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# The EU's Normative Role

The Use of Political Conditionality in Relations with Cuba,  
China and Zimbabwe

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# Abstract

The European Union (EU) is a unique foreign policy actor, because of its history and the diversity of its member states. The EU has developed a distinct approach to promoting human rights and democracy in third states. Its focus lies on positive engagement through constructive dialogue. This preference for using positive rather than negative engagement is the subject of this thesis. It is argued that it is necessary for the EU to judge and conduct its relations with each individual state on a case by case basis. Case specific considerations need to be taken into account as it provides the foundation on which the relationship is based on and continues to shape the negotiations and any use of political conditionality throughout the relationship. This does not diminish the EU's normative basis that continues to be well founded in the international human rights treaties. This thesis proceeds to analyse three distinct cases by focusing on the evolution of the Unions relationship with the Peoples Republic of China, Cuba and Zimbabwe. They demonstrate the fragile nature of political dialogue regarding human rights and democratisation and underline the need to constructively engage the recipient state.

*Keywords:* European Union, political conditionality, third states, human rights, democracy

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 The Evolution of the EU's Role as a Norm Spreader

The European Union claims to be a unique actor within the international society, whose objectives are to promote human rights, democracy and good governance. The EU's history as an organisation, created to ensure peace and foster cooperation between its members based on the principles of human rights and democracy, has left a mark on how it conducts its relations within the international society. The fact that the EU speaks with a single voice in some areas such as trade and within certain areas of foreign policy despite the diversity of its member states, who have all played very different roles in history (neutral states, colonial powers and former members of the Soviet Union) is unique and gives it increasing weight as an international actor.

The European Union started off as a careful international actor with a restricted role within the international society and a limited policy of spreading values to third countries. The emphasis was on the EU's relationship with some of the member states former colonies, the ACP states, under the Lomé agreements on development policy. The Communities development aid was to be non-political, free of neo-colonialism and superpower interference. It became clear that the EU's non political policy was unviable following the atrocities in Uganda in the late 70's and that the EU would lose credibility by providing aid to a state that systematically violated human rights. A change was therefore introduced, largely due to criticism from within the EU, with the inclusion of political conditionality within the third Lomé Convention of 1985 (Smith, 2003:111).

The real qualitative and quantitative change in the EU's role as an international actor came in the beginning of the 1990s and can be explained by two factors. Firstly, the link between democracy, good governance and development was clearly established by the World Bank in its groundbreaking report on Sub Sahara Africa in 1989. It concluded that economic decline in Africa was the result of 'the deteriorating quality of government' and that Africa 'needs not just less government but better government' (World Bank). The report marked an end to non political aid, making democracy and good governance a key factor in the allocation of aid, both for the member states and the Community. Secondly, the political climate within the international society changed after the end of the Cold War that made it possible to pursue a more proactive approach to the promotion

of human rights, democracy and good governance. The absence of political overtones of bipolar confrontation meant that Western governments no longer had to take strategic reasons into consideration when dealing with authoritarian governments in developing countries. Some of the former Eastern and Central European Countries who desired to be part of the community also approached the EU. Their memberships were conditioned on the fulfilment of certain criteria's such as human rights and democracy. This set a precedent for the Communities relation with third countries and it was decided that values could be promoted using economic and cooperation agreements (Smith, 2001:188).

The EU's role as an active norm spreader has developed rapidly under the second pillar, CFSP during the past twenty years. Its objectives has been to pursue the values of human rights, democracy and good governance through positive engagement with all states, and through multilateralism within international organisations while working for the strengthen of international law and human rights. The EU has developed a unique approach where it values dialogue, uses persuasion rather than coercion to reach its goals, and works towards addresses causes rather than conflicts. The ways in which the EU tries to promote these values in third countries can be grouped into three categories: through the application of positive and negative conditionality, the provision of aid for human rights, democracy and good governance programmes and the use of diplomatic instrument (Smith, 2002:110). It should also be seen as part of the unions own security strategy to create a more stable world order, as political instability in a country is a threat not only to that country but potentially to the region and the wider international society. The EU strongly believes in the democratic peace theory; democratic states do not go to war with one another (Youngs, 2001).

The EU's unique role as a supranational power operating with a distinct history and will to promote norms has caused a wide debate on what sort of a role the EU plays within the international society. Role theory, aims to establish what sort of actor the EU is; based on the widespread perception by other actors, as well as the EU's own conception of its role. In doing so it facilitates the determination of its foreign policy objective within the international society (Aggestam, 2006). Ian Manners (2002) argues that the EU represents a new form power, a normative power, because of its history, its clear normative basis and distinct approach to spreading values. The literature on the EU as a normative power has raised a widespread debate within the academic literature and gained both supporters and opponents.

The criticism of the EU's role as a norm spreader is that it is inconsistent and incoherent in the application and practice of its values in relation to third countries. This is particularly evident in regards to the use of sanctions. It is argued that the EU gives each individual state too much room and leverage in the negotiations on political conditionality, and that too many other considerations apart from the normative ones are taken into account, such as trade relations, security issues, political weight and colonial ties.

## 1.2 The Aim of the Study

The aim of this thesis is to test the literature on the EU's role as a normative power in relation to three case studies, China, Cuba and Zimbabwe. The cases have been chosen because they are all high profile cases when it comes to violations of human rights and all suffer from a democratic deficit, with respect to the fact that they are very geographically, politically and economically different to one another. Furthermore, the EU has different historical links and interests within the countries and they in return have different incentives and motivations to create a relationship with the EU. The one thing they have in common is the obvious disinterest to further strengthen these values. The EU's involvement in the area has been met with generally oppositions, and has only been tolerated due to the EU's economic and political weight. In order to examine what sort of inconsistencies there are, and if an explanation can be found for them, and indeed if they are incoherent with what can be expected of a normative power. The thesis will only analyse the EU's normative power in regards to third states, as there is no room for a discussion on the diffusion of norms to its applicant states, although it is arguably the case that the EU's strength as a norm spreader are strongest in this respect.

The thesis will argue that it is unrealistic to expect even a normative power to act completely consistent in regards to all third states and only to take considerations to its normative foreign policy objectives. All states are different and therefore need to be treated differently as there are different considerations to be taken into consideration in relation to each one. Furthermore, the spread of human rights, democracy and good governance is a difficult matter, as it challenges state sovereignty and territorial integrity. These are principles that have governed the international society since 1648, and therefore they cannot be overlooked in international politics. Opening up a dialogue on these issues should be regarded as a major achievement with respect to these principles. The EU is primarily an international organisation within the international society and it cannot be expected to disregard all other objectives than the normative when it conducts its foreign policy. The fact that the EU has opened up a dialogue and promoted these issues within all areas of foreign policy is remarkable. It needs to be credited for the distinctive approach that it has developed to spread norms and that it does so throughout its actions within the international society.

### 1.3 The Structure of the Thesis

The introductory chapter introduced the topic by examining the conceptual evolution of the EU's use of political conditionality towards third states. The second chapter starts by looking at the EU's role in the world, and why it is important to theories its actions. The normative power theory will be revised and evaluated by looking at different aspects and critiques of the argument; the EU's normative basis and the link to the UN system, its preference for positive engagement over more coercive means and the EU's self-interest in spreading norms. The third Chapter will test the argument made while examining three cases studies; Zimbabwe, Cuba and China. The case studies have been chosen to demonstrate that the EU has pursued the same normative objectives in respect to all cases but the outcomes are varying due to the structure of the different relationships and the interests involved. In an attempt to demonstrate that, specific interests will be considered on the basis that they shape the relationship and hence form the foundation for a constructive dialogue. The motivation of the recipient and the incentives by the donor further continues to shape the relationship throughout. The concluding chapter will revise the arguments made throughout the essay and analyse the theoretical part with the three case studies to reach a conclusion of the analysis.

## 2 Theoretical Frameworks

### 2.1 The EU's Role within the International System

‘The European Union is well placed to promote democracy and human rights... Uniquely amongst international actors, all fifteen-member states of the Union are democracies espousing the same Treaty-based principles in their internal and external policies. This gives the EU substantial political and moral weight’ (European Commission 2001:3).

The EU is proclaimed as a unique foreign policy actor, both by itself and other actors within the international society. Originating in its history as an organisation created to ensure peace and foster cooperation between its members based on the principles of human rights and democracy, which also has left a mark on how it conducts its relations within the international society. It therefore claims to be a new form of significant actor in the world, acting to promote values such as peace, human rights and sustainable development across the world through positive engagement.

The EU is the world's largest aid donor of both development and humanitarian assistance, accounting for 51 per cent of the global total in 2002 with the inclusion of member states aid programs, and is on its own the fifth largest donor in the world (Bretherton, 2006: 111). The members states can push for EU action on ethnical issues and through internal dialogue establish a common position for the EU. The fact that an EU position represents the positions of 27 member states and the institutions of the world's largest trading bloc also adds value: the ‘politics of scale’ increases the international influence of an ethical dimension (Smith. 2001, 185).

This portrayed uniqueness and the evolving nature of EU's foreign policy have attracted a wide range of academic literature, that debates and aims to determine what sort of power the EU is and what role it plays in international relations today. The importance of different role theories lies in the fact that when one determines a role one also identifies the actors responsibilities and obligations, and in doing so reveals the intention and motives of the foreign policy actor. Manners and Whitman suggests, that ‘the notion of an international identity for the EU is an attempt to think about how the EU is constituted, constructed, and represented internationally. The relationship with the EU and the rest of the world is therefore crucially determined by the nature of this international identity’ (Manners and



Whitman, 2003:383). It is not only the actors' own perception that is of importance but also other actors role conceptions, as an identity is not only a result of a 'self-image, but also an instrument in the process of constructing a political identity' (Lucarelli in Aggestam, 2006:27). Aggestam suggest that a role is created through the combination of what is expected of the actor, its own conception of its role in relations to its role performance and role set. All of these aspects need to be considered when discussing what role the EU plays within the international society.

## 2.2 Theoretical Discussions

### 2.2.2 Normative Power Argument

The theoretical discussions are widespread and largely dependent on how the EU's actions and motives are interpreted and emphasised by the authors. Paul Taylor places the EU with other international actors, such as the UN and individual states, because they share the same agenda of pursuing the 'the civil and political values of Western liberal states in other parts of the world'. The EU approach to spreading values represents that of a 'proactive cosmopolitanism', as it deliberately attempts to 'create a consensus about values and behaviour – a cosmopolitan community – among diverse communities' (Taylor 1999:540). The suggestion is that the EU's motivations for the promotion of human rights and democracy derives from a perceived responsibility to foster a liberal international system, but also as a way to ensure legitimacy, since its human rights policy would lose credibility if it ignored large scale human right violations in third countries. (Smith: 2006:158). All of this is true but the proactive cosmopolitan literature does not take any considerations of the way the EU is unique as an actor and how it has developed an original approach when it spreads norms.

Ian Manners considers these factors and distinguishes a unique role for the EU as a normative power within the international society. The basis for the claim lies in the EU being a new form of civilian power replacing the traditional military power. The distinguishing features of the EU as a civilian power is that it influences through the use of 'economic power to achieve national goals; the primacy of diplomatic co-operation to solve international problems; and the willingness to use legally-binding supranational instructions to achieve international progress' (Manners, 2002:236).

The central component of normative power Europe is that it is 'different to pre-existing political forms and that this difference pre-disposes it to act in a normative way' (Ibid:242). Its normative difference lies in its 'historical context, hybrid policy and political legal constitution' (Ibid:240). This has led to the

creation of a normative basis for the EU, which can be found in its series of declarations, treaties, policies and criteria and conditions of the last 50 years. One can identify the EU's frequent use of five core norms, supported by four 'minor norms' throughout the *acquis communautaire* and *acquis politique*: peace, liberty, democracy, rule of law, human rights, social solidarity, anti-discrimination, sustainable development and good governance (Manners 2002:242-3).

More important is the way that these norms are diffused by the EU in international relations. The EU has a clear focus on positive engagement through dialogue, which is demonstrated by its six factors of norm diffusion (contagion, informal diffusion, procedural diffusion, transference, overt diffusion and the cultural filter) (Ibid:244-5). The EU focus is addressing the causes and not the just the symptoms of a problem through engaging with an actor. The EU's history, political structure and the importance it places on cultural diffusion, leads Manners to conclude that the 'most important factor shaping the international role of the EU is not what it does or what it says, but what it is'(Ibid:252)

### 2.2.3 Normative Basis

It is not always easy to determine what is 'normative' and 'ethical' (Sjursen, 2006:170a) when spreading norms. A strong indicator would be a clear link and correlation with international law to legitimize the EU's promotion of norms (Sjursen, 2006:179b). An examination of where the EU's norms originate from leads to the finding that they are informed by the principles of the UN system.

The EU has already gone further to inform and condition its foreign policy on norms found in human rights treaties such as the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and the European convention on human rights than most other actors in world politics (Manners, 2002:241). The EU has itself proclaimed that 'the protection of fundamental rights is a founding principle and an indispensable prerequisite for her legitimacy' (President Conclusion cited in Manners, 2002:241). Furthermore, the primary goal of the CFSP is declared 'to safeguard the common values, fundamental interests, independence and integrity of the Union in conformity with the principles of the United Nations Charter' (Eriksen, 2006:263). Eriksen reasons that the frequent mentioning of the UN Charter within the Constitution and previous treaties underscores the Unions respects for higher-ranking principles (Eriksen, 2006:260). Moreover, the EU also uses the UN system as a way to pursue its policies. It has frequently drafted resolutions for the Commission of Human Rights (CHR) as a venue for addressing its concern for human rights abuses. Its action has in recent years become more and more correlated within CHR and it has presented more resolutions than any single member state (Smith, 2006b:121). The Presidency also makes several statements and explanations on behalf of the EU as well as more general statements on thematic human rights issues. (Smith, 2006c:157)

## 2.2.4 The Use of Negative and Positive Conditionality

One of the distinguishing features and one of Manners criteria for a normative power is the EU's preference for positive engagement over the use of more coercive means such as sanctions. This section will develop the argument behind the EU's motivation to use positive engagement, as it is key to gain an understanding of the EU's role as a norm spreader.

A comprehensive human rights policy must encompass both carrots and sticks. Both positive and negative conditionality can motivate an actor to improve its behaviour; the action taken largely depend on the donor's long-term strategy. Positive conditionality provides the recipient with a policy of incentives, which involves the promising of benefits on the accomplishment of the conditions. It can come in the form of the awarding of grants, loans, technical or financial aid, the increasing or establishment of commercial ties of diplomatic ties and international recognition.

Negative conditionality on the other hand means cutting off cooperation in certain or all areas through the imposition of different forms of economic and political sanctions. The EU's preference for dialogue also lies in its belief that some norms can not be imposed through coercion. There are several problems linked to the use of sanctions. Firstly, the break of in diplomatic relations also means that the actor loses influence over the recipient and thereby the means of holding a constructive dialogue. Secondly, practice shows that sanctions often punish the civilian population and not the real perpetrator i.e. the government. Thirdly, theory asserts that negative conditionality, instead of provoking the changes sought by the actor, may have a legitimising effect on the repressive government (Fierro, 2003:102)

Unease within the EU to applying negative conditionality is because it is regarded to isolate those states that most need aid and ties with the EU and generate instability (Smith, 2001:198). The use of sanctions is necessary sometimes when all other means have failed. Integration, dialogue and trade, not sanctions are the methods that should be used to promote human rights by the EU. For example, Article 8 of the Cotonou agreement states that dialogue should be flexible and #formal or informal according to need, and conducted within and outside of the institutional framework, in the appropriate format, and at the appropriate level including regional, sub-regional or national level' (Williams, 2004:45). It does not represent the most transparent and comprehensive structure, but it clearly recognises the importance of maintain contact on human rights issues within a political context. Furthermore, if sanctions are imposed they should avoid penalising the population: aid can be distributed through NGOs within the recipient country rather than its government, and humanitarian and emergency aid always continues (Smith, 2001:190).

The US policy community holds the firm belief that positive inducement are 'counterproductive and wrong when dealing with unsavoury states, and that attempts to reform bad governments via inducements will result in their pocketing

those rewards without meaningful behavioural change' (Nincic, 2006:322). The EU's reluctance to use negative measures has led it to be charged of appeasement and complicity, especially in cases when dealing with rough cases. Commissioner Chris Patten defends the EU's approach of positive engaging by emphasising 'that structured exchanges on the basis of the clause with third countries offer a more realistic way of realising the goals of the human right's clause than the application of rigid criteria for the suspension of parts of an agreement' (Patten in Bartels, 2005:39). Moreover, problems exist as to the sustainability of the speed of induced democratic reforms. The Commission communication has for example opted for the formula of 'democratic principles' (and not democracy) in order to highlight that the transition to democracy represents a dynamic process. The implication is recognition that foreigners cannot impose democracy and that each country should be engaged to choose and develop its own model (Commission, 1998). The sensitivity of promoting democracy lies in the fact that it is challenging the Westphalia principles of non-state interference into states domestic affairs. It is therefore very important for the EU to tread carefully not to lose the possibility to shape the transition through dialogue (Smith, 2001:198).

Richard Youngs further remarks that the EU's human rights policies exhibit a gradualist philosophy, deployed as a central element of controlled change of development countries. The link between promoting democratic principles and a stable world order are found in the democratic peace hypotheses. It believes in the democratic peace thesis that 'democratic states do not go to war with one another' (Björkdal, 2002:19). Democratisation has been suggested to both prevent and cure post conflict societies. The EU has developed approach to democratic assistance focused on preventing conflict by strengthening the civil and social structure of a country through a distinctive, bottom-up approach. Funding is directed towards support and largely channelled through NGO's taking away the more traditional focuses such as election monitoring (Youngs, 2001:362).

Dialogue is the EU's preferred method in all scenarios and is used as a form of conditionality in all areas of the EU's engagement with a country. This is eminently witnessed with regards to the incorporation of Art 8 on political dialogue within agreements with ACP states. It provides for a structured framework for such a dialogue to take place. It shapes the agreement of the condition of the relationship with the country and the EU, dialogue is condition as part of the relationship and is also the first measure taken in breach of an agreement. Constructive dialogue is henceforth for of conditionality that aims to shape and foster a relationship and steer it towards the right direction.

### 2.2.5 Incoherence and Inconsistency

One of the drawbacks in the EU's method of positive engagement and focus on dialogue is the EU's problem of developing consistent and coherent policy when each single agreement is created in dialogue with the recipient country. All agreements are henceforth different as there are different factors to take into

consideration in relation with different countries even though the underlying problems of human rights and democracy might be the same.

Coherence of the EU's external policy is one of the most important problems in normative terms, a fact that has been recognised both by academic commentators and by EU institutions (Lerch and Schweltnus, 2006:305), calling for a 'coherent and consistent approach' towards promoting human rights in non-member states (European Commission, 2001: 5). The debate on the effects of the inconsistency is varying. Vincent argues that inconsistency can be undermine the inclusion of human rights considerations in foreign policy, as human rights are particularly sensitive in finding among other foreign policy considerations because 'it is not on the substance and appearance of even-handedness that human rights policy depends' (Smith, 2001:198). Donnelly on the other hand believes that the problem of inconsistency is overstated: 'There needs to be no real inconsistency in treating similar violations differently... a blind demand that violations x produce response y is simplistic and silly.

Karen Smith notes that 'some violations in third countries are ignored, largely dependent on member states limited commitment not translated into a consistent and credible policy' (Smith, 2006,157). Indeed the Union's engagement with the countries and regions in the South has been described as a policy patchwork characterised by considerable variations in focus and intensity (Holland, 2002:1). These variations have arisen, not primarily from different circumstances and needs of the Union's 'development partners' but from a range of internal and external factors which has combined to construct the opportunity structure, and hence shape the direction, of EU development policy (Bretherton, 2006:110).

The debate over the inconsistency of the EU's policy is important as it leads to a questioning of if the EU is acting out of its own motives rather than through objections that are more normative. 'If the variations in the treatment of human rights violators are to be part of a consistent policy, human rights concerns need to be explicitly and coherently integrated into the broader framework of foreign policy'. (Smith, 198-199)

## 2.2.6 The EU's Self-Interest

'The notion that action can only be described as ethical if motives are absolute pure and untainted by self interests is bizarre, and unsupported by any plausible moral philosophy' (Brown, 2001: 23).

This thesis will argue that it is unrealistic to expect that a 'normative power' will act through pure altruistic reasons. The EU's flexibility in conditioning an agreement should be seen as strength and not as a weakness as its actions aim to safeguard dialogue with the recipient. Without a dialogue, no constructive change can be realized. The EU strongly believes in positive engagement and to create a successful dialogue it has to take consideration to all aspects of its relationship

with the recipient, their interest as well as its own. The EU cannot impose norms on any country, the only thing it can do is to try to shape it through a constructive dialogue. It is therefore necessary for the EU to take considerations to the historical, strategically and political, economical aspects as they form the basis for the relationship. The success of the dialogue is dependent on both parties, not only the EU, and the success is largely dependent on how willing and motivated the actor is to be influenced.

It is also necessary for the EU to safeguard its own interests, as it is the economic and political strength of the EU, that attracts an actor and provides an incentive to agree to conditionality. The EU is an actor within the international society whose role is largely based the political strength of its member states and its economic power. Its economic and political weight provides the largest incentive for countries to enter into dialogue with the EU on matters often considered being domestic affairs, and it is its strengths that give it leverage to continue dialogue throughout the relationship. The EU's action needs to be taken to safeguard and promote its interests and they are the reason for why the EU is influential. There is nothing wrong with EU having self-interest in a relationship as long as it does not clash with its normative objectives.

The Normative power argument and the proactive cosmopolitan literature are both very positive and include limited criticism of the EU's role within the international society. Furthermore, they do not present arguments for the way in which the EU can benefit from a comprehensive human rights and democracy promotion policy towards third states. Realist would point out that it can be used to promote the EU's self-interest, as it can be abused as a policy for the EU to hide behind when it really is pursuing its own self-interests. For example, violations of human rights could provide an excuse to cut off aid to strategically and commercially unimportant countries when aid budgets decreases. Or it provide an excuse for encouraging states to pursue the introduction of economic and good governance reforms to open up the country to Western investment.

Limited evidence can be found that supports the claim that the EU would promote human rights out of pure self-interests. The fact that the EU sometimes has self-interest when acting to promote values does not necessary rule out the normative dimension. The EU is promoting values of democracy and human rights both from a more normative and moral motivation but also because it is in its own interests as it is seen as a way to promote a more stable world order. Former Commission President Romano Prodi has himself exclaimed that the EU 'must aim to become a global civil power at the service of sustainable development. After all, only by ensuring sustainable global development can Europe guarantee its own strategic security' (Prodi in Manner, 2002:236). The fact that the EU benefits from the developments made hardly rules out the normative dimension of its achievement in spreading democratic principles within other states, as the success of its interest to create a stable world order neither contradict nor rule out the fulfilment of spreading democratic principles.

## 3 Case studies

### 3.1 Case Study of the EU's Engagement in Zimbabwe

‘In contrast to rewards, threats and punishments supply less information about what behaviour is desired, leads to a narrower range of performance (involving less innovation between the parties), lead often to the appearance of older, earlier learned, more primitive behaviour and lead to more dislike of each party by the other thus hindering the development of cooperation’ (Milburn,T. and Daniel, C. 1989:626).

The EU's relationship with Zimbabwe is heavily influenced by the latter's role as a former British colony. The relationship has been framed within the EU's development policy under the Lomé Conventions, to ensure development within the country through the distribution of aid and preferential trade access to the EU. It was in the UK's interest to uphold its political links with its former colonies even after its entry into the EC, partly due to a general feeling of responsibility for progress.

Zimbabwe was at the time of independence a country ruled by a rich white majority with strong ties to its former colonial power. The large division between the black and white populations led to the liberation wars of 1970's which aimed to overthrow white power and regain their colonised land. At the end of the war Robert Mugabe installed himself as a leader and effectively ended rule by proxy. This marked the beginning of Zimbabwe's gradual slide into a more and more autocratic rule as Mugabe continued to indiscriminately continue to address the problems of the uneven distribution of wealth within the country (Taylor and Williams, 2002:550).

The breaking point came with the redistributions of the Land Acquisition Act of 1992, which aimed to amend the problem that 4500 white farmers in a country owned 70 percent of prime agricultural land with a population of 13 millions. In the beginning, the process was both supported and partly funded by the British government. However, they withdrew their support as it soon became evident that the process was highly corrupted with the main beneficiaries being Mugabe and the ZANU-PF elite.

The land reform distorted Zimbabwe's economy to such extent that it went into free fall in 1997 and in 2000 was considered the world's fastest shrinking

economy. 70 per cent of the population was unemployed and all-economic sectors were in decline. By mid 2000 most of its international donors had suspended their aid programs due to political situation within the country (Ibid:549-50).

The political climate remains as one of fear and intimidation, where criticism of the government is made at the risk of ones life. Mugabe's government has protected and strengthen their power by systematically targeting the judiciary, independent and international Media, opposition activists, white Zimbabweans and anyone else who dare to criticise their political agenda (Ibid:551).

The UK had tried to affect the developments within Zimbabwe, through political dialogue without any effect. It therefore chose to introduce an arms embargo in 2000 and cut aid to Zimbabwe by one third in 2001. The same year she also turned towards the EU to pressure it to respond to the crisis and harden its approach towards Zimbabwe (Ibid:555). The EU responded in 2002 by invoking the consultation procedure under A 96 of the Cotonou agreement. It reached limited results as the EU was divided internally between the northern member states who pressed for sanctions and the southern preferred engagement (Smith, 2006a)

Sanctions became inevitable as the EU's electoral mission in Zimbabwe was compromised by the Zimbabwean government to the extent that it was no longer able to determine the status of the elections and was forced to go home. The EU consequently decided to suspend all financial aid, impose an arms embargo, ban the entry of twenty Zimbabwean officials to the territories of the EU, and freeze their financial assets on the grounds of Zimbabwe's violations to democracy. Through this use of what is called targeted sanctions, the EU aims to cause political disruption for the political leadership of the country without punishing the civilian populations (Smith, 2006a:161).

The sanctions did not compel Mugabe's regime to change the direction of its agenda. On the contrary, the sanctions may even have helped him to remain in power as he gained the widespread support of several developing countries. The failure of the sanctions lies in that they did not manage to isolate Mugabe politically, as he still had the support of the countries within the neighbouring region. The EU has tried to engage with actors within the region such as the Southern African Development Community, but has met opposition to its decision to imposition sanctions by some members, such as South Africa and Nigeria. Developing countries outside of Sub-Saharan Africa such as China, Cuba and Algeria have voiced the same criticism (Smith, 2006a:162). The EU has found it difficult to gain support from the African region, as their colonial history of oppression is still so fresh in their memory and any sort of involvement or questioning of their internal affairs is very sensitive and easily seen as a form of neo-colonialism.

Liberal values are not unknown to the African region. The African Union even included the promotion of human rights and democracy as one of its objectives in 2000. It is however very difficult to claim that the African countries share the same normative basis as the EU. The interpretation of what African states and the



EU regard to be democracy is sometimes in complete contradiction to one another. Tanzania's government did for example proclaim Mugabe to be 'a champion of democracy' and asserted that 'the people of Zimbabwe have spoken loudly and clearly (Taylor and Williams, 2002:562)' after the heavily rigged election in 2002.

Nigeria even actively worked against the EU's policy on Zimbabwe, by mobilising other opponents to vote down the EU's draft resolution on Zimbabwe to prevent it from accessing the UN Commission on Human Rights. The opposition managed to effectively block the draft resolution for a number of years. The EU consequently decided to drop it in 2005 as the draft resolution had very limited prospects of being adopted. The UK pressed the EU into action as it argued that it would a national one would have been counter productive by causing further friction in its relations with Zimbabwe (Smith, 2006b:162). A further example of the African countries dissatisfaction with the EU, is the indefinite postponing of the EU- African summit scheduled for 2003. The reason being, that several African member states refuse to attend if the EU does not wave its travel ban and allow Mugabe to attend. (Smith, 2006a: 162)

Mugabe has not perished under the international condemnation; on the contrary, he skilfully uses the foreign condemnation of his rule so effectively that especially the British government now rarely comments on Zimbabwe (*The Economist*, 2007). He lately expressed his apparent gratitude towards his people 'who resisted the enemy's repeated attempts to reverse our Independence'. He calls upon them to be strong and have faith in their supporter, as he is expecting further opposition as the 'evil forces have not given up on their designs and hence we should remain vigilant while also counting on the support we have so far received from our friends in the region and beyond' (Speech by Mugabe 2006).

The EU's support for its actions has come from the US and the Commonwealth. However, the Commonwealth is limited in its action, interfering into a states domestic politics is an even more sensitive issue because of its historical heritage of the British Empire as its' actions is more easily criticized to be acts of neo-colonialism. Despite this the Commonwealth took the decision to suspended Zimbabwe's membership after Mugabe's re-election, but Mayall argues that it does so with a risk of 'unravel even the modest progress towards democratisation of the Commonwealth since 1991' (Taylor and Williams, 2002:558).

The EU's sanctions have also been compromised internally. The EU is allowed to grant exemptions to the travel ban and has done so to allowing Mugabe to attend the World Food Summit in Rome 2002 and the Popes funeral in 2005. More remarkable is France decision to invite Mugabe to the Franco African Summit in 2003, and then pressure the rest of the EU member states into granting him a travel exemption by threatening to veto the continuation of sanctions. France decision to compromise the EU's stance was grounded on her fears that other African states would not attend if Mugabe was not allowed (Smith, 2006:162).

The sanctions against Zimbabwe were renewed in 2003 and the EU has since then continuously renewed them, but they have not been strengthened or extended into new areas. The EU's most recent action was to remind the international community that it sticks by its sanctions, by pointing out that it was inappropriate to appoint a Zimbabwean as the head to the Commission on Sustainable Development because he would not be able to travel to Europe for meetings because of an existing travel ban (*Spiegel Online*, 2007).

The EU's possibilities to act are rather limited within a country led by a political leader who is so disinterested and unaffected by both the positive and negative measures the EU has taken to create a dialogue and provoke a response. Especially, as Zimbabwe enjoys the active political support from its African neighbours. The question is if there is anything the EU can do. It has already moved away from its policy of promoting values through positive engagement by imposing target sanctions on Zimbabwe. In doing so, it has also lost its power to affect through a constructive dialogue. A constructive dialogue is key to the promotion of democracy. The recipient on the other hand faces a challenge to its internal integrity and the sensitivity in being urged to democratise resides in the fear that this could entail the overthrow of the own government. In the absence of dialogue, the EU can not impose democracy on Zimbabwe, as it in itself would be inherently undemocratic act and a contradiction, not to mention an impossible achievement in practice. A further extension of sanctions into other areas are unlikely to produce any positive result and run the risk of impoverishing the civil population more and further alienating the EU from Zimbabwe and the region. The only thing the EU is for the member states to adhere to the sanctions and hope that the future holds for a more approachable leadership in Zimbabwe.

## 3.2 Case Study of Cuba

The EU's relationship with Cuba is just as is the case with Zimbabwe influenced by its political ties with its former colonial master Spain, but also by Cuba's need to create mainly new economic ties after the loss of its Soviet ally at the end of the Cold War.

The Soviet Union was Cuba's closes ally since its bloody revolution in which Castro seized power of the government and Cuba was declared a socialist state in 1961. Cuba's relationship with the Soviet Union has shaped both its political and economic development and is largely modelled on the same principles, of single-party state and planned economy as the Soviet Union was founded on. Cuba today has a well developed educational and health system (that according to its own government is equivalent to Western ones).

The Soviet Union also provided Cuba with political and economic support. As an aid donor it guaranteed a market for its sugar produce and provided access to

cheap oil. The economic support from the USSR allowed Cuba to have an ambitious foreign policy supporting guerrillas in Latin America and Africa who were considered to fight for the socialistic cause.

In return, Cuba supported the Soviet Unions foreign policy, most notably by allowing it to place nuclear missiles on Cuban land directed towards the US in 1961. In doing so, it further distanced itself from the West. The US foreign policy had since held a strict trade embargo and enacted extraterritorial legislation against Cuba.

The end of the Cold war and the break-up of the USSR were challenging both politically and economically for Cuba. Cuba had to find new allies. It looked within the region and found Venezuela and Bolivia who have become new political and economic allies as they among other things supplies Cuba with oil and gas. The EU also attracted its attention having developed into a large economic power. It is unclear whether Cuba sought a relationship with the EU in light of this or whether the EU seized the opportunity to start a dialogue with Cuba (Fierro, 2003:180). The relaxation of the Cold War tensions was also significant, 'since it enabled the EU to pursue a more proactive role in the region (Latin America) seen as the preserve of US policy' (Bretherton and Vogel, 2006:128). The EU commenced relations with Cuba in 1993 (relations before that were restricted to indirect aid via the World Food Programme).

Spain, the EU member state who because of its colonial links with Cuba had the strongest political economical ties with Cuba, encouraged EU to clarify its position on Cuba. The result was the European Union Common Position on Cuba in 1996. The agreement recognises the democratic and human rights problems within Cuba, and chooses to address them through positive engagement; emphasising that the best way to encourage reform is through daily trade. Cuba has since the revolution been a totalitarian state, ruled by one (socialist) party who severely have limited their citizens political and civil rights. Cuba's treatment of its prisoners has especially raised concern, as they often are subject to allegedly, arbitrary imprisonment and unfair trials. However, Cuba is not completely alien to human rights, but it rejects the western emphasis on civil and political rights and share the belief with many eastern countries that economic and social rights are sufficient (US State Department, 2006). Referring the familiar critique, "what good is a vote if you have nothing to eat". A further problem is the economy that still today is based on socialist principle in organising a state controlled economy; all means of production are owned and controlled by the government, who also employs the majority of the labour force. The inefficiency of the economy has led to the creation of a wide spread black market in order for the population to obtain basic subsidiaries (US state report). The EU therefore consequently also calls for a reform of its economy.

The EU's agreement states that 'full co-operation with Cuba will depend upon improvements in human rights and political freedoms' (Council 1996). The relationship is not fixed as the agreement holds that it shall be revisited every six month and is conditioned on how 'Cuba continues to open up to the world' and in return the EU's 'relations with Cuba should reflect the transition process' (Ibid).

The EU's action differs from the more coercive approach of the US. Its embargo has not been successful and is criticised for having a negative effect on the enjoyment of the full range of human rights in Cuba (Amnesty International Report 2006). The EU has also actively worked against the US policy by strongly imposing and calling into question the legality of the US attempt to extend its sanctions extraterritorially, through the Helms-Burton Act at the world trade organisation. However, the EU's position on Cuba needs to be carefully measured within the framework of its relations with the US (Fierro, 2003:187).

The EU is hesitant in its relationship with Cuba. The most remarkable thing is that the EU has held back on letting Cuba negotiate for accession to the Cotonou agreement, which would give Cuba preferential trade access to the EU and provided it with a larger share of aid. Instead most member states have concluded bilateral trade agreements with Cuba. Cuba is notably the only country in Latin America who has not signed the agreement. The European Commission and the Cotonou countries have endorsed its application but the EU is hesitating to build relations with Cuba as long as it remains a one party system (Smith, 2006a:160) Its reasons led an angered Mr Castro to accuse the EU of interfering in Cuba's internal affairs, and join the American trade embargo (The Economist 2003). The EU was once again divided into a north-south division on what action to take, with northern member states opposing membership and southern in favour of inclusion. Spain as a country with strong economic ties would possibly benefit from Cuba's accession to the agreement. The division lies in disagreements about whether it is easier to influence outside the Cotonou agreement than within it. The benefits with Cotonou would be that it already contains a well developed framework on political conditionality on human rights conditioning political dialogue in Art 8 of the agreement on principle of democracy and good governance, and it might therefore be easier to exert influence than through bilateral negotiations.

The EU has over the years developed into an economic actor within Cuba reflected in the fact that in 2001, two thirds of Cuba's imports from developed countries came from the EU; almost 70 percent of its development aid came from Europe; and European direct investment accounted for more than 50 per cent of all direct investment. The EU has further called for reform of the Cuban economy to adhere to principles of a market economy.

In theory, this should give the EU a large advantage with Cuba. However, this has not been the case as the sensitivity of the EU-Cuba relationship has been demonstrated repeatedly. For example, Cuba froze its relations with the EU in 2000, after it had supported a Resolution by the Commission on Human Rights condemning the human rights situation within the country (The Economist 2003). The EU tried to reopen the dialogue during the next two years and finally succeeded in 2002. Just for the relationship to reach another breaking point the same year, following the events in March of 2003, when the Cuban government carried out a brutal crackdown on peaceful opposition, arresting and sentencing 75 human rights activists (prisoners of conscience; cf. Amnesty), independent journalists and opposition figures on various charges, including aiding a foreign

power and violating national security laws. The relationship was once again tainted and Cuba's application to the Cotonou agreement effectively suspended. Light diplomatic sanctions were also imposed to; 'limit the bilateral high level governmental activities, reduce the profile of member states' participation in cultural events [...] invite Cuban dissidents at national days celebrations' (Council of the European Union 2003). This also led the EU to commence an extensive re-evaluation of the Common Position of 1996. In response, Fidel Castro's government led demonstrations outside the embassies of Spain and Italy, accused by Cuba of instigating the measures, and suspended the agreement establishing the Spanish Cultural Centre in Havana. In August, Cuba wrote to the EU saying that it would no longer accept development aid from the EU or its member states, as a rejection of the conditionality of EU aid on human rights improvements. The EU deplored this decision. However, it reiterated its commitment to supplying aid to the Cuban people and continued to call for the US embargo to be lifted immediately (Amnesty International Report on Cuba, 2004).

The EU's sanctions were lifted in 2005 even though there were disagreements within the EU over whether this was the correct decision to take, as Cuba had made such limited progress (Smith, 2006:161). The EU's position today more or less remains the same as stated in the Common position of 1996 with the same emphasis on 'constructive engagement and a critical and comprehensive dialogue' (Council Conclusions 2006) with Cuba. It recognises that the human rights situation has further deteriorated especially in regards to political prisoners and calls for their release. The acts are condemned by the EU as they violate the principle of the UDHR and other human rights treaties that Cuba is party of and the EU further expresses concern for the 'rolled backed reforms leading to a tentative economic opening' (Ibid).

The need for EU's call for a democratic and human rights reform in Cuba is easily determined as legitimate after evaluation the political situation within the country. What might seem an equally necessary problem for the EU but may seem less legitimate is the need to address the state of the Cuban economy by calling for a reform of Cuba's socialist economy, by opening up the state governed economy to the principles of market economy. The links between human rights, democracy and the principle of a market economy are not self-evident. EU's policy is however, based on a firm conviction that human rights are better understood and better protected in societies in which goods, investments, individuals and ideas circulate freely (Commission, 1995). The union has a practice of linking human rights and democracy with economic reform. The link is found in its belief that structural adjustments is an important condition to restoring balance in crucial areas by creating an environment conducive of sustainable growth. (Manners Lucarelli, 2006:173), In doing so it runs the risk that the importance of human rights becomes bypassed by the assumption that development of a market economy and democracy will automatically lead to the fair respect of human rights. The link can be contested, as there is no legal basis for it within international law that calls for requesting respect for principles of

market economy. However, Fierro argues that since the EU is expecting a 'substantial change in the political situation to qualify its position, elements such as market economy can, at the end of the day, prevail over other elements such as human rights' (Fierro, 2003:106). As it in fact, would be easier to measure a passage to market economy rather than a drastic improvement of the protection of economic and social rights or fundamental freedoms.

The EU also has to take into consideration its role within the region to ensure its credibility towards all Latin American countries. EU's diplomatic relations with the rest of Latin America do not mention Cuba. Principles of democracy and human rights are shared values within the region, but all countries oppose the US embargo on Cuba. The US embargo has made the voicing of concern against Cuba a very tentative issue and countries within Latin America as well as the EU are careful in their criticism not be seen to resemble or endorse US policy (Smith, 2006:164). The EU has developed a distinctive approach towards Cuba with a clear emphasis on positive engagement through dialogue. It is not as easy to create a meaningful dialogue as it is once again faced with a political leader who so highly values the internal integrity of his country. However, Cuba has a strong economic incentive to foster economic relations with especially Spain and the rest of the EU. It seems unlikely that Cuba main reason to foster relations with the EU is that it is concerned about its democratic deficit and wishes to improve its human rights standards. The EU's weight as an economic actor within the international society is high especially since the US has cut off all its relations with Cuba. But as the history of the relationship has shown, Cuba is willing to break with the EU if it challenges its territorial integrity to much. The EU has therefore a difficult role to play in measuring to what extents it can introduce conditionality and still uphold a constructive dialogue. In light of this, EU's actions should be valued because it introduced a dialogue, and even though the progress has been limited, it remains the first step towards change in the right direction.

### 3.3 Case Study of China

China is, similar to the two previous cases, an undemocratic country, but the EU's approach to addressing its democratic deficit has by comparison been fundamentally different. The relationship with China reveals a more symmetrical conditionality than towards the previous cases (Fierro, 2003:191), and is far more complex due to the intricate nature of the actor. China is perceived to be an important actor in numerous areas within the international society; judged to be by far the most important emerging market, widely regarded to be the ominously rising strategic power within the post-cold war international system, and has been an important actor in the debates over gathering human rights norms (Youngs,

2001:166). Other foreign policy objectives are important, as the EU's concern is not only about the spread of values and norms towards China. Any action taken by the EU towards China therefore has to be carefully examined and evaluated and put into this context, as the EU is not only an important actor for China, but China is an important actor for the EU.

China is EU's most important economically, commercially, politically and strategic ally in Asia. The more prosperous and influential China becomes; the larger are the potentials for EU to benefit from it. The economic aspects of the relationship are colossal as the EU constitutes the world's largest market and China has emerged as the world's most populous and fastest growing economy. In 2005, the EU became China's biggest trading partner and China was the EU's second biggest trading partner. The economic relationship is not frictionless as it also represents the EU's largest trade deficit. Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy determined in 2003 that 'this is not yet of political concern' at least not in comparison to the US that suffers from an even larger deficit (Scott, 2007:28).

The political relationship was reformed after the return of Hong Kong in 1997 and Macao in 1999 to China, which removed their historical burdens and marked for a new political relationship with a growing convergence on international issues with a shared belief in multilateralism and the UN (Tang, 2005:313-4). Leaders at the EU China Summit of 2005 described it as 'a progressive deepening of the relationship, which is fast maturing into a comprehensive strategic partnership (Scott, 2007:25). The strategic partnership is important for the EU from a security perspective as it provides the EU with a constructive opportunity to influence the future development of China's role within the international society. The EP has stated that 'general approach aims to shape China into a fully integrated, responsible and predictable partner of the international community' (Scott, 2007:36). China is such an enormous power within the international society and it is therefore extremely important to keep it engaged within it. The price for the EU, as the next section will demonstrate might be a compromise of its values in favour of a dialogue.

The difficulty in affecting China on issues of human rights and democracy was demonstrated after the events of Tiananmen Square in 1989. The EU responded to the massacre by imposing a range of punitive measures, including an arms embargo, a reduction in economic co-operation, a cessation of military cooperation and a suspension of new aid programmes. Richard Youngs argues that 'if the Tiananmen massacre served to throw doubt on the optimistic presumption that economic change would engender incremental democratization, the imposition of sanctions provided a salutary lesson in the limits to European power' (Youngs, 2001:167). The main consequence of the sanctions was that it encouraged China to foster closer relationship with ASEAN neighbours, which caused strategic concerns in Europe. China did however make some minor changes to its human rights legislation which was enough of to justify EU to restore normal relations, with the exceptions of the arms embargo that remains in place today (Ibid).

The arms embargo remains a thorn in the side for China who has long argued for its removal. The EU has been reluctant to do so as it may be its best means to affect China to conform to human rights incentives. Further, the arms embargo is a human rights issue in itself as the lifting of the embargo would provide China with state of the art weapons system. This would be a considerable upgrade of its military capacity, which might provoke its conflict in Taiwan. The US is strongly opposed this as Taiwan's major guarantor of Taiwan since the 1950 and its main arms supplier. Furthermore, China has good relations with several "rogue states" such as North Korea, Iran and it has recently been found to provide Sudan with arms in return for oil and signed lucrative business deals with Robert Mugabe. The last thing the EU would want is to contribute indirectly to the development of these countries military capacities. However, the removal of the arms embargo would settle EU's huge trade deficit with China (Tang, 2005:319). The US and Japan have further expressed its concern as they argue that the lifting of an arms embargo would enhance the Chinese influence in East Asia.

The EU's relationship with China is very fragile when it comes to the discussion of human rights. The Chinese see any voiced criticism by the EU, as a serious challenge to their sovereignty and risks having a negative on their relationship. For example the Chinese response to the Parliaments awarding of the 'Sakarov Prize' in 1996 to a Chinese dissident, was seen as a 'brutal interference in China's internal affairs' and the EU was advised 'not to go too far along this road' as it not only harms Chinese-European relations but it consequently 'detrimental to European interests' (Fierro, 2003:199). The same message has been repeated in response to European Parliament resolutions on the human rights situation in China. Its criticism regarding Tibet led the Chinese Ambassador in Brussels to write that 'all matters relating to Tibet are entirely China's internal affairs in which no foreign government, organisation or individuals have the right to interfere. The European Parliament resolution on Tibet constitutes serious encroachment upon China's sovereignty and gross intervention in China's internal affairs'. The message concluded with a warning that the EP needs to act responsibly and not create obstacles as they can have a harmful effect on the Sino-EU relations (Fierro, 2003:200).

The difficulty of spreading norms towards China is increased as the EU lacks its usual mechanism of introducing political conditionality within its trade agreements. EU's relations with China commenced in 1975 and a genuine trade and co-operation agreement already in 1985 bound the actors to one another. The further dimension of complexity lies in the fact that the actors became legally bound towards one another before the EU had actively started to include democracy and human rights in its bilateral agreements. Subsequently, the EU lacks any provisions to suspend the agreement on the basis of violations of human rights and neither does it have any legal basis to impose human rights conditionality in the future (Fierro, 2003:191-2). Almost all agreements from the same era have been renewed and provisions of political conditionality have been incorporated with the exception of China, Canada and the Association of South-East Asian Nations. However, other parties such as Australia have halted the



renegotiations due to the inclusion of the human rights clause. The EU and Australia instead signed a less formal joint declaration (Smith 2001:197). It may be that the human rights issue has a paralysing effect for both parties as the renewal of the agreement seems to be postponed indefinitely. The EP is the only institution within the EU that has actively voiced wish for a new agreement.

The first Chinese- EU dialogue was set up in 1995 following a Chinese initiative. Fierro suggest that this was a way for China to avoid the inclusion of human rights conditionality in their trade agreement and further as a way to prevent the EU from tabling a resolution against China before the UN Commission on Human Rights. The following Council statements implies that this might be true, as ‘the result of the dialogue will be taken into account when the Union will decide what step to follow at the Commission of Human rights’ (Fierro, 2003:201).

The 1998 Communication on China sets five goals for the EU in its relations with China; engaging China further in the international society, supports its transition towards an open society based on the rule of law and human rights, integrating China in the world economy, making use of existing European resources and, finally, raising the EU’s profile in China. The goals were to be achieved through ‘constructive engagement and concrete co-operation programs aimed to develop the rule of law and civil society. The EU has since 1997 been involved in low-key human rights governance issues at grassroots level (Scott, 2007:28). The progresses of these measures were affirmed in the 2001 Communication on China by the Commission, without any further clarification on the extent of the progress. The conclusion of the document suggests that the EU is searching for a balance between its human rights concerns and commercial interests in China. The balance in the relationship might have been found in 2003 with the strategic partnership. The EU has since then become more secure in its relations with China which is demonstrated in a more demanding Strategy paper. The paper includes more criticism, than any of the previous ones; it calls for a dialogue that is more focuses and result oriented, with a higher quality of changes and more increased results.

The EU continues later in the documents by emphasising that ‘many of these steps are not only in EU’s interest’ (Commission 2006). They are strongly in China's interest and an integral part of China's progress towards balanced and sustainable growth and development and global leadership and responsibility. It will be interesting to see if this will mark the beginning of a more demanding relationship between China and EU, and further whether this will lead to the concluding of a new trade agreement that includes political conditionality.

The case of China demonstrates that the EU has increased possibilities to influence within a strong relationship. EU can and probably will never be able to force China to do anything. It has had to trade carefully to build a dialogue with China that over time has included more and more political conditionality. The EU can only aim to be involved in the shaping of a more democratic China. Mainly, as has been stated before, because democracy cannot be imposed. Moreover,

China is a very strong political and economic actor in the world and always has been and will continue to be so in the future. The EU needs to respect China's strength when creating a relationship to not discourage dialogue. The EU approach to engage China into the international community has been a way to foster its development into a predictable actor. The EU's possibilities to influence increases with the strengths of its relations with China, is demonstrated in the evolution of their strategic partnership.

## 4 Conclusion

The above discussion suggests that the fact that the EU has chosen to pursue its normative interests differently in regards to different countries should not be seen as a weakness but, on the contrary, as a strength. The Union's flexible approach has ensured the achievement of its main normative ambition, which is to create a constructive dialogue. Manners normative power theory suggest that what makes the EU a normative power is largely due to the EU's history, the highly developed political integration between the member states and their preference for positive engagement on a clear normative foundation.

The normative objectives have been called into question with regards to the Union's use of political conditionality in relations with third states. The EU's preferred method of positive engagement through constructive dialogues with recipient states of aid and trade agreements has, goes the criticism, resulted in an incoherent and inconsistent approach to addressing concerns of human rights and democracy. It is argued that the EU has given too much consideration to its own narrow interests and given the recipient states too much leverage in negotiations.

The aim of the thesis was to demonstrate the success and shape of the EU's policies are based on specific contexts identified by the EU while attempting to engage the recipient states. It is argued, that not the EU's action should inform the discussion of the normative dimension, but the process through which it engages with these actors. This argument has been tested with regards to the EU's relations in three cases: Zimbabwe, Cuba and China. The findings of each case study will first be revised to establish the basis for the overreaching conclusion of the essay.

The case of Zimbabwe demonstrates the difficulty in spreading norms through positive engagement if there is a lack of trust from the recipient party. Zimbabwe's democratic deficit originates in its colonial history that left an uneven distribution of wealth and power between the black and white populations. This also had an effect on the EU's relationship with Zimbabwe as it made the Zimbabwean Government extremely sensitive and sceptical to any outside interference in its domestic affairs. It was therefore foremost important to encourage dialogue. The use of sanctions is always controversial, but in this case

all other means of positive engagement were exhausted. The EU would have lost credibility if it had not imposed sanctions. The controversy and the sensitivity of interfering in former colonial states affairs were shown by the lack of support of these measures within Africa and a further bolstering of Mugabe's hold on power.

The Zimbabwean Government never showed any real interest in EU involvement. To help a country to develop democracy one needs to be highly involved in the internal process. This requires a high degree of trust within the relationship something that clearly was lacking from the start. The EU has chosen to uphold, but not expand nor strengthen the sanctions imposed against Zimbabwe. The reason being that it seems unlikely that new sanctions would succeed where the others have failed and would run the risk of further impoverish the population and cause increased friction between the EU and the rest of Africa. None of these actions would be in the interest of EU or the people in Zimbabwe whose problems they aim to address.

The EU's relationship with Cuba is less complicated as Cuba has economic incentives to wanting to foster relations with the EU. Hence the EU had greater leverage in negotiations with Cuba. The EU still had to tread carefully and gradually approach conditionality with Cuba, but the relationship had a foundation to foster further relations as both the parties wanted something from the other. The EU has aimed to foster economic and political development within Cuba, by developing civil and political rights and encourage the Cuban economy to transfer into a market economy. Using accession to the Cotonou agreement as a tool to condition the promotion of human rights and democracy within Cuba showed the EU's preference to use carrot rather than stick. The Union has had to act carefully to secure a dialogue with Cuba as it is also sensitive to outside interference in its domestic affairs.

China is a completely different case to the cases of Cuba and Zimbabwe, not because of the problems the EU wishes to address, but because it is trying to affect an actor of equal, rising strength and strategic power. The emerging relationship is therefore amongst equals. China is not dependent on EU's aid but it wants to foster trade relations to the benefit of both. No one can tell China what to do, especially not in its domestic politics, the only thing the EU can aim to achieve is the influence Chinas development to that of a predictable actor within the international society. It would be unrealistic for the EU to disregard its political and economic interest in China for all its normative objectives. It is far easier to do so in regards to Zimbabwe and Cuba because it would not considerably weaken its strength. China is a great power in the world and it expects to be treated as one.

The EU needs to foster its political and economical interest because they are what make it able to influence and impose political conditionality in the first place. This is also reflected in numerous project addressed to strengthen the civil society without provoking the government. Dialogue is the way forward in regards to China, maybe not because it always is the most effective measure, but because the consequences of the absence of one are unthinkable.

The outcomes of the case studies show incoherent results but the EU has been consistent in its approach to use positive engagement until it has proved unviable. The use of sanctions has only been used when all other means has failed, as the case of Zimbabwe illustrates. Furthermore, findings of the case studies support the argument that it is necessary for the EU to take consideration of both its own interest and the interest of the recipient party in the formation of a constructive relationship. It is unrealistic for the EU to pursue an absolutely coherent and consistent policy when promoting human rights and democracy, as it would not only require the EU to disregard all of its own interests but it would require the same of the other party.

The EU is the world largest aid donor, represents the world's largest trade market while imposing large political when it acts within the international society. It is these three aspects of the EU's role that represents the main incentive for countries to foster close relations with the EU. The EU has pursued its policies through positive engagement with a country, with a particular focus on creating a constructive dialogue with the recipient party. Each agreement has as a result been different as the EU has different political, commercial, historical, colonial and economical links to the party that forms the basis for the relationship. Furthermore each party has in return different motivations and is offered different incentives by the EU. The founding principle of the EU's relationship with a party is extremely important as it provides the foundation for the future partnership.

The EU may be a post-modern power but it is operating within a world order largely governed by the principle of westphalian sovereignty. The EU's gradualist approach to strategically calculate how far it can go is clever. It often uses a method of imposing conditionality progressive to the extent that it will lead to maximum results but not deter further cooperation. The more incentives an actor has to cooperate with the EU the more approachable it will be to political conditionality. The EU needs to act to ensure the continuation of a dialogue. Dialogue is a form of negotiation through which parties share vital information with one another, which would otherwise be unavailable. The stronger a relationship is the more leverage the EU has in negotiations. As the actors have developed a co-dependency as their economic and political interests have merged.

Contrary then, to the criticism presented in the literature, the EU has been consistent in its action to include human rights and democracy in regards to different sort of state. Furthermore it has showed that it wishes to cooperate with the UN and uses their charter and treaties as its normative basis throughout the case studies. It has been consistent in its attempts to further its concerns to the UN Commission of Human Rights. This connection to the UN further legitimises the EU's action and gives it a clear normative basis.

The EU is an actor with a clear normative dimension, but its actions need to be pursued in respect of its broader interests. This should not be considered to lessen the EU's normative role.

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