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Abstract

The paper has two main aims. First it seeks to explore whether security cooperation between the EU and China is taking place, and if so, whether it is evenly spread across a number of security dimensions. Second it intends to investigate the underlying motives or drivers that either facilitate or inhibit EU-China security cooperation. Further, it will explain why the EU rather than EU member states is chosen as the unit of analysis, explore the development of EU-China security relations, and illustrate how historical legacies, identity aspects and differences over key issues, such as sovereignty and territorial integrity, affect EU-China security relations. In addition, it will deal with the theoretical and conceptual underpinnings of the study on EU-China security relations, paying particular emphasis to the concepts of diffusion and convergence. Whether or not EU-China security cooperation converges in one of the ten chosen security dimensions will be assessed by the degree of policy conformity the EU and China are able (or unable) to obtain with regard to threat perceptions and policy response thereto. Attention will be devoted to diffusion factors which can affect changes in the perception of threats and response thereof. Among these factors are changes in (geo-political) structure, interests and norms. A further objective of the paper will be to explore whether policy convergence on threat perceptions and response thereto might be a precondition for joint action, or whether practical cooperation can take place without prior policy convergence between the EU and China. The paper will round off with a short section introducing the security dimensions that are being examined in the more detailed study on which this paper is based.

Introduction[*]

The purpose of this paper is to explore EU-China security relations, which have hitherto received scant attention in the writings on EU-China relations. This involves an empirical exercise of studying a number of security dimensions, through a number of theoretical or heuristic orientations, structural interests, and normative considerations as well as diffusion mechanisms of learning and emulation. The purpose of these framing devices is to provide common elements of analysis to inform empirical research rather than constituting a tight framework leading to systematic application.

EU-China security cooperation may appear tenuous and of little significance when seen next to the massive amount of trade and other forms of economic cooperation between the two sides. Nevertheless, it is a topic of steadily rising importance, not only because economic and security concerns are becoming increasingly intertwined, but also as non-traditional security threats become more pronounced in international relations. Indeed, aside from economic interdependence, other factors affect the incidence of security cooperation between China and the EU. On the one hand, neither the EU nor China consider the other side as a potential enemy or a military threat – though the non-democratic nature of the Chinese regime and its maritime territorial disputes continues to be viewed with suspicion by EU policy makers and public opinions (Casarini 2012, p. 4; Keohane et al. 2014). Instead, both China and the EU support a multipolar international order, and both adopt multilateralism as a key element of their foreign policy, albeit with differences in its practical application.

On the other hand, the EU and China have very different attitudes to key principles of inter-state relations such as state sovereignty, non-intervention and the territorial integrity of states. Furthermore, democratic aspirations and other normative concerns such as the rule of law or good governance matter for the EU in a way they do not for China. More fundamentally, the fact that the EU is not a state carries with it limitations regarding the cohesion of its security policy, with security and defence policy remaining largely the prerogative of member states. The absence of a distinct EU military presence in Asia and the NATO membership of most EU countries diminish EU attractiveness as a genuine (independent) security actor in its dealing with China. While this does not exclude cooperation on military matters altogether between the EU and China, it does put the emphasis more strongly on cooperation in the non-traditional aspects of security,[1] where both the EU and China may perceive common treats and desire a common response, for example with regard to counter-terrorism and climate change.

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[1] Although it is difficult in practice to make a clear distinction between traditional and non-traditional security, we link traditional security with military security, nuclear proliferation and regional security. Following William (2013), we deem these three aspects as being concerned with the interplay between the armed offensive and defensive capabilities of states and states' perceptions of each other's intentions. Non-traditional security in our conception deals with the political, economic, societal and environmental security of states where issues of organisational stability, access to resources, the preservation of cultural traits and environmental sustainability are a concern. Among the aspects which have these non-traditional security characteristics are terrorism and organised crime, climate change and energy security, economic security, and human security. For further details on the subject see Williams (2013) and Buzan et al. (1998).

This paper seeks to put the complex nature of EU-China security relations into context, both historically and conceptually. It starts by providing a brief overview of the development of EU-China relations in this field over the past decades. Subsequent sections then examine some of the conceptual issues that affect the way in which the EU and China understand (or, as the case may be, misunderstand) one another, before a final section raises the question of how and to what effect China and the European Union are able to cooperate on a range of security matters.

Historical overview of EU-China security relations

EU-China diplomatic relations have existed for forty years, over which period there have been both setbacks, such as the 1989 Tiananmen Square event, and high points such as the 2003 strategic partnership. A number of important policy papers by both the EU and China have been adopted during this period. Among the more significant ones are the EU-China Trade and Cooperation Agreement of 1985 (Council Regulation, 1985), which provides the fundamental legal agreement between the sides to date, and the EU-China Mature Strategic Partnership of 2003 (European Commission, 2003). China has complemented these sets of agreements with policy papers on the EU in 2003 (Chinese Government, 2003) and 2014 (Chinese Government, 2014).

The strategic partnership of 2003, which was upgraded in 2010 to include foreign affairs, security matters and global challenges such as climate change and global economy governance, represents the central plank in the EU-China political and security relationship. It has one of the most extensive institutional bases of EU strategic partnerships, and includes the bilateral level, the inter-regional contexts, and the level of global multilateral organizations such as the United Nations (UN) and the World Trade Organization (WTO). Further mechanisms of EU-China security cooperation are located in the political dialogue and the annual EU-China Summit (postponed twice in 2008 and 2011). Moreover, the summit of September 2012 encouraged regular contacts between special representatives and special envoys, holding a regular dialogue on defence and security policy, increasing training exchanges and organizing a High Level Seminar on Defence and Security in 2013. This makes China the fourth country with which the EU has established a dialogue on defence and security issues. The EU-China High-level Strategic Dialogue is an additional channel for security cooperation.

While the main drivers of EU China relations have undoubtedly been of an economic kind, meaning primarily concerns with trade, investment, monetary and intellectual property issues, the political and security dimensions of the relationship have steadily increased since the mid-1990s. The reasons for this can be found in three interrelated factors. First, as trade and investment has risen in volume between the EU and China,[2] new political and security challenges have arrived, such as transnational terrorism, nuclear proliferation, environmental degradation and organized crime, which need to be met in the form of political cooperative measures both at bilateral and multilateral level in order to protect the immense benefits of EU-China trade and investment. Second, as China grapples with domestic political developments (internal democratization developments and China's "one country, two systems" policy (with regard to Taiwan), and as it seeks to play a supportive role in efforts of international peace and stability, China has found it opportune to engage with the EU in a political dialogue. China has a positive image of the EU because of its success in overcoming strife and in integrating a huge number of countries peacefully and because of its contribution to peace and stability in the world. The EU is also not seen as a military threat but rather as a respected and reliable political partner. Third, there is the Chinese aspiration to match, through bilateral and multilateral diplomacy, its global economic presence. In the context of China's "peaceful rise" as a global power, it has developed a new self-perceptions of its own role in international relations, and that includes a strategic partnership with its largest trading partner. Finally, the EU itself has had a long-standing desire, going back to its initial engagement with China in the mid-1970s, to extend its values of

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[2] Bilateral trade in goods has risen from €4 billion in 1978 to €429 billion in 2011 (Grant 2013).

peaceful existence in the form of democratic norms and values to China (Barysch et al. 2005, p. 1). China, whilst seeking to stifle the import of such values, has a longstanding aim of seeking to counteract the United States' global dominance and sees the EU as an ally in such an attempt. This Chinese perception was particularly prominent after EU divisions in the Spring of 2003 over participation in the United States-led invasion of Iraq, but has since waned somewhat.

Complicating the analysis of past developments – and hence of current and future perspectives – are the presence of contending paradigms through which the nature of EU-China can be viewed, with very different results. From a Realist perspective, for example, there will be a strong emphasis on the 'rise of China' in the context of an emerging multi-polar world. In such a view, China, the United States, Russia and the European Union are being regarded as 'poles' that are in potential competition with one another. The debate about China's arrival in Africa, and the dissonances that this has created vis-à-vis the EU, are an example of such thinking. From such a 'realist' perspective, with its emphasis on national interests, power and capabilities, the EU-China relationship would appear to have clear limitations.

A different perspective is offered by the focus on identity, ideology and cultural differences, and the way in which these constitute drivers for both cooperation and conflict. While the bloc mentality of the Cold War era may be largely a thing of the past, the EU is still widely seen as being part of 'the West' together with the USA, while China remains a country governed by an authoritarian regime, even after the liberalisation of economy and society. The EU and China also have contrasting attitudes to key principles of international relations such as state sovereignty, the universality of fundamental rights or humanitarian intervention. From such a perspective, looking at the way in which images of the 'self' and the 'other' are being constructed on either side, helps to understand the gaps that remain between China and the EU despite decades of engagement.

However, the arguably dominant vision of EU-China relations is being offered by a liberal-institutionalist perspective, with the focus squarely on the economic dimension and the emphasis on the common interest that both sides share in stability and further development of this relationship. This is not to deny the competitive nature of the respective economies, and the resultant differences on issues such as market access, exchange rate manipulation or intellectual property rights. But such differences must be seen within a wider framework of growing trade relations and increasing foreign direct investments on both sides. The sovereign debt crisis in the Eurozone, while causing problems for growth in both Europe and China, has actually demonstrated the interdependence of the two economies and reinforced the sense of mutual benefits that comes from closer economic cooperation.

Conceptualising EU-China security relations

The various lenses through which international relations can be viewed, but above all the dominance of the liberal-institutionalist paradigm in the relationship between the EU and China, help to explain the different conceptualisations of security relations. On the whole , EU-China relations – in contrast to U.S.-China relations – are not marked by 'balance of power' considerations or the United States' 'pivot to Asia' to be considered as a re-balancing exercise against Chinese expansion in Asia (White House 2013). However, even though Chinese relations with the EU are not seen in the context of the Great Power rivalry that is often detected in its relations with the United States (Shambaugh 2012; Mearsheimer 2014), the EU and China might still be perceived as having hegemonic tendencies in the pursuance of their respective interests and value considerations in the regional and international arena (Buzan and Wæver 2003; Katzenstein 2005). As both have developed considerable economic power, they are forced to secure the fruits of their economic success through a growing number of bilateral and multilateral cooperative security arrangements.

Observers are divided as to whether China's rise as an economic and political power will result in it becoming a responsible stakeholder in the international system, or whether it will end up pursuing a revisionist rather than a status quo policy (on the former, see Kahler 2013; Foot 2012; Van der Putten

and Chu 2011; on the latter see Johnston 2013; Ikenberry 2011). Either of these outcomes of Chinese policy will have repercussions on EU policies, whose general aims are supportive of the existing international system while pressing for occasional reforms. Consequently, the question as to whether the EU and China engage with each other cooperatively in the security domain or pursue different, and possibly even conflicting strategies, requires thorough empirical research across a number of dimensions.

Key concepts in the analysis of EU-China security relations

This exercise will be guided by the use of a number of key concepts that serve as heuristic tools for subsequent empirical analysis which are linked in their practical application. *Convergence* (and its negative counterpart divergence) is defined in this context as the degree of policy conformity the EU and China are able (or unable) to achieve in a given security dimension. *Cooperation* is defined as the degree of actual security cooperation between the EU and China, be it in the shape of either formal agreements or of joint actions (involving either material resources or firm commitments to joint standards) in each of the security dimensions under investigation. *Diffusion*, finally, refers to the exchange of norms, values or standards by either a 'learning' process or through 'emulation' taking place in the context of EU-China security relations.

These three heuristic devices are to some extent inter-related in that changes in the (geo-political) structural domain may affect changes in national interests, while changing interests can impact on the way norms are applied in the field of EU-China security cooperation. Accordingly, we may observe divergence or convergence between China and the EU. China and the EU may agree (or disagree) on which security threats they find more salient and on how to respond to perceived threats. For example, as China has become more interdependent in the world economy, its economic security concerns have become more similar to the EU's understanding, with China and the EU advocating a similar multilateral approach. Another example of such convergence is the observation that non-traditional security threats have become more salient for China as well as for the EU in the post-Cold War era. These structural changes have led to at least minimal convergence in the way the EU and China define threat perceptions and norms regulating policy responses. This has opened up a space for collaboration, however minimally defined.

However, whilst it is plausible to assume that there is a strong link between the existence of policy conformity and levels of cooperation, the possibility that cooperative arrangements or joint actions can arise independent of any such link cannot be discounted altogether: cooperation might occur spontaneously as a consequence of exogenous events such as natural disasters, something that must remain a potential scenario to be found in empirical research.

Assessing convergence and cooperation

This discussion of convergence and cooperation as key concepts in the analysis of security relations raises questions about how to measure developments in this respect. Therefore it is necessary to elaborate here briefly on the specific criteria used in this study. Convergence is assessed by the following two factors: first, the extent to which uniform positions exist between the EU and China on the perception of threats and responses thereto with regard to ten specific security dimensions; and, second, by the extent to which agreement/disagreement exists on issues of sovereignty or non-intervention in a given security dimension and therefore the extent to which they can act as barriers to convergence. Rather than merely bringing to light the similarities/dissimilarities in the assessment of threat perceptions and responses, which tends to portray a static view, the aim is to explore the dynamic element. In other words, it is not enough to simply state that sovereignty or non-interference principles are an issue, but to explore whether, over time, changes have taken place and/or the force of the argument for convergence has either weakened or strengthened. This involves an application of the heuristic elements outlined below in the shape of structure, interests and norms.

Cooperation is assessed essentially in three different ways: first, the extent to which the EU and China have engaged in joint agreements of actions either at the bilateral or the multilateral level. Joint agreements can be in the form of Summit declarations or the adoption (signing and ratifying) by both partners of, for example, UN conventions. But it will be important to distinguish the extent to which cooperation is merely at the level of 'intentions' (rhetoric), or involves a number of actual joint actions. Or put differently, whether the prospects for cooperation between the EU and China remain at the level of discourse rather than practice. Joint actions can, at the low end, take the form of information exchanges on counter-terrorism activities, organized crime or cyber security, and, at the high end, the joint anti-piracy maritime operations between the EU and China in the Gulf of Aden. With regard to joint actions it will be important to examine: the type, frequency or length of action; the material or personnel sources involved in these actions, the temporal or lasting effect which can be attributed to them; the springboard or multiplier implication which can be associated with them. It might also be interesting to establish whether cooperation is more pronounced at the bilateral rather than at the multilateral level and whether there is strong relationship in performance between these two levels or none at all. Second, cooperation is studied through the extent to which barriers to EU-China cooperation exist, for example, barriers which seemingly arise in addition to those which affect the levels of convergence/divergence. The concern here will be with existing obstacles within the EU (among EU institutions and/or between EU institutions and Member States) to forge common positions, and manoeuvres by China to divide or undermine EU consensus in selectively dealing with EU institutions (Council or Commission) and individual EU Member States. Finally, a third criteria is the extent to which cooperation is in line with the levels of convergence/divergence noted earlier in the analysis, or exist separately, for example, as a spontaneous – possibly one-off – response to events such as natural disasters or pandemics.

Developing a diffusion perspective on EU-China relations

Another, arguably more intriguing, possibility is that similar perceptions of security threats and of appropriate policy responses to these are the result of prior collaboration. In other words, that through EU and Chinese partners working together there is a diffusion of shared perceptions and policy approaches. The second part of our argument therefore focuses on diffusion. The literature on diffusion commonly identifies coercion, socialization, learning and competition (or emulation) as key transmission mechanisms (Graham et al. 2013).[3] Gilardi (2010) observes, however, that in practice it has proven difficult to distinguish between possible causal mechanisms. In our view, a focus on specific policy areas allows for the identification of instances of converging perceptions and beyond that to actual collaboration. If and when such instances have been identified they can then be linked to precise diffusion mechanisms.

Arguably, emulation and learning are the most relevant mechanism for EU–China relations. Learning emphasizes interaction and conscious adoption of alternative frames of mind, while emulation is less interactive and less conscious (Simmons and Elkins 2004). Competition rather than cooperation is the main driver behind emulation (Ward and John 2013); for example, China has emulated Western, capitalist, economic policies in order to remain competitive in world markets (Simmons and Elkins 2004). In contrast, a key element of learning is the exchange of information. For example, in cases of contagious diseases such as Avian Flu, EU experts informed their Chinese counterparts about the risks (that is, threat perception) while Chinese engagement with the WHO provided important information about the appropriate policy responses (in China as well as the EU).

There has been increasing attention for the diffusion of norms regulating international trade and economic cooperation. Simmons and Elkins (2004, p. 175) highlight the relevance of communication networks for the diffusion of the norms associated with economic liberalization. Cao (2012, pp. 386-9)

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[3]   See also Simmons et al. (2006, 2008), and Shipan and Volden (2008).

suggests that more extensive trade ties explain diffusion of domestic economic policies. Dorussen and Ward (2010) provide evidence that networked trade relations can also diffuse political norms, specifically nonviolent interstate conflict resolution. The diffusion of norms governing political interaction and institutions may also happen in regional and global intergovernmental organizations with a political rather than economic mandate; for example, the role of the UN in advancing human rights as a global norm, or the EU in promoting democratization by making it a condition for membership.[4] Deutsch et al. (1968) is a seminal study detailing the effects of communication networks on the diffusion of political norms. To analyze the full spectrum of possible policy diffusion, the case studies consider bilateral collaboration between the EU and China but also their joint participation in multilateral forums.

Such a framework allows us to identify two forms of diffusion: first of all, from China to the EU (and/or vice versa) within a particular policy domain and, second, diffusion across policy domains. A two-way approach is thus being proposed to study diffusion characteristics. To enhance the scope of the investigation, and to adopt a broad definition of security (Bourne 2013), a number of different security dimensions will be examined ranging from military to non-military aspects. In each of these dimensions, it needs to be systematically explored to which extent the EU and China have common threat perceptions and responses thereto, as well as the levels of bilateral or multilateral cooperation each undertakes.

The levels of analysis problem in studying EU-China relations

Our choice of focussing in this analysis on EU-China security relations, rather than on the security relations of the EU's member states with China, or else on what is sometimes loosely referred to as 'Sino-European' security relations, may require some explanation. First of all, this paper is intended as a contribution to the literature on the EU's external relations and in particular on its evolving role as a security actor. From modest beginnings the EU has developed a wide-ranging security policy, and how this shapes up in relations with China – not a traditional ally yet one of its strategic partners – is of considerable scholarly interest and political relevance.

We do recognise that undoubtedly individual EU member states such as, for example, France and the United Kingdom have a longer and more involved security engagement with China than the EU does. This greater involvement is the result of a combination of such factors as their status as nuclear powers and permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, the experience of small scale military personnel visits and exchanges and long-standing bilateral Strategic Partnerships with China. Such bilateral security relations may provide interesting – even important – insights, but the analysis of those respective bilateral security relations would not provide a full account of what EU-China security relations entail in scope or degree.

Most importantly, focussing on the member states rather than on the European Union and its common institutions and policies would downplay – and risks neglecting – the host of instances where the EU has demonstrated that it does indeed constitute a security actor in its own right when dealing with China. Examples are the anti-piracy operation in the Gulf of Aden, the climate change negotiations, the counter-terrorism measures, and the arms embargo issue. Consequently, the choice in this paper has been to focus predominantly on the European level as the main level of analysis while incorporating, where appropriate, the role of member states when examining the specific security dimensions which have been chosen for the analysis of EU-China security relations. In line with this choice, the following section turns to the theoretical and conceptual orientation of EU-China political and security relations.

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[4]   For example, Dorussen and Kirchner (2014) analyze how regional organizations attempt to promote security by diffusing an increasingly broad set of norms. Similarly, Dorussen and Ward (2008) argue for the pacifying effect of connections via the network of Intergovernmental Organization membership.

Heuristic devices informing the analysis: structure, interests and norms

In line with the basic premise of this paper, security cooperation is considered to be affected by similar or converging EU and Chinese views with regard to threat perceptions and responses thereto. Depending on the degree of convergence in views within a given security dimension, cooperation is either enhanced or hindered. Furthermore, the degree of policy conformity or converging views which exists in a certain security dimension is influenced by changes in geo-political-economic structure, interests and norms. These three aspects are linked to some extent in that changes in the (geo-) structural domain can affect changes in national interests, and changes in interest formation can affect change in the way norms are applied in the field of EU-China security cooperation. The effects of these changes can either promote or impede what Simmons et al. (2006) call 'interdependent decision-making' or that policy choices of one country are shaped by the choices of others, in this case decision-making and joint actions in the field of EU-China security cooperation. The following will explore in more detail the three aspects which are seen to affect EU-China security cooperation in this manner.

Structural factors

Both the EU and China have undergone significant changes as economic and political actors on the international scene. The rise of China as an important economic and political actor on the international scene began in the early 1990s, with Beijing's drive to expand its bilateral and multilateral links in order to foster rapid economic growth based on economic reform and opening-up after the rejection of the rules of the international system by Mao. Industrialisation and development towards an advanced economy occurred earlier in Europe, while the creation of the Single European Market in the 1990s provided a boost to the competitiveness of the EU's economy. Economic growth in Europe has slowed, even stagnated in Europe in recent years, as a consequence of the economic and financial crisis, but China and the EU now lead the world in terms of their trade. Partly because of representing the world's second-largest economic partnership[5] and partly because of dependency on external trade, both the EU and China have considerable interest in ensuring that international trade routes are secured (Reiterer 2013). Moreover, to improve their prosperity both need an open trading system and access to energy sources and raw materials. The link between economic interaction and security, at the bilateral (EU-China) and multilateral levels, is hence a significant factor in EU-China relations, and a main reason why the economic dimension of security ought to be included in such an analysis.

A second structural change with implications for EU-China security relations relates to change in the nature of security threats. While the Cold War was dominated by an overlay of a global conflict structure, the post-Cold War security landscape has increasingly been dominated by regional security interactions (Buzan and Wæver 2003) and regional integration dynamics (Hettne 2003). A core concern in this respect is the perceived rise of sub-system violent conflicts, often discussed under the heading of the 'new wars' (Kaldor 1999; Münkler 2005). Generally, non-traditional security threats have risen in importance not only in Europe but also in Asia, including climate change, the threat of viral pandemics, the pursuit of food and energy security, as well as the effects of regional conflicts (Caballero-Anthony and Cook 2013). As a consequence, non-traditional aspects of security have become more prominent in EU-China security relations. This factor is reflected in the selection of the security dimensions of this study, where stress if given to sub-system conflicts and non-traditional security threats.

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[5] The economy of the EU represents €12.6 trillion and that of China €4.6 trillion (the United States has €11.3 trillion) (Barroso 2013). China has the world's largest foreign reserves at US$3.95 trillion as of the first quarter of 2014 (*Financial Times*, April 2014).

The role of national interests

National interest is affected by changes in geo-economic or political terms and by domestic/internal conditions. In terms of domestically/internally conditions both the EU and China seek to influence and shape their external security environment in ways that best benefit their nationalist ends. Callahan (2012) goes as far as to link China's national security with its nationalist insecurities. In part this is due to the fact that China is still in a state-building or developing mode. In terms of geo-economic or political terms, China's aspiration of great power status contrast clearly with the rule based effective multilateralism interests espoused by the EU. Whereas China's interests are primarily based on national defence and security and territorial protection, the EU includes milieu security interests in its defence and security calculus. There is also a contrast between the more 'other' oriented approach of the EU and the more 'egoistical' worldview of China. However, dissimilar and similar interests are sometimes not far apart. This can be seen with regard to Central Asia where the EU and China are competitors in terms of seeking access to Central Asian gas and oil, but are partners in terms of striving to reduce Russian influence in Central Asia. While the EU and China pursue similar aims with regard to the promotion of multipolarity, they differ over the extent to which this should be used as a counterweight to United States global dominance. Both are supporters of multilateralism and the role of international organizations, but they differ on the extent to which multilateralism should be applied and the status quo of international organizations be observed. While both seek international stability, they also see each other in part as undermining this stability. The EU sees Chinese maritime border disputes as affecting the security in the Asia Pacific, whereas China perceives the EU's engagement in the Ukraine (together with that of NATO) as contributing to the instability in the Eurasia region.

Generally, EU efforts to provide incentives for achieving converging views on security between the EU and China are limited, and to the extent to which they exist, they are primarily confined to the non-traditional aspects of security. In contrast to its ability to set conditions for countries aspiring to EU membership in terms of economic and political adjustments, for countries benefitting from EU aid and cooperation agreements (for example, the African, Pacific and Caribbean countries) or for the granting of trade privileges, with few exceptions no such mechanisms are at work in EU-China security relations. Among the exceptions is the period before and around 2000, just before China became a member of the WTO, when the EU was able to exert pressure for Chinese economic and political reforms. Although the EU provides substantial aid and technical assistance, as well as programmes which promote greater democratization, these do not seem to affect Chinese security policies significantly. What seems to affect Chinese security outlook more directly is its attempt to emulate the EU's peaceful development, particularly as expressed in the EU's civilian power concept. Such an association can also be used by China to justify that its rise in the international arena will be similarly peaceful.

The Power of Ideas and Norms

In a mutually constructive way, ideas and norms can impact on the identity of national interests of the involved actors. They can also help to establish or strengthen the mutual understanding and mutual trust between the EU and China. This can be illustrated in a number of examples. Not only does China explicate the EU as a model in terms of international standing, China also sees virtues in the confederal structure of the EU. Both the EU and China uphold the principle of peaceful coexistence and emphasize equality, mutual trust, respect and cooperation. Both see each other more as partners than as enemies. The same expectation cannot be said to hold in China's relations with, for example, Japan or the United States.

Differences exist regarding the extent to which consensus through consultation and the peaceful settlement of disputes is to be achieved. This issue links strongly with the application of the sovereignty and non-intervention principles. Whereas China applies a strict adherence to these principles, the EU does not rule out military intervention in cases of 'failed state' scenarios, that is,

where states fail to adequately protect their citizens, or where looming humanitarian disaster require intervention, for example, interventions in the Western Balkans and parts of Africa. In contrast to China, the EU also attaches conditionality to its trade agreements and development cooperation. However, those principled differences are not always as stark as they appear. For example, China has deviated from its strict adherence to non-intervention, such as when permitting NATO action in the Libyan conflict of 2011. At the same time, China's aggressive maritime behaviour in the South and East China Sea can be seen as a deviation from China's declared policy of 'peaceful settlement of disputes' demonstrates that both the EU and the EU are prepared to exercise a mixture of persuasive and coercive elements of statecraft.

Security cooperation between the EU and China, involving values and norms, works through a mix of socialization processes and social learning. It is widely accepted that the EU seeks to influence other regional integration processes, and that in reverse other regional organisations are attracted to the European integration experience. In the Chinese case, there has been considerably less effort to pursue a comprehensive engagement with the outside world. However, China has consistently advanced its principles of peaceful coexistence, based on equality, mutual trust, respect for sovereignty, and cooperation. Since 2010 it has sought to give greater voice abroad to these principles through the establishment of an increasing number of Confucius Institutes around the world. In any case, these efforts of external 'image creation' are a conflation of norms and interests and reflect hegemonic tendencies in that both the EU and China seek to pursue their respective interests and value considerations in the regional and international arena.

Socialization processes and social learning links with knowledge transfer. The expectation is that knowledge transfer between the EU and China takes place more in some of the security dimensions than in others. Knowledge transfer from the EU to China is likely to be practised in the fields of climate change, economic security, infectious diseases and food safety, but less so on aspects which touch more explicitly on human rights. Notwithstanding the nearly twenty years of the existence of the EU China Human Rights Dialogue, differences appear as strong as ever, with China emphasizing the collective security of the people together with a state-centric view, and the EU prioritizing the security of the individual and the need to intervene in cases where states fail to protect their citizens from harm. Equally, deep-seated (cultural) differences over ideas/principles and norms in cyber security impede knowledge transfer in either direction between the EU and China.

The derived heuristic devices of structure, interests and normative factor will inform the empirical analysis of this study, by providing guidance as to why certain levels of convergence/divergence appear between the EU and China in the assessment of threat perception and responses thereto. An understanding of these three devices provides important information on the extent to which sovereignty principles, especially by China, are upheld or shifting in EU-China security relations. Knowledge of these heuristic devices and key issues will be instrumental in assessing levels of convergence/divergence. The results of these levels will then act as a benchmark for the assessment of actual EU-China security cooperation.

Towards an empirical analysis of EU-China Security Cooperation

The substantive areas that ought to be chosen for an empirical study of EU-China security cooperation will need to be structured along the lines of five core themes arising from the previous discussion: (a) threat perceptions; (b) response to threats; (c) the degree of convergence/divergence on threat perceptions and response; (d) the incidence of cooperation at the bilateral level; and (e) cooperation at the multilateral level. The threat perceptions and policy response preferences the EU and China have in each of the respective security dimension will need to be studied. This should also involve an examination of the existing barriers to convergence by considering the implications of changes in terms of (geopolitical) structure, interests and norms. In a second step, the analysis will need to identify the degree to which policy convergence in threat perceptions and response exists between the

EU and China. The presence or absence of policy convergence will then related to an assessment of the degree of cooperation which the EU and China have undertaken in a given security dimension either at the bilateral or the multilateral level. Attention will also be paid to whether joint cooperative actions in the security field occur in the absence of convergence, for example, through spontaneous joint actions in response to natural disasters. While this step will examine the evidence for actual cooperation, or potential thereof, it will also examine the extent to which barriers exist both within the EU (problems of cohesion) and between the EU and China (for example, attempts by China to undermine EU cohesion).

Such a study should cover a range of traditional and non-traditional security dimensions which are being examined along these lines. Specifically, the following security dimensions that could be included in such an analysis:

- military security
- regional security
- nuclear proliferation
- terrorism and organised crime
- climate and energy security
- human security
- civil protection
- cyber security
- economic security
- migration and immigration.

The choice of focussing on these security dimensions is justified in terms of the explicit reference that both Chinese official policy papers as well as key EU documents such the 2003 European Security Strategy (ESS) (European Council, 2003) and the 2008 Implementation Report of ESS (European Council, 2008) make to these particular areas.

The ten security dimensions have also been selected in part because of the expectation that they evoke different cooperation characteristics. One assumption here is that there may be a variation between higher and lower levels of cooperation across these areas. High levels of cooperation might be expected in the area of climate change and energy security (Bo, Biedenkopf, Chen and Oberthuer), economic security (Geeraerts and Huang) and counter-terrorism/organized crime (Bossong and Holmes). These are areas where, despite differences over sovereignty issues, either the common perception of threats has risen over a considerable period of time or where international norms, collaboration or regulatory arrangements have promoted the adoption of similar policy approaches between the EU and China (for example, ensuring that international trade routes are secured, or that measures are adopted in response to climate change). In contrast low levels of cooperation can be expected for human security (Harnisch and He), cyber security (Bersick, Christou and Yi), military security (Whitman and Wong) and migration/immigration (Chou, Koff and van Dongen). These security dimensions are more closely associated with deep-seated EU-China differences over sovereignty (rooted in historical legacies, identity factors, developmental aspects, and so on), differences in threat perceptions (for example, China's internal floating population and emigration concerns versus the EU's security concern with external migration/immigration), or the belated arrival of EU-China security relations (for example, cyber security). As it developed as a supranational (EU) or national (China) policy area, civil protection (Dorussen, Jin and Fanoulis) has also recently become part of EU-China security relations. Here, there has however been more progress. In between high and low levels of EU-China security relations are the dimensions of nuclear proliferation (Casarini and Song) and regional security cooperation (Diez, Scherwitz and Tan). While the EU and China have substantial levels of common threat perceptions on those two security dimensions, it is expected that

different interests (for example, China's approach towards North Korea or China's more assertive behaviour in the East and South China Sea) undermine higher levels of cooperation.

Conclusion

Since 2003 there has been increasing understanding between the EU and China that security cooperation needs to complement the economic and political dialogue between the two countries. How far this understanding translates into practice, which aspects of security benefit more and which less, and what the underlying reasons for the occurrence of cooperation or lack thereof are raise theoretical and conceptual issues and require empirical examination. From a theoretical perspective, EU-China security relations have traditionally been assessed from such approaches as neo-realism and liberal internationalism. However, as indicated above, neither of these approaches by themselves provides an appropriate framework for assessing EU-China security cooperation across a spectrum of security dimensions. It appears more appropriate to consider changes in the geo-economic and political context, changes in interest formation and practice, and changes in normative behaviour. Changes in the structure of the international system will affect how China and the EU define their interests and their normative understanding of appropriate actions.

Different identity considerations and approaches to key issues such as sovereignty and non-interference have important implications for the extent to which the EU and China converge or diverge in policy preferences to perceived security threats. In turn, together with levels of convergence/divergence in threat perception and responses, they affect levels of cooperation (intensity, frequency and resources involved) or non-cooperation in EU-China security relations. How far this effect occurs, and whether it occurs equally across a number of security dimensions is largely an empirical question. Similarly, the extent to which diffusion transfers take place in the shape of learning processes or emulation mechanisms needs empirical examination. An attempt has been made in this paper to explore the empirical terrain of EU-China security relations, but a much more careful analysis of this will need to be undertaken in a detailed study covering a range of traditional and non-traditional aspects of security cooperation. Expectations are that such an exercise will provide a more differentiated picture of the various facets of security policy than those often associated with a one-dimensional (for example, military, environmental, or cyber security) treatment of EU-China security relations.

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