

Normative Power Europe – Nonsense?

A Role Theoretical Approach to EU-Africa Relations

Abstract

The European Union is often characterised as a normative power; an actor that is driven by values and principles such as democracy, liberty, peace and the rule of law. This thesis investigates whether the European Union perceives itself as such through a qualitative case study of how the EU perceives its role in Africa. It utilises role theory – in the form of a typology of national role conceptions – and aims to challenge the conception of the European Union as a normative power by textual analysis of EU-documents that guide the common foreign- and security policy as well as conclusions from the Council of the European Union. It finds that characterising the European Union as a normative power in Africa is not nonsense, but that the union also perceives itself as a diplomatic power as well as a military power to some extent in Africa.

Key words: EU, EU-Africa relations, role theory, EU role conceptions, normative power

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1. Introduction

1.1. Introduction and Motivation

When the inter-regional relationship between the European Union (EU) and Africa was initiated with a summit between the two sides in Cairo in April 2000, colonel Muammar al-Qaddafi of Libya confronted EU-leaders: ‘stop looking at us like slaves...we need water pumps, not democracy’ (Sherriff & Kotsopoulos, 2014: 306).

A lot has happened in the past two decades since al-Qaddafi’s statement. As Sherriff & Kotsopoulos (ibid) put it, ‘the European tone would shift from one based on an image of Africa as a charity case to one of Africa as an opportunity’. Ursula von der Leyen’s commission, in office since 2019, has stated a strategic partnership with Africa as a priority for the EU, symbolically demonstrated by the president’s first foreign trip being to meet her counterpart, Moussa Faki, at the African Union Commission (Sherriff, 2021: 116-130).

In academic contexts, the EU is often presented as a *normative power*, leading scholars to invent the term ‘Normative Power Europe’ (NPE) (Manners, 2002). Normative power is a concept that refers to an actor that influences the reasoning of other actors in the international system rather than using coercive means (Bengtsson & Elgström, 2012: 95). It can also be explained as an actor that is driven by values and principles (Crawford, 2013: 132). In the case of the European Union this has been expressed through promoting and projecting norms relating to liberty, democracy, peace and the rule of law, as well as regionalism (Manners, 2002: 242; Farrell, 2013: 102). In other words, and to resonate with al-Qaddafi’s comment, it is an actor that prioritises democracy over water pumps.

The concept of normative power is closely related to the notion of soft power (Bengtsson & Elgström, 2012: 95). Nevertheless, the European Union currently has ten ongoing military or civilian operations in Africa (EEAS, 2021). This could potentially undermine the aforementioned conception of the European Union as, primarily, a soft power. With that said, it is stated in the European Union Global Strategy (2016: 4) that ‘for Europe, soft and hard power go hand in hand’. The first aim of this paper is to explore whether the European Union increasingly perceives itself as a hard power – or *military power* – in Africa.

What is more, ‘the EU does not, [as a normative power], subscribe to the logic of spheres of influence, adopted by “hard” powers such as the US and

Russia' (Delcour & Wolczuk, 2021: 160). Yet, it seems to be the case that the EU is adapting geopolitically to a new reality in Africa in which Russia's and China's influence is growing (Holden & Warren, 2015: 50). The second aim of this paper is to analyse the EU as a geopolitical actor – or *diplomatic power* – in Africa.

Bachmann & Müller (2015: 3) notes that 'the Union's collective international agency on economic issues is hardly questioned; it is widely seen as a key actor in global economic issues'. Africa has, along these lines, often focused on issues related to economics like aid, trade opportunities and debt relief in their interactions with European representatives (Carbone, 2013: 6). The third aim of this paper is to examine the EU's role as an *economic power* in Africa.

Mark Eyskens, a former Belgian Foreign Minister, depicted the EU during the 1990s as an 'economic giant, political dwarf, and a military worm' (ECFR, 2018). Contemporary scholars, meanwhile, repeatedly characterise the EU as a normative power. The stated 'strategic partnership' with Africa together with increasing militarisation on the continent, increasing influence of other actors and the EU's reputation on economic issues gives us reason to challenge these conceptions. Hence, the fourth, final and fundamental aim of this paper is to *challenge the conception of the EU as a normative power* by exploring what kind of power the EU perceives itself as in Africa; this will be considered through the use of the concept of *roles* (see 1.2. and 3.).

1.2. Research Question

In 1.1. it was established that the *perception* of the European Union's *role* in Africa is the fundamental object of interest for this paper. With that said, some definitions, clarifications and conceptualisations are in order.

Firstly, *roles*, within the context of role theory, refer to expectations, attitudes and beliefs that individuals bring to their interactions with others (Harnisch, Frank & Maull, 2011: 1). Depending on the relations between the individuals and the context in which these interactions take place, the roles may vary (ibid). In this study, which examines the perception of the EU's *role* in Africa, this means that the EU's expectations, attitudes and beliefs of itself in Africa are under investigation. A further elaboration on how this concept, initially developed by sociologists, is applied in international relations and also in this paper will be found in section 3.

Secondly, with the EU and Africa consisting of 27 and 54 member states and countries respectively, there is a myriad of possible role perceptions for the EU. This paper does not consider the perceptions of individual member states, but rather, targets the EU exclusively in the analysis. Söderbaum (2013: 27) notes that 'any inquiry of [the] EU's role in Africa depends on our conceptualisation and theorisation of the EU as an actor and as 'one''. Thus, this paper assumes that the

EU is a consistent and uniform actor – and is therefore seen as ‘one’. The same might be said of Africa; the EU has sub-regional specific policies for the Horn of Africa, Gulf of Guinea and so forth, but also stresses that ‘in different regions...in the Mediterranean, Middle East and Africa...both north and south...the EU will be driven by specific goals’ (EUGS, 2016: 10). With this in mind, the EU’s role in Africa as a whole will be analysed. In turn, this can be interpreted as an investigation of the inter-regional relations between the European Union and Africa.

This boils down to the specific research question that this paper will inquire: *How does the European Union perceive its role in Africa?*

1.3. Scope and Delimitations

This section will spell out the delimitations of this paper concerning time frame and rhetoric-reality gap. Further delimitations on theory and operationalisation will be addressed subsequently (in 3 and 5.3. respectively).

This paper will use EU documents from the incumbent and previous EU commissions; that is from the Juncker Commission (2014-2019) and the von der Leyen Commission (2019-). This time frame, 2014- , has been set to limit the scope of the paper. Besides, each of these commissions produced a strategic document for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) which are to be considered as relevant for understanding the EU’s role in Africa.

According to Crawford (2013: 156), there is a ‘chasm between policy rhetoric and the reality of implementation, with the EU’s self-presentation of itself as a normative actor in international affairs not substantiated in practice’, normally referred to as the rhetoric-reality gap. This paper will remain on the rhetoric side of the gap in the analysis of the EU’s perception of its role in Africa, not covering the practical implementation of policies, since it investigates how the EU *perceives* itself rather than *how* it cooperates. With that said, it is important to recognise that ‘declarations of dialogue and cooperation do not necessarily mean that there is substantive cooperation’ (Rein, 2015: 562).

1.4. Structure of Paper

In the introduction, the topic was introduced by challenging and disputing the routine conceptualisation of the EU as a normative power, the ensuing fundamental aim of this paper being to explore what kind of power the EU perceives itself as in Africa. This subsequently led into the research question: How does the European Union perceive its role in Africa?

In the next section, a brief historical background to EU-Africa relations is given. Thereafter, in the theoretical section, role theory is introduced before previous literature is reviewed, followed by a methodological account. In the methods section, research design, validity and reliability as well as operationalisation will be discussed. In short, the operationalisation of roles consists of a typology of national role conceptions inspired by Kal J. Holsti (1970); these are the possible roles that the EU can assume in the analysis, and in other words, the potential answers to the aforementioned research question.

An empirical analysis follows, in which there are three parts: a critical literature review, an analysis of CFSP-frameworks and lastly an analysis of conclusions from the Council of the European Union. In the first, role theory is applied to literature on EU-Africa relations, while in the two latter, I analyse the content of EU-documents and interpret how they perceive their role (from the typology of roles given in 5.3.) in Africa. Finally, an analysis of the results together with a discussion of methodological shortcomings will conclude this paper.

2. Background

Signed in 1957, the Treaty of Rome which established the European Economic Community, precursor to the EU, included explicit passages on the mutual strategy towards some African countries, mostly prior colonies (Tallberg, 2021: 22; Tristl & Bachmann, 2015: 83). This appears to be the earliest collective policy-oriented approach to Africa from Europe. Over four decades later, in 2000, the inter-regional relationship between the EU and Africa, formally termed The Africa-EU Partnership, was initiated at the first summit between the two sides in Cairo (Sherriff & Kotsopoulos, 2014: 306). Until then the relationship had been limited to aid and trade and was structured around the Lomé Convention, and its successor the Cotonou Agreement (ibid: 305).

In 2007, at the second summit between the EU and Africa in Lisbon, the Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES) was decided upon, marking the start of a new era of inter-regional relations (Tristl & Bachmann, 2015: 86). The JAES was a substantial *political* framework determining long-term policy between the two regions, in contrast to the *economic* nature of the Cotonou Agreement (ibid: 83). These two frameworks were, however, meant to complement, rather than compete with, each other.

Today, in 2022, the Africa-EU Partnership – the African Union (AU) being the most important actor on the African side – is still guided by the JAES, with the practical format being EU-AU summits of heads of states, ministerial meetings, Commission-to-Commission meetings and inter-parliamentary meetings (European Commission, 2022). In February 2022, during the sixth EU-AU summit in Brussels, a ‘joint vision for a renewed partnership’ was agreed upon, involving an investment package, provision of vaccine doses, enhanced peace and security cooperation and a commitment to multilateralism (European Council, 2022).

3. Theoretical Section

This paper utilises *role theory* in the analysis of the inter-regional relations between the European Union and Africa. As outlined above (in 1.2.), roles refer to expectations, attitudes and beliefs that individuals bring to their interactions with others; this concept is, in the discipline of international relations, applied to states, or in this case, regional organisations in order to *explain* foreign policy behaviour with reference to one role, or alternatively to a set of roles. Roles will be operationalised in 5.3. In short, a typology of *national role conceptions*, modelled on Holsti (1970), will be accounted for.

The *role perception* of an actor, A, refers to actor A:s conception of its own position and appropriate behaviour in relation to others, for example actor B, and also actor B:s expectations with regard to the role of actor A (Harnisch, 2011: 8). A role conception therefore includes two intertwined elements. In this paper, however, Africa's role expectations with regard to the EU are not analysed due to the scope of the paper. Hence, only the first part of role perception – the EU's perception of itself – is investigated.

In role theory, a distinction is made between meta roles and context-specific roles. The former refers to the generalised role of the actor, whereas the latter refers to expectations of behaviour within a certain policy area or geographical region (Bengtsson & Elgström, 2011: 114). This paper examines the *context-specific* role of the European Union, the policy area being inter-regionalism and the geographical region Africa.

Holsti (1970: 277) notes that 'policymakers of most states conceive of their state in terms of multiple sets of relationships and multiple roles and/or functions', justifying an assumption of a possibility for the EU to have more than one role conception in this thesis. In addition, it is presumed that these, in the case of multiple role conceptions, can be ordered insofar that some occur more than others.

4. Literature Review

This section will review the current literature on the European Union's role in Africa. The paper places itself within the established subfield of 'EU-Africa relations' which, in turn, belongs to the field of 'EU Foreign Policy' (Haastrup, 2020). An account will therefore be given of previous literature on this topic. This paper utilises role theory and consequently also places itself within the field of 'EU role conceptions'. Previous studies within this field with a focus on Africa will also be cited. The difference between these is that the former investigates the EU's role 'from the outside', whereas the latter reviews the EU's own conception of its own role. This literature review is purely descriptive as opposed to the critical literature review (found in 6.1.) which is interpretative and has theory – in the form of operationalised roles – applied to it.

Former colonial links resulting in bilateral ties have persisted in impacting Africa-EU relations (Bachmann & Müller, 2015: 5). In spite of this, the EU has consistently claimed a leadership role in the region (Holden & Warren, 2015: 50). This leadership role has, more accurately, been characterised as the EU being a *normative power* in Africa (ibid). In practice, this is expressed, for instance, through efforts to ensure peace and security, democratisation, liberalisation and promotion of regionalism (Carbone, 2013: 3-9; Staeger, 2016: 981).

The role of the EU as solely a normative power in Africa has, notwithstanding, been challenged by scholars. Björkdahl (2011: 103-113), for example, notes that the EU's peace-keeping operations in Africa show that the union's foreign policy is not limited to soft power methods like normative power, while claiming that this demonstrates its intentions to wield *military power* on the continent. In addition, Martin (2011: 191) points out that 'normative behaviour [by the European Union] co-exists with instrumental rationality, including strategic geopolitics...'. In other words, the EU has blended the exertion of normative power with seeking to gain political influence and develop its own structural power in Africa (Carbone, 2013: 9; Holden & Warren, 2015: 50). As demonstrated, others have challenged NPE; my contribution is to do the same but focusing on the EU's self-perception.

The EU's role conception as an international actor has been extensively researched. Context-specific approaches towards certain regions such as the Caucasus (see Delcour & Wolczuk, 2018) and Eastern Europe (see Chaban & Headley, 2018) have been investigated. However, in terms of the European Union's role conception in Africa – that is, applications of role theory in the field

of EU-Africa relations – literature is limited; it has exclusively focused on African perceptions of the EU’s role (see Chaban et al, 2013) rather than vice versa.

In a case study of the EU’s role conception, however, Bengtsson & Elgström (2012) included ACP-countries (Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific), noting that the EU, in its relations with these, perceived itself as a partner for development and a promoter of norms, both of which are consistent with the role of *normative power*. Furthermore, the EU’s own role conception was also described as a ‘champion of global free trade’ and a ‘promoter of regional integration’ (ibid: 103).

In sum, the EU is, by scholars, seen as a normative power in Africa, which is further corroborated by Bengtsson & Elgström’s (2012) research on the EU’s conception of its own role. The aforementioned work was published ten years ago; my aim is to contribute with a contemporary investigation. Moreover, the absence of context-specific approaches to Africa as a region further motivates this paper. To this end, this paper will provide a novel insight into what we already know.

5. Methodology

5.1. Research Design

This thesis aims to explore what kind of power the EU perceives itself as in Africa, through the use of roles. Formally, the research design of this thesis is a *qualitative case study*. This is an appropriate research design since ‘one of the primary virtues of the case study method is the depth of analysis that it offers’ (Gerring, 2011). However, this may come at the cost of breadth, with the case study occasionally identified as non-generalisable (ibid). Although this paper is purely qualitative, the results will be quantified (in 6.4.) so as to highlight which roles occur most frequently in the empirical analysis.

Africa was chosen as a case (of a region in which the EU is a foreign policy actor) due to the Union having strategically prioritised the continent (see 1.1.). An equally significant aspect is the increasing influence of Russia and China in Africa, making it an interesting region in which to analyse the EU’s role. It should therefore be considered a heavy – or *crucial* – case (see Teorell & Svensson, 2007: 222). Referring to the preceding statement concerning generalisability, it should be noted that Africa may not be a generalisable case, and the EU’s role perception might vary across contexts and regions.

The paper is *explanatory* insofar that it utilises role theory in order to explain the EU’s role perception in Africa with reference to one or a set of roles. Explanations are, however, not possible without descriptions (Teorell & Svensson, 2007: 23). This paper is therefore also *descriptive* given that it describes the EU’s Africa policy. The requirements for an explanatory case study to use generally comparable variable values as well as to relate to theory will be satisfied by the use of a role theoretical typology (see 5.3.) (Teorell & Svensson, 2007: 236).

What is more, this thesis is *theory-consuming*, meaning that the case, rather than theory, is of utmost concern to the paper; the task being to use existing theories in order to explain the case (Esaiasson et al, 2017: 42). However, the operationalisation consists of a typology of roles inspired by Holsti (1970), though with *modifications and additions*. These roles are then subsumed under broader conceptions of power (eg. normative power); this has not been done before. With that said, this paper also has *theory-developing* elements (Esaiasson et al, 2017: 43).

5.2. Methods and Material

This paper utilises textual analysis, a form of content analysis, as its methodological approach. Processing the essential content through careful reading of a text are the underlying systematics of this method (Esaiasson et al, 2017: 211). Rather than focusing on causal ‘why-questions’, textual analysis is used to interpret ‘how-questions’, for instance about what ideas prevail in a particular context, making it a satisfactory form of method for this thesis (ibid: 212).

Material used for this thesis consists primarily of primary sources in the form of EU-documents such as the European Union Global Strategy, Strategic Compass as well as two conclusions from the Council of the European Union. These have been selected in view of the fact that they guide the EU’s CFSP and ‘express political positions’ respectively (EUGS, 2016: 4; Council of the European Union, 2020a). Conversely, official statements from the president or protocols from summits could, for instance, have been chosen. The former, however, seem to express mere formalities instead of guiding policy, while the two latter are bilateral documents rather than being composed exclusively by the EU. This paper also uses secondary sources in the form of previous literature on EU-Africa relations in order to be able to corroborate the findings from the primary sources.

In practice, I will interpret the phenomenon under investigation in the material (EU-documents) from a classification scheme (typology of roles) (Teorell & Svensson, 2007: 24). This classification scheme will include variable values (eg. regional protector) that the variable (EU’s role perception) can assume.

5.3. Operationalisation

In this section, operational indicators are assigned to the theoretical definition of roles (see 3.). In short, this involves defining the measurement of *roles* by giving an account of how I intend to assign values to the variable (Esaiasson et al, 2017: 55). In other words, roles are *operationalised*.

Chaban et al (2013: 434), in their study of external perceptions of the European Union, posed the question to a number of respondents whether they perceived the EU as a military, economic, diplomatic and/or normative power. These will be used as the *primary roles* of this study in order to conceive, in broader – and more colloquial – terms, what kind of power the EU perceives itself as.

Labelling the EU as a normative power, for example, might indicate, but not exhaust, a description of its role in Africa. I will therefore – essentially to have a more delicate tool of analysis – also use secondary roles, or *sub-roles*, linked to these primary roles. Formally, these sub-roles are the variable values that can be assigned to the variable ‘EU:s role conception’ in the analysis. To be clear, these sub-roles are not normally linked to primary roles; I have created this overarching typology to distinguish between different types of primary roles as well as to demonstrate nuances within these.

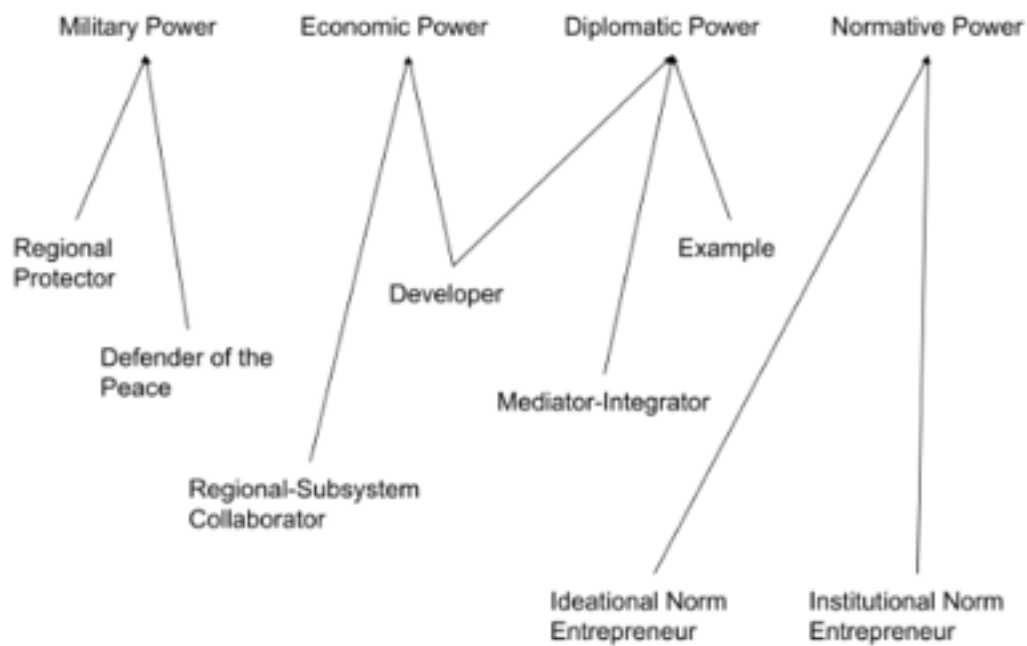


Figure 1: Links between primary roles and sub-roles

5.3.1. Primary Roles

In this section, the primary roles will be briefly addressed. These are, as mentioned, not variable values in the empirical analysis, but rather categories in which the sub-roles can be arranged in order to conceive, in more general terms, what kind of power the EU perceives itself as. Elaborate in-depth conceptualisations of power is, however, beyond the scope of this paper. Yet, it should be mentioned that normative power, for example, refers to an *agenda* whereas military power refers to a *tool of statecraft* (Bengtsson & Elgström, 2012: 95). The same might be said of diplomatic power and economic power respectively. Despite the fact that these primary roles seemingly relate to different aspects – or levels – of power, they will be used on equal terms in the analysis to determine the primary nature of the EU’s role conception.

a) Military Power

Military power is related to military capabilities and intentions. As mentioned, it refers to a tool of statecraft rather than a comprehensive agenda (Bengtsson & Elgström, 2012: 95). It should be noted that military power is not necessarily aggressive in nature; it can also be used for humanitarian and civic activities such as peacekeeping (Ramadani, 2015: 52). In this paper, it will be used to describe the EU's readiness to use this tool of statecraft.

b) Economic Power

The EU has been identified as an economic power with reference to 'the single market's large population, prosperity, advanced economies, large trade volumes, single currency and economic unity' (Chaban et al, 2013: 443). It is worth bearing in mind that economic power can be considered as 'hard power' – for instance in the form of aid conditionality (Ramadani, 2015: 52). Here, it will be used when the EU expresses its economic might by emphasising phenomena such as trade or aid, corresponding to the EU's ability and potential to assist through economic means.

c) Diplomatic Power

Diplomacy is a political activity to a greater degree than an economic activity; its intent being to secure foreign policy objectives without using force or propaganda (Berridge, 2022: 27). In this paper diplomatic power is understood as such, with the addition that it is more active, internationally oriented and geopolitically strategic than normative power. Additionally, I consider it a both as a tool of statecraft (eg. mediation) and an agenda (eg. geopolitical strategy).

d) Normative Power

Normative power was conceptualised previously (in 1.1.). Reiteratively, it is a concept that refers to an actor that is driven by values and principles, in the EU's case, liberty, democracy, peace and the rule of law (Crawford, 2013: 132; Manners, 2002: 242). In this paper, it will be used to describe when the EU expresses itself in terms of, or according to, this concept.

5.3.2. Sub-roles

Inspired by the typology of national role conceptions assembled by Kal J. Holsti (1970), I have identified six of these which will be used as sub-roles in this paper. However, altogether Holsti's typology includes more than 17 roles. Many of these, such as 'liberation supporter' and 'Bastion of Revolution-Liberator', will not be used in this paper for two reasons. First, the ones mentioned are examples of roles which concern concepts such as revolution that I consider irrelevant to this paper. The scope of this paper thus demands that some possible roles are prioritised above others. Second, the aforementioned typology can be considered out-dated having been created in the context of the cold war. Thus, the roles used

will not only be adjusted, but also complemented by two role conceptions created for this paper in order to accommodate the relatively contemporary concept of normative power.

First, though, I want to underline that there is some overlap between the roles. For example, the roles mediator-integrator, regional protector and Defender of the Peace all have a link to security policy. The difference between these roles will be discussed. Also, the primary role under which the sub-roles have been subsumed will be disclosed.

a) Regional Protector

This national role conception ‘implies special leadership responsibilities on a regional or issue-area basis, [and] places emphasis on the function of providing protection for adjacent regions’ (Holsti, 1970: 262). In substance, this role differs from mediator-integrator in being a more active form of foreign policy (ibid: 260). In addition, it emphasises *protection* rather than mediation which, in turn, relates more to military power than diplomatic power. In sum, this role will be used when the EU indicates willingness to provide military protection in Africa, and is consequently subsumed under *military power*.

b) Defender of the Peace

This role is assumed when governments ‘seem to indicate a universal commitment to defend against any aggression or threat to peace, no matter what the locale’ (Holsti, 1970: 272). It differs from regional protector in being a less active form of foreign policy, but also in indicating a *universal commitment* rather than a *regional focus*. It diverges from mediator-integrator also in being a less active form of foreign policy, but at the same time seems to be more related to military power than diplomatic power. In this paper, it will be used as quoted above – and subsumed under *military power*.

c) Regional-Subsystem Collaborator

This role refers to when governments ‘indicate...far-reaching commitments to cooperative efforts with other states to build wider communities, or to cross-cutting subsystems...’ (Holsti, 1970: 265). This role has been used to explain Japan’s perceived duty to strengthen economic cooperation in Asia. In this paper, it will be used in a similar way; it is used to ascribe the potential role of strengthening economic cooperation through *trade*, a cross-cutting subsystem. It is therefore incorporated in the concept of *economic power*.

d) Developer

This national role conception ‘indicates a special duty or obligation to assist underdeveloped countries’ (Holsti, 1970: 266). In this paper, it will be used to refer to a perceived duty to assist through financial aid. It is subsumed under *economic power* due to its economic nature, but is moreover arranged under *diplomatic power* for the purpose of highlighting that this sub-role also appeals to

the EU's 'carrot-and-stick way: we'll give you aid if you do this and this' (Chaban et al, 2013: 444).

e) Example

Holsti (1970: 268) explains that 'this national role conception emphasises the importance of promoting prestige and gaining influence in the international system by pursuing certain domestic policies'. It has been used to describe passive foreign policy, eg. the Philippines' believing that it will gain influence by showing Asia that democracy can succeed. In this paper, however, it is understood as a more active form of foreign policy with the emphasis on the will to *gain influence in the international system*, motivating policy with reference to geopolitical concerns. The latter part of the above quote, concerning domestic policies, is hence, excluded from this role. It is due to its geopolitical nature subsumed under *diplomatic power*.

f) Mediator-Integrator

This role refers to when 'governments perceive themselves as capable of, or responsible for, fulfilling or undertaking special tasks to reconcile conflicts between other states or groups of states' (Holsti, 1970: 265). In this paper, it will be used to capture situations where the EU expresses its role as making mediatory efforts or indicates responsibility to reconcile conflicts. It is subsumed under *diplomatic power* due to its intuitively diplomatic nature, but also under *normative power* since it implicitly emphasises peace.

g) Ideational Norm Entrepreneur

This role aims to directly correspond to the previous conceptualisation of normative power (in 1.1.). It was not a part of Holsti's typology, but was created for this paper's typology in order to accommodate the concept of normative power. The role will be assumed when the EU attempts to project norms relating to liberty, democracy, peace and the rule of law (Manners, 2002: 242). Naturally, it is subsumed under *normative power*.

h) Institutional Norm Entrepreneur

This role was also created for this paper. Since role theory mainly has been applied to states rather than regional organisations, roles have been accommodated to such variables. Promoting institutional structures should be a possible role for regional organisations in foreign policy. It should be mentioned that this role may be included in the role of ideational norm entrepreneur, but I have decided to differentiate between these roles in order to highlight the discrepancy between norms as ideas and norms as structures. This role is assumed when the EU indicates a willingness to export their institutional structure or strongly encourages and promotes similar regional models, and is subsumed under *normative power*.

5.4. Validity, Intersubjectivity and Reliability

An investigation into the EU's *perception* of its role in Africa has its complications. In the textual analysis, I will interpret the *meaning* of certain statements, and from that assign roles. That is, the meaning will be understood as what the statements express according to the interpreter (me) (Teorell & Svensson, 2007: 103). Result validity refers to the accuracy of a method; whether we are measuring what we claim to measure (Esaiasson et al, 2017: 57). One might, on these grounds, contend that I can not measure what I claim to measure; that the EU's perception of its role can not be established by interpretation, and rather, that this is only possible by asking the EU.

An elementary requirement for research is *intersubjectivity*, a concept that refers to the fact that a different author should, with the same material and tools, come to the same conclusion to the research question (Teorell & Svensson, 2007: 54). The issue mentioned in the previous paragraph, concerning interpretation of meaning, also causes problems for the intersubjectivity of this thesis. Furthermore, although the typology (see 5.3.2.) has largely been modelled on Holsti (1970), the roles might have been understood differently. In turn, the *reliability* of this thesis, essentially concerning repeatability and consistency, will have suffered from the inherent problems of the method (Teorell & Svensson, 2007: 59).

6. Empirical Analysis

The empirical analysis is divided into three parts. First, a review of literature on the EU in Africa with role theory applied to it will be given. Since it does not take the EU's own statements as a starting point, it may be said that it does not treat the EU's *perception* of its own role. However, it takes scholars' interpretations of the EU's perceived role and, from that, arise at possible role perceptions. Two categories of EU-documents are then analysed: CFSP-frameworks and conclusions by the Council of the European Union.

6.1. Critical Literature Review

The birth of the JAES was partly a European response to the geopolitical agendas that followed from increasing globalisation and the rise of Russia and China as security and trade actors respectively in Africa (Sherriff & Kotsopoulos, 2014: 308). Thus, the perception of the EU as a normative power in Africa has been challenged by realist scholars. Rather than questioning this notion, they note that promoting and projecting values and norms can be combined with rationalist security concerns (Crawford, 2013: 144; Martin, 2011: 191). Along these lines, the von der Leyen Commission's stated priority of establishing a strategic partnership with Africa has again, partly, been motivated with reference to maintaining the rules-based world order (Sherriff, 2021: 116). It is clear that the EU pursues geopolitical objectives through its commitment to and interactions with Africa (Rein, 2015: 570). This alleged realist position of the EU, emphasising the importance of gaining influence in the international system, can be seen as them assuming the role of *example*.

Since the creation of the JAES, *security* has been a declared priority for the EU in its relations with Africa (Holden & Warren, 2015; Rein, 2015; Carbone, 2013). The aims of this engagement in the regional security of Africa are multifaceted and complex, and can therefore be linked to multiple roles.

Firstly, by engaging in security issues, the EU seeks to gain influence over the region which it sees as 'vital in becoming a more significant player in international politics' (Carbone, 2013: 9). This shows that one aspect of the security engagement relates to the aforementioned role of *example* by satisfying the desire to become an important actor in the international system.

Secondly, and in contrast, there seem to be normative elements to consider. Within the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), the role of the EU is to act as a mentor and supporter (Whitman & Haastrup, 2013: 67), one aspect of this mentoring being to promote the AU's role as a mediator in conflicts (Carbone, 2013: 8). In other words, the EU advocates for the AU to be a mediator-integrator, and through that, I would argue, assumes the role of *mediator-integrator* itself. By promoting the AU's role as a mediator, the EU strives toward their underlying intention of fostering peace and security in Africa (Rein, 2015: 558). In addition, Farrell (2013: 102) notes that 'the EU's promotion of regional integration... resonates with normative statements, not least in the claims that regional integration is the most effective way to guarantee regional security...' This indicates that another normative aspect of the security engagement is to act as an *institutional norm entrepreneur*.

Thirdly, economic policies and security policies appear to be interrelated. Cooperation between the EU and AU has been focused on financial support from the former for activities led by the latter (Rein, 2015: 553). These activities are, in principle, limited to the area of peace and security (ibid). However, although the AU mainly views Brussels' role in Africa as limited to financing efforts to ensure peace and security, the EU rather likes to see itself as a political partner in these areas (Sheriff, 2021: 117). Nonetheless, this appears to be a perceived duty from the EU to assist through financial aid, and accordingly, acts as *developer*. Thus, there is a connection between development and security (Rein, 2015: 559).

Fourth, and lastly, security policies have an inherent link to the notion of military power. As stated earlier, the EU currently has ten ongoing military or civilian operations in Africa (EEAS, 2021). In previous years, the EU has undertaken five different interventions within the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) (Vlassenroot & Arnould, 2016: 4). Söderbaum (2013: 37) notes, regarding the EU's role in the DRC, that 'it is hard to avoid the conclusion that the EU's key political goal is not mainly to solve the myriad of problems... The most important goal appears instead to be to build the EU's presence and identity as a peace-builder and security actor'. This statement falls short of the EU emphasising the function of providing protection – or playing the role of regional protector. Conversely, the EU's military presence in Africa seems to have been about creating an image of having a special task to reconcile conflicts, and is therefore an expression of acting as *mediator-integrator*.

On the other hand, while early CSDP-operations were motivated with reference to value-based concerns such as human security, nowadays the EU tends to motivate these on the basis of more utility-based justifications such as geopolitical or economic concerns (Palm & Crum, 2019: 515-521). With that said, the EU's current security involvement should not be considered as an expression of their normative power – or, more precisely, as acting as an ideational norm entrepreneur – but rather, as a tool to fulfil the role of *example*.

This section has shown that there are alternative ways to interpret the EU's conception of itself as a normative power in Africa. All things considered, Normative Power Europe in Africa should not, however, be overlooked. Innumerable scholars clearly identify the EU – and its perception of itself – as a normative power (eg. Holden & Warren, 2015; Bachmann & Müller, 2015; Scheipers & Sicurelli, 2008). This has been expressed, as mentioned, by promoting norms, for instance related to democratisation, liberalisation and sustainable development, ultimately substantiating the EU's perception of itself as an *ideational norm entrepreneur* (Carbone, 2013: 9).

In conclusion, scholars indicate that the EU acts as *example, mediator-integrator, institutional norm entrepreneur, ideational norm entrepreneur* and *developer* in Africa.

6.2. CFSP-frameworks

This section will analyse two strategic documents produced by the EU. First, the European Union Global Strategy (EUGS) was designed as a guide to the EU's common foreign- och security policy, intended to promote policies and 'nurture the ambition of strategic autonomy' (EUGS, 2016: 4). Similarly, the Strategic Compass (EUSC) 'guides and enhances [the EU's] action to make the EU a stronger and more capable security provider' and 'identifies clear goals in the area of EU security and defence' (EUSC, 2022: 15).

6.2.1. European Union Global Strategy

'Africa' is mentioned 31 times in the 60-page document; a substantial number compared to Asia's 19 and Latin America's 4. This, to begin with, illustrates the strategic importance of Africa to the EU.

The EU declares that 'solving conflicts and promoting development and human rights in the south is essential...' (EUGS, 2016: 34). It goes on to say that this will be done by 'intensifying...support for and cooperation with regional and sub-regional organisations in Africa', which means 'systematically addressing cross-border dynamics in North and West Africa...through closer links with the African Union...' (EUGS, 2016: 34-35). The EU appears to suggest that regionalism, in the form of cooperation between subregions, is the answer to many of the problems facing Africa. In other words, the EU is playing the role of *institutional norm entrepreneur*. On the other hand though, it is said that the EU 'will not strive to export [their] model, but rather seek reciprocal inspiration from

different regional experiences' (ibid: 32). At first glance this appears to undermine the conception of this role, but 'seeking reciprocal inspiration' does not stop short of a willingness to export the norm of regionalism, and thus, does not diverge from the role.

The EU (ibid: 36) then establishes that they:

'...will invest in African peace and development as an investment in our own security and prosperity. We will intensify cooperation with and support for the African Union...We must enhance our efforts to stimulate growth and jobs in Africa...A quantum leap in European investment in Africa is also needed to support sustainable development. We will build stronger links between our trade, development and security policies in Africa, and blend development efforts with work on migration, health, education, energy and climate, science and technology... We will continue to support peace and security efforts in Africa, and assist African organisations' work on conflict prevention...We will do so through diplomacy, CSDP and development, as well as trust funds to back up regional strategies.'

This quote touches on multiple areas of cooperation, many of which seem to be interrelated. In this clutter it is clear, however, that peace and security together with development are preeminent in the union's Africa policy; they seem to motivate all – or at least most – other forms of cooperation. Focusing on development which, they say, will be achieved through stimulating growth, trading and investing points to the EU assuming the role of *developer*. Accomplishing peace and security will be done through assisting and financing conflict prevention, which indicates a role of *mediator-integrator* for the EU.

In the document, particularly in the foreword by Federica Mogherini, there are other remarks of interest that are not directly pronounced as Africa strategy, but are nonetheless of relevance for the EU's role conception. First, according to Mogherini, 'wherever [she] travels...partners expect the European Union to play a major role, including as a global security provider' (ibid: 3). It is later stated that 'soft power is not enough: we must enhance our credibility in security and defence' (ibid: 46). As explained earlier (in 3.), the role expectations of others are inherent in an actor's role conception. These views indicate that the EU is expected to be and therefore strives to be a *regional protector*. As already stated, 'for Europe, soft and hard power go hand in hand' (ibid: 4).

In sum, the EU can be said, in the EUGS, to assume the roles of *institutional norm entrepreneur*, *developer*, *mediator-integrator* and *regional protector*.

6.2.2. Strategic Compass

As in the EUGS, ‘Africa’ occurs considerably more frequently than ‘Asia’ or ‘Latin America’ in the EUSC: 30, 5 and 7 times respectively. Again, this shows that Africa is, in some sense, a prioritised region for the EU’s CFSP. It is proclaimed that:

‘The future of Africa is of strategic importance to the EU...ongoing conflicts, poor governance and terrorism across the continent affect our own security... Stability in the Gulf of Guinea, the Horn of Africa and in the Mozambique Channel remains a major security imperative for the EU, also as they are key trade routes. At the same time, we see growing geopolitical competition in Africa, with an increased presence of both global and regional actors. Some of them do not hesitate to use irregular forces in zones of instability, thereby undermining international efforts towards peace and stability, destabilising countries and their economies as well as being complicit in human rights violations’ (EUSC, 2022: 19-20).

From this quote we understand, again, that peace and security are imperative to the EU’s role in Africa. Securing trade routes and counteracting terrorism are only briefly mentioned as reasons for this while a greater emphasis is placed on geopolitical competition. Probably, this is a reference to surging Chinese and Russian influence on the continent, with the latter engaging increasingly in security matters. This indicates the EU’s commitment to gaining influence in the international system through Africa; thereby assuming the role example. Another intriguing point is the description of these ‘other’ actors with references to irregular forces and human rights violations. The EU posits itself, by that, as an actor that is not complicit in the use of irregular forces or such violations and by doing that distances itself from its geopolitical competitors. Emphasising the importance of respecting these demonstrates the EU’s role perception as a normative power – and an *ideational norm entrepreneur*.

Security continues to be the chief topic in references to Africa: ‘As a reliable security provider, the EU will enhance its efforts to support African-led initiatives that contribute to peace and security on the African continent, including African-led Peace Support Operations...’ (ibid:55). Explicitly referring to itself as a security provider, the EU here assumes the role of *regional protector*.

This is further substantiated by stating that ‘enhancing the security of our African partners remains one of the key priorities for us. We will engage with the full range of EU security and defence tools, in particular military and civilian missions and operations, peace and stabilisation programmes, assistance measures and financial support. This is even more important as we are witnessing a growing presence of our strategic competitors...’ (ibid:57). CSDP missions have the function of providing protection for adjacent regions and, as mentioned, should be linked to the role of *regional protector*. An equally significant aspect is that they,

together with ‘peace and stabilisation programmes’, imply that Europe perceives itself as being responsible for undertaking special tasks to reconcile conflicts, and should therefore also be linked to the role of *mediator-integrator*.

To conclude, the EU takes on the roles of *example*, *regional protector*, *ideational norm entrepreneur* and *mediator-integrator* in the Strategic Compass.

6.3. Council of the European Union Conclusions

In addition to legally binding acts, the Council of the European Union adopts official documents such as conclusions, resolutions and statements. These documents are used ‘to express a political position on a topic related to the EU’s area of activity’ (Council of the European Union, 2020a). This section analyses two such conclusions on general Africa policy contrary to policies aimed at subregions in Africa.

6.3.1. Council Conclusions on a renewed impetus for the Africa-EU Partnership

In the Council Conclusions on a renewed impetus for the Africa-EU partnership (Council of the European Union, 2017) it is stated early on that:

‘The EU and its Member States are Africa’s main partner in the fields of foreign investment, trade, place of origin for remittances, development and humanitarian assistance, and security and defence. The EU aims to remain Africa’s main partner in those fields and beyond...’.

The areas in which the EU identifies themselves as Africa’s main partner should be seen as fields in which the cooperation has succeeded. Seemingly, the EU perceives at least a part of its role in Africa in terms of these policy areas. From the quote above, it can be inferred that the EU wants to remain an economic partner. More specifically, the fields mentioned indicate a special duty to assist and consecutively demonstrate the EU’s role as a *developer*.

It is then declared that the EU ‘pursues three interrelated objectives’ in its ‘truly strategic and equal political relationship’ with Africa:

(1) ‘a stronger mutual engagement, including on global governance issues, through frequent political interaction and more people to people contacts, as well as increased cooperation in the international arena, based on common positions, values and shared interests;’

(2) 'security on land and sea...as an investment in security on both continents;'

(3) 'sustainable, inclusive and environmentally friendly economic development in Africa, creating more and better jobs on the continent...'

Firstly, it is worth noting that the EU describes its relationship with Africa as strategic and political. This does not completely oppose the notion of the EU as an economic partner. However, seen in light of the EU's reputation as an economic giant but a political dwarf, or the fact that European representatives have focused more on political issues while African representatives have focused more on economic issues concerning the JAES, it explicitly tells us that the EU regards itself as political partner rather than an economic one (Bachmann & Müller, 2015: 3; Carbone, 2013: 6).

Objective (1) indicates an attempt to court Africa in aligning itself with Europe on the international stage with references to common positions, values and interests. This is a case of the EU emphasising the importance of gaining international influence and by that playing the role of *example*. Objective (2) makes references both to the EU's own security as well as Africa's in its pursuit of security in Africa; the former may again be a matter of the geopolitical motivations as an *example*, whereas as the latter should be seen as the EU's perception of its special leadership responsibilities, and thereby an expression of the EU's role as *regional protector*. Objective (3), meanwhile, concerns the economic development in Africa, but is specified as aiming to be in line with European norms like sustainability and inclusivity. The EU is, by this, an *ideational norm entrepreneur*. Ultimately, it should be clarified that it is stated that these objectives are interrelated. Assuming the roles of *example*, *regional protector* and *ideational norm entrepreneur* indicates that they are interrelated, or at least, it suggests that these roles are not exclusive of each other.

In addition, the EU 'emphasises the role of regional and sub-regional cooperation, which provide building blocks to pan-African integration efforts for both political objectives of security and combating cross-border threats and for economic and social development' and then claims that 'peace and security will remain *at the centre* of the EU's cooperation with African partners' [emphasis added]. With the EU being a form of regional cooperation promoting regionalism, the first of these statements should be understood as the EU assuming the role of *institutional norm entrepreneur*. The second statement, with the added emphasis in mind, shows that peace and security are fundamental aspects of EU-Africa cooperation. Stressing peace is associated with the role of *ideational norm entrepreneur* whereas security is more connected to the role of *regional protector*.

Apart from this, the document also includes references to gender equality and gender-based violence, support of 'democracy and the promotion of human rights and the rule of law', climate change and sustainable energy as well as equal and

inclusive societies. These can all be seen as expressions of the EU perceiving its role as *ideational norm entrepreneur*.

In sum, the EU takes up the roles of *developer*, *example*, *regional protector*, *institutional norm entrepreneur* and *ideational norm entrepreneur*.

6.3.2. Council Conclusions on Africa

In the Council Conclusions on Africa (Council of the European Union, 2020b), four main areas are declared as being ‘strongly in the interest of the EU to develop an even closer partnership with Africa regarding’:

(1) ‘multilateralism. Both African and European voices are key to the promotion of the international rules-based order, human rights, the rule of law and democracy;’

(2) ‘peace, security and stability. A peaceful and resilient African continent also directly benefits Europe;’

(3) ‘sustainable and inclusive development. Global challenges, such as climate change, green transition, protection of the environment, conservation of biodiversity, global health and gender equality, require urgent collective action;’

(4) ‘sustainable economic growth. Trade and investment between Europe and Africa can create sustainable jobs and growth on both continents.’

Objectives (1) and (3) stress the importance of promoting ‘European’ norms and implicate the EU as having the role of an *ideational norm entrepreneur* in Africa. The second (2) aim of fostering peace and security is only motivated with reference to benefiting Europe. This is not further elaborated, but explicitly suggests that European interests in African security are of considerable concern, as opposed to alluding to benevolence. These interests are presumably geopolitical and are, in practice, about exerting influence on the African continent. Accordingly, it can be argued that the EU is taking up the role of *example*. On the other hand, although European interests are singled out as an explanation for this priority, it is also possible – and probable – that facilitating the consolidation of peace is a part of the normative program of the EU, again indicating the role of *ideational norm entrepreneur*. Lastly, objective (4) clearly insinuates that the EU has economic interests in Africa, and should be seen as an effort to promote the cross-cutting sub-system that is trade. They assume, through that, the role of *regional-subsystem collaborator*.

In conclusion, the EU assumes the roles of *ideational norm entrepreneur*, *example* and *regional-subsystem collaborator*.

6.4. Results

In 6.1. it was established that scholars view the EU as perceiving itself as an example, mediator-integrator, institutional norm entrepreneur, ideational norm entrepreneur and developer.

In 6.2. strategic documents of the EU guiding the CFSP were analysed. In the EUGS (2016), the EU assumed the roles of institutional norm entrepreneur, developer, mediator-integrator and regional protector, whereas in the Strategic Compass (2022), the EU took on the roles of example, regional protector, ideational norm entrepreneur and mediator-integrator. Notably, the roles of regional protector and mediator-integrator occurred in both documents.

In 6.3. conclusions by the Council of the European Union were investigated. Ideational norm entrepreneur and example appeared in both sets of conclusions. Developer, regional protector and institutional norm entrepreneur were exclusive for the former, while regional-subsystem collaborator was only present in the latter.

To summarise, and to answer the research question, the result of this empirical analysis is that the EU's principal roles in Africa appear to be as *ideational norm entrepreneur* and *example*. In addition, the EU perceives itself as a *regional protector*, *developer*, *mediator-integrator* and *institutional norm entrepreneur* to a large extent. The roles of *defender of the peace* and *regional-subsystem collaborator* were hardly present. In turn, this implies that the EU sees itself as a normative power and a diplomatic power, while also considering itself a military power to some degree.

	Regional Protector	Defender of the Peace	Regional-subsystem collaborator	Developer	Example	Mediator-integrator	Ideational norm entrepreneur	Institutional norm entrepreneur
Critical Literature Review	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
EUGS	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Strategic Compass	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Conclusions (2017)	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Conclusions (2020)	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Total	3	0	1	3	4	3	4	3

Figure 2: Quantified findings of the Empirical Analysis

7. Analysis

In this section, the results from the empirical analysis will be further analysed and discussed.

Challenging the conception of the EU as a purely normative power was an aim of this thesis. Although the empirical analysis showed that *ideational norm entrepreneur* as well as *institutional norm entrepreneur* – the roles subsumed under normative power – were two frequently occurring roles, it might be argued that the aim has been fulfilled. Acting as *example* by aiming to gain influence on the international stage or referring to geopolitical motives, *regional protector* by implying military leadership responsibilities, or *developer* by indicating a special duty to assist, suggests that the EU perceives itself as having multiple roles in Africa. The EU can, with this in mind, *not* be said to merely, or even chiefly, perceive itself as a normative power in Africa.

Notably, despite *ideational norm entrepreneur* having been squeezed out as a role conception in the Strategic Compass when the EU attempted to differentiate themselves from other geopolitical competitors in Africa (see 6.2.2.), this role was not apparently conceivable in the CFSP-frameworks. Along these lines, and in resonance with the EU, normative power appears to be a concept created by scholars in order to differentiate the EU from its geopolitical competitors. Nonetheless, the EU evidently does – along with other roles – see itself as such.

On the other hand, it may be said that the roles of *example*, *regional protector* and *developer*, for instance, complement rather than compete with the conception of the EU as a normative power. Referring to the views of Crawford (2013: 144) and Martin (2011: 191), promoting and projecting values and norms can be combined with rationalist security concerns. This implies that different conceptions of power are not exclusive of one another. Another aspect of this is the discrepancy between agendas and tools of statecraft. In 5.3.2., it was stated that normative power, for instance, is an agenda, while military power is a tool of statecraft. Hence, it is possible for the EU to identify itself as a normative power and a military power simultaneously.

Not only does the EU have multiple role conceptions; they also seem to be interdependent, or at least interrelated. To demonstrate, the EU finances African efforts to ensure peace and security as well as deploying its own military operations under the CSDP on the continent. If they do this with the intention of both creating sufficient conditions for development within democratisation and liberalisation and to wield geopolitical influence on the continent, does this make

them a military, economic, diplomatic or normative power? All things considered, the EU can be said to perceive itself as all of these to some extent.

In spite of the preceding analysis, the role conceptions of the EU in Africa can be ordered. *Ideational norm entrepreneur*, *institutional norm entrepreneur* and *mediator-integrator* all regularly appeared in the empirical analysis, indicating that the EU, after all, perceives itself as a normative power. On top of that, *example* and *developer* occurred repeatedly, indicating the EU's self-perception as a diplomatic power, with the former demonstrating the union's geopolitical ambitions. *Developer* was also subsumed under economic power, but altogether, the EU does not see itself as principally an economic power in Africa. Interestingly, the EU increasingly understands itself as a *regional protector*. This should be seen as an expression of the EU augmenting its power to that of a military power. All in all, the EU primarily perceives itself as a normative and diplomatic power, and somewhat as a military power, in Africa.

8. Discussion

In this section, methodological aspects, shortcomings and alternative approaches will be addressed. Specifically, the choice of material, conceptualisations and theory are discussed.

Defender of the Peace was the only role in the typology not to figure in the empirical analysis. This can be explained with reference to the fact that this role was intended to indicate *universal commitments* to peace, while the council documents (in 6.3.) focused exclusively on Africa, and the strategic documents (in 6.2.) were only analysed in parts dealing with Africa. Likewise, the fact that *ideational norm entrepreneur* occurs in both sets of conclusions from the Council of the European Union, whereas it is almost absent in the analysis of the CFSP-frameworks, can be explained by the nature of these documents; the former targeting specific issues in Africa, for example democratisation, while the latter deals with the CFSP – related to the CDSP – drawing the analysis towards military affairs and away from normative affairs. The role of *regional protector* is therefore adjacent to the CFSP-frameworks. The same might be said of the critical literature review. That is, the reviewed research may have been biased towards some roles; if literature on trade negotiations were analysed, for instance, the EU's economic power may have been more present. All things considered, the context – in this case, the type of documents and the review literature – seem to have affected the role conception of the EU in Africa in the analysis.

In 5.3.2. it was stated that in-depth conceptualisations of power were beyond the scope of this paper. With the preceding analysis (see 7.) concerning differences between agendas and tools of statecraft in mind, it might be argued that this distinction implicitly encouraged more elaborate conceptualisations that would have been helpful in the analysis. In turn, this caused difficulties in subsuming sub-roles under the primary roles. This was, however, not done since the existing conceptualisation was sufficient to challenge the perception of the EU as a normative power, but also with reference to the limited scope of the thesis. Other conceptions of power as Liberal Power Europe (LPE) or soft imperialism could have been used and, thus, affected the outcome of the analysis.

Role theory was favoured as the theoretical foundation of this paper in order to understand the EU's *role* in Africa, a theory that is arguably state-centric. Understanding EU-Africa relations might, as demonstrated by realist scholars (see 6.1.), be shaped by theoretical assumptions at the structural level of analysis. This may have affected the analysis. In addition, with some dominant EU member

states being former colonial powers, a colonialist perspective could have been used to further explain the EU's role in Africa.

This section has demonstrated that the selected material, conceptualisations and theory have affected the result of this thesis.

9. Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to challenge the conception of the EU as a normative power by exploring what kind of power the EU perceives itself as in Africa, resulting in the research question ‘How does the European Union perceive its role in Africa?’.

To that end, a typology of national role conceptions, modelled on Holsti (1970) was created. The empirical analysis, in which the roles were assigned, consisted of a textual analysis of two CFSP-guiding frameworks for the EU as well as two conclusions by the Council of the European Union.

The results showed that the EU perceives itself principally as an ideational norm entrepreneur and example in Africa, but also as a regional protector, developer, mediator-integrator and institutional norm entrepreneur to a large extent. In turn, this implied that the EU sees itself as a *normative power* and a *diplomatic power*, while also considering itself a *military power* to some degree. As discussed in the previous section, the EU not perceiving itself as an *economic power* may have been a consequence of the material used in the analysis.

In the context of previous literature, this thesis has challenged the acknowledged conception of the EU as a normative power by highlighting its geopolitical – and diplomatic – ambitions in Africa, and emphasising its increasing self-perception as a military power. Ultimately, however, characterising the EU as a normative power does not appear to be nonsense – but it should be underlined that it is only one of multiple role conceptions.

Further research is needed on characterising the EU as a foreign policy actor as well as on EU-Africa relations. EU-documents should be examined under similar theoretical assumptions as well as further challenging the conception of the EU as a normative power. More importantly, research on types of power needs to progress. A comprehensive and contemporary typology of national role conceptions should be produced. With this, we could identify powers in a more nuanced way as, for instance, normative-military, normative-economic or diplomatic-military powers.

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