

Ideational Divergences between European Union and China: Cases of International Interventions

Zhun ZHONG

(zhong.zhun@yahoo.com)

LUISS Guido Carli University & Université libre de Bruxelles

SYNTHESIS

Since the end of the Cold-War, the international intervention in humanitarian crisis has emerged as a frequent but also controversial phenomenon in global politics. Alongside with the notable practices of crisis intervention in Balkan and Africa, the international debate on coercive intervention is not settled yet. The dissertation starts with the historical practices and current debates on multilateral intervention. Chapter 1 first conceptualizes the elusive concepts of multilateralism, intervention and multilateral intervention, aiming to operationalize these interrelated concepts for the following empirical research. Then I turn to the question of the EU-China ideational divergences on intervention, highlighting their different understanding of human rights and sovereignty. At the end of Chapter 1, I raise my research proposal: to explain why the EU and China adopted different policies in the chosen cases of Darfur and Libyan crises, and to what extent their professed principles had influenced their policy-makings.

To provide a theoretical framework for the research, in Chapter 2 I proceed to the theories of international relations, Realism, Marxism, Liberalism, Constructivism and Institutionalism. Focusing on the given problem—the role of ideas in foreign policy

makings of international actors, there exist relatively superfluous debates but also productive interactions amid this welter of competing theoretical traditions. By synthesizing what might be considered conflicting theoretical approaches, I argue that an explanatory framework including the function of ideational factors could stand up to the criticism from hardcore realists and materialists. Besides, in the light of institutionalism, as policy-makers need to consider both the logic of appropriateness and the logic of consequences, the ideational factors such as values, images and principles could define the boundary of policy-options, or (and) enter into the cost-benefit calculations.

Before conducting the case analysis, the dissertation needs to clarify the two international actors' general positions, adopted principles and policy-making processes on the external intervention. Especially considering the EU, its actorness and capabilities as a foreign policy actor are not without controversy. Chapter 3 first reviews different conceptions of European foreign policy, such as civilian, normative and ethical power Europe, but regards them as theoretical and empirical questions to be explored than a political statement of reality. Then the Chapter demonstrates the EU's interventionist position since the establishment of CSFP/CSDP and proactive norms of human rights and democracy, highlighting the EU's commitment to R2P and Human Security regarding crisis intervention. While there is a strong correlation between its principles and positions, the EU's commitment to the above principles and values in practice varies from case to case. Through the subsequent investigation of the EU's foreign policy-making process, we can find that this is largely because the division of labour between the Union and Member States, and the different level of Europeanization in diplomatic, economic and military policy areas.

Chapter 4 asks the similar question to the Chinese foreign policy. The Chapter first reviews China's intervention and non-intervention policies from the 1950s to the 2010s, and explain why China's positions on UN peacekeeping varied in different

periods. Although China's compliance with the non-interference principle has become more flexible, nowadays Beijing is averse to the conception of non-consensual 'humanitarian intervention' and wary of the emerging norm of 'Responsibility to Protect'. Then the Chapter turns to the analysis of policy making process, attempting to explore the mechanisms in which ideational factors could exert a long-lasting influence on policy-making. Here I suggest that the path-dependency and risk-averse prevail in the Chinese political institutions, so that the dominant principles would not be easily changed despite of the changing material circumstances.

To answer empirically my research questions and test relevant working hypothesis, an intensive within-case analysis of the Darfur and Libyan crisis is conducted in Chapters 5 and 6. Within the two cases, we can observe China's prevention and permission, the EU's consensus and division on intervention, as varied dependent variables. Departing from the previous accounts either focusing on the economic/geopolitical calculations of international actors or the normative components of their policies, Chapter 5 and 6 attempts to bridge the gap by taking both the material factors and ideational factors into account. Based on my categorization of intervention in Chapter 1, I analyse three specific fields of multilateral intervention that China and the EU (including Member States) involved: diplomatic, economic and military intervention. The case study finds that the role of ideational factors was discernible in the EU and China's policy-makings, although their causal varied significantly in different policy-fields. For example, while diplomatic stances of the EU and China on the two crises were largely shaped by their adopted principles, their policy decisions on the military intervention were significantly influenced by material considerations. My findings are based on two

sources: the diverse first and second sources and interviews with a dozen of relevant officials and analysts who experienced the case.

The concluding chapter 7 is divided into three parts. First, I draw conclusions from empirical case studies, arguing that these phenomena cannot be fully explained without taking into account the development of a normative support for humanitarian and pro-democracy intervention in the West, as well as the long-lasting ideational aversion to the (Western-style) forcible intervention in China. The dissertation suggests that the ideational factors have permissive, regulative, and incentive effects on the EU and China's policy-makings on crisis intervention. Secondly, I discuss the feasibility and legitimacy of current doctrines of international intervention, and provide some policy suggestions to the EU and China with regard to their practices of crisis management. Although the EU-China ideational divergences will persist, the Chinese 'constructive engagement' can be compatible with the European 'responsible protection' if carefully managed. The dissertation concludes by revisiting the concept of the normative power. Based on the implications drawn from the empirical study, I suggest understanding the normative power as the ability, rather than the actor or unit, to use given norms and principles to persuade others and shape what passes for normal. The normative power is an autonomous source of the hegemony, and the rise of China may bring about the persistent norms contestation in multilateral institutions.