

The European Union as a *Green* Normative Power?

The Case of the EU's Sustainable Energy Cooperation with China

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“We cannot command Nature except by obeying her.”

Francis Bacon (1561-1626)

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Abstract

Given energy's powerful role in achieving sustainable development (SD), the relevance of turning to sustainable energy (SE) – understood as renewable energy and energy efficiency – has been recognised as an essential instrument in the global SD agenda. In its Treaties, the European Union (EU) made a profound commitment to the SD principle, and to environmental sustainability, by enshrining it as an objective of the Union and vowing to promote it both domestically and abroad. With Manners' introduction in 2002 of the 'Normative Power Europe' (NPE) conceptualisation of the EU, this commitment can be linked to the EU's very identity (Manners 2002). The EU is to be a norm promoter in the world to which it can be held accountable. The objective of this thesis is to determine if the EU can legitimately be called a *green* normative power to the extent that it abides by its commitment to promote SD in the world.

In order to test this proposition this research applies Manners' NPE approach to the case study of the EU's SE cooperation with China. With its fast paced rise as an economic powerhouse and main fossil fuel consumer, China currently poses one of the single greatest challenges to the achievement of effective SD for the planet. China is also one of the main countries with which the EU developed its SE cooperation. This work presents three main contributions. First, the thesis' main originality derives from the use of Manners' tripartite analytical framework (Manners 2009b) in the context of EU-China relations in SE. This provides for a comprehensive assessment of the EU's normative status, not only addressing the EU's commitment to SD but also to promoting it in a normative way (Manners 2002) by looking at the whole policy process. In doing so, this research seeks firstly to enrich the currently very limited NPE literature on the EU's status as green normative power by extending it to the field of SE. Secondly, the thesis also aims to add an originally researched case study on China to the NPE field of study. Finally, the thesis also contributes to expanding the application of Manners' analytical framework by operationalizing it to the study of the SD norm as a concept.

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CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

1.1. The EU, a *Green Normative Power*?

Norms are recognised to be a constitutive element of human societies, rooted in our 'social embeddedness' (Hayden 2009: 1) and the need for guidelines to organise life in community. Understood in the sense of "collective expectations for the proper behaviour of actors within a given identity" (Katzenstein 1996: 5), norms prescribe appropriate conduct in religious, legal or cultural terms to individuals and societies. Norms define what ought to be, and in that sense norms contribute to constituting reality. This is also seen to extend to international relations. Some norms have been widely recognised and institutionalised at the global level within the United Nations (UN) system, like human rights, while some others remain contested or even cease to be legitimate, like slavery¹. Not all of them are binding or even have legal status but all represent a shared understanding of adequate conduct that states commit to and are therefore expected to influence their behaviour. As such, norms matter. Sustainable development (SD) is one of the more recent of such international norms. Introduced in 1987 in the seminal Brundtland report, SD gradually became both a development paradigm and an international norm in the UN system, giving normative power to environmental sustainability and the recognition that human development has boundaries, which are those of the planet and its environment. Considering the now established responsibility of human activity for climate change and grave environmental degradation, SD's contribution in committing countries to balance their development is a powerful one.

Nowadays most countries in the world have some sort of SD implementation strategy and even if perhaps not always applied, awareness of it for environmental issues is indisputably relevant. This holds particularly true for the European Union (EU), which

¹ See Finnemore and Sikkink (1998)

has not only enshrined the SD principle in its Treaties, giving it practically constitutional status, but is also known to have taken on the role of active promoter of the SD concept in the world (Bretherton and Vogler 2006; Vogler 2003). The EU is actively keeping SD on the agenda of international institutions like the Group of Eight (G8) and the Group of Twenty (G20), the United Nations Security Council, or the World Health Organisation as part of its efforts to frame itself as an environmental or green leader (Afionis and Stringer 2012a: 114). The promotion of SD has also become part of the EU's bilateral relations – including with China - so that commitment to the promotion of environmental sustainability in the world has become part of the EU's identity. The EU thereby showed that it considers it as its role to promote the SD norm and environmental sustainability in the world.

In the academic field of international relations (IR) however, the relevance of norms to explain state behaviour has only been recognised recently. A 'turn' away from the rationalist approach and its emphasis on material interests was necessary to be able to conceptualise the role of norms in IR (Checkel 1998; Finnemore 1996; Florini 1996; Finnemore and Sikkink 1998). Constructivism – a fairly recent addition to the field – and its understanding of reality as essentially constructed was instrumental in conceptualising the role of norms in IR and establishing their causal effect. Constructivism allowed study of what other schools of thought had previously been unable to fully account for. In the context of European Studies, this progress was particularly relevant as it opened the door to conceptualising the EU as a 'normative power' and thereby contributed to the already flourishing literature acknowledging the hybrid nature of the EU as neither fully-fledged state nor international organisation (Hill and Smith 2005: 4). Ian Manners' bold claim according to which "the EU has been, is and always will be a normative power in world politics" aimed to do exactly that by "[promoting] normative approaches to the study of the EU in world politics" (Manners 2008: 45). According to the 'normative power Europe' (NPE) approach developed by Manners, norms are not simply another obligation or commitment, but in fact define the very nature of the EU (Manners 2002). The EU is considered ontologically different from other IR actors because its very existence is based on values and principles. As such it is a normative project whose identity is defined by the commitment to norms as well as their promotion in the world. Consequently, the EU's normative identity compels it to be a 'force for good' in the world, a 'normative power' that can be held accountable by it.

Offering an approach specifically tailored to analyse the EU and norms, NPE became a popular tool within the European Studies field to evaluate the EU's external relations, giving rise to a wealth of studies and literature either discussing the concept itself or applying it to a large array of case studies. As is to be expected of theories and approaches used to explain such a complex entity as the EU – a *sui generis* body and constantly evolving project eluding definite categorisation – and its intricate system of external relations, NPE case studies have more often than not given credence to a more multifaceted understanding of the EU's norm-promoting role. Perhaps unsurprisingly they have shown the difficulty of addressing the NPE question in a binary way. Without discounting the role of norms, NPE and its case studies have instead allowed for a more nuanced yet in-depth picture of the role they play in the EU's relation with third countries. However, defining the nature of the EU on the basis of case studies each time provides a valuable yet necessarily incomplete assessment of the EU's normative identity. Following the NPE model of the EU, since norms are a constitutive element of the EU's identity, any assessment of it cannot be declared final without at least all the main norms the EU subscribes to having been investigated. Striving to establish conclusively the nature of an intricate body such as the EU requires a comprehensive picture of all of the facets that Manners claims constitute the EU's normative identity - the commitment to five core and four minor norms which includes SD (Manners 2002; 2008)².

Yet in spite of the EU's very official commitment to the SD norm, a review of the literature in *Chapter 3* shows a relative lack of *comprehensive* investigation of the EU's actual global promotion of environmental sustainability and SD as part of an NPE study, leaving the environmental dimension of the NPE – and of SE in particular - picture under-researched. Only a handful of studies hold the EU accountable to its SD allegiance within the NPE field of study and none of them address the issue from the sustainable energy (SE) – understood in this work as renewable energy and energy efficiency - point of view. In view of the current urgency to deal with climate and environmental issues repeated again by more than 170 world leaders at the 2016 Paris Summit, environmental sustainability norms can hardly be rejected for

² The five core norms of the EU as identified by Manners are peace, liberty, democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights. The four minor norms are social solidarity, anti-discrimination, sustainable development and good governance (Manners 2002).

their lack of significance. Equally the role of SE in the promotion of SD cannot be ignored as the same processes have identified energy efficiency (EE) and renewable energy (RE) as key levers in the global efforts for SD. The EU as green leader who supports SD both domestically and internationally is therefore to be held accountable to its green credentials in the form of SE promotion in the world. In view of this, this research is asking - is the EU a *green* normative power?

1.2. Background and Aim of the Research

Nowadays it seems 'sustainability is everywhere' (Isenhour et al 2015: 1), so much so that almost every domain seems to have its sustainable alter ego. The term still applies to its original environmental field when talking of sustainable ecosystems or the sustainable use of the oceans or sustainable agriculture. The use of the term however greatly expanded to become associated with all sorts of concepts, from sustainable architecture, sustainable urbanism, sustainable transport and mobility but also sustainable finance, a sustainable economy, sustainable banking, and sustainable consumption, as well as sustainable travel, sustainable fashion, and sustainable lifestyles up to the point of reaching 'sustainable *ad nauseam*' as Roosa (2008: 36) would cynically argue. Sustainability has in fact long stopped being limited to a specialist jargon and crossed its original confines of environmental sciences to become almost a catchword widely used beyond this point. Yet far from being just a trend, it is in fact symptomatic of a profound realisation – the inevitable connection between human existence and the environment and especially how this has come to represent a real threat for the planet. The imperative for sustainability is the acknowledgement of this responsibility towards not only our societies but our environment, introducing shifts in behaviour at every level, from companies and factories, to public institutions, policies and people, to reach a balance between human needs and respect for the environment.

Energy in particular stands at the heart of this conundrum. In the form of fossil fuel, energy is both responsible for fuelling human development since the Industrial Revolution as well as for causing climate change, one of the greatest man-made threats to the planet and our societies. The burning of coal, oil and gas is one of the best engines for economic growth and breaking the poverty cycle as well as for

ensuring developed countries can maintain their lifestyles but at the same time is also at fault for rising sea levels, ocean acidification, desertification and important changes in weather conditions with dramatic consequences around the world.

Given energy's powerful role in achieving sustainable development, the relevance of turning to SE has been recognised – understood in this work as renewable energy RE and EE, which are considered the 'twin pillars' of SE (REN21 2015) in line with key SD texts as well as scholarly sources.³ International organisations such as the United Nations (UN), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the International Energy Agency (IEA), and the G8 and G20 have developed SE strategies or advocate their use, as do dedicated SE agencies such as the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) or the International Partnership for Energy Efficiency Cooperation (IPEEC). Many countries nowadays have SE programmes. This is even the case – though to a fairly limited extent - for notable oil and gas producing countries such as Qatar, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Russia.

Thanks to a UN-led process started in the early 1970s, the need to adopt and promote SE became more than a political choice made by certain countries and certainly more than a mere idea. SE achieved international normative status when it became intrinsically connected to the SD norm, famously defined in the 1987 Brundtland Report (point 27) as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. The very broad international recognition of the SD norm and the national commitments it enjoys almost automatically promoted SE. SD being only a concept – even if an internationally recognised one – it only lives through operationalising measures, of which SE was defined as a key pillar through SD milestone documents and events. Next to issues such as food security, biodiversity and ecosystems (World Commission on Environment and Development 1987), the commitment to SD therefore equates to adopting and promoting SE, as a way of achieving SD as well as to provide accountability for doing so.

³ Chapter 4 reviews major SD texts and shows how, in the process of translating the concept of SD into workable implementation plans, RE and EE were presented as the two major levers for SE promotion.

The commitment to the SD norm however is by essence a global task since sustainability is the responsibility of all countries, and that includes international cooperation – at global, multilateral and bilateral level. Bilateral cooperation is particularly relevant in the case of SE. The transition to sustainable energy systems is far from being a minor change. It is in fact probably one of the most fundamental changes modern societies have had to make, because it touches to the core of how societies function. Fossil-fuel-based energy systems are so deeply established, with a high degree of path dependency due to heavy infrastructure and investments, but also habits and mind-sets, including in policy-making, that it requires a comprehensive and large-scale overhaul of old ways in favour of what could originally be considered as uncharted territories. As recognised in key SD texts, if the shift to SE as part of a structural “process of change” is to be achieved, it necessitates some degree of cooperation between countries, especially between those most advanced in the shift and others. Therefore the responsibility for promoting SD includes the accountability for SE promotion between countries.

Looking at individual countries, China currently poses one of the single greatest challenges to the achievement of more sustainable development for the planet. The sheer scope and speed of the economic and social development the country underwent since launching economic reforms in the late 1980s are enough to put China’s environmental impact in a category of its own. In about two decades, driven mainly by rapid industrialisation and urbanisation, the country became the world’s largest CO₂ emitter, surpassing the United States (US), the lead emitter since the 1920s (IEA 2015b). China is accountable for just over 20% of the world’s final energy consumption (IEA 2015c) consuming the largest amount of coal in the world - one of the most polluting sources of energy - and has become the world’s second-largest oil consumer (ibid). Human-induced fossil fuels emissions have been indisputably linked by scientists to global warming, leading to rising temperatures and sea-levels, stronger storms and increased frequency of droughts and heat-waves across the globe (IPCC 2007a). Present CO₂ levels in the atmosphere responsible for climate change are not merely a recent phenomenon however, but the result of centuries of industrial activity and accumulated emissions. Looking at historical or cumulative emissions, major industrialised countries like the US and Europe hold the biggest responsibility with 52% of CO₂ emissions for the 1850-2011 period (Ge et al 2014).

In 1850 the major CO₂ producer was the United Kingdom (UK) (Friedrich and Damassa 2014).

This link between industrialisation and emissions still holds true. However, the rise of Asian countries in the 1990s – with China in the lead - created a shift in the trend, with developing countries accounting for a larger share of emissions than industrialised countries whose emission have stagnated, even if at relatively high levels (ibid). China's contribution is particularly relevant to SD efforts because it is taking place in a time of rising scientifically-led political and public awareness of the link between fossil fuel consumption and climate change, giving a greater sense of urgency to the support for environmentally sustainable development. In 1992, world leaders signed the historic United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) calling to curb greenhouse gas emissions to “prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system” (art. 2). In this context China's weight in terms of fossil fuel production and consumption is as much part of the problem as it is a key to achieving global SD, so that cooperating with China on SD and SE makes a direct and impactful contribution to SD. This is especially so since China recognises the relevance of sustainability. The country adopted the 1992 Rio Declaration as well as the Agenda 21 articulating SD into principles and plans of action, and incorporated them into its own Agenda 21 strategy.⁴ China is also very aware of the need to usher in a transition towards a more sustainable form of development. The country has been supporting multi-sector RE policies since the mid-1990s (Dent 2014: 35) but really engaged in energy transition in the form of mandatory RE and EE targets with its 11th Five Year Plan (2005-2010) – the country's economic development blueprint – and heavily supported the development of national solar and wind energy industries.

Testing the commitment to promoting SE in the spirit of SD in bilateral relations would be relevant for any country committed to the principle, but this thesis makes the assumption that with the EU it acquires an additional significance. The EU has made sustainable energy a political priority. In 2010 the EU made resource efficiency a flagship of its Europe 2020 growth and job strategy. Four years later, the EU introduced legally binding legislation updating the 2007 “20-20-20” targets to a 40%

⁴ See UN [no date]a.

cut in greenhouse gas (GhG) emissions based on 1990 levels, a 27% share of RE in European energy consumption and an indicative 27% improvement in energy efficiency (European Commission 2016b). However, long before becoming such a catchy political commitment, sustainable energy was already present in the EU's first European programmes for energy adopted in the 1980s, such as JOULE, VALOREN and PACE (Alegría Mancisidor et al 2009: 102). Since then, the EU produced a series of directives and other legal documents promoting the development of sustainable energy in Europe. With the Maastricht Treaty and then the Treaty of Amsterdam, the EU has made a quasi-constitutional commitment to the SD norm whereby it binds itself to the promotion of SD as an objective within and outside of the EU (Pallemaerts 2006: 19). Conceptualising the EU as an entity that has been built on shared values and principles and whose identity it is to promote norms in the world, the EU should naturally support SE in its cooperation with such a crucial player as China in matter of environmental sustainability. This is particularly true since China is not simply one of the EU's oldest partner countries, with relations initiated in 1975, but is also a particularly important one as one of 10 strategic partners since 2003.

The aim of this thesis is therefore to determine whether the EU can be called a 'green' normative power in the sense of being proven to promote SD in the world. It intends to do so by applying Ian Manners' NPE approach and corresponding tripartite analytical framework to the EU's SE cooperation with China.

1.3. Hypothesis and Research Questions

This thesis' main assumption draws directly on Ian Manners' NPE approach, according to which the EU's different identity has an impact on its conduct in its external relations, since 'its normative identity predisposes the EU to act in a normative way' (2002: 252). The EU is committed to promoting norms and values in the world so that it has and exerts its power to change what passes for normal in its relations with third countries (Manners 2002: 253). As such, this thesis builds on constructivist approaches and in particular NPE theory and scholarship. In that light, the main hypothesis underpinning this thesis is that the EU is a normative power and is therefore predisposed to promote SD with China in the context of its SE cooperation.

The primary research question therefore tests this by asking whether the EU is promoting SD through its SE cooperation with China from 1994 to 2013. In other words, is the EU cooperating on SE in order to contribute to China's sustainable development?

Determining the normative nature of the EU is a broad task that requires an analytical framework to make it operational. As such the choice of analytical framework to carry out the research directly informs how this question is to be answered. This thesis operationalises the NPE concept using Ian Manners' tripartite analytical framework 'Principles-Actions-Impact' (PAI) tailored to testing the EU's commitment to promoting norms abroad (Manners 2008; 2009). Drawing on procedural normative ethics – virtue ethics, deontological ethics and consequentialist ethics – Manners suggests that in order to be deemed a normative power, the EU must be normative in the following three dimensions – in its principles, or intentions; in its actions, or the way it carries out cooperation; and in its impact, or consequences of its actions (Manners 2008). Each of them thus prompts investigation of a different dimension of what Manners defines constitutes a normative power, and it is the combination and comparison of these three facets of a normative power that should eventually lead to conclusive findings about the EU's nature (Manners 2011c: 243). Research into each of these dimensions is translated in a set of three criteria – nine in total – devised by Manners to determine whether the EU is normative respectively by principles, actions and impact. This thesis applies this PAI analytical framework to test the EU's commitment to SD in its cooperation with China on SE by researching its three main dimensions ('principles', 'actions' and 'impact') with regard to the three constitutive criteria of each (legitimacy, coherence and consistency; persuasion, argumentation, and prestige and shame; socialisation, partnership and ownership). This allows breaking down the main research question into three further sub-questions, with each of these facets being the subject of a dedicated empirical chapter:

1. Is the EU normative by principle, meaning, is the EU cooperating on SE with the intention of promoting SD in China?

In order to be normative, the EU must first show that it 'lives by virtuous example' in line with virtue ethics (Manners 2008: 56). This encourages study of the 'moral character' (ibid) or intentions guiding the EU's external relations and is addressed in

Chapter 5. In this case study, the EU is thus to cooperate with China on SE with the intention of promoting SD, and to do this for the sake of China. As Manners' suggests, this is tested firstly by judging legitimacy of the EU's intentions in promoting a universally accepted norm, then by evaluating the coherence of these intentions, for example with other norms or motivations, and lastly by assessing them for their consistency within the promoting entity – here, the European Commission (Manners 2009b: 2).

2. Is the EU normative by actions, meaning, is the EU actually acting to promote SD with China by means of SE cooperation?

The second part of the framework, and following deontological ethics, the EU is to 'be reasonable' in the conduct of its relations with third countries (Manners 2008: 58), motivating study of the actions the EU takes with China to promote SD. The aim as undertaken in *Chapter 6* is to evaluate whether the EU's conduct of SE cooperation contributes to supporting the SD principle in China and for the sake of China in a normative way. This is performed by exploring the EU's efforts of persuasion and argumentation to have China take up SE, as well as attempts to employ prestige or shaming techniques to encourage support for SE (Manners 2009b: 3).

3. Is the EU normative by impact, meaning, does the outcome of the EU's SE cooperation contribute to the promotion of SD in China?

The third part of the framework turns to the consequences of the EU's actions, which using consequentialist ethics are to 'do least harm' (Manners 2008: 59) and are the object of *Chapter 7*. Applied to the EU-China case, this study specifically investigates the implementation of SE cooperation through projects and programmes in order to support China in the uptake of SE in a way that enables China to perform its own SE shift. This involves evaluating whether these platforms for SE exchanges act as socialisation agents in the use of SE, whether they operate in partnership with China, and if they propose activities that develop China's capacity and ownership to perform the shift itself (Manners 2009b: 3).

1.4. Scope of the Research

In order for the scope of this research and the questions that it attempts at answering to be clear, clarification is required as to what is understood by the 'EU' in this thesis, as well as what the pursuit of SD promotion entails. Firstly due to space constraints, this thesis makes the choice of limiting the scope of the research to the European Commission. The EU is not a unitary actor but it is a *sui generis* body constituted of several institutions whose roles and sets of competences may vary according to the policy area addressed or even the time-frame considered. This certainly holds true for the EU's energy cooperation with China. Research has shown that the European Commission, – referred hereafter in this thesis as 'the Commission' – the Council of the EU, as well as the European Parliament and, after 2010, the European External Action Service (EEAS) are all part of EU-China energy relations (Algieri 2008; Knodt et al 2013), as is the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC). The Parliament and EESC are involved in EU-China relations but their relevance is not of first order. Whilst the Council is relevant because it determines the general goal-orientation of the EU's foreign policy, according to Shambaugh et al (2008: 6), the Commission "has been among the most active of all of all governmental institutions across Europe in fashioning and articulating a strategy and policy towards China". It has been responsible for drafting all the EU's policy papers on China since 1995, which contain the EU's cooperation strategy with China – including on energy – as part of the first pillar along trade and development cooperation, as noted by Casarini (2009: 17). External relations with China were therefore under exclusive Community competence until the pillar structure was abolished by the Lisbon Treaty when it entered into force in 2009. Interviews conducted for the sake of this thesis across all European institutions mentioned above confirm the pivotal role played by the Commission in the conduct of EU-China energy relations. In view of this, the Commission appears to be a legitimate choice to study the EU's energy relations with China in terms of intentions or policy as well as actions and impact. This thesis has chosen to exclude the study of EU member states' relations with China on SE as well as the Chinese perception of the EU's SE cooperation because this would take the research beyond the scope of studying the EU as an actor in external relations and as a normative power.

The promotion of SD is understood in this thesis in the environmental sense as support for environmental sustainability. As a development paradigm, SD is generally presented as having three dimensions - economic, social, and ecological or environmental (Baker 2006; Ekins 2000). Environmental sustainability is defined by the OECD and IEA (2001: 1) as a focus on “the stability of biological and physical systems and on preserving access to a healthy environment.” As the purpose of this thesis is to determine if the EU is a ‘green’ normative power, the environmental dimension has been chosen as a focus of study, leaving out the other two dimensions. This thesis chooses to look at the environmental sustainability aspect as this dimension – and SE in particular – has so far not been extensively researched in relation to the normative power argument. As explored in *Chapter 3* this refers to exploring both the EU’s SD norm promotion and the way it promotes SD. Additionally, it is a dimension of SD that has been quite well articulated in EU texts directly linked to the pursuit of SD⁵. This tends to show that the EU focussed the SD commitment on the environmental aspect.

1.5. Originality and Contribution to Knowledge

This thesis puts forward four main contributions to knowledge. The first and primary contribution of this work is to comprehensively test the NPE conceptualisation of the EU for the SD norm. In other words, the thesis aims to determine whether the understanding of the EU’s identity as an actor in the world is effectively one of norm promotion above all else, by assessing the EU’s promotion of the SD norm with China. According to Manners, the EU’s ontological difference and normative mission are expressed through its pledge to abide by and promote five core and four minor norms. So far, the result of the review of the literature conducted in *Chapter 3* shows that most of the NPE literature has concentrated on empirical investigations looking at the EU’s commitment to these norms applied to geographical cases. Generally however, there seems to be a traditional focus in the field on the aspect of democracy

⁵ Pallemmaerts (2006: 24) notes that article 6 of the Treaty establishing the European Communities (TEC), as amended by the Treaty of Amsterdam, constitutes ‘the strongest references to SD’ and refers to the mainstreaming in EU policies of environmental protection requirements for the sake of promoting SD.

promotion, as supported by Del Sarto 2016, with studies into human rights⁶ or democracy promotion itself⁷ being particularly frequently investigated (and criticised). In comparison, interest in the SD norm - although recently developing - remains quite scarce with only a handful of studies on the topic. Lightfoot and Burchell (2005) were one of the first to assess the EU's commitment to promoting the concept of SD at global governance level as a way to determine its credential as a normative actor, yet without going into the implementation of SD in third countries. Later studies went one step further and looked at specific environmental norms and assessed them for their contribution to SD promotion. Faulkner (2006) researched the EU's international promotion of biosafety policies on genetically modified organisms (GMOs) to determine if the EU is worthy of being considered a green normative power and Afionis and Stringer (2012a; 2014) used EU biofuels regulations and cooperation with Brazil to determine if the EU is a normative power on SD. Whilst these made critical inroads into NPE regarding SD and environmental sustainability, it is argued here that none of them *comprehensively* test Manners' NPE conceptualisation of the EU for the SD norm. According to Manners – and as investigated in detail in *Chapter 2* - in order to be called a normative power the EU must be found *both* to promote norms and to do this in a normative way (Manners 2002: 252), which calls for an exhaustive assessment to be able to decide on the EU's identity.

Other frameworks exist as discussed in *Chapter 2*, but the PAI approach was especially tailored to testing the EU's status as a normative power – both as a promoter of norms and its doing so in a normative way (Manners 2002: 252), which constitute the two essential dimensions of a normative power. The PAI analytical framework was developed by Manners several years after laying the foundation of his NPE theory, considered to have been launched in his seminal 2002 article (Manners 2002). The 2009 article, "*The concept of normative power in world politics*," (Manners 2009b) clearly presents the tripartite framework, establishing the 'principles', 'actions', 'impact' dimensions of a normative power. Following this

6 See Lerch and Schwellnuss (2006); Joffe (2008); Vadura (2015); Orbie and Khorana (2015).

7 See Youngs (2001); Demmelhuber and Kaunert (2014); Powell (2009); Niemann and De Wekker (2010).

framework entails studying the EU's promotion of norms from all three angles and then assessing these three aspects against each other in order to determine if the EU can be called a normative power. The investigation does not simply focus on the EU's norm promotion abroad but also provides the means to determine if this is being done in an ethical way. The three dimensions are themselves broken down into three further criteria each, which provide the tools to determine if the EU promotes a norm in a normative manner. Intentions have to be legitimate, coherent and consistent with the normative principle; actions must lead to persuasion, argumentation, and conferral of prestige and shame; and impact must be conducive to socialisation into the norm, be the result of a partnership type of approach to cooperation, and enable to develop ownership of the norm (Manners 2009b). The originality of this thesis is to comprehensively test the EU for its commitment to NPE by applying the tripartite analytical framework developed by Manners to conclusively assess the NPE concept for the SD norm. In doing so, this work primarily intends to contribute to completing the 'NPE puzzle' by articulating its environmental dimension around the SD norm and add to the currently very limited literature on the topic.

The second original contribution is to use SE as a means to evaluate the EU's allegiance to the promotion of the SD norm. SD is a normative principle and a development paradigm rather than a practical objective. *Chapter 4* describes how the concept evolved to become operationalised at global governance level into several core elements constitutive of SD promotion. Due to its essential role in reducing GhG emissions and positive contribution to climate change efforts, SE was identified in this process as an absolute essential pillar of SD. Whereas the few studies of the EU's SD promotion in relation to NPE addressed issues like biofuels or GMOs (Afionis and Stringer 2012a, 2014; Faulkner 2006), this thesis is the first to employ SE – EE and RE – in order to study the EU's commitment to SD. In doing so it contributes to the understanding of international SD cooperation through an indispensable dimension of SD and expands the NPE field of study to include the new aspect of SE.

Thirdly, by applying the analysis of the EU's SE cooperation in the case of China, this thesis contributes to growing the corpus of NPE case studies on China. Being both a historical cooperation partner of the EU and a challenge to the EU's attachment to norms and its promotion in the world, this makes of China an interesting test case for NPE. Existing studies however mostly focus on the EU's

promotion of human rights, democracy promotion and the support to the rule of law which are only part of the five core norms out of the nine core and minor norms which constitute the EU's normative identity according to Manners (Manners 2002)⁸. Yet China's climate and environmental impact make it an essential player in the global commitment to SD. As the literature review in *Chapter 3* shows in terms of normative literature on EU-China environmental sustainability matters, climate change is the most popular field of research⁹ but SE as a topic in its own right does not appear to have been addressed at all from the vantage point of testing the NPE conceptualisation of the EU.

The final contribution is of methodological nature. This thesis contributes to expanding the application of Manners' PAI analytical framework to test Manners' NPE by operationalising it to the SD norm. Manners' PAI framework is essential to determine if the EU is a normative power as it allows to test both dimensions of a normative power. However there are nine core and minor norms that constitute the EU's normative identity according to Manners and as norms evolve with time, are created or lose relevance, these might even change. Manners' PAI framework is therefore generic so as to be used to test any of the EU's constitutive norms. Many earlier case studies could not rely on it as it was not yet developed, whilst many later ones do not formally apply the entire tripartite analytical framework¹⁰, or do so only succinctly due to the space constraints of journal articles¹¹. Applications of the full PAI are not very common yet. Manners employed it to analyse the social dimension of trade policies (2009d) and at least one other study applied it fully to look at the EU's trade, human rights, and external security policies with Russia (Bluth 2011). So far, the generic PAI framework has therefore not been used to assess the EU's promotion of SD and environmental sustainability. This thesis contributes to further refining the understanding of the PAI as an analytical tool by offering an understanding of its application tailored to study the EU's environmental credentials.

8 See Balducci (2010); Shen (2012) and Erickson (2013).

9 See Torney (2012a); (2012b) and Carrapatoso (2011).

10 See Shen (2011).

11 See Niemann and de Wekker (2010).

1.6. Methodology and Sources

Testing the validity of the NPE approach requires adequate methods taking into account its constructivist background. As Finnemore and Sikkink (2001: 395) noted constructivism's "core assumptions" tend to shape "the methods by which constructivists go about answering their questions." In a constructivist world view, reality is not simply 'out there' but is constructed by agents and structures and their interactions (Jackson and Sørensen 2013: 208). Relating both to NPE and this research, this involves interpreting the EU's own construction of reality and whether this is guided by normative concerns such as the promotion of SD with China. Relevant methods should enable the motivations and intentions behind the elaboration and conduct of the EU's SE cooperation with China to be traced, as well as their consequences. Qualitative methods are generally understood to be best positioned to explore and "capture meanings, process and context" (Bryman: 1988; Rose 1982 in March and Stoker 1995: 138) and have therefore been chosen as the main methodology for this thesis.

1.6.1. The Case Study

The aim of this thesis is to determine if the EU is a normative power in the environmental dimension. Conforming to this therefore requires a norm – SD in this case – and a context or a case to apply it to – relations with China. The case study method has been widely used in the NPE literature as a means to put the approach to the test. For example, Manners seminal article presenting NPE looks at the EU's international pursuit of the abolition of death penalty (Manners 2002). Scholars seem to agree on the relevance of the case study method to test a theory (Bryman 2001; McNabb 2004: 359). This thesis adopts a single case study method, justified by the depth of research required by the PAI analytical framework. With its focus on three different dimensions of normative identity – principles, actions and impact – each of them requiring different levels of analysis and research into three facets for each dimension, conclusive findings can in this case only be achieved by means of a single case study approach. This is further justified by the large temporal scope demanded by the longitudinal approach suggested by Manners (2009b; 2009c).

Usual criticisms of case studies include their reliability, replicability, and ability to be scientifically generalised (Yin 2009: 14-15; Bryman 2001: 49-50). The use of a well-defined tripartite analytical framework, guided by general principles of procedural normative ethics, should ensure the reliability and replicability of the results. Case studies are not necessarily meant to be generalised in the sense of being applicable to all other cases (Bryman 2001: 50) and can risk falling into 'atomistic' prejudices (Manners 2011c). They can however be generalised to "theoretical propositions" (Yin 2009: 15), and as Manners links the EU's identity as a normative power to the promotion of norms in the world in a quite absolute way, even a case study has the potential to contribute to validating or refuting the theory. Furthermore, the study of the EU's SE cooperation with China, whilst specific to this case, aims to investigate the SE dimension of SD promotion and therefore has the potential to uncover general dynamics at play that could be relevant for understanding the EU as a normative power and environmental actor in the world. This is especially true given the tensions between norms and interests or foreign relations regarding sustainability agendas.

1.6.1.1. China as a Litmus Test for testing 'Normative Power Europe'

To the knowledge of the author, this is the first attempt at applying the PAI framework to test the EU's commitment to the promotion of SD and SE in China. China has been chosen as a test case in order to provide a better understanding of the EU's norm promotion activities in that field. China is considered to act as a 'critical case', as defined in the case study literature (Bryman 2001; Yin 2009), which is ideal to confirm, challenge or extend a theory (Yin 2009: 47). In the field of NPE case studies, even though China has evolved positively regarding its position on international norms, (Harding 2008) it still constitutes a litmus test for Europe's normative status because it poses a real challenge to the political values promoted by the EU (Shen 2011; Mattlin 2012: 181). As Mattlin (ibid: 184-185) notes, the EU's normative role differs according to different categories of countries it faces. China together with Russia are described as "major non democratic countries," or the 'axis of ego' (Manners 2008: 60), leading both to a lack of European leverage and adoption of moral high-ground and thereby making it more difficult for the EU to exert its

normative influence (Mattlin 2012: 184)¹² in contrast to accession countries for example, where the EU can use conditionality as leverage. The differences in values and power constitute a decisive hurdle for European norm promotion, so that if the EU is to be found normative with respect to China, this would indicate a solid instance of normative identity related to SD.

The particular challenge in the case of SE cooperation with China is seen to reside in the generally very strong interests at the heart of energy cooperation. Knodt et al (2013) conceptualises sustainability issues to stand in a 'normative triangle' of European energy interests, energy security and competitiveness concerns. China is committed to the principle of SD and started a process of SE transition in the 1990s. However, China is also like the EU a major energy consumer, which makes it an important determiner of world energy prices and influences directly the EU's energy security. Trade interests are also very present since China represents a large market for the European 'green industries', as well as presenting competition issues stemming from the aggressive development of China's SE industry (Lema et al 2011). As a result, normative motivations are likely to both cohabit and be challenged by strong European self-interest, and thereby provide a compelling case study.

1.6.1.2. Sustainable Energy as a Sub-Case Study of Sustainable Development

Testing the commitment to SD necessarily requires studying a specific dimension of SD because it is a broad concept, like peace and democracy, which therefore demands a more specific focus in order to be analysed. This is quite common practice in the NPE literature, as Shen (2011) selected the abolition of death penalty and the Tibet issue to study EU human rights promotion with China. Breaking down the SD concept into a more workable study topic is also part of this thesis' originality in that it aims to look inside the 'black box' of the SD normative principle. Within the ecological dimension of SD, which has been chosen as a focus of research on SE promotion, the choice of SE over environmental and climate change issues was made due to its cornerstone position in the UN process of operationalising the

¹² See for example Holslag (2010) on the lack of normative convergence between the EU and the Brazil, Russia, India and China (BRICS) countries leading to failed European attempts at collaborating on major international issues.

concept of SD into workable targets¹³. SE therefore sits at the core of any efforts to promote the environmental dimension of SD. Secondly the sheer relevance and activity-levels of energy and SE cooperation in EU-China relations over the period studied make SE a very suitable subject as a case-study of EU-China relations. SE plays an essential role in China's sustainability transition and is an area where the EU has expertise. As SE has furthermore been proven to constitute a core element of climate change strategies and some environmental issues as well, SE appears to legitimately represent the environmental concerns at the heart of the SD concept.

SE – sometimes also referred to as 'green energy' – is defined for the sake of this thesis as including both renewable energy and energy efficiency¹⁴. As is often the case with such broad concepts, SE does not have a consensual definition. According to the Cambridge dictionary (no date), SE is "energy that is produced using the sun, wind, etc., or from crops, rather than using fuels such as oil or coal which cannot be replaced". This rather literal definition limits SE to renewable forms of energy only. In academic circles however, when SE is addressed in connection with the concept of SD and the goal of reaching environmental sustainability goals, SE acquires a much broader meaning. According to Tester et al (2005: 8) SE is "a dynamic harmony between the equitable availability of energy-intensive goods and services to all people and the preservation of the earth for future generations". This type of definition has the merit of going beyond literal interpretations and clearly reflects the linkage between SE sources and the achievement of a more sustainable form of development paradigm; however there is the downside of its not being fully operationalised. A more practical understanding is adopted in this thesis along the line of Midilli et al's (2007: 65) understanding of SE as "the form and utilization of energy that has no or minimal negative environmental, economic and societal impact".

¹³ See *Chapter 4*

¹⁴ This thesis uses the IEA definition of RE understood as "energy that is derived from natural processes (e.g. sunlight and wind) that are replenished at a higher rate than they are consumed. Solar, wind, geothermal, hydropower, bioenergy and ocean power are sources of renewable energy." (IEA 2016b)

This also applies to the definition of EE which is understood as "a way of managing and restraining the growth in energy consumption." (IEA 2016c)

In order to delineate a more defined scope for SE for the sake of SD norm promotion, the choice to focus on RE and EE specifically is therefore essentially based on its understanding within the SD norm process. The Brundtland report – the SD landmark document – and subsequent UN SD documents established RE and EE as one of the two main energy-focused pillars in the implementation of SD goals¹⁵. This is in line with narrower or conservative definitions of SE, which exclude nuclear energy, as well as fossil fuels for transitional purposes (Omer and Energy Research Institute 2012: 127). This thesis also largely excludes the climate change angle of EU-China SE cooperation. As noted by Hammond and Jones (2008: 21), the depletion of fossil fuels and climate change issues relating to SD concerns require a “portfolio of energy options” which includes technologies such as carbon capture and storage (CCS) technology and other climate change mitigation measures. SE is directly linked to climate change efforts. As a policy however, EU-China climate change cooperation is a different cooperation field which has received dedicated scholarly attention (Torney 2015; Bo and Chen 2013; Belis and Kerremans 2014), and whilst there are necessarily linkages and overlaps between SE and climate change cooperation, climate change cooperation as such is not addressed in an effort to limit the scope of this thesis.

1.6.1.3 Analytical Timeframe

The time-frame chosen to assess the EU’s promotion of SD through SE with China has been set as the period 1994 to 2013. The choice of a long time-frame has been prompted by the requirements of Manners’ analytical framework. As NPE works like “water on stone” rather than “napalm in the morning” (Manners 2009b), it calls for a longitudinal timeframe which would allow it to capture “generational changes rather than momentary fluctuations in the EU’s normative power” (Manners 2009b: 19). The start date of 1994 represents the start of institutionalised energy cooperation between the EU and China with the establishment of the Energy Dialogue between the EU and China as part of a variety of sectoral dialogues upon which the relationship has been built. The year also represents the renewal of EU-China

¹⁵ These findings are the result of the investigation in *Chapter 4*.

relations as a whole following the Tiananmen events in 1989 and the normalisation of relations in the mid-1990s following European sanctions against China (Shambaugh 2008: 31). This phase “marks the beginning of the period of widespread engagement” and the start of energy cooperation in its own right (Casarini 2009: 37-38). The end date of 2013 on the other side represents an end point up to which China was considered a developing country in EU rules (Knodt et al 2013: 11). This change of status is not a mere administrative decision but it has deep implications for the way EU-China relations are conducted as well as funded on the whole. As such this can be considered a paradigm shift in the relation, which opens up a new era in the way cooperation is conducted and therefore cannot be assessed on par with the previous period.

1.6.2. Data Collection Methods and Sources

1.6.2.1. Elite Interviews

Elite interviews constitute the main source of empirical data this thesis draws upon in order to test Manners’ NPE approach. Across the qualitative research methodology literature, interviews are recognised as one of the most popular research instruments, in social science and political science in particular, as they provide useful insights into people’s motivations (King 2004; Lilleker 2003; Holstein and Grubin 1995). Elite interviews as a sub-category typically focus on experts or decision makers, either because of their proximity to power or their expertise, as Morris (2009: 209) sums up some key contributions to elite interview literature. Humorously put by Peabody et al (1990: 52), they are the “people out there who know more about your subject than you do”. As such, interviewing elites is very useful to gain insider knowledge of events and processes otherwise inaccessible to the public (Lilleker 2003: 208). This is particularly the case with the EU’s energy cooperation with China, of which only rare insights into the cooperation itself or the actors’ motivations and interests are available, let alone investigations into possible normative drivers. Elite interviews enable gaining precisely this type of information, which was crucial for the elaboration of this thesis.

Selection and Interview Conduct

The selection or sampling of the relevant participants constituted the first and perhaps critical step of the data collection process. Due to the relative lack of literature on the EU's conduct of SE cooperation, and therefore the relevant actors, the selection process was required both to collect empirical data about the EU's motivations and interests on SE cooperation with China as well as mapping out the field and its actors. This explains the relatively large number of interviews¹⁶ and was instrumental to understand the nature and degree of involvement of each group in the EU's energy cooperation with China. The target population (Goldstein: 670) was defined as participants involved ideally in both EU-China relations and energy policy fields, with inevitably varying degrees of connection to either field depending on the interviewee. Considering the "polyphonic" (Knodt et al 2013: 10) nature of the EU's energy cooperation with China, participants were selected quite broadly focusing on the following institutions – the European Commission as well as other European institutions and bodies, Chinese representatives in Brussels, energy interest groups, and academics. Knowledge and experience of energy cooperation with China, were the two key selection criteria used, as suggested by Rubin and Rubin (2005: 64).

The various levels of analysis the PAI framework brings in, as well as the compartmented nature of the EU's China cooperation whereby those making the policies are different from those implementing the cooperation, led to the inclusion of a second set of participants in the interview sample located in Beijing. These include EU officials working directly or indirectly on energy as representative of the main EU energy projects and programmes with China but also, for completing the mapping out exercise, member states' embassies, European and national chambers of commerce, and international organisations. Furthermore, with the European Delegation to China (EUDC) occupying a critical role in implementing and coordinating the EU's cooperation with China (Algieri 2008), it also required to be included in the interview sample. Chinese industry representatives and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) were included in order to obtain insights as to their level of involvement with the EU's energy cooperation with China. Finally, relevant Chinese academics provided more contextual and specialised data.

¹⁶ See table of interviewees in Appendix A.

Interviews were conducted with a total of 85 participants, with both European stakeholders who make up the majority of the interviews and Chinese participants as well¹⁷. Interviews were for the most part conducted in person, which led to travel to conduct fieldwork in several locations. Interviews were conducted in two main fieldwork sessions in Brussels (November-December 2011) as well as Beijing (October-November 2013), with a trip to Shanghai (October 2013). Complementary fieldwork sessions took place in Brussels (April 2012 and December 2013) and Wuppertal (December 2013). Additional phone interviews were occasionally conducted as well (December-February 2014). This practice is in line with the research methodology. Mikecz (2012: 483) remarks on the need to travel when engaging in elite interviews due to lack of likelihood that interviewees would be willing to adapt to the researcher's schedule. Goldstein (2002: 671) underlines the increased connections and benefits this yields for the researcher's data collection process.

In-depth semi-structured interviews were chosen as the main data collection method. These were conducted following a pre-determined set of seven questions sent in advance via email to the participants as it facilitated the comparison of data (Lilleker 2003: 209) and therefore the reliability of data analysis and findings. The elaboration of the questions was directly guided by the search for intentions, practices and impact of the EU's SE cooperation with China demanded by the PAI analytical framework – that is, by the specificities of this research (Lilleker 2003: 209). The choice between semi-structured and open questions tended to the latter in order to allow participants to explore all dimensions, which are too elaborate to confine to closed questions and would have missed the altogether extracting the 'whys' and 'hows' of the EU's SE cooperation with China. As suggested by Huitt and Peabody (1969: 28-29) "a semi-structured interview allows more opportunity for probing and gives the respondent considerable freedom to expand on a given question". Questions were tailored for European respondents who constituted the main target group for this research but they were inverted in a mirror-like fashion when the interviewee was Chinese in order to gain insights on their perception of the cooperation with the EU relating to the dimensions mentioned above. Most interviews lasted around 45 minutes, with some

¹⁷ See Appendix A for the detailed breakdown of interviewees.

shorter ones with more senior interviewees as is often the case (Peabody et al 1990: 452) and a few longer ones of around one hour or more. Interviews were always ended by giving the interviewee the opportunity to add, change or expand on any point he/she wished, and concluded with thanks for the interview as well as seeking further recommendations of other relevant participants (snowballing).

Data Reliability

Reliability of data is often quoted as a possible issue with qualitative data (Bryman 1988) but particularly so when it comes to elite interviews (Berry 2002, Ball 1994, Morris 2009). According to Mikecz (2012: 484) “elite participants are trained in how to represent their organization to the outside world. It is not uncommon for researchers to hear the “public relations” version of events instead of their personal account of events.” This adds to “the common problem of bias, poor recall, and poor or inaccurate inarticulation’ (Yin 2009: 109). As a result, a set of mitigating practices were followed in order to increase the reliability of the data collected. The relatively large number of interviewees, and especially the fact that the researcher interviewed several participants within the same Directorate-General (DG) or institution, possibly of different hierarchical position, and at times even interviewing the same person a second time, enabled different viewpoints to be collected and the data obtained to be cross-checked, so that the analysis was not dependent on one interviewee but findings were obtained thanks to a body of data. Rubin and Rubin (2005: 24) in fact suggest “ask(ing) (the) same question to different people in separate roles” as well as “asking the same question in different ways”. This second technique was also extensively used when necessary. Triangulation – the practice by which interview data is cross-checked with documentary sources (Somekh and Lewin 2009) - was also employed to verify interview material when available literature existed. Finally, a critical stance was kept so as not to “take everything at face value” (Mikecz 2012: 483). This was achieved through preparation beforehand and accumulating broad knowledge on EU-China energy cooperation. Generally however, interviews were conducted in good faith and participants were usually eager to share their work with the researcher. The accuracy of the data was ensured by tape recording interviews with participants’ agreement, as it is “the most practical method for gathering accurate data” (Lilleker 2003: 210), or alternatively by handwritten notes transcribed right after the interview to prevent mistakes due to memory loss.

Mitigating measures and ethical considerations

Whilst a lot of the literature on the interview method mentions the 'powerless researcher' (Morris 2009: 212) and the possibility of interviewees establishing a power relation (Goldstein 2002) due to their status as elite participants, the researcher generally did not face such issues. Most participants were very open about discussing their work – to the surprise of the researcher – and both interested and welcoming. Only on a few occasions did issues arise, so strategies were put in place to diffuse any patronising tone, which is known to be a potential issue with elite interviews (Welch et al. 2002). Extensive preparatory research contributed to shifting the power balance as well as mentioning the researcher's prior *stagiaire* experience (Winter-Spring 2010), which changed her positionality by framing her as more of an insider rather than an inquisitive researcher. The researcher worked for the European Commission DG External Relations (Relex) – Japan, Korea, Australia and New Zealand Unit – from January to June 2010 prior to beginning the PhD programme in Leeds. Given the temporary and rather low-level nature of the post, this was not felt to undermine the ethical nature of this research.

Another issue related to the fact that interviews were conducted for most part in 2011 and up to 2014 whereas the analytical framework requires longitudinal reflection over the defined period 1994 to 2013. As a result, the data runs the risk of representing only the EU's position of the last years under consideration. This is particularly relevant as the interview process was carried out shortly before China was removed from the list of developing countries in EU rules, in the context of a heightened sense of competition perceived by the EU towards China relating to SE disputes and general anxiety about EU downgrading triggered by Asia's rise. This bias also relates to a lack of institutional memory well-known to researchers of the EU (Algieri 2008: 66). It was remedied by recognising the issue and avoiding over-representing such views in the findings but instead confining them to the period they relate to. The use of documentary sources, which in contrast to the interviews cover the entirety of the thesis' timeframe was essential to balance out the more recent interview data.

This thesis complied with the University of Leeds ethical process and gained ethical approval for the conduct of this research. Along with the set of questions, a detailed information sheet and consent form were sent to each participants in the contact

email and were provided again on the day of the interview¹⁸. The information sheet informed the interviewee about the confidentiality guarantee, the use of the data collected, as well as the right to withdraw. It also provided the contact details of the researcher and her supervisors. The signed consent form provided informed approval to use the data for research purposes. According to university guidance, the interview data collected – both transcripts and recordings - was stored in a secure place only accessible to the researcher.

1.6.2.2. Documentary Sources

As Yin (2009: 103) notes, “because of their value, documents play an explicit role in any data collection in doing case studies”. Documentary search was essential, both before the elite interviews process was started in order to ensure appropriate preparation as well as afterwards in order to support findings with suitable data. Documentary search ensured that a framework of knowledge on EU-China energy and sustainable energy cooperation was in place to target the right participants for interview as well as making the interviews themselves as relevant as possible. This increased both the credibility of the researcher as well the quality of the data collected. It also enabled more reliable data analysis as the information collected was not taken at face value but embedded in a larger context of EU-China energy relations.

Three main types of documentary sources were used in this thesis. Firstly, the thesis relied on primary sources from the EU. These drew heavily on European-China policy communications, complemented with outputs of EU-China summits, and occasional Council of the EU documents. This first group of documents contributed to establishing the EU’s position towards China, from which energy and sustainability issues were then extracted. Other EU primary sources were needed however to complement the analysis, in particular EU energy policy documents – both on internal and external energy matters – and EU SD policy documents such as European Council conclusions or European environmental legislation. Embedding findings into

18 See Appendix B for the ethical form registering participants’ consent in taking part in the study.

EU energy cooperation and SD policies enabled the conduct of energy relations with China to be related to its larger drivers and interests and to weigh up the role of norms. EU development cooperation documents constituted the last type of main EU primary sources. Country Strategy Papers (CSP), National Indicative Programmes (NIPs), Multi-annual Indicative Programmes (MIPs), as well as specific project records for the EU's energy cooperation projects and programmes were all used to investigate the developing dimensions of EU-China cooperation, including SE relations as well as their impact. Finally, primary documents from the UN were largely used regarding SD development, as they constitute the basis on which the norm and development paradigm developed. This includes, but is not limited to the Brundtland report, Agenda 21, the 1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and the UNFCCC.

A second type of documentary search targeted websites and reports. Internet search is considered a relatively new means of collecting data (Yin 2009: 103, Bryman 2001: 379). In the case of EU-China energy cooperation, electronic resources were extensively used as they proved to be a great repository of information with which to investigate the EU-China cooperation itself: its institutions, its actors, its projects and programmes, which are otherwise absent from the more formal official EU documents or even from the literature itself at times. The Internet, with its nearly limitless sources of information uploaded by almost anyone poses issues of authenticity, credibility and representativeness for the researcher (Bryman 2001: 379). Taking this into account, only reliable websites with a proven relevance to the research were used, such as the DG Energy websites, which contained insights into the working of the Energy Dialogue, the priorities of its working groups and the themes of the Energy Conferences. Another useful source was the EUDC website, with its much more detailed information on the EU's sustainable energy cooperation with China. Considering the cross-cutting nature of energy and the large number of DGs involved in the cooperation, websites and documents from these DGs were also accessed. The availability of European Commission and EU projects sources was crucial for this work, however at the cost of the likelihood of seeing them disappear from the public domain with time, when websites were being updated or the projects ceased to exist. The main and most relevant websites consulted have therefore been electronically saved by the researcher and can be consulted upon request. A number of reports and official publications regarding energy from authoritative and reliable

sources such as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the IEA, the EU, and the UN were also used. The former two provided factual data relating to energy consumption and production in both the EU and China, while the latter was instrumental as a reference point on ownership and partnership as they both relate to development cooperation work.

Lastly, this thesis made use of several bodies of academic literature to complement, underpin or support the empirical findings. These included, but are not limited to, the literature regarding EU-China relations, EU-China trade matters and SE disputes, energy transitions, green growth, SD definitions and history, international development cooperation, and sociological approaches to norms. It should also be noted that most of the sources reflect Europe's role in the cooperation, reflecting this thesis' focus on the EU's side of the cooperation, and only take into account China's point of view when needed for the analysis. Whilst this is acknowledged as a necessary limitation imposed by the scope of study, significant contributions by Chinese scholars or sources have been utilised throughout the thesis. These proved absolutely necessary to develop a comprehensive understanding of the Chinese case, as well as EU-China relations.

1.6.3. Data Analysis

Data was analysed according to three different methods – interview coding, discourse analysis and contents analysis, the latter only marginally. By far the most used method was interview coding. Interview data was first transcribed from audio recordings to verbatim text records. Considering the large number of interviews and the fact that many of them proved more useful to map out the cooperation rather than for their specific accounts of EU-China energy cooperation, only those interviews from participants directly related to the cooperation were transcribed. Interview data was then analysed in the following stages – recognition, clarification, and coding (Rubin and Rubin 2005: 207). Firstly, transcripts were analysed to bring to the fore recurring themes and concepts that would hint at pertinent issues within EU-China energy cooperation. In a second stage, these key concepts and themes were clarified in order to establish with certainty their specific meaning. Follow-up interviews also significantly helped gain better insights where that was the case. Finally, interviews

were coded. Coding is considered to be one of the most popular qualitative data analysis methods and is defined as “replacing or substituting groups of words, phrases or sentences by letters or numbers” (Pierce 2008: 242). The PAI analytical framework indicates that normative intentions are to be looked for in the EU’s cooperation with third countries. The nine criteria of which it is composed acted as a guide for defining the themes in more detail, and included promoting sustainability and SD in cooperation with China as a policy objective or else via material interests, intentions to actively persuade China to adopt sustainability, and SD practices or intentions to support China’s ownership of SE measures. Coding was done by means of qualitative data analysis software NVivo. Considering the different levels of analysis required by the PAI framework – policy, conduct, and implementation – and the different actors involved in each, interviews were organised accordingly in different sets to enable them to be compared and contrasted. Findings were systematically triangulated with the relevant literature, and primary sources, when available, in order to look for corroboration (Pierce 2008), as using different data sets or ‘research strategies’ reinforces the reliability of the findings (Bryman 2001: 447)

The discourse analysis method was employed for criteria such as ‘legitimacy’, mainly relying on the analysis of primary sources. In line with the constructivist ontology of reality as a social construct, institutional discourse is taken to reflect meanings and intentions. Analysing the EU’s policy documents on China was considered the most appropriate method for identifying the nature of intentions supporting SE cooperation. Discourse analysis was complemented by contents analysis to first establish the presence and composition of the EU’s sustainability discourse with China.

1.7. Thesis Structure

This thesis is structured around eight chapters. Following this introductory chapter, *Chapter 2* presents the theoretical and analytical framework underpinning and forming the backbone of this thesis – the NPE approach and its corresponding PAI analytical framework. Its aim is to critically establish the relevance of Manners’ conceptualisation of the EU in assessing the EU’s promotion of SD with China, as well as the adequacy of the tripartite analytical approach to investigate the problem

at hand. In the first section, the chapter introduces a historical view of NPE as a tailored approach to studying the EU's normative influence in the world, building on the constructivist's normative understanding of IR and applied to the field of European Studies. The NPE theory itself is then comprehensively outlined, underlining its contribution to the field compared to other approaches but also outlining the numerous and ongoing debates both within and outside the field. These allow the analysis to critically evaluate NPE as an approach that has been continuously criticised but also cumulatively improved as an iterative construction, rather than fundamentally undermined by the same debates, confirming its relevance as a means to study the EU's norm promotion activities in the wider empirically validated world. In the second section of the chapter, Manners' tripartite framework is presented and justified in comparison with other available analytical tools. The three main facets of normative power – principles, actions, and impact – are detailed in turn along with their corresponding criteria, both from the point of view of Manners as well as in terms of their operationalisation to the case of the EU's SD promotion with China in the context of SE cooperation.

Chapter 3 then contextualises the research by providing a review of the three main bodies of academic literature this thesis draws from and intends to contribute to - the bodies of work on EU-China relations, the NPE and SD. By uncovering their respective contributions to the study of the EU's SE cooperation with China from a normative point of view, the chapter not only intends to present the level of knowledge achieved around the question but it also means to identify the gap this thesis aims to fill, located at the intersection of the three fields. This discussion is preceded by a short historical account of EU-China relations, which places the subject matter in its historical context and provides some perspective as to energy's relevance for EU-China cooperation as a whole.

The aim of *Chapter 4* is to explore the 'normalisation' of energy to provide insights into how energy – usually rather understood as a commodity or a resource – entered the realm of normative studies, which generally addresses principles of a moral or prescriptive quality. The main purpose of the chapter is to justify the choice of SE for the normative study of the EU's external relations by bringing to the fore its links with the SD norm, as well as its adoption by the EU as part of the operationalisation of the SD norm. This is carried out first by highlighting the scientific data which shows how the anthropogenic effects of fossil fuel contribute towards causing modern

climate change. A historical account of the translation of this realisation – the limits of human development – into the political sphere follows in the analysis, and presents how it underpinned the institution of SD as a development paradigm and norm in the global governance process. Detailing the process of articulating and finding ways to implement SD shows the centrality that RE and EE acquired as the two pillars of a sustainable form of development when it comes to energy. Finally, turning to the EU, and the process of formally committing to SD and then operationalising it, the chapter shows how here as well energy was ‘normalised’ as sustainable energy, and that RE and EE in particular were translated as operational principles for the implementation of SD within the EU.

The next three chapters 5, 6 and 7 involve the empirical application of Manners’ tripartite PAI framework to the EU’s SE cooperation with China. All three chapters follow the same pattern and are subdivided according to their three constitutive indicative criteria derived from Manners framework. *Chapter 5* on the ‘principles’ sustaining the EU’s SE cooperation with China assesses whether the promotion of SD for the sake of China constitutes the main rationale behind the cooperation. This is investigated from the three criteria defined by Manners – legitimacy, coherence, and consistency. Legitimacy analyses the EU’s sustainability discourse within its policy documents on China. It explores whether references to SE emanate from the EU’s commitment to promoting the SD norm by looking at the presence of links to universally accepted SD reference texts. Coherence then moves on to uncovering the role of material interests that could stand in contradiction with the normative commitment to SD in motivating the EU’s SE cooperation with China. This is carried out by assessing the drivers of the cooperation *within* the European Commission and DG Energy in particular as it is the main actor within the Commission on SE issues. Finally the study of consistency locates the assessment of EU motivation *across* European Commission DGs and weights the role of material interests against normative intentions, mapping out and evaluating all the main DGs involved in the cooperation.

Continuing the application of the tripartite framework, *Chapter 6* studies the ‘actions’ of the EU’s SE cooperation with China and in particular the actual conduct of energy relations. The aim is to determine in the context of the application of Manners’ persuasion, argumentation, and prestige/shame criteria whether the EU promotes SD using dialogue and engagement rather than force and coercion. ‘Persuasion’

starts by mapping out the institutionalisation process of EU-China energy relations and assesses whether it allows in the case study for the development of channels of cooperation for SE as a means to engage China on SD in a normative way. The chapter then turns to determining if the EU used successful argumentation and active convincing of the Chinese government to explicate the success of EU-China SE cooperation. The focus lies on establishing the extent of EU agency to explain this result. Eventually the sub-section on prestige and shame looks at symbolic enforcement of the SD norm. The prominent EU-China solar panel (PV) trade dispute, which saw the EU impose tariffs on Chinese solar panel imports in 2012, was selected as test case to examine if policy outcomes in the area are the result of the EU's normative agenda and promotion of environmental sustainability or rather trade and economic interests.

Following from the focus on intentions and then on the conduct of the cooperation in the two previous chapters, *Chapter 7* closes the application of the tripartite Manners framework to the EU's SE cooperation with China examining its practical implementation. The aim of this chapter is to determine if, through its joint SE projects and programmes (or platforms) with China, the EU encourages the adoption of SE for the sake of supporting China to achieve sustainable development in a way that is "other-empowering" and encourages "reflexive thinking" (Manners 2008: 59). This firstly involves analysing the EU's socialisation efforts by mapping out the landscape of SE platforms, which can act as socialisation agents into the use of SE, through which China can develop understanding and its own questioning. Secondly the operation of the cooperation is assessed for the extent to which it is carried out in partnership with China as opposed to being unilaterally managed by the EU (Manners 2009b: 4). Finally the chapter moves on to the last criteria and examines the platforms' activities for encouraging China's ownership in carrying out its own SE transition. The platforms are judged for their contribution to building the capacities of the relevant Chinese actors in fields necessary for achieving a SE transition.

Ultimately *Chapter 8* – the conclusion to the thesis – brings together the findings of all three empirical chapters – principles, actions, and impact – in order to conclude on the EU's status as a green normative power. The chapter provides both substantial findings on the relevance of Manners' NPE conceptualisation of the EU, based on this case study, as well as methodological findings on the tripartite PAI analytical framework, both of which constitute the backbone of the thesis. Policy

recommendations are presented towards the end of chapter 8 with a view to sharing the practical lessons emanating from the thesis. They elaborate on some of the essential steps to be put in place to ensure international SE cooperation does indeed contribute to furthering SD and does not deviate from it, by succumbing to material interests among other reasons. The chapter finishes by outlining some of the main avenues for future research emanating out of this work. Finally, the conclusion also outlines the main academic contributions in terms of originality made by the thesis.

CHAPTER 2 – NORMATIVE POWER EUROPE AS A THEORETICAL AND ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Introduction

This chapter presents both the theoretical and analytical framework suggested for the investigation into the EU's sustainable energy (SE) cooperation with China and how this reflects its commitment to the promotion of the sustainable development (SD) principle in the world. The main goal is therefore to discuss Manners' NPE conceptualisation of the EU and justify its relevance for this research as well as its corresponding tripartite 'principles-actions-impact' (PAI) analytical framework.

The chapter is therefore structured around two main parts. Firstly, a review of the 'Normative Power Europe' (NPE) approach is carried out in *Section One*. It traces its relation to constructivism, up to its connection with the European studies field, demonstrating its contribution as offering a norm-oriented understanding of the EU. The NPE concept itself as developed by its main architect Ian Manners is then presented in detail, highlighting its ontologically-defined explanation of the EU's identity followed by insights into NPE's empirical applicability through a review of past case studies. Whilst this offers a deeper understanding of NPE and its conceptualisation of the EU's role in the world, as well as its practical use, an overview of the main criticisms scholars have raised against it allows some central points of contention to be raised. A discussion of some of the main debates within the NPE field itself is then shown to reframe the discussion around NPE as the gradual enrichment and improvement of the concept instead of fundamentally undermining Manners' understanding of the EU. *Section Two* moves on to the presentation of Manners' tripartite analytical framework, firstly establishing its relevance for the purpose of this study in comparison to other existing analytical approaches. The tripartite framework is then described and its application explained. Each of its three facets (principles, actions and impact) and their three sets of corresponding criteria are both presented as defined by Manners but their operationalisation is also introduced in order to show its application to the EU-China

SE cooperation case. Finally, the conclusion brings all the investigations together and assesses NPE and the PAI framework to be adequate theoretical and analytical tools for the purpose of this work.

2.2. Normative Power Europe as Theoretical Framework

2.2.1. Analysing the EU and its External Relations: From Constructivism to 'Normative Power Europe'

With its relatively recent emergence in the field when it comes to international relations (IR) theories, constructivism is often presented as the newest addition to IR. Inspired by sociology and philosophy and reaching back into other theoretical traditions such as the English School (Checkel 1998: 324), this approach arose in the 1980s in the context of the end of the Cold War and of the rigidity of the bipolar world, which until then had great influence in the understanding of the international sphere. Constructivism positioned itself quite in opposition to previous approaches, triggering one of the most significant debates in the discipline (Zehfuss: 2). At its heart lies the critique of a rationalist approach to IR as adopted by (neo)realists and (neo)liberals.

Although there is no consensual definition of constructivism, Adler (1997: 322) suggested understanding it as revolving around the view that 'the manner in which the material world shapes and is shaped by human action and interaction depends on dynamic normative and epistemic interpretations of the material world.' What appears in this definition is constructivism's rejection of set assumptions about human nature that would unchangeably determine the way IR takes place. On the contrary, constructivism stresses the constructed nature of reality by a process of intersubjective interaction between agents and structures. Actors are motivated by ideas and identities which are themselves at their origin defined by interests instead of being considered as exogenously given, by, for example, the anarchical nature of the world. Identities, ideas and interests therefore change in this process of interaction. Consequently, 'social constructivism seeks to account for what neo-

utilitarianism assumes: the identity and/or interests of actors' (Ruggie 1998: 4). Translated into IR, constructivism is concerned with looking into this 'black box' of identities, ideas and interests. In that regard, norms play an important role in unpacking identities. They are considered to constitute agents, by 'providing them an understanding of their interests' (Checkel 1998: 326) and overall to be 'causal insofar as they regulate behaviour' (Wendt 1999: 182).

However, before any specifically normative conceptualisation of the EU could arise, effectively linking the constructivist research agenda to the study of the EU, the European studies field first faced the challenge of even defining its main object of study. The EU challenges many of the elements on which IR studies is based, such as a state-centric approach, power, and interests to name but a few. In fact, as Zielonka (1998: 11) wrote 'the Union is anything but a traditional state actor: it has no proper government, no fixed territory, no army or a traditional diplomatic service – it even lacks a normal legal status.' Delors (1985) in his time as president of the European Commission qualified the EU as 'unidentified political object'. Scholars who researched the question have qualified the EU at best as a 'multiperspectival polity' (Ruggie 1993), 'post-modern polity' (Caporaso 1996), but also at worst as a 'beast' (White 2001; Bretherton and Vogler 1999; Risse-Kappen 1996), a 'strange superpower' (Cameron 2007) and 'pregnant with strange contradictions and paradoxes' (Zielonka 1998: 11). It has in fact proved so difficult to agree on the nature of the EU that it has been labelled *sui generis*. As White (2004: 15) concludes, 'while it may be possible to characterise the EU by reference to possible analogies – most obviously states and/or international organisations – the EU is sufficiently distinct from both of these extant institutions to be labelled a unique type of international actor or *sui generis*.' The EU's difference also applies to its external relations. EU foreign policy is first and foremost the result of a foreign policy-building process born out of 'a combination of external demands and opportunities, and political will and imagination on the part of its founders' (Bretherton and Vogler 1999: 28) and therefore hardly fits a traditional understanding of foreign policy. In fact, the EU's role as global actor is the expression of the evolving nature of the integration process over the past sixty years and it is still a work in progress as the 2010 establishment of the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the latest Lisbon Treaty provisions show.

This unique nature of the EU's foreign affairs and thus its international dimension has translated into disagreements as to how to theorise the EU as a foreign policy actor. To this day, there no single grand theory capable of tackling this task in a way that would rally consensus. Instead we find a vast corpus of literature concerned with the matter, from which it is difficult if not impossible to determine with certainty which approach is the best overall. A historical account of the evolution and progress of theoretical work on European foreign policy is provided by Ginsberg (1999: 432) addressing just this situation, starting with integration theories such as neofunctionalism, followed in the 1970s by a growth of empirical works. It is only the end of the Cold War which gave rise to a new type of analysis focused specifically on European foreign policy. Yet in spite of a second wave of conceptual works, Ginsberg notes the broad dissatisfaction of scholars with the state of the art.¹⁹ In fact, most of the fields or strands of theories had their own take on the analysis of Europe's global role. International relations theories represented essentially by realist and liberal paradigms occupied centre-stage for a long time. Even though contributions based on both these approaches are not to be denied, under such views the EU's global role as an autonomous entity capable of achieving impact independently from member states could not be accommodated, thereby fundamentally limiting the scope for studying a global role of its own. Views of prominent realist scholars such as Bull (1983: 151), stating that "Europe" is not an actor in international affairs, and does not seem likely to become one' seem definitive in this regard. European integration theories on the contrary specifically grew out of the European integration process. However, they often focused on explaining the emergence of foreign policy and on the processes and actors involved. Moreover, as offshoots of old liberalism and realism, neofunctionalism and intergovernmentalism encountered the same limitations that grew out of this old divide. Some approaches have however bypassed the problem by taking on the EU's global role from a different perspective and turning towards the EU's unique foreign policy set-up. On the one hand, the notion of 'actorness' introduced by Sjøstedt (1977) and frequently revisited thereafter, and on the other Allen and Smith's (1990) concept of 'presence', have exemplified this trend. Yet while the former explains the EU's capacity to have an impact in international affairs and the latter the EU's international salience, and

¹⁹ For precise references to scholarly studies, see Ginsberg (1999: 432).

its being praised for transcending traditional IR limitations, both are concerned with investigating whether or not the EU has an established position in world affairs. As such they position themselves a step prior to examining the impact of the EU's international role.

Manners' approach of considering the EU as a locus of ethical responsibility towards third countries, embodied in the promotion of norms, can be seen as emerging from a body of literature that decisively embraced the EU's difference and conceptualised it accordingly. Originating in the 1970s with Duchêne's (1972) conceptualisation of the EU as a civilian power, this body of literature grew, adding to the conceptualisation of the EU's global role concepts such as 'superpower in the making' (Galtung 1973; Buchan, 1993), or more simply 'superpower' (McCormick 2007), but also 'quiet superpower' (Moravcsik 2002), a transformative power (Leonard 2005), a soft power (Nye 2002, 2005), a market power (Damro 2012 2015), and perhaps more surprisingly 'metrosexual power' (Khanna 2004). Even though each develops a specific understanding of the EU's global presence, the 'EU-as-actor' approach as some scholars define this category overall takes the EU as a new form of international actor. It is particularly interesting for the purpose of this study for it not only acknowledges EU actorness but also the specific nature of its role. Others addressed the role of norms related to the EU (Cochrane 1999; Nicolaïdis and Howse 2002) but Manners' NPE understanding of the EU was the first to define the EU's unique foreign policy role according to its norm promotion activities.

As such, the concept of NPE connects with the literature arguing for a different kind of power, understood as the ability to induce change. Considering the role of the EU as that of changing perceptions of normality, Manners' work is to be related to authors such as Leonard (2005), who has looked at the EU as having a transformative impact, and more generally to the literature revolving around Wolfers' (1962) milieu goals type of impact. The comparison with Leonard is telling of Manners' specific contribution to that field. While Leonard suggests that the EU has the power to 'reshape the world' in connection to empirical considerations, Manners builds on a constructivist ontology to relate the EU's influence directly to the use of norms. He thereby overcomes the long-lasting debate on whether the EU can be called an international actor at all and moves on to considering the EU's influence as a tangible fact. Most notably, his approach enables focusing on the *modus operandi*

of that influence – norms – and the concrete manifestation of that power induced by the use and diffusion of norms (Postel-Vinay 2008: 42).

2.2.2. 'Normative Power Europe' – Conceptualising the EU's Different Role in the World

As much as the Cold War paradigm called for assessment of the EU's international role as a civilian power to reflect the nascent yet bipolar-constrained EU foreign policy role, the end of this influence and the transformations this brought to the face of international relations justified for some the need to reconsider the EU's role in a new light. Yet instead of doing so with a focus on empirical capabilities, either military or economic, or cultural type, in a bid to present an outlook completely independent from traditional conceptualisations of the EU's role, the rise of constructivism in the field of IR suggested instead looking at the power of ideas. Transcending what was perceived as a sterile dichotomy between civilian and military power and with it the 'unhealthy concentration on how much like a state the EU looks' (Manners 2002: 239), constructivism suggests that reality exists as an intersubjective construction born out of the exchange of ideas, values and principles.

Applied to understanding of the EU's role, ideational concerns do not seek to add yet another means to exert power to the list, but open the door for a fundamental re-evaluation of the way the EU and its role in the world is envisioned. In his seminal 2002 article '*Normative power Europe: A contradiction in terms?*' Ian Manners boiled it down to the concept of normative power. The EU in this view is to be best conceived as a normative power, whose specific role in the world translates in 'its ability to shape conceptions of "normal" in international relations' (Manners 2002: 239). Like Duchêne's civilian power approach, some scholars regard NPE as advocating the EU as a novel kind of actor. While the former remains bound to sources of power of an empirical nature, as well as Westphalian conceptions of IR, Manners suggests the EU's 'real' power rather lies in the ideational sphere.

As much as it represents a break from previous conceptualisations, NPE is far from being the first attempt at recognising the connection between norms – and by extension ideational factors – with power related to the EU. In fact, Civilian Power

Europe from which NPE aims to distance itself in particular, recognises the potential for power contained in ideas. In the case of the EU, the main difference put forward by Manners is that norms and ideational elements at large are not just another source of power but are in fact an emanation of the EU's difference as an IR actor. In other words, norms are not simply a means but a determining element of the EU's identity.

Manners explains this difference as originating from the unique combination of three main elements - the EU's normative difference, its commitment to norms (its 'normative basis' in Manners' terminology), and the diffusion of norms in its external relations. The normative difference itself is constituted by three different aspects, which combined together are quite unique to the EU - the historical context and Europe's war-torn past against which the EU has been established, its hybrid polity characterised by a mixture of 'supranational and international forms of governance which transcends Westphalian norms' (King 1999:313 in Manners 2002: 240), and its political-legal constitution. The EU's normative difference is then further expressed through a commitment to norms and values enshrined throughout its laws. This predisposes the EU to act as a diffuser of norms using a set of factors to carry out its commitment to norms in its relations with the world. Consequent on the EU's normative difference, the EU has a distinctive international identity, which translates in practice into the diffusion of norms. Contrary to other approaches, NPE does not define the EU's international role according to the instruments it uses (civilian or military in previous conceptualisations) but according to what it is. Accordingly, Manners suggests 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' (Manners 2002: 252).

Concretely, this translates into a normatively-informed foreign policy and external relations as well as a commitment to the diffusion of norms. According to Manners the EU is a normative power not simply because it is predisposed to behave as such, but because it also acts normatively. NPE therefore suggests looking at the EU's norm diffusion role in the world. Manners identifies what he calls five 'core' norms - peace, liberty, democracy, rule of law, human rights - and also four 'minor' norms (because more contested) - social solidarity, anti-discrimination, sustainable development, and good governance (Manners 2002: 242-243). Each of them is to be found in EU treaties and legal texts, declarations and policies since the 1950s and

are at the centre of the EU's normative efforts. Their promotion in the world is a token of the EU's value-based identity.

2.2.3. A Concept with Empirical Applicability

A wealth of studies since have used NPE to look at the role norms and values play in the EU's foreign relations. To demonstrate the EU's normatively driven foreign policy, Manners originally took the example of the abolition of death penalty and showed how the EU pursued an abolitionist policy, paying attention to the international diffusion of norms. Since then, empirically, both the geographical focus as well as the breadth of policy studies have greatly expanded to encompass neighbourhood countries – the Balkan countries (Chandler 2008; Juncos 2011 on Bosnia, Ciambra 2008 on Macedonia), the Caucasus (Stewart 2011), North Africa (Martinez 2008) – but also Africa (Sicurelli 2010; Storey 2006), the Middle East (Gordon and Pardo 2015; Demmelhuber and Kaunert 2015), and ACP countries at large (Langan 2012). The focus on norms has also been researched regarding countries which are known for not sharing the EU's attachment to norms. As the EU's powerful neighbour and important player on the world scene, Russia has been used as a prime test-case for the EU's normative policy, with Forsberg and Herd (2005) examining the context of Russia and the Chechen conflict, and Romanova (2016) considering human rights.

More recently, China figured prominently as an interesting litmus test for the normative power approach. Studies often focused specifically on the human rights promotion (Balducci 2010; Shen 2015) and the challenges of promoting values China does not necessarily consider as universally valid. Most authors investigating the reality of the EU's commitment to norms against an economic and political giant which consistently expresses its resistance to any initiative perceived as external interference therefore draw critical conclusions regarding the EU's approach. Studies such as Mattlin's (2012) offers insights into the reasons for failure, and often point at growing economic interests as a serious hurdle to the realisation of the normative agenda, whereas Holslag (2010b) situates the 'China challenge' posed to the EU in the context of emerging countries generally. Often the focus is on the fundamentally differing values of China and the EU, such as in Jian's (2008) contribution, with recent

interest in how this plays out in Africa where China offers an alternative to the norm-driven cooperation promoted by the EU²⁰. But even though posed as one of the most serious challenges to the EU's normative position, a study by Lee (2012) shows the normative power approach can also be applied even to more openly reluctant partners such as North Korea.

Policy studies have extended to include the EU's neighbourhood (Haukkala 2008), development (Birchfeld 2011), education (Kleibrink 2011), and trade policies (Orbie 2011; Syzmanski and Smith 2005). Generally speaking, NPE has generated a wealth of research – including theses and student interest at large – creating an entire field of studies and entire volumes on the topic (such as Lucarelli and Manners 2006; Tocci 2008; Whitman 2011). It extends to considering perceptions and reactions of third countries towards 'normative power Europe'. The concept has also been used specifically to look at 'green' policies. Lightfoot and Burchell (2005) first looked at whether the EU could be seen as a normative power in the field of sustainable development. They investigated the operationalisation of the concept of SD at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) and used Manners' approach to establish the EU's role in shaping the outcome of the conference. Since then, a number of studies have addressed the array of policy fields related to environmental sustainability, as comprehensively detailed in *Chapter 3*. Their contribution was to explore the SD norm from different policy angles – biofuels, fisheries or GMOs. Not only did they thereby develop academic understanding of the EU's commitment to environmental sustainability in the world, but they also expanded the empirical applicability of NPE to sustainability issues.

2.2.4. Critics and Debates

From the onset, Manners introduced his concept of NPE as having a prescriptive quality to it, expressed in that 'the EU should act to extend its norms into the international system' (Manners 2002: 252). However as Sjørusen notes, 'the fact that it corresponds very closely to the EU's own description of its international role could

20 See Kaya (2014); Liu (2011); Taylor (2011) and Barton (2009).

be enough to set the alarm bells ringing' (Sjursen 2006: 235). Critics consequently point at the concept being closer to a political or even ideological concept rather than an analytical one. Criticised is the fact that NPE essentially promotes a positive vision of the EU, thus leaving NPE scholars vulnerable to being blamed for their uncritical bias towards the EU's role in the world (Forsberg 2011: 1187). In that sense Pollock (2012) argues normative power offers a rather heroic depiction of the EU as an inherently normative actor which in fact eludes the reality of living in a material world.

Critics such as Hyde-Price (2006: 217) dismiss this sympathy towards the EU which consists in claiming that the EU's weakness, defined as the lack of coercive instruments, declaratory politics, and soft power, is in fact its greatest strength. He instead offers a neorealist alternative according to which the EU is in fact merely 'the institutional repository for the "second-order" concerns of its member states', whereby ethical and normatively-informed policies are not to be attributed to the EU itself, but are pursued only if not conflicting with the material interests of member states (ibid: 222-223). As Kagan (2003) did before him, Hyde-Price refutes the 'liberal-idealist' basis of NPE or civilian power Europe as showing naivety in neglecting the role of power in IR. His view, on the contrary, re-introduces material and rationalist elements in the balance.

Without entirely dismissing the constructivist emphasis on norms, Youngs (2004) suggests instead combining both ideational and rational concerns by looking at the presence of the strategic rationale investing the EU's normative agenda. Avoiding questioning the sincerity of the EU's attachment to norms, Youngs demonstrates by means of security infused, human rights policy examples that both norms and interests co-exist in the EU's foreign policy. Similarly, Merlingen (2007) posits that the EU's agenda is infused with strategic calculation and material interest, whilst Storey equates it to a 'mercenary' use of norms (Storey 2006). He argues that while promoting norms with third countries – good governance in this case – the EU in fact promotes its own reading of a specific norm: the European neoliberal agenda. Whether normative behaviour is interpreted as the instrumentalisation of a genuine attachment to norms or more bluntly as a 'hypocritical smokescreen for the pursuit of naked and short-term gain' (Storey 2006: 334), such contributions illustrate the prevalent critique towards NPE as overlooking the less benevolent face of a European Union capable of engaging in strategic calculations and interest-based

behaviour. In a nutshell, these critics understand the EU as engaging in power politics and being in fact much closer to a traditional power.

The dichotomy between norms and interests introduced in Manners' NPE is one that has been a recurring topic of attention. Diez (2005) saw the reason for this in the fact that norms and interests are tightly connected and difficult to disentangle from one another. Manners, while underlining that in its purest form, normative power is 'ideational rather than material or physical' (2009c: 11) recognised that in reality, normative justification coexists next to material concerns, so that justification and reflexivity must be applied in order to not infringe on the normative nature of the EU's status. He notably addressed specifically the tension between normative and security interests and how this impacts on the EU's putative normative power status (Manners 2006a; 2006b). Others in the field of NPE have similarly raised this point, such as De Zutter (2010: 1109) openly making the point that 'norms [cannot] be considered free by definition from interests'. Considering this phenomenon, Aggestam (2008: 8) suggested acknowledging that interests and normative considerations are intertwined and that the EU simply has mixed motives. Laïdi advanced the argument that the EU only has a preference for norms, which leaves open the possibility for interests to be taken into account too. This would overcome the idealisation of the EU 'whose preference for norms is seen as a guarantee of its good faith and disinterestedness' (Laïdi 2008: 18) and around which criticism commonly revolves. Others like Langan (2012) and Del Sarto (2016) produced a harsher critique by claiming that the EU in fact instrumentalises its normative credentials and the promotion of norms in order to reach material gains.

This debate points at the dangers of endorsing the EU as what Jørgensen and Laatikainen (2004) have labelled a 'force-for-good' type of identity simply on the grounds that it is a normative actor. They instead argue that self-image cultivated by the EU as being unconcerned with its own interest is in fact the result of purposively playing down its own interests in its representation of itself. Aggestam (2008: 7) critically argues that such representation as disinterested actor has a tendency to create a separation between the EU as morally superior and the others 'as ruled by the "law of the jungle"', which ultimately risks alienating them. This conveys a communitarian approach instead of the cosmopolitan values and principles the EU sets itself to promote in its foreign policy. Whilst looking into the power dimension of

the NPE discourse, Diez (2005) already established this process of 'othering'. Works considering specifically the reactions of third countries to the EU's NPE discourse lend empirical support to Aggestam's argument. Taking the case of China, it appears that the normative power discourse is not only criticised for asserting European superiority and encouraging hypocrisy, but that it is altogether rejected on the grounds it only applies to the post-Westphalian world (Wang 2009). Similarly, in the case of Russia, there is a sense of certain values being imposed and it not being treated as equal. To a country with a rather realist mind-set, the EU's pursuit of norms is taken as a cover for promoting a more interest-based agenda (Headley 2015). Even though known for being critical of the EU's diplomacy and particularly unwelcoming to what is perceived as intrusion in its internal affairs, Russian perceptions can still be seen as reflecting the antagonising potential of the EU's NPE approach.

More generally it also echoes the belief that 'Europe is no longer a universal concept' (Wang 2009: 70), and the challenges posed by the global shift of power puts the normative power approach under threat from competing actors and approaches. In line with this change, most recently scholars have turned to researching whether Europe and its current normative emphasis is 'future proof' (Gerrit 2009: 77). Based on a study on the historicity of normative power, Postel-Vinay (2008: 49) synthesises the situation of Europe as the one where it 'was a global norm-setter that became a provincial norm-setter after engendering the European Community: it has not yet adjusted itself to this historical change of scale'. According to her, Europe has avoided confronting itself with this situation and refused the debate on power, with its attachment to the normative power argument the proof of this reluctance. The 'future test' for Aggestam is the capacity for the EU's normative power to withstand the reality of a multipolar world (Aggestam 2009). Without adhering to a Hobbesian vision of IR, she also calls for engagement with the power debate and a more 'rounded and multidimensional analysis of power' (ibid: 27). Taking a realist stance on the question, Toje (2009) argues that Europe's influence can only be successful in a world becoming more like itself, yet the multi-polar world in the making is not likely to become one of liberal democracies. As a result, 'normative power without hard power to back it up is like a velvet glove without an iron fist' (Toje 2009: 48) and normative power is doomed to be ill-adapted in a world dominated by the return of power politics. In summary, this group of scholars are critical of the sustainability of

the NPE model which is thus reduced to the product of a past era. According to them, international rebalancing will render normative power superfluous and will call for a change of paradigm.

2.2.5. 'Normative Power Europe' as Iterative Construction of a Concept

In the nearly fifteen years since the concept of NPE was first introduced in Manners seminal 2002 article, scholarly work around the concept has been prolific, having addressed the topic from a large variety of angles revolving around key tenets of Manners' work. Whilst some regard this interest to have in fact created a shapeless body of literature or even contesting of the NPE concept within its own field, other scholars rather see it as a continuous enrichment of the concept and its application. As this thesis argues, these additions can be considered as improving and expanding the understanding of NPE instead of undermining it in a process of iterative construction.

It is both one of the earliest and most persistent topics present throughout the NPE-related literature to clarify what constitutes a normative power, as Diez (2005: 626-628) expressly set out to do. More specifically, scholars established the distinction between NPE from other conceptualisations of the EU addressed in the differentiation from the concept of 'civilian power Europe'. While Manners introduced his concept as a clear distinction from both civilian and military power, other scholars such as Diez (2005) have either argued that 'civilian power Europe' is a particular form of normative power, or agreed with Zielonka (2008) that normative power can be considered under this type of approach. Scholars generally agree on the proximity between both, yet the difference lies in whether norms are considered as another means in civilian power's toolbox or whether instead the diffusion of norms is the expression of a normative difference of the EU. Claiming the EU is a normative power by its essence opened another debate as to whether normative power status is indeed only reserved to the EU. Here the difference with the US has been widely considered by scholars such as Smith (2011). Manners and Diez have made use of it to investigate the US' use of norms and its connection with the belief in American exceptionalism. They have notably looked at the diffusion of certain types of norms and how they can be used to serve communitarian types of interests – in a word, to

show the instrumentalisation of norms as opposed to the EU's more benevolent and 'ordinary' use of norms (Manners 2006c, Diez and Manners 2007). Others however have argued that the status of normative power is not solely reserved to the EU and that other countries make use of norms in their foreign policy. Tocci's (2008) volume for example investigates the concept with regards to foreign policies of India, Russia, US, and China. A variety of contributions on the topic followed, with very diverse views on the EU's predisposition to act in a normative way – a core claim of NPE. A relative consensus however seems to have emerged in the one of the strands of the NPE literature around the need for reflexivity in the EU's use of norms as mentioned by Manners himself (2007; 2006c) but also Diez (2004, 2005). Such reflexivity has been advocated both by proponents of a different approach, such as Aggestam's (2008) 'ethical power Europe', and also by Manners himself, in particular in connection with the EU's militarisation and the challenge this represents for the EU's normative identity²¹.

This latter issue raised in itself a further debate as to the identity of a normative power, which Whitman (2013: 177) in his own review on the NPE scholarship relates to a later or "neo-normative research agenda". Does it allow for military instruments as long as these are used in a normatively considerate way, or do these contradict a normative identity altogether? Ultimately this leads back to the understanding of power deriving from the concept of NPE and knowing where to locate the power dimension of normative power Europe. Is it the means (military, civilian, normative), the identity, and the actions, or the representation and discursive construction of a normative actor which constitute the power of such an actor? Diez suggested adding yet another dimension looking at the discursive power of representation as a normative power (Diez 2005), while one further approach has been to consider the EU a 'vanishing mediator' whose power lies in changing identities, becoming less and less relevant as the transformation reaches more and more actors and ultimately vanishes altogether (Nicolaïdis 2004).

A "third wave" (Whitman 2013: 185) of NPE analysis looks at the concept from an unusually critical point of view, as Whitman argues they question NPE not as a

21 See Manners (2006a); (2006b)

concept but as a starting point. Scholars such as Parker and Rosamond (2013) clarify NPE as being on the one hand a distinctive characterisation of the EU, and on the other, a tool to assess its international role. This can be linked to the multiplicity of levels behind the meaning of 'normative power', as Manners himself identified as threefold. The first one relates to normative theory, the second to normative power as a form of power (*pouvoir*), and the third as a type of international actor (*puissance*) (Manners 2012: 192). Others like Diez (2013: 194) suggest the concept of hegemony better reflects the EU's identity, as it manages to solve some of the key debates in the NPE field, including the role of interests and inconsistent behaviour.

From this short overview it not only appears that NPE gave rise to a myriad of parallel, eclectic, yet for most part interconnected debates, but most importantly perhaps that no consensual definition of the concept emerged. As a result, the concept of NPE is seen as debated, contested, blurry, and even 'a semantically empty notion' (Pace 2007). This can be explained by the variety of key themes themselves being highly contested, with multiple meanings in the field of IR such as that of power, and by the apparent contradiction of conflating terms such as normative and power. As Forsberg (2011: 1198-99) sums it up, 'a good deal of these problems stem from the multiple meanings for the key concepts of "normative" and "power"'. The apparent confusion over numerous themes springing from the concept of NPE can however be seen as part of a particularly dynamic engagement in the iterative construction of a new conceptualisation of the EU's role in world affairs. Manners himself contributed more than 15 articles and papers, engaging in debates and responding directly to some key issues such as his answer to Diez on the power invested in representation as a normative power (Manners 2006c).

The iterative aspect becomes particularly clear when looking at some of the most recent scholarship. The continued criticism within the NPE debate about its inherent difficulty in accounting for the presence of interests has been addressed by scholars like Martin-Maze (2015). He suggests seeing norms and interests as two sides of the same coin, using Bourdieu's structural constructivism to overcome the sterile dichotomy he argues social constructivism brought about. Others, like Orbie and Khorana (2015), and Parker and Rosamond (2013), explain the recurrence of interests in empirical NPE studies as being related to the EU's market liberal norms, another unaccounted-for element of its identity. These contribute to finding ways of

reconciling NPE with the presence of interests and improve the analytical value of NPE. Even Damro's (2015) most recent conceptualisation of the EU as a market power, though quite far from Manners' normative approach, claims flexibility in order to be compatible with – among others – more ideational views on the EU's international identity.

Some of the latest contributions to the NPE debate introduced another new dimension by expanding the concept to include the so-far "*terra incognita*" (Chaban et al 2015) view of norm takers or receivers. Kavalski (2013; 2014) suggests including in the definition of an NPE the impact of norm promotion on norm takers and in particular the EU's recognition as a normative power. Research seems to have focused on the Asian point of view. Hoang (2016) investigated the EU's normative power status through trade relations with Vietnam, and a special issue of the Asia-Europe Journal was dedicated to further addressing NPE from the perceptions of Asian countries. Scholars like Chaban and Holland (2015) and Stumbaum (2015) explore this added relational characterisation of NPE and thereby underpin the continued – even if modified – relevance of the NPE concept. Finally, Birchfield's 2013 article suggesting NPE as a framework for evaluating EU policy formation helps move away from the ongoing "essentialist theoretical debates" (907) around the NPE concept itself and rather investigate its relevance as an analytical tool to advance our understanding of the EU's external relations. Altogether these new approaches to the NPE discussion, instead of undermining NPE, take it outside of its original boundaries, and as such they are seen to support the continued significance of Manners' norm-focused conceptualisation of the EU through their attempts at improving it.

2.3. Normative Power Europe as Analytical Framework

2.3.1. From Theory to Empirics

'It is one thing to say that the EU is a normative power by virtue of its hybrid polity consisting of supranational and international forms of governance; it is another

to argue that the EU acts in a normative (i.e. ethically good) way.' (Manners 2008: 45)

As has been addressed in the previous section, the NPE approach developed by Manners is built on the premise that the EU is by nature a different type of actor (Manners 2002: 240). The NPE as an understanding of the EU is about conceptualising this difference, in particular relating it to the role of the EU as an international actor. It implies that a different nature should give rise to a correspondingly different type of role in the world and that as such, the EU is to be best conceived as acting as a norm promoter. This conceptualisation of the EU's role thus makes a direct connection between what the EU *is* and how that should translate in its external relations. Even if many empirical studies were conducted on that basis, only later did NPE become formulated into an analytical framework aimed at providing informed guidelines for judging whether the EU does indeed *act* as a normative actor. This enterprise culminated in the detailed presentation by Manners of a tripartite framework (Manners 2009b). This framework has specifically been designed as an analytical tool for judging the EU's norm promotion and its quality as a normative type of actor in the world.

A detailed and norm-focused framework is needed in order to obtain conclusive results on the matter. The tripartite framework has been applied several times by Manners himself relating to the social dimension of trade policies (2009d) and to the European Neighbourhood Policy (2010), as well as by other scholars like Orbie (2011) and Birchfeld (2011), on the topics of labour standards promotion through trade and EU development policy respectively, and Niemann and De Wekker (2010) regarding democracy and good governance norms promotion in Moldova. The tripartite analytical framework is however not the only method brought forward by scholars of NPE. Other approaches include Forsberg's (2011), who suggests looking at five features of normative power – normative identity, normative interest, normative behaviour, normative means of power, and normative outcomes – and De Zutter's (2010) whose four-step methodology 'spots' a normative power by looking at material conditions, identity and role, the assessment of a normative power's impact by other actors, and the actual impact of the norm promotion. Whilst both these frameworks make important contributions to the field of NPE, it nevertheless seems that they are rather preoccupied with determining the identity of the EU as a

normative actor, whereas Manners' method is specifically designed to test the normative quality of the EU as a type of actor by investigating whether the EU *acts* as a normative actor. In contrast the two other methods are addressing whether the EU *is* a normative actor.

2.3.2. The Tripartite Analytical Framework and its Application

'We must judge the EU's creative efforts to promote a more just, cosmopolitical world in terms of its principles, actions and impact.' (Manners, 2008: 47)

In the effort to translate the concept of NPE into one that can be empirically tested, Manners introduced the tripartite analytical framework (2007; 2008; 2009a; 2009b) which has been visually translated by the author of this research below in Figure 1. Drawing from moral philosophy, Manners suggest using the three procedural normative ethics – virtue, deontological, and consequentialist ethics – as a guide in establishing a framework for judging the EU's normative status, each of them locating the normative power of the EU at a different stage (Manners, 2008). Virtue ethics indicates an actor is to be deemed normative by looking at its character (principles), deontological ethics by looking at its actions (actions), and consequentialist ethics at the consequences of its actions (impact). Applying this to the case of the EU specifically, this implies looking at the principles, actions, and impact of the promotion of the EU's normative principles²². As a further guideline, Manners associates each stage with a maxim – 'live by example', 'be reasonable', and 'do least harm' – intended to judge the way in which the EU promotes such principles (2008). Manners (2008; 2009b) suggests for each criterion three further and more specific criteria – legitimacy, coherence, and consistency; persuasion, argumentation, and the conferral of prestige and shame; and finally socialisation, partnership, and ownership.

²² The term "normative principles" will be used throughout this work to refer to the five major (peace, liberty, democracy, rule of law and human rights) and four minor principles (solidarity, anti-discrimination, sustainable development and good governance) - also referred to as core norms and objectives - as identified by Manners (2002).

In terms of application of the framework, this involves any study looking into all three of: principles, actions, and impact (Manners 2009c). The tripartite framework is intended to reveal interpretations of the construction of principles, actions, and impact as they are created and recreated by the EU (Manners 2009c). In the spirit of normative critique as advocated by Manners, not only should the interaction between the three stages be analysed but the claims for normative principles, actions, and impact should be compared against each other. This should bring to light potential 'convenient self-perceptions', constructions, and discursive rhetorical practices (2009c: 19). For the sake of comprehensiveness of this critical approach, comparisons of the EU with other examples at all three stages should also be performed. Considering that this would considerably expand the scope of this thesis however, and since it is beyond the application of the framework *per se*, this aspect will not be researched in this specific work.

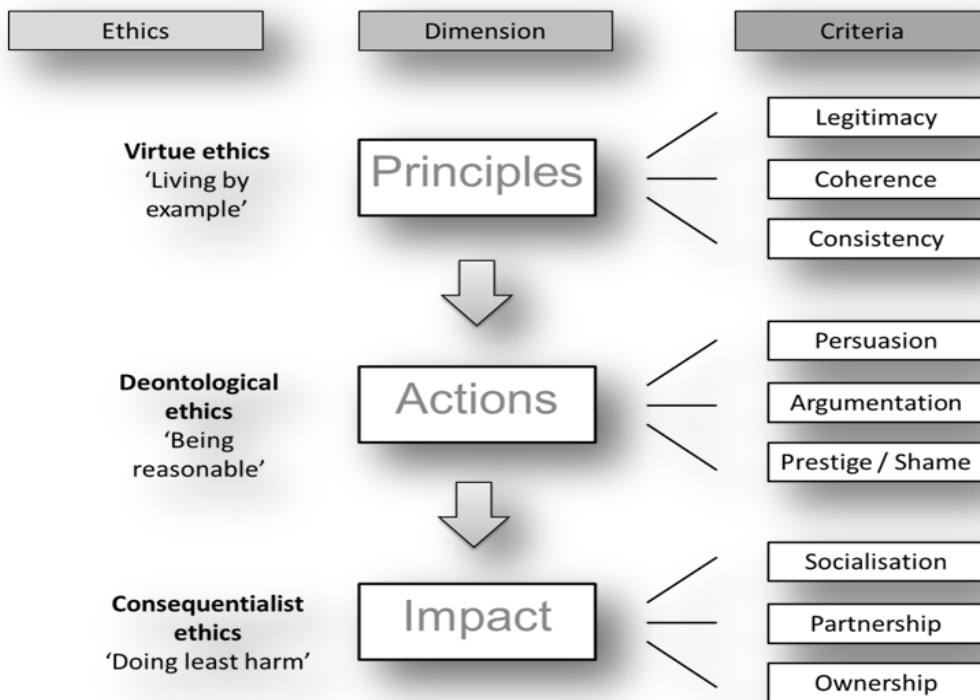


Figure 1 - The tripartite analytical framework

(Source: Author's visualisation of Manners' tripartite framework developed in Manners 2008; 2009b)

The analytical strategy for applying the framework, as termed by Shen (2011: 45) in her own application of NPE to her case study, will therefore dedicate one empirical chapter for each of the three facets of normative power (principles, actions, and impact). The analysis within these chapters follows an integrated approach in the sense that the EU's SE cooperation with China - from policy, actions to implementation - forms the basis on which the analysis takes place as opposed to being addressed separately. Eventually each of the pathways will be weighed against each other in the *Conclusion Chapter 8* in order to produce findings relative to the EU's normative identity when it comes to its SD promotion commitment with China. Before that, each of these facets will be investigated through the three sets of criteria defined by Manners (Manners 2009b). They will not only be the object of individual assessment but they will also be looked at as an ensemble in order to determine if the EU is normative in each of the three facets. However, as the framework has been formulated in an intentionally generic way so as to be applicable for the nine normative principles identified by Manners as constitutive of the EU's normative identity (Manners 2009b: 3), operationalization to apply specifically to the SD norm and the case of EU-China SE relations was necessary. The section below serves both to detail Manners' framework in more detail as well as present its application to the case study.

2.3.3. Principles

Following virtue ethics and Aristotle's notion of virtue in particular, the enquiry into the construction of principles should reveal – if the EU is to be a normative power - the EU to be 'living by example' (Manners 2008: 56). Virtue ethics encourages looking at the character or traits guiding the EU's external actions (ibid). Consequently, the analysis begins with the study of the EU's principles and how these become externalised as aims and objectives of the EU's external relations. Manners presented the EU's 'normative basis' consisting of nine normative principles – peace, liberty, democracy, rule of law, and respect of human rights, as well as social progress, combating discrimination, sustainable development, and good governance – which not only constitute the EU's normative identity and are legally enshrined in the EU texts and treaties, but which 'EU member states, institutions and

citizens are willing to stand up for' and therefore shape and orient the EU's role as an international actor (Manners 2008: 48).

Applied to the case study of this thesis, this entails determining if the EU intends to promote SD through its SE cooperation with China. The SD norm is a relatively recent construction detailed in *Chapter 4*, which has essentially taken place at United Nations (UN) level to become a universally accepted development paradigm. One of its main contributions from the viewpoint of this thesis was to define global development aspirations taking into account environmental sustainability as opposed to a solely growth-led focus. As such, the promotion of SE was defined as an essential instrument to achieve it. As a norm, SD has been universally recognised by international law – SD is referenced in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Convention on Biological Diversity – and three non-binding agreements with 150 signatories (Hadden and Seyert 2016: 249, 253) as well as by numerous countries through state declarations and by international organisations through their resolutions (Barral 2012). The EU subscribed to the SD norm, which has been made one of the Union's objectives. Internally as discussed in *Chapter 4*, the EU translated this commitment into its domestic policies, thereby showing that it too considered SE as pivotal means to do so. Having long-lasting diplomatic and energy relations with China – one of the world's greatest challenges to SD especially in terms of unsustainable energy use and sources – if the EU is to be normative, it is to be found intending on promoting SE in China as a means to support more sustainable Chinese development. The EU must however not only intend to promote SE but it must do so in a normative way. This will be determined by means of the legitimacy, coherence and consistency criteria. As the focus is on intentions, the level of analysis therefore lies within European policy towards China.

2.3.3.1. *Legitimacy*

“Normative power should primarily be seen as legitimate in the principles being promoted.” (Manners 2011b: 233)

In order to be a normative power, the principle promoted must be legitimate. The legitimacy criterion refers to the extent to which the principle promoted is considered

universally accepted at international level. This is to exclude the promotion by the EU of its own values and principles and ensure that the principle is embedded in larger international agreements (Manners 2008: 56). In real terms legitimacy of the principle is established if the principle originates from previously established international conventions, treaties and agreement and in particular if it is deemed important within the UN system itself (Manners 2009b: 2).

Generally, Manners identifies the UN Charter, the Helsinki Final Act, the Paris Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and UN Covenant and the Council of Europe's European Convention of Human Rights as benchmarks for legitimacy of normative principles. In the case of sustainable development, key SD reference text are generally understood to include the Brundtland report, the 1992 Rio Conference and its '*Declaration of principles*' as well as the Agenda 21 and could extend to subsequent outcomes of the global SD process such as the '*Plan of Implementation*' emanating from the 2002 Johannesburg Summit for Sustainable Development or the latest declaration entitled '*The future we want*' from the 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development. In operational terms not only does this entail being able to identify references to the SD principle in the EU's policy and cooperation documents with China but a demonstrable commitment to embedding the promotion of SE with China within the wider global SD agenda, which these documents encapsulate is necessary to be considered legitimate. When investigating EU policy documents, the EU's rationale for SE cooperation with China must be seen as the direct extension of this universally established commitment to promoting the SD norm.

2.3.3.2. *Coherence*

"Coherence of principles comes from the extent to which differing principles, and practices to promote them, can be seen sound and non-contradictory."
(Manners 2009b: 2)

Coherence requires looking at the coexistence of the normative principles which are being studied with other principles. Consequently, it is important to identify if the normative principle indeed coexists with other principles and whether their nature challenges the integrity of the normative principle and its promotion. This notably

refers to the dichotomy between norms and interests and the presence of principles and practices representing such material interests. Manners did clarify that NPE is to be considered as an ideal, which could thus allow for the cohabitation between norms and interests (2009b: 4; 2011). Coherence should however focus on the balance between the normative principle and competing principles and practices and should eventually be judged according to its overall prevalence and preserved integrity. Such a prioritising of the normative principle should also ensure that the use of material incentives and physical force is performed in a justifiable way (ibid).

In reference to energy, the interplay between norm and interests has been conceptualised in particular by Knodt et al (2010; 2013). These authors conceptualise European energy objectives to be guided by what they term a 'normative triangle' whereby sustainability stands next to energy security and economic interests as the three main drivers of the EU's internal policy and external energy relations. Considering that EU-China relations rest on a solid historical trade-based focus with a well-established economic rationale behind the development of the cooperation, but also that China with its very large energy consumption as well as imports constitutes a possible threat to the EU security of supply, the likelihood of such material elements to interfere or even prevail with a normative agenda is non-negligible. The coherence between normative and material intentions will therefore be investigated, looking at the weight of material interests against sustainability concerns as motivation in the EU's SE cooperation with China. The prevalence of economic or energy security drivers will be considered a breach of coherence.

2.3.3.3. *Consistency*

“[Consistency] comes from the extent to which differing principles and practices to promote them, are uniform both within and without the promoting entity, and are applied uniformly” (Manners 2009b: 2)

Compared to the integrity of principles versus other potentially competing principles as just outlined in the coherence section (or 'external integrity'), consistency addresses what could be called 'internal integrity' of the normative principle. It refers to the compatibility of various practices adopted to promote the normative principles, the uniformity of their application and whether this ultimately preserves or endangers

the integrity of the principle (Manners 2009a: 2). Applied to the case of EU-China energy and environment cooperation, consistency amounts to looking at whether the use of different principles and practices in the promotion of SD through SE cooperation is consistent with each other and do not defeat or reduce normative promotion.

This can be studied at various levels and it has been translated by distinguishing between horizontal, institutional, and vertical consistency by scholars like Nutall (2005) and Olsen (2008: 160). In the case of the EU's energy cooperation with China, horizontal consistency would look at uniformity of policy application within the different parts of a given institution – such as within the European Commission and its various Directorate General (DG) involved in energy cooperation. Institutional consistency on the other side would be concerned with investigating the consistency between various European institutions – essentially the Commission, the Council, and the Parliament, and possibly others such as the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) – yet remaining within the realm of the Union. Vertical consistency addresses the uniformity of application between the European Union and its member states. Practically, even if interesting, studying all three types of coherence would not be realistically achievable within the scope of this thesis. Considering the focus adopted in this research on the European Commission as the main actor in EU-China energy relations and the empirical data collected in the field showing a multitude of DGs involved in SE cooperation, horizontal coherence is deemed as most relevant to yield relevant results. Consequently, scrutiny of the uniform application of the principle will involve assessing the motivations for cooperating with China on SE across all the DGs involved. As with the coherence criteria, consistency will be determined according to a shared understanding of SE across the Commission as a means to support China towards a sustainable development path.

2.3.4. Actions

The second stage of the analytical framework Manners focuses on the normative power aspect of the EU at the level of its actions. Deontological ethics, and Kantian thought in particular, orient the study of the EU's normative power to the means of

promotion of normative principles. If the EU is to be deemed a normative power, the nature of its actions shall be observably guided by the maxim 'being reasonable' (Manners 2008: 57). This stage is about identifying whether the promotion of a normative principle translates in the EU's actions and if these are also executed in a convincing or attractive manner. It is the stage where the norm promotion enters directly into contact with the third party. In order to judge whether the EU can legitimately be coined a normative power, the EU's actions for the norm promotion must involve persuasion, argumentation and the conferral of prestige or shame and generally, a commitment to engagement and dialogue (Manners 2008; 2009b).

Concretely, this involves determining if the EU is transforming intentions into actions and is in fact promoting SE as a means to achieve SD as part of its energy relations with China. SD is a development paradigm, which requires some form of implementation strategy in order to have a chance of becoming a reality. This was recognised by the global governance process on SD, which through the years and various Rio Earth Summits worked at articulating the concept into practical objectives and targets to transform it into a concept with practical use. Bringing the concept to life within national implementation plans became part of the commitment to the SD norm as the concept only lives through application. International cooperation especially between developed and developing countries was identified as a responsibility contained in the commitment to the norm (with an entire chapter dedicated to it in the Agenda 21). As shown in *Chapter 4*, the EU was found to have translated its commitment to SD into a workable programme through its Environmental Action Programmes (EAP), which included support to SE. In a series of directives the EU also required its member states to increase their share of RE in their energy mix and recommended improvement in EE. Regarding China – a non-member state – the EU cannot possibly demand that China take similar steps; however it must be found to actively encourage China to support itself a transition to more sustainable energy systems domestically. Over the years, the EU and China have developed rich and well-institutionalised relations. As being normative in Manners' sense is not only about promoting norms but also doing so in a normative way, the EU would need to be seen to use EU-China energy cooperation – its institutions in particular - in order to influence China in that direction. The tripartite analytical framework suggests the EU should be persuasive, argue, and symbolically enforce through the conferral of prestige and shame, to be deemed normative in

action, as opposed to the use of force and coercion (Manners 2008; 2009b). The EU and China do not only interact on energy at bilateral level. As two of the main players in climate change governance and with a shared interest in SE, opportunities for exchanges on these issues are numerous (G8, International Partnership for Energy Efficiency Cooperation (IPEEC), IEA and others). However, the well-developed nature of bilateral energy relations provides for a well-defined frame especially dedicated to EU-China exchanges in which to investigate the EU's actions as it is believed to reveal how the EU conducts its energy relations with China without some of the interferences international settings can have.

2.3.4.1. *Persuasion*

“Persuasion in the promotion of principles in world politics involves constructive engagement, the institutionalisation of relations, and the encouragement of multi- and pluri-lateral dialogue between participants.” (Manners 2009b: 3)

Persuasion addresses the need for the EU to use acceptable instruments that rest on peaceful and non-coercive means to deliver its SE promotion message. Any other forms of persuasion such as economic or military pressure for example would signify the EU stepping away from a normatively acceptable stance. According to Manners, persuasion can take place through three forms – engagement, institutionalisation, and dialogue. Following this, if the EU is to be persuasive in its norm promotion, then it must actively engage China on issues revolving around SE, make sure to create channels for exposing China to the EU's argument, and invite China to dialogue on the matter.

This research chooses to focus mainly on the institutionalisation of EU-China SE relations as a way to detect persuasion. Institutionalisation through dialogues and working groups is not only part of the EU's modus operandi in the way it built its relations with China (De Matteis 2010) but it also appears to encapsulate all three of Manners' persuasion instruments. Institutionalisation is a way to engage and institutionalise, and constitutes a platform to encourage dialogue. Institutionalisation's specific contribution to persuasion is to establish channels for continued dialogue around SE, ensuring frequent exchanges and thus exposure contributing to the persuasive nature of the EU's actions.

2.3.4.2. *Argumentation*

“[Argumentation] can involve reference to international principles as well as encouraging understanding and agreement (although also misunderstanding and disagreement)” (Manners 2009b: 3)

Argumentation is described by Manners as deploying strategies to convince the third party to adhere to the norm. Reference to international principles will ground the legitimacy of a normative approach, create an internationally recognised rationale for its acceptance, or possibly increase the pressure to comply with an internationally recognised principle. The understanding of the norm will increase its acceptance, whereas showing its benefits will encourage agreement.

In the case of EU-China relations, the research will look at whether the EU can be seen to have direct agency in the success of bilateral SE cooperation identified through the investigation into the EU’s ‘persuasion’ efforts. This success must be the result of active attempts of the EU – using normative means – to convince China of the relevance of SE for SD. The attention on European agency deviates slightly from Manners’ interpretation of ‘argumentation’ based on the means only, as it asks the question of ‘if’ before it looks at the ‘how’. This is justified due to China’s strong support for a nationwide development of SE as part of its reform programme started in the late 1980s and its possible influence in creating a demand for such cooperation with the EU. It is therefore necessary to determine if some of the popularity of SE cooperation might be attributed to the EU’s argumentation efforts, in which case the means employed will be assessed along the lines defined by Manners.

2.3.4.3. *Prestige and shame*

“The attribution of prestige and shame may range from public declarations of support to membership of an international community, while the attribution of shame may involve public condemnation or the use of symbolic sanctioning.” (Manners 2009b: 3)

After laying the foundation through persuasion, then arguing in support of the norm, a third phase is the attribution of rewards or symbolic sanctions to support either the

adoption of the norm or show disagreement with the resistance to do so. As defined by Manners, the conferral of prestige can be symbolic and declaratory and expressed through public declaration, or it can be translated into concrete benefits such as being accepted as a member of an international community. Similar to the carrot and stick method, the conferral of shame works oppositely to prestige – the open condemnation tacitly imputes a position of guilt to the non-complying actor by denouncing it to the international community and public opinion (shame). This can be made explicit through the use of symbolic sanctions.

As recognised by Börzel and Risse (2012: 8) ‘the further we move away from Europe, the fewer incentives the EU has on offer to promote its policies and institutions and the more it has to rely on mechanisms of persuasion and of communication to make its case’. China not being a neighbouring country of the EU, one of its vital enforcement mechanisms – conditionality – will not be available to sanction China, and the EU therefore lacks in some of its “force projection” (Stumbaum 2015: 332). Instead the 2012 solar panel trade dispute between the EU and China was chosen as a ‘case study’ – solar power being one of the forms of SE – in which to test the EU’s shaming technique. This represented at the time the largest EU commercial dispute using a trade defence instrument in its history (Stearns 2013). The question investigated was therefore whether such an instance of shaming was motivated by the EU’s resolve to shame China for its export-oriented strategy instead of encouraging domestic use of solar energy, or whether instead other material motives such as economic interest in shielding European panel producers were at play.

2.3.5. Impact

Drawing on consequentialist ethics inspired by Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill, Manners indicates that in its third stage, the normative nature of the EU is to be located at the level of the consequences and implications of its actions (Manners 2008: 57). If the EU is to be recognised as a normative actor, it shall not only be normative by principles and actions, but also the impact of its actions should be the end result of its norm promotion enterprise. The consequences of the EU’s normative promotion should measurably encourage the adoption of the normative principle by the EU’s partner, such as to respond to the maxim ‘doing least harm’ (ibid: 59). As a

yardstick, the EU's actions should generally be recognised to stimulate the adoption of the normative approach by the third party.

As such the consequences of the EU's actions constitute the main focus of attention and in particular the implementation of SE cooperation is decided under political cooperation mechanisms reviewed under 'persuasion'. Political cooperation is one aspect of promoting SE for SD but eventually it is the encouragement to see it implemented in China, which will in effect enhance the sustainability of China's development. A SE transition involves great economic and political challenges (Dyer 2012: 362) and is akin to a complex and structural overhaul of well-established energy systems, policies and behaviours (Lockwood et al 2013). Performing it therefore requires adequate expertise, finance and technologies. Key SD reference texts such as the Agenda 21 impart responsibility on developed countries to cooperate with developing countries – China was considered such under EU rules until 2013 – on SD to help create real impact among others through leapfrogging. The EU as a prime mover in the transition to SE is to share its experience to help accelerate China's own transition. This places the level of analysis within joint EU-China projects, programmes, and centres concerned with SE cooperation. These will be scrutinised for their involvement in China's shift to SE in the light of their contribution to socialisation, partnership, and ownership, as demanded by the tripartite framework (Manners 2009b: 3).

2.3.5.1. Socialisation

“Socialisation as an impact of the promotion of principles in world politics should be seen as being part of an open-ended process of engagement, debate and understanding.” (Manners, 2009b: 3)

Constructivist ontology posits that ideas, norms, and values are constructs, and their assimilation the result of a process of interaction. Socialisation to norms is a key mechanism in this process of norm adoption as 'the process through which individuals internalize the values, beliefs, and norms of a society and learn to function as its members' (Calhoun 2002). Relating to the impact of norm promotion, this can be achieved through an active involvement of the third party by the EU in a process

of repeated exposure to the normative approach. This would create a structure in which the dissemination and diffusion of norms occurs.

The EU's socialisation efforts should therefore translate into the presence of relevant socialisation agents in the form of common projects and programmes, which demonstrably aim to support China's move to SE. These should act as platforms for Chinese exposure to topics revolving around the implementation of an SE transition and offer China the possibility for dialogue from which understanding but also potential criticism can arise.

2.3.5.2. Partnership

“Partnership as an impact of the promotion of principles may be the result of institutionalised relationships created by the participating parties whether multilateral or plurilateral, international or transitional.” (Manners 2009b: 3)

Partnership relates to the quality of implementation of the cooperation so that when looking for signs of partnership, there should be evidence of participation by China in common initiatives with the EU. China should however not simply be involved in common actions, but ideally should also be intentionally given by the EU an equal footing in order for the partnership to be in line with the principle of doing least harm. This should give China the possibility to jointly carry out the normative approach to energy and environment.

Concretely, the study of partnership in the EU's SE cooperation with China will specifically look at the operation of the joint energy cooperation platforms. In particular, they will be judged for China's involvement in their establishment, their funding, their conduct, and also for the level of participation in the definition of their activities. To be normative in partnership, China must be given a genuinely equal position to that of the EU as well as authority in defining relevant activities for its own SE transition.

2.3.5.3. Ownership

“Ownership as an impact of the promotion of principles involves practices of joint or local ownership as a result of partner involvement and consultation.”

(Manners, 2009b: 3)

The ownership criterion comes as the last of the criteria and judges whether the EU's normative approach directly contributes to the assimilation of the norm by the third country. Ownership can be seen to refer to an advanced result of socialisation in which the third party has in fact made the normative approach its own. The stress therefore lays on the importance for the relationship to be 'other-empowering' as opposed to self-empowering which local ownership encourages (Manners 2008: 59).

Remaining within SE cooperation platforms, decisive proof of the EU's contribution to increasing China's ownership of performing its own transition to SE has been narrowed down to consideration of international development literature to include the support to capacity-building activities with relevant Chinese stakeholders. This is taken to constitute relevant support in providing China with the EU's tools, knowledge, and expertise to learn how to implement its own shift to SE and effectively contribute to SD.

2.4. Conclusion – The Relevance of the ‘Normative Power Europe’ Approach and its Tripartite Analytical Framework

The aim of this chapter was to comprehensively present and assess Manners' NPE conceptualisation of the EU along with its tripartite PAI analytical framework in order to determine if the EU can be called a green normative power. The initial investigation into NPE itself showed that in response to the fluid and changing nature of the EU, NPE certainly captured the essence of its time. Reflecting the move to a post-Westphalian, post-Cold War world, Manners elaborated a new way of conceptualising the EU's role in the world with the normative power approach. Moving beyond previously dominant approaches which consigned the EU to remaining perpetually limited to the sum of its parts, he articulated further the influential Civilian Power Europe idea introduced years before. On the basis of a

constructivist ontology, he embarked on the 'turn in IR' and provided a European-specific approach to understanding the EU's foreign policy as a catalyst for change, emanating from the power of ideas and the EU's essentially normative identity. As such it has been hailed as progress from previous conceptualisations by allowing a look beyond force as the sole definition of power in IR. Since then it has been criticised for the same reasons, engendering a rich academic debate. Either fundamentally rejected for forgetting that the EU's power will always first be in the hands of its member states, accused of reducing the EU to a benevolent actor devoid of interest or strategic calculations, or simply recused for not being adapted to the shifting dynamics of the world, NPE has been criticised for various shortcomings. While all of them point to real issues, and have been acknowledged as such in this section, they do not fundamentally undermine the viability of the NPE approach for detecting the normative dimension in the EU's external affairs.

NPE understands power as the capacity to intervene in the mutual construction of actors such that the other considers a norm as 'normal' and part of its own identity. Norms in this process play a causal role for such a change of identity and are considered the emanation of the EU's normative difference. For these reasons, NPE adopts an approach to power and norms specifically tailored for the EU which appears particularly suitable as a conceptualisation of the role of the EU in the world, and specifically for identifying whether the EU can be called a normative power in its relation with China. This is particularly the case since sustainable development is one of the nine norms identified by Manners as promoted by the EU, and as such it should be detectable in the EU's policy. The various empirical applications detailed in this section have also underpinned the practicality of the concept for detecting this norm. On the other hand, the many debates among even those most in line with this approach, such as the role of interests alongside normative concerns and also the difficulty of pinning down a consensual definition of the concept, were presented. Whilst often considered evidence for the concept's lack of clarity, for the student of the NPE approach this can be regarded as a constructive process, participating in delineating more clearly the contours of NPE as an analytical concept.

Finally, the chapter turned to Manners' tripartite analytical framework, underlining first the transition normative power underwent from a conceptualisation of the EU's role in the world to a method of analysis for judging the EU's status as normative

actor. The choice of the tripartite framework was then justified by distinguishing it from other possibly competing analytical approaches to the concept of NPE. Such distinction enabled the adequacy of Manners' method to be established in comparison to others, on the grounds that they do not provide a method for determining whether the EU acts as a normative power but rather focus on determining the EU's 'normativeness' at the level of its identity. The framework was then presented as well as the way it will be applied to this work. As a generic construction, a detailed articulation of the framework's analytical components as created by Manners and also as applied to the case study of SE cooperation with China was then performed and demonstrated how its practical operationalisation will be conducted in this thesis.

In view of this, as well as the study of the NPE concept it is possible to conclude that NPE offers an approach which not only allows for norms to have an impact but also provides the conceptual and analytical tools to look into the power of norms in a way that is tailor-made for the EU and which has furthermore proven its empirical validity to specifically address the EU's cooperation with China on 'green policies'. NPE is therefore deemed a viable approach for this work to look at the EU's normative power with regards to China. Having just provided insights into NPE and PAI as theoretical and analytical frameworks underpinning this research, the next chapter presents a short historical background of EU-China energy relations and a review of the relevant bodies of literature in order to highlight the originality of their use to determine if the EU can be labelled a 'green' normative power.

CHAPTER 3 – CONTEXTUALISING THE EU’S SUSTAINABLE ENERGY COOPERATION WITH CHINA

3.1. Introduction

This chapter offers a comprehensive review of the current academic literature on which this thesis draws and to which it intends to contribute. By contextualising this research into both the historical and academic context it is embedded into, it thereby aims to locate the gap in existing knowledge it aims to fill and delineates the originality of this work.

The chapter starts with a short account of the historic background and evolution of EU-China relations, which forms the backdrop of energy cooperation and the research that has been conducted around it. The historical evolution of the relationship is examined from its early trade links, to the establishment of diplomatic relations and the main four phases of their recent development. The purpose is to contextualise energy cooperation in the broader framework of EU-China relations. In a second and more substantial part, the main three bodies of literature utilised by this thesis – on EU-China relations, normative power Europe and sustainable development (SD) – are successively presented and their respective contributions to the normative approach to the EU’s sustainable energy (SE) cooperation with China are discussed. This serves to establish in a concluding section whether these fields intersect and to assess to what extent they address the EU’s commitment to SD with China in the field of energy. The concluding section thereby identifies the gap in knowledge emerging from this study, which this work intends on addressing.

3.2. Historical Background to the Cooperation

The EU’s relationship with China is one of evolution and change over time shaped both by history and international dynamics as well as the respective development of the EU and China as actors on the world scene. These are the dynamics that form

the backdrop for the emergence of EU-China energy cooperation. Originally the relationship was characterised by what Yahuda (2008: 13) termed the “tyranny of distance,” traced back to as early as the beginning of the Christian era and later the essentially indirect nature of trade links via the Silk Road. Whilst geographic and cultural distance explained the relative historical lack of direct engagement, trade nevertheless continued to play an essential role both as a connector between Europe and China as well as the main source of “substance” for their relationship (ibid: 13)²³. The formal establishment of relations however could only materialise following the détente in the Cold War period. China’s break from the Soviet bloc in 1972 and subsequent economic reforms and opening up in the 1980s were prerequisites for China’s economic and political rise. For the EU on the other hand, the integration process leading to development of an international dimension, with supranational competences on trade and European Political Cooperation (EPC) in 1970 and later the Maastricht Treaty in 1993, were instrumental in the EU’s gradual establishment as an actor with international clout. Both the EU and China came to be major players on the international scene and developed their relationship greatly after the inception of diplomatic relations in 1975.

Soon after, trade was once again the impetus for the first agreement between the EU and China in 1978. But China’s reform also extended the scope of cooperation to development and technical support from the EU (Crossick and Reuter 2007: xiv). However, progress came to a halt with the 1989 Tiananmen massacre, which prompted Europe to impose sanctions on China and effectively freeze relations. Whilst this caesura introduced human rights issues as a major bone of contention between the EU and China, in a way that would remain so in the future, relations between the EU and China renormalised relatively quickly. From then onwards, EU-China relations evolved in what scholars distinguish as three phases – a period of transition after the Tiananmen events from 1989 to the mid-1990s, a period of rapid development or constructive engagement from 1995 to 2002 and a honeymoon phase from 2003 to 2005 (Casarini 2009; Song 2012). This was followed by a more recent phase, from 2006 onwards, characterised by a rethink of EU-China relations

23 See also Dent (1999) for an account of EU-China relations from an economic point of view.

with a tougher European stance towards China and an emphasis on mutual responsibilities and benefits (Song 2012).

In the first period, EU-China relations entered “the most significant critical juncture” (Vogt 2012: 6). What appeared as the original weakness of the bond transformed into a key enabler for relations to take off: “the complementary symbiosis” (ibid) created by the increasing amount of trade links and the lack of major security concerns that affected China’s relations with the US and Japan. Trade was a jumping-off point for the relationship to be substantiated over a greater diversity of topics and depth of relations. The relationship acquired a political and an environmental dialogue in 1992, an energy dialogue in 1994, a human rights dialogue in 1996, and in 1998 instituted annual summits, providing the relationship with permanent channels for cooperation (Song 2012: 21). In 1995 it also officially acquired a strategy with the EU’s release of its first ever China policy which instituted Europe’s ‘constructive engagement’ approach to China (Casarini 2009), matched in 2001 by China’s first policy paper on Europe. This period ushered into the honeymoon phase, marked in 2003 by the move from comprehensive to strategic partnership with China as defined by the Council’s first ever European Security Strategy (European Council 2003). A year later, as noted by Song (2012: 23), the EU also became China’s biggest trading partner and China the EU’s second biggest after the US.

Relations however soon underwent a change of tone, visible in the EU’s 2006 policy paper on China where China started to be perceived in a less favourable light (Bingran 2009). Once again this is to be found in the perceived change in trade relations. As put forward by Geeraerts (2013: 11) “mutual economic benefits have always been the main driver of cooperation between the EU and China [...] based on prospects of interdependence and economic complementarity”. However, with difficult economic prospects, the EU’s large trade deficit with China as well as perceived unfair competition at times came to be understood rather as a “threat to Europe’s prosperity” (Vogt 2012: 9). Secondly, and more generally, the balance sheet of cooperation started being criticised. In particular, the strategic nature of the partnership was challenged as reflecting European wishful thinking as opposed to describing the actual nature of the relation (Holslag 2011). As Smith and Xie (2009) note, the EU’s establishing of strategic partnerships actually reflects the EU’s strategic ambitions rather than the quality of a relationship. Human rights and in

particular the Tibetan issue continue to be a stumbling block, the arms embargo is still in place at the time of writing, and despite years of cooperation, cultural and language barriers still remain (Smith 2014). On the other hand, EU-China cooperation can also be seen to define a “more mature and realistic” (Gill and Murphy 2008: viii) type of relationship with richer and denser connections developed, with technical cooperation and more sophisticated initiatives such as climate change partnership in 2005, the trilateral partnership between the EU, China and Africa in 2008, and in 2013 the ‘*EU-China 2020 Strategic Agenda for Cooperation*’, “the highest level joint document” (European Commission 2016i: 2) guiding the cooperation thus far.

In spite of this and the overall significant progress made, especially considering the relative geographic disconnect, some consider that EU-China relations remain “secondary” (Yahuda 1995) and even “derivative”, as argues Wong (2012: 95), to their respective relations with the US. Whilst it is true that they have not yet acquired the same ease and familiarity of EU-US relations for example, scholars like Bingran (2009: 239) take the view that long term reciprocal interest and globalisation form a strong basis for the relationship and its future. The recent developments in energy and climate cooperation in particular show the partnership is of relevance with regard to some of the greatest challenges of the 21st century. The EU and China have recognised their interdependence both in trade and in terms of the similar climate and energy challenges they both face (Chatham House: 2007) and have used it as a motor of their relationship. Cooperation on environment and energy has been established early on, but has evolved to become a central element of the partnership, notably thanks to the institutionalisation of climate change cooperation. In their 2020 cooperation strategy, SD has been made a pillar of the joint cooperation agenda, including the range of ‘green topics’ and joint international cooperation on SD. The next section explores how the academic literature has addressed these issues and whether they have at all been connected to the EU’s normative power debate.

3.3. EU-China Relations Studies - Norms without Energy

When it comes to the field of EU-China relations, it is apparent from the review of the academic literature that the research produced has evolved together with the

changing nature of the relationship itself. Unsurprisingly, the bulk of the literature is dedicated to understanding such change and its impact on bilateral relations as well as in the international context. In line with this assessment, the first generation of academic literature in the EU-China studies field originally focused on making sense of EU-China relations. Studies on the bilateral side of the relationship addressed the historical roots of the relationship²⁴ as well as mutual perceptions the EU and China hold of each other, with quite a few works preoccupied with providing accounts of the level of understanding between both entities²⁵. Gradually however, academic works moved on to assessing the actual relationship and its evolution. The focus included the growing institutionalisation and expansion of the relationship. Cameron (2009) reviewed the development of EU-China relations since their official inception in 1984 through the EU's policy communications, whilst Algieri (2008) specifically focused on the institutionalisation itself and the role of the various EU institutions in cooperation, and Casarini (2009: 2) provided a broader account of the "dramatic growth of EU-China relations across the board" that occurred in the post-Cold War period.

Following the broadening and deepening of EU-China relations during the so-called "honeymoon" period (2003-2005), a number of edited books were published on EU-China relations only, providing more detailed accounts of the various dimensions composing this rapidly evolving relationship²⁶. Such works served to provide a more comprehensive overview of the relationship, dealing with security, trade, geopolitical as well as cultural issues, and cooperation matters of global governance. The issues they address are however also relevant indicators as to which aspect in particular constituted the centre of gravity of the relationship.

24 See for example Yahuda (2008).

25 Works by Möller (2002) provides a good picture of mutual perceptions, whilst Song (2008) and Zhu (2008) focus on China's perception of Europe. Dai (2008) examines in particular the evolution of European studies in China and Brødsgaard (2008) look at contemporary Chinese studies in Europe.

26 One of the first works was Crossick and Reuter (2007), followed in by Shambaugh et al. (2008), Vogt (2012) and most lately Dong et al. (2013).

With regards to bilateral relations, these include trade and commercial matters,²⁷ security issues,²⁸ and assessments of the 2003 EU-China strategic partnership²⁹. The impact of EU-China relations for world affairs as well as repercussions on other major players are another dynamic field in EU-China studies. Since China's rise is considered by many specialists to be one of the most significant events since the end of the Cold War (Shambaugh 2008: 3), a significant amount of EU-China literature is dedicated to looking at the consequences of China's impressive development and its related political presence in international affairs for the EU as well as for the world order. A common theme in scholarly works has been how the EU is to deal with China's rise. This has been addressed in the literature through general accounts³⁰, with regard to the challenge China poses to the EU's trade and security interests³¹ or its relations with Africa³². Opportunities this rise brings for increased multilateralism in world affairs has also been investigated³³, next to its potential for reshaping the world order, especially with regards to the US and the consequences on the EU-US relationship³⁴.

The field of EU-China studies has become rich with academic contributions reflecting the remarkable development relations between the EU and China have undergone in the last decades, as well as going beyond the bilateral aspect and embedding it in the changing international context caused by China's rise. As mentioned above, EU-

27 See Antevski et al. (2013) and Kuna-Marszalek (2009) for general accounts of EU-China economic and trade relations. On the EU's trade policy vis-a-vis China see Bustillo and Maiza (2012) or Erixon et al. (2008). On investments and European Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) in China see Filippini (2009) and Clegg and Voss (2011) for China-EU FDIs.

28 See for example Brown (2011) or Tang (2005).

29 See among others Smith and Taneja (2009), Xie (2009) and Sautenet (2007).

30 See Men and Balducci's (2010) edited book and Gros (2009).

31 See Kavalski (2012) or Stumbaum (2009).

32 See Kotsopoulos (2014), Huliaras (2012) or Hackenesch (2011).

33 See Wouters et al. (2012) or Godement (2008).

34 See in particular Casarini (2009) on the impact of security cooperation between the EU and China on the US as well as an account of trilateral EU-US-China relation; see also Ross et al. (2010).

China relations are addressed from a wide variety of perspectives; however it is particularly noticeable how much normative issues – even if not always at the forefront of this literature – are weaved in to these accounts. Throughout the EU-China scholarly literature, the EU seems to be acknowledged as an actor with a normative mission when it comes to its relations with China. This is embodied in particular in the EU's constructive engagement policy, which has driven the EU's China policy since the mid-1990s and its first 1995 policy paper on China, '*A Long term policy for EU-China relations*', where it was first formally articulated. Pan coins the description of constructive engagement as a "normative project" (Pan 2012: 39), whilst Men (2011: 546) describes the EU as a normative power with regard to China, drawing on its intention "to help China transform into a country based on the rule of law, with respect for human rights and democracy". Zhu's (2008: 148-173) examination of Chinese scholarship on the EU finds a similar link to norms whose origins he links to a shift by Chinese scholars away from a realist understanding of the EU towards an acknowledgement of the EU as normative power.

Generally however, EU-China literature addresses the EU's "normative mission" in a rather critical way, often underlining its negative impact on the relationship, often at the cost of the EU. Scholars have exposed the EU's constructive engagement as a "false promise and mission impossible" (Pan 2012: 45) – also described as an "unconditional engagement" according to Fox and Godement (2009) – that the EU pursues blindly for mostly instrumental reasons according to Algieri (Algieri 2008: 77) because "the cost of non-cooperation with China cannot be afforded". Authors such as Casarini (2009), Lerais et al. (2007) and Jain (2009) pinpoint how China's threat to Europe's economic stability constitutes a serious counterweight to the pursuit of the EU's normative efforts. Vogt (2012: 68), supported by Holslag's (2011) research, suggests that progress in the relationship and developing the partnership beyond a simple aspiration will require the EU to revise its attachment to its normative agenda. In the light of Shambaugh's (2008: 13) account, since outside actors can only have a relatively limited influence on China's own domestic development, such an agenda appears doomed to fail. In summary, normative promotion as part of the EU's China policy is present throughout EU-China studies, yet is not usually addressed as a primary object of research. It is instead presented as a bone of contention in the relationship, standing in the way to access greater levels of cooperation.

Considering the significance of the EU's normative agenda with China there is nonetheless an entire part of EU-China research specifically dedicated to exploring the EU's norm promotion activities with China. Whilst there has been some research done on normative promotion and security (Stumbaum 2015), as well as in regard of climate change (Cock 2011), the vast majority of case studies remain centred around the EU's human rights promotion with China. Human rights issues have been covered relatively widely, either by more general accounts like Balme (2008) and Kinzelbach (2010), or other scholars like Freeman and Geeraerts (2012) and Men (2011) who look at the differences of understanding on human rights and how this has shaped the relationship. Whilst scholars like Shen (2013) investigate the dynamics at play behind the EU's choice of approach in its human rights policy, others like Wai (2012) give a picture of the more contentious human rights issues between China and the EU, like protection of the individual and political civil rights, freedom of speech, assembly and association, the rights of minorities, and religious freedom. Some human rights issues however attract a greater amount of attention. This is the case with the EU's opposition to the death penalty³⁵ as well as issues concerning Tibet³⁶. Other topics covered by the literature relate to Taiwan's right to self-determination³⁷ and to the arms embargo.³⁸ Generally, research on the EU's human rights agenda is very critical of the EU's approach and a substantial portion of the literature is dedicated to elaborating on this criticism. The example of human rights is often used to highlight the EU's inability to act as a normative power towards China, as Crookes (2013) or Shen (2013) have shown.³⁹ In spite of some exceptions, whether general or norm-specific, research focused on the EU's norm promotion activities with China has only rarely ventured beyond the assessment of the EU's human rights promotion. This leads one to argue that when it comes to the EU's identity as a normative actor with China, core norms such as human rights norms

35 See Marino (2012).

36 See Shen (2015b).

37 See Kirchner and Christiansen (2013).

38 See Lee (2015).

39 See also Kaya (2014) and Taylor (2011).

have been almost the sole yardstick used to qualify - and rather more often disqualify - the EU as a normative power.

3.4. Energy Without the Normative Aspect

Energy, along with other 'green' topics, started being studied in its own right by a second generation of literature as opposed to simply being quoted in the long list of EU-China sectoral dialogues. Green areas of cooperation gained academic momentum following the deepening nature of the relationship around the early 2000s. During this time, EU-China relations experienced a growth of dialogue with the creation of the partnership on climate change in 2005 and the formal establishment of the Energy Dialogue that same year, roughly when scholarship on green issues came more prominently into being. Originally however, most attention was attracted by climate change cooperation rather than energy issues as such.

Research into climate change matters in EU-China relations is quite comprehensive and looks into both the bilateral aspects of EU-China climate change cooperation such as provided by Torney (2012b), Balme (2012), or Men (2014), as well as the global governance aspect as studied by Mabey (2009), Bo and Chen (2009), or Belis and Schunz (2013). Scholarly work on energy in the climate change context has been undertaken justified by energy's inextricable link with climate change mitigation but also because clean energy cooperation has been made a pillar of the EU-China climate change partnership. Energy research has therefore focused on the technological aspects of energy and in particular climate change mitigation-specific initiatives like Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS)⁴⁰ and the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM)⁴¹ – a sustainable energy technology transfer programme from developed to developing countries established in the context of the UNFCCC and of which China is a major beneficiary (Van der Gaast et al. 2009). Consequently, the climate-change framing of energy issues as instrumental for the fight against climate change led to quite partial accounts of energy matters in EU-China relations. The

40 On CCS see Espie and Zhang (2011) and Scott (2009).

41 On CDM see for example Belis and Kerremans (2014) and Chang et al. (2012).

focus on technology in the context of a rising China as a growing competitor to the EU also meant that energy issues were locked in a “competition versus cooperation” approach. A number of works including Afionis and Bailey (2012b), Freeman and Holslag (2009), and Holzer and Zhang (2008) place clean energy cooperation in a narrative of commercial interests impeding cooperation in spite of convergence of policies and increasing scope for cooperation. Research undertaken by Carrapatoso (2011) or Torney (2012a) concerning EU climate change norm diffusion towards China nevertheless connected clean energy to a more normative research agenda. Energy matters under the umbrella of climate change are however once again used as a proxy to study climate change cooperation and are not directly linked to assessing the EU’s normative status.

Turning to energy-specific research in EU-China relations, studies tended originally to be framed around the energy security dimension and the security of supply in particular. China’s impressive growth - both in scope and rapidity - strongly impacted global energy markets and challenged traditional consumer countries’ supply strategies, fuelling a sense of threat in traditional consumer markets like the EU. This became reflected in the literature, translating into a ‘scramble for resources’ type of approach. China’s quest for energy security became scrutinised as exemplified by Jakobson’s (2009) contribution, or Gu (2009), who analysed the impact of the EU’s energy security strategy on China’s energy security. Entire edited books like Amineh and Guang’s (2010) *‘The globalisation of energy: China and the European Union’* provide a broader outlook over the key determinants of the evolving contemporary energy situation in the EU and China. They bring in global perspectives, including major suppliers like Russia, Saudi-Arabia, or Iran, but also other major consumers like India or Japan, into the analysis. Whilst a lot of literature has provided side-by-side accounts of both the EU and China’s energy security situations, interests, and strategies, some scholars like Taneja (2009) or Umbach (2007; 2010) translated the energy security issue into the context of the EU-China relationship. These however very rarely connected to normative approaches.

It is only when SE issues increased in overall relevance within EU-China relations that SE received more dedicated scholarly attention. Interest in EU-China SE cooperation gained academic momentum following the greater institutionalisation of energy cooperation from 2005 onwards, as well as the growth of commercial and trade links between European and Chinese companies resulting from China’s 10th

Five Year Plan (2005-2010). Scholarly interest started peaking a few years later, so much so that energy together with other green topics became its own sub-field within EU-China relations.⁴² Whilst accounts of commercial exchanges on SE issues started proliferating,⁴³ literature detailing energy and SE cooperation itself enabled mapping out the institutionalisation of the cooperation and its actors. Snyder (2009), Stahl and Schioppa (2013), De Matteis (2009), Primova and van Vrede (2012) as well as Zha (2013) all contributed to further the academic knowledge on the chronology as well as the understanding of the role played by the various dialogues, high-level meetings and cooperation platforms in the development of EU-China energy cooperation. The peak of interest in SE expanded the field to a larger variety of issues such as water management, thermal power generation, food safety and especially urbanisation.⁴⁴ SE-specific contributions like Goujon (2015), Jun (2015), or Jungbluth (2015) were carried out much more recently. Whilst they finally provide SE-specific research, they either do not contribute to connecting SE to normative promotion by the EU, or they tend to exclude it by remaining at a materialistic depiction of SE cooperation. Holslag (2010a) frames SE cooperation with the EU's failed quest to "turning green power into soft power" with China. Knodt et al. (2013; 2015) makes use of normative terminology in a somewhat contradictory attempt to conceptualise the EU's interests and preferences in a 'normative triangle' – composed of security, market competition, and sustainability interests – in order to determine if these match the interests of BRICS countries. Both papers are of great relevance to understand the dynamics at play between the EU and China, Knodt's in particular as it is one of the most detailed and empirically founded pieces of research on EU-China energy cooperation. Nevertheless, the spur towards SE research did not contribute to linking the more normatively-inclined EU-China relations field with the SE cooperation one.

42 One notable example would be the "EU and China partners for a green world" conference dedicated to the topic, organised in May 2012 by the Committee of Regions in Brussels and which gathered academics in the field.

43 Accounts appear to be limited so far to wind and solar energy matters in the EU-China relationship. On wind energy, see for example Urban et al. (2015) or Dent (2013). Accounts of EU-China solar energy matters focus mainly on the solar PV dispute, as with those provided by Goujon (2015) or Voituriez and Wang (2015).

44 See Reuter and Men's (2015) edited book on green cooperation.

Turning to the field of 'Normative Power Europe' (NPE) studies, the concept has been applied empirically to look at the role norms and values play in the EU's foreign relations in a series of cases studies, including on China⁴⁵. Most importantly from the point of view of this thesis, the concept has also been specifically used to look at the EU's promotion of SD. Lightfoot and Burchell (2005) were one of the first to investigate the claims of the EU being a green leader⁴⁶ using Manners' approach to establish the EU's role in shaping the outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) conference⁴⁷ (Lightfoot and Burchell 2005: 84). This constituted the first study of the EU's SD promotion in the context of NPE and provides inroads into understanding the EU's commitment to SD. The study however is limited to looking at the EU's ability to shape a shared definition of the concept, taking place at an intergovernmental conference rather than addressing the promotion of SD in the world. In that sense it does not unpack the concept of SD, nor does it apply it to the EU's relation with a third country.

Since then, quite a few studies have addressed the array of 'green' policy fields in a normative light, contributing to complete the picture of the EU's role as a sustainability actor. The growth of interest seems to have validated coining this sub-field with its own term: '*green* normative power' (Groen and Oberthür 2014: 289). Originating in the description of the EU as an international environmental actor, various concepts were used to explain the EU's seemingly unexpected "rise to prominence in global environmental politics" (ibid) reported by scholars such as Sbragia and Damro (1999), Vogler (2005) or Zito (2005). The normative power concept, or more generally normative interpretations, was one of the lines of explanation used to understand the phenomenon. Works by Kelemen (2010), Scheipers and Sicurelli (2007) and Vogler and Stephan (2007) make use of this approach to differing extents in order to make sense of the question: "what are the reasons behind the EU's ascent as an international environmental leader?" These

⁴⁵ For more details see *Chapter 2*, p.41.

⁴⁶ This is to be seen in the larger context of the EU's self-proclaimed green leader status which has been addressed among others by Brande (2008) from the 'Civilian Power Europe' angle.

⁴⁷ For more details see *Chapter 2*, p. 42.

studies are beneficial in introducing the normative dimension to the debate around the EU's role as an environmental actor, so far lacking from this debate as noted by Baker (2006). However, they do not assess the NPE approach itself. Instead they utilise the normative argument to explain environmental leadership as the EU's own construction motivated by its desire to "establish an identity and a reputation as a 'normative power'" (Kelemen 2010: 338). Unsurprisingly these studies reach rather critical conclusions about the EU's normative commitment, leading some to go even as far as labelling it the "myth of a green Europe" (Lenschow and Sprungk 2010).

Others have used the normative argument more directly to assess the EU's claims to environmental leadership and commitment from the NPE angle. They offer a valuable contribution in advancing understanding of the EU's principled environmental policies in the world, providing insights into different policy fields. Significantly in view of this thesis, these works make the connection between the EU's official commitment to the SD norm and specific EU policies. Works evaluate European policies in the light of its claims to support SD, such as Faulkner (2006) who takes the EU's leadership in international biotechnology regulation and genetically modified organisms and looks behind what seems to be an accepted normative achievement to unravel the influence of 'normal' politico-economic forces behind the making of a green normative power. Other studies, such as Bretherton and Vogler (2012), explore the external dimension of the EU's Common Fisheries Policy and its compliance with the EU's formal commitment to SD. More recently Afionis and Stringer (2014) applied the study of environmental norms to the case of Brazil and in particular cooperation in the field of climate change, deforestation, and biofuels. Their study focused on the balance between the EU's normative commitment and economic interests in shaping this cooperation.

Taken together, the handful of studies looking into the NPE claim from the SD point of view provide essential inroads into uncovering the EU's compliance with its environmental commitment in the world. However – as is argued here – these works do not do so in a comprehensive way in terms of testing the NPE approach, as they have yet to address not only the norm promotion aspect but also the way in which the EU promotes the norm. This latter aspect is according to Manners' definition of NPE - which is the one used in this research - equally constitutive of the normative power identity (Manners 2002: 242). Therefore, in order to be ethical, the EU must not only be found to promote the norm, but it must also engage in "normative

practices” (Manners 2008: 55). Manners developed the tripartite analytical framework drawing on normative ethics precisely to investigate the EU from both these aspects. The application of the framework is therefore thought necessary to provide a comprehensive assessment of the EU as a green normative power, which none of these studies have employed. As such, none of them amount to a complete assessment of the EU as a *green* normative power, to stand as a test of the NPE approach in SD.

The SD field in turn has very clearly approached SE as an essential tool for achieving sustainable development. Tester et al. (2012:2) even termed SE “the engine of sustainable development”. Authors like Roosa (2008: 77) explore the ways in which energy is related to sustainability and establishes that since sustainability is functionally dependent on energy use, transformation, and energy mixes, “energy policies will ultimately prove to be the most important component of sustainable development”. El-Ashry (2005: 93) pinpoints the broad consensus around clean energy as the “win-win proposition for developed and developing countries alike” to adopt in order to reach SD. This instrumental approach to SE for SD is also linked to the development of the field of sustainable energy transition – as a means to implement the shift to clean energy. In the special issue of the Journal of Cleaner Production entitled ‘*Energy for sustainable future*’, contributors aimed to identify policies as well as management approaches to employ for the SE transition to take place – including energy efficiency (EE) and SE aspects (Dovi et al. 2009: 889). In this spirit a wealth of case studies on SE for SD have been researched⁴⁸ and indicators have been developed measuring the progress to SE and SD. This has been done through research papers⁴⁹ as well by international organisations like the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)⁵⁰ and through joint collaboration between international organisations.⁵¹ As a SD actor, the EU’s own commitment to

48 For example, see Ni and Johansson (2004) for China, Oyedepo (2014) for Nigeria and Yuksel and Kaygusuz (2011) for Turkey.

49 See for example Iddrisu and Bhattacharyya (2012) and Patlitzianas et al. (2007).

50 See The IAEA’s Indicators for sustainable energy development (IAEA [no date]b).

51 See the 2005 joint collaboration of the IAEA, UNDESA, IEA, Eurostat and the European Environment Agency on energy indicators for sustainable development.

SD and transition to SE has been critically assessed in the literature as reviewed by Ledoux et al. (2005), Bernheim (2006) and Streimikiene and Sivickas (2008). However, this understanding of SD as a quantifiable objective has kept the conceptualisation of SE as being a means to an end.

This is not to say that the SD field of research only considers SD as such. SD's ethical aspect has been established by scholars involved in the academic struggle for defining SD. Ciegis (2009), Barral (2012) and Westing (1996) all elaborate on the concept's ethical dimension and its normative foundation.⁵² Research has also extended to the study of SD as a norm. Srivastana (2011) provides a study into the prescriptive power of the SD norm and highlights in particular the factors explaining the lack of compliance with the norm. Others like Park (2007) or Jörgens (2004) studied the diffusion of the norm from international organisations into national implementation programmes. Such works contribute to the understanding of the mechanisms of global governance at work behind the uptake of the norm and its translation into operational national objectives and strategies. This area of research addresses SD as a given normative principle and neither unpacks the concept nor does it directly connect with the field of SD research that explores the role of SE in achieving SD. Generally, the field looks at SD in a more pragmatic way and focuses on strategies for its achievement, and therefore does not attempt to connect it back to the international actor's identity. SD is the main object of study and not necessarily seen as a proxy for establishing EU normative identity.

3.5. Conclusion – Bringing Sustainable Energy, EU-China Relations and Normative Studies Together

This purpose of this chapter was to provide a review of the three main bodies of literature relevant for this thesis – EU-China relations, NPE, and SD – and to highlight their specific contribution to the question of the EU's SD promotion in China via SE cooperation. By first offering an overview of the historical background in which these relations developed, this chapter has shown that, firstly, the assessment of the EU's

⁵² For a more detailed account on SD's normative dimension see *Chapter 4*.

normative identity with China is restricted mainly to its cooperation on core norms and has not been extended to include SD, and this in spite of the growing interest in green topics. Secondly, research into the EU's SD promotion from a normative angle does exist and has even been labelled as the 'green normative power' field. Whilst using the NPE terminology to hold the EU accountable to its environmental commitment, these works do not however comprehensively assess the NPE approach from the angle of SD as they have yet to recognise both the promotion of the norm by the EU as well as the normative practice of it, which Manners defines as an equally determining aspect of a normative power identity (Manners 2008: 55). Furthermore, these studies, even though providing insights into specific policies and their compliance with the SD principles, do not bring SE – a key pillar for achieving a more sustainable future – into the assessment of the EU's SD commitment. Thirdly and finally, the SD field of study, whilst separately acknowledging both SE's essential role in achieving the quantifiable objective of SD as well as the fact that SD is a norm and can be studied as such, so far fails to link both of these aspects to associate SE with the promotion of the SD norm. Although the field considers SD norm promotion as one global governance mechanism to ensure SD becomes translated into national agendas, it does not extend this logic to the country cooperation level in general, nor to the EU in particular.

Taken together, this leads to the conclusion that SE has not yet been studied as a means to assess the EU's SD promotion, and in particular with regards to its cooperation with China. This thesis' main originality is to address this gap and comprehensively assess the EU as a green normative power by using Manners tripartite analytical framework and linking the promotion of SE in bilateral EU-China cooperation to the assessment of the EU's commitment to SD. As previously mentioned under 'originality' in *Chapter 1* it is thereby intended to contribute to empirically expanding the NPE field to the promotion of SD in the context of SE cooperation – 'normalising energy' – as well as adding a case study to EU-China NPE research. Before being able to empirically investigate the matter, the following chapter first introduces this process of 'normalisation' of energy, explaining how a concept such as SE entered the realm of normative studies and thereby became a justified means to study the EU's SD promotion with China and the world.

CHAPTER 4 - THE NORMALISATION OF ENERGY

4.1. Introduction – Sustainable Energy, from Resource to Norm

Energy in its literal sense is a physical concept that refers to an object's or system's 'capacity for doing work' (Encyclopaedia Britannica [no date]). In everyday life, energy is understood as a *resource* that enables life, transportation and production of goods and services. Energy powers our computer systems, and fuels our cars and buses, it cooks our food and it lights up our homes and cities. In a word, energy is essential to our modern existence. It is therefore in its capacity as a resource that energy has usually been approached in social sciences whether in the fields of political science, economics, history or otherwise. In this work however, energy is used as a case study to detect the EU's normative status as an actor in international relations. In this case, energy is brought to the field of normative studies using sustainable energy (SE) – energy efficiency (EE) and renewable energy (RE) – as one expression of the sustainable development (SD) norm, eventually to help determine whether the EU promotes SD with China. By doing so, SE is conceptualised as a social construct that defines what is considered as acceptable or appropriate by society, that is, as a norm.

This approach is rather uncommon, with energy essentially understood by social sciences as a resource, commodity or product for humans to use and trade, but not generally as a norm, even in the field of 'Normative Power Europe' (NPE) approach itself⁵³. Within NPE, the norms researched are often more akin to moral principles, as in studies related to human rights such as the death penalty, or the Tibetan issues considered by Shen (2011), or the EU's moral economy in its relations with Africa (Langan 2012). This chapter precisely aims at explaining how energy entered the normative realm by understanding how SE is in fact related to the SD norm and its operationalisation into a workable concept. It furthermore aims to show how this

⁵³ In the same vein of fields seemingly less connected to normative issues see Dyer (2000) for a normative approach of biotechnology.

approach to SE was then adopted by the EU, thereby justifying the use of SE to investigate the EU's status as normative power.

The chapter first addresses the linkage between energy and sustainability, showing how the former is determinative of the current climate, which threatens the environmental sustainability of the planet. Research then turns to the concept of SD and its contested definitions in order to underpin the following section, which retraces the process of normatisation of SD, and the related emergence of energy in the form of EE and RE as operational tools in doing so. The chapter concludes by looking into the EU's integration of SE as part of the implementation plan for SD. The variety of issues approached in this chapter are supported with equally varied sources ranging from primary scientific data on the role of energy in climate change, key international SD texts, and European policy documents, to secondary literature on SD definition debates and processes of institutionalisation of the SD norm at international and European level. Energy is closely linked to sustainability issues. Scientific data shows the reliance on fossil fuel for human development since the industrial revolution has caused the climate to change and is posing a serious threat to the environment, especially considering the aggravating trend in fossil fuel use.

4.2. Energy and Sustainability

4.2.1. The Cost of Fossil Fuel Powered Development

Energy is a crucial underpinning for human life but also for the way we live, produce, consume, and travel. As expressed by various scholars 'energy is, most simply, the fundamental unit of the physical world' (Brooks 1986 in World Commission on Environment and Development: 146); energy, simply is everywhere (Ciuta 2010: 135). In fact, it is the availability of energy which has allowed more than 200 years of relatively rapid development, powering unprecedented growth together with socio-economic progress as well as generally shaping the way we have come to conceive living in society. Energy powered the Industrial Revolution, which represents the single most significant developmental leap of human history. It was in fact as argued by Wrigley the shift from organic to mineral sources of power, which was instrumental

in fuelling this development (Wringley 2010). Only thanks to coal could key innovations of the time such as the steam engine be fuelled, electricity be produced, and industrialisation be powered. Coal further supplied steam locomotives and the expansion of the railway system, with later oil-powered modern transportation - automobiles, ships and planes, not to mention the use of energy for heating houses, bringing lighting to homes and public places, and enabling warm water supplies. Energy directly fuelled this revolution and thereby underpinned this unprecedented time of prosperity and improved welfare. As expressed by Guallastegui et al (2011: 47) "it was coal that made the Industrial Revolution possible, and the ever-increasing use of carbon-based fuels since that time has rapidly improved the quality of life of humankind." The reliance on fossil fuels did not stop after industrialisation was achieved but it continued to be the corner stone of developed countries, creating a continued dependence for it shaping what is conceived as modernity – mass production and consumption, transportation, individual homes and cars. Energy in the form of fossil fuel is everywhere because development and progress as we know it is dependent on its availability.

This development came at a cost however. Relying mainly on fossil fuels for their relatively ready and cheap availability, the intimate relation between development and fossil fuels has been recently challenged by the realisation that not only are fossil fuel resources finite, but their use also seriously impacts the environment. In fact, data from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) show that since 1750 - which roughly corresponds to the beginning of the Industrial Revolution – the concentration of carbon dioxide (CO₂) in the atmosphere has increased by 31%, which is unprecedented. Of the past 20,000 years of emissions, three quarters are due to fossil fuel burning (IPCC 2001b: 7). With CO₂ emissions having a life-span of up to 200 years (ibid: 38), it is very likely that the unprecedented activity of the industrial revolution and its corresponding increased CO₂ levels are responsible for rising greenhouse gases and the global warming of the planet. In fact, scientific evidence allows a link to be traced between energy consumption in the form of fossil fuels and global warming. According to the IPCC, the global average surface temperature has increased over the 20th century by about 0.6°C, with the 1990s being the warmest decade (ibid 2011b: 2). The greenhouse effect – the natural process by which the atmosphere traps some of the sun's energy and warms the surface of the planet, making life possible on Earth (IPCC 2007a) - is a physical

phenomenon known since the 19th century. Recent evidence attributes the rise of temperature to anthropogenic gases, that is, to the release of greenhouse gases⁵⁴ (GhG) into the atmosphere due to human activities (IPCC 2001b: 10). CO₂ in particular is responsible for 64% of human-made global warming (European Commission 2016c). According to the IPCC, 'emissions of CO₂ due to fossil fuel burning are virtually certain to be the dominant influence on the trends in atmospheric CO₂ concentration during the 21st century' (IPCC 2001a: 12). This leads to the conclusion that the majority source of emissions is to be found in the combustion of fossil fuels, which generates the release of these gases in the atmosphere. According to International Energy Agency (IEA) data shown in Figure 2 below the use of energy by human activities represents by far the largest source of GhG emissions.

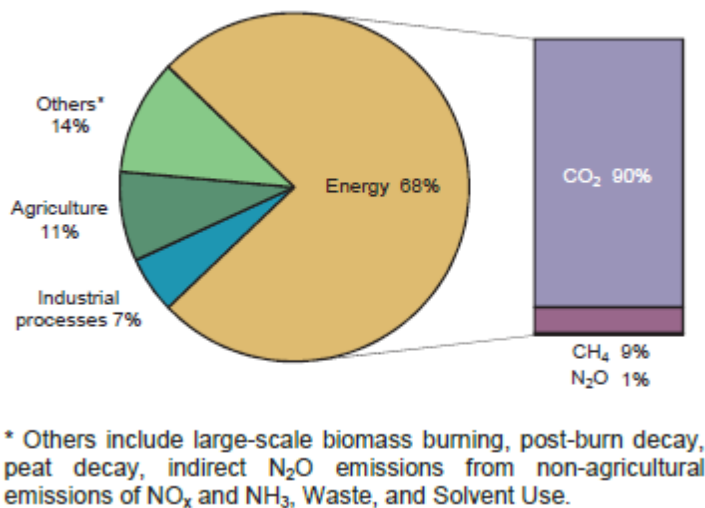


Figure 2 - Shares of global anthropogenic GhG, 2010

(Source: IEA 2015a: 7)

Such scientific data uncovered the link between development and global warming, showing that centuries of fossil fuel burning has had a direct impact on the climate and environment. Further evidence also shows that global warming is accompanied by a decrease in snow cover and ice, a rise in global average sea level as well as in

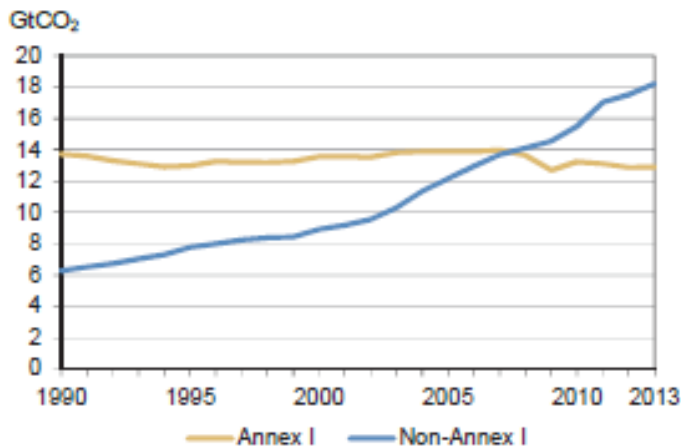
⁵⁴ The main greenhouse gases are carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane, nitrous oxide and fluorinated gases. Carbon dioxide is however by far the main source of GhG emissions (US Environmental Protection Agency 2016).

ocean temperatures (IPCC 2001a), which together represent a change in the climate of the planet understood as 'the change in climate (i.e. regional temperature, precipitation, extreme weather, etc.) caused by increase in the greenhouse effect' (IEA 2016a)⁵⁵. Human activity and GhG emissions are thus directly bringing about global warming, which is mainly responsible for one of the most pressing global issues. Global warming is causing the climate to change and current projections foresee a continued rise in temperature, further decrease in snow cover and ice, and continued increase of sea levels, ocean acidification, increased extreme weather events, and altered rainfall, to quote but the well-attested effects. Scientific evidence shows that global warming and climate change are already affecting climate and this is expected to continue, due to the fact alone that CO₂ can survive up to two centuries in the atmosphere.

4.2.2. Energy's Persisting Relevance for Environmental Sustainability

Trends however indicate that we are on an aggravating course with a continued increase in world emissions. Since 1990, global CO₂ emissions have increased by 46% (UN 2013: 42), and this at an accelerated rate, rising 10% from 1990 to 2000 and 33% from 2000 to 2010 (ibid: 43). Compared to the rest of the world, industrialised countries continued emitting on average a far larger amount of CO₂ per capita (IEA 2015a: 12).

⁵⁵ The definition itself of the concept of climate change by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) attributes the phenomenon to human activity: "Climate change" means a change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods.' (1992:7).



Key point: Emissions in non-Annex I countries have almost tripled since 1990, while emissions in Annex I countries have declined slightly.

Figure 3 - Regional CO₂ emissions trends (1990-2013)

(Source: IEA 2015a: 8)

The most rapid increase is however clearly taking place in the developing world. Non Annex-I countries almost tripled their CO₂ emissions from 1990 to 2012 compared to a slight reduction for developed countries as seen in Figure 3 and Figure 4. The most important increase in emissions is to be attributed to Asia, and China, being the largest single emitter, with predictions further that future emissions increase will continue to mainly originate from developing countries. The IEA attributes to fossil fuel consumption the faster increase in emissions in the case of developing countries (IEA 2013a: 7) in line with the famous Kuznets environmental curve which conceptualised the link between development and pollution. The steep upward trend of CO₂ emissions produced by developing countries illustrates the continued role of fossil energy in the connection between fast-paced economic development, growth in population and environmental sustainability at large.

As just discussed, with its responsibility in causing the biggest man-made impact on the climate to date, the use of energy directly impacts sustainability. Energy, and in particular sustainable energy, however only became normalised once this state of affairs became internationally recognised and a “policy response” was organised (Dyer 2012: 362) enabling the concept of sustainable development to become an international norm of its own. This first requires looking into the concept of SD itself and its normative dimension in particular.

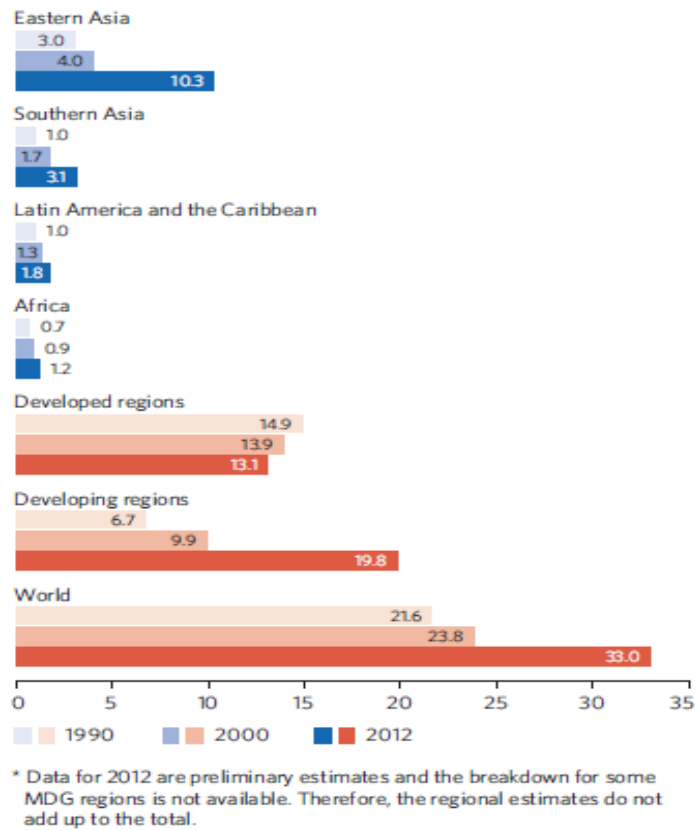


Figure 4 - Emissions of CO₂ 1990, 2000 and 2012 (billions of metric tons)
(Source: UN 2015)

4.3. The Concept of Sustainable Development

4.3.1. The Brundtland Report Definition

The concept of sustainable development was famously coined in 1987 by the World Commission on Environment and Development in its '*Our common future*' report, also known as the Brundtland report. It defined sustainable development as 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.' (World Commission on Environment and Development: 43). This original definition makes a link between 'nature management and economic development' (Barral: 379), stressing the need for

balancing between the two dimensions. This connection is constitutive of the concept's meaning and distinguishes it from the sole concept of sustainability it is sometimes confused with. Sustainability is borrowed from ecology and refers to the ability of an ecological system to survive (Costanza and Patten 1995). As Baker argues, it is the very combination of the concept of development with that of sustainability, which makes SD of relevance to society and societal changes rather than to ecology alone (Baker 2006b: 7).

This concern is reflected in SD's three pillar structure formally instituted at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg – the environment, the social, and the economic. Ekins (2000: 73) defines social sustainability as referring “to a society's ability to maintain, on the one hand, the necessary means of wealth-creation to reproduce itself and, on the other, a shared sense of social purpose to foster social integration and cohesion”. He further suggests referring to Pezzey (1992) that economic sustainability “is most commonly interpreted as a condition of non-declining economic welfare projected indefinitely into the future.” The originality of the environmental dimension is that it is affected by the impact of both the economic and social aspects on the environment (Baker 2006b: 7). As a vision for development, SD is a ‘particular pattern of social change’ (Lafferty and Meadowcroft 2000) ‘at the *interface* between these three dimensions’⁵⁶ (Baker 2006b: 7) that is respectful of all three aspects without being driven by only economic concerns for example. SD thus represents the ability to achieve a balance between the three dimensions of SD in order to determine whether the needs of future generations will be met (World Bank [no date]). As such it is often compared to a process rather than an end goal (Baker 2006b: 8).

Not only have the terms sustainable development and its principles been widely adopted by countries and international organisations such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the World Bank or the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) but they have become one of the EU's fundamental principles with the Treaty of Amsterdam (Article 2 TEC). The Treaty enshrines SD as an objective of the integration process (Pallemaerts 2006: 19), and thereby the EU's adoption of the concept. In the EU's Constitution, even though it

⁵⁶ Emphasis added.

has not been formally adopted, Article I-3 suggests the EU subscribes to the three pillar understanding of SD:

The Union shall work for the sustainable development of Europe based on balanced economic growth and price stability, a highly competitive social market economy, aiming at full employment and social progress, and a high level of protection and improvement of the quality of the environment. It shall promote scientific and technological advance. (EU 2004)

Based on its authoritative nature and its adoption by the international community and the EU, this is therefore the definition of sustainable development that is chosen for the purpose of this thesis.

4.3.2. A Multidimensional Concept

Since the Brundtland report, the term sustainable development has become a buzzword in the sense of being widely used, ranging from international institutions and funding agencies, to national governments, regional and local bodies up to civil society at large with NGOs, advocacy groups to public opinion in general, so that most of us these days have at least heard of the concept. However, away from the level of catchphrase that SD seems to have become, when it comes to defining the term for analytical purposes, the lack of clarity around the meaning of the concept is equally widespread. Most academic discussions on the topic start with bemoaning the vagueness of the concept and the difficulty of agreeing on a commonly accepted meaning (Ciegis 2004, in Ciegis 2009: 29).

A large number of definitions of the concept have emerged, so many in fact that entire studies have been dedicated to the problem of defining the concept itself⁵⁷. Ciegis (2009: 28), who devoted an article to the analysis of conceptual descriptions and evaluation of SD, shows that the meaning ascribed to SD varies according to disciplinary-related perspectives, whether economic, social, ecologic, institutional, ethical, political or other. He estimates at over 100 the number of definitions in the economic literature alone (ibid). Part of the complexity in agreeing on a definition is

57 See Lele (1991) and Mitcham (1995).

the multidimensionality of the concept itself. SD is at the same time an ecological concept, a development paradigm, a global strategy for development, as well as a project of global and political nature.

SD can be understood as alternative development paradigm because of its profoundly integrative nature (Roosa 2010: 36), in the sense that it is based on the integration of economic, environmental, and societal concerns, and their conciliation with one another. As Baker notes, the notion became an alternative model of development geared towards including 'environmental considerations in the steering of societal change, especially through changes to the way in which the economy functions' (Baker 2006b: 7). Since the Brundtland report, SD also became a 'conceptual launching pad' (Roosa 2010: 42) from which to develop blueprints for achieving sustainable development. The 1992 Rio conference and the Agenda 21 meanings of the concept extended to that of a strategy for development, as will be investigated in the following sections. The sustainable development formula is also to be seen as a highly political product. It is political in its conception as Benton (1994: 129) notes, 'Dr Brundtland provided a slogan behind which first world politicians with green electorates to appease, and third world politicians with economic deprivation to tackle, could unite', and it is political in the transposition of the concept into actual policies and actions.

4.3.3. The Normative Dimension

As some scholars have argued, sustainable development is best understood via concepts like democracy truth and justice or liberty (Baker 2006b: 27; Bell and Morse 1999: 11) which as such makes it notoriously difficult to consensually define. Beyond all the debates on the meaning of SD, and more importantly for the purpose of this thesis, at the core of the Brundtland definition there lies a very strong normative dimension. As posited by Barral (2012: 380), it introduces two normative principles – intergenerational and intragenerational equity – that are the responsibility to preserve the environment for future generations, and the responsibility to equitably share resources within societies and between developed and developing countries. It is the integration of these principles that constitutes sustainable development. The concept is an ethical stance in that it does not address the way things actually are but it points

at the type of development and society that should be (Ciegis 2009: 30). According to Scott and Marshall's (2015) definition of a norm in the Oxford Dictionary of Sociology, a norm can be understood as 'a shared expectation of behaviour that connotes what is considered culturally desirable and appropriate', SD's ethical and prescriptive qualities qualify the concept to be a norm. Of the several types of norms⁵⁸, SD has been termed as 'prescriptive' or 'evaluative' norm (Jørgens 2004: 247) due to its contribution in defining what is an appropriate type of development. Finally, even taking into account the difficulty to pin down a consensual meaning for the term, within its multiple dimensions SD is fundamentally a normative concept. However, SD and by extension SE only became an international norm in the process of establishing SD as a UN development paradigm. The following section outlines this process and how it led to the normalisation of energy.

4.4. The Normalisation of Sustainable Energy Process

4.4.1. Linking Development and Environment

As pointed at earlier, there is a scientific link between energy and the environment, hence the essential role energy occupies in switching to a sustainable mode of development. It is however only with the awareness of this link and the acknowledgement of human responsibility in environmental degradation that sustainability became an issue and following that, that sustainable development became an international goal in which energy became central. Although the term sustainability only made its appearance into the Oxford English Dictionary in the mid-1990s, sustainability is a long existing concern. Van Zon (2002 in Du Pisani 2006: 85) traces this back to ancient civilisations such as ancient Egyptian, Mesopotamian, Greek and Roman civilisations relying on raw material and this necessarily impacting the environment. The early formulation of the idea can be related to 18th century scholars like Thomas Malthus in his '*Essay on the principle of population*', articulating

58 See Finnemore and Sikkink (1998: 891-893).

the inevitable tension existing between an ever-growing world population and the world's carrying capacities (Robertson 2014: 10). Other scholars who addressed the issue include John Stuart Mill in '*Principles of political economy*' (1848), George Perkins Marsh's '*Man and nature*' (1864), or Alfred Russell Wallace's '*The wonderful century*' (1899) (Du Pisani 2006: 86). Even what we consider a modern issue, climate change, was warned about as a consequence of industrial activity in 1908 by Swedish chemist Svante Arrhenius (Robertson 2014: 11). Their commonality is the emphasis on the responsibility of human development for environmental degradation and the related idea that the respect for the environment involves placing limits to such development.

Awareness of human responsibility only really entered the public consciousness in the 1960s, peaking in the 1970s. It is only in the 1980s however that the public 'discovered' the issue of global warming (Dunlap and Scarce 1991: 651). Reports such as the 1972 Club of Rome report, '*The Limits to Growth*' calling for zero growth strategies (Meadows et al. 1972), or the economist Herman Daly's 'steady state economics' (Daly 1977) model of growth, were instrumental in bringing to the fore the argument of sustainability and necessary limits to economic development (Baker 2006b: 18). By making a clear connection between development and its impact on the environment the assumption of environmentally inconsequential or essentially given ever-increasing economic growth became challenged in the public eye.

With this realisation, the awareness of sustainability concerns shed a new light on the consequences of the consumption of energy, the way societies consume it, and the fact it is mostly of fossil fuel origin. The acknowledgement of the relevance of sustainability consequently required the adoption of a different approach to energy, away from high energy consumption and sole reliance on fossil fuel energy. This took place with the institutionalisation of the SD norm in an essentially international process that was mainly led by the UN in the sense that the norm does not originate from any national policies but that it was orchestrated and carried out by the UN (Jørgens 2004: 247).

4.4.2. The Establishment of the Sustainable Development Norm and the Normatisation of Energy

Originally addressed as a natural resource from the point of view of availability, depletion and conservation at the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (UNCHE) in Stockholm⁵⁹, energy was present from the start of the process. The UNCHE is considered to be the first attempt to formally connect together what later became the three pillars of sustainable development – environmental, economic and social (Baker 2006b: 70). It is the Brundtland report which in 1987 institutionalised the acknowledgement of the concept of limits to growth imposed ‘by the ability of the biosphere to absorb the effects of human activities’ (World Commission on Environment and Development 1987: 8) (Baker 2006b: 21). Based on the recognition of environmental problems and the issue of climate change and their direct link with economic and social dimensions, this milestone report established the pursuit of sustainability as a guiding principle for a new development paradigm and established SD as an international norm. Energy being at the crossroads with all three aspects of environment, society, and economy, the formalisation of sustainability objectives framed the energy issue as one of the underpinnings of the grand sustainable development scheme which the Brundtland report laid down for the first time. This is reflected in the Brundtland report where energy is singled out as one of the six challenges to be addressed⁶⁰.

As the sustainable development strategy gradually translated into a more concrete programme of action in the form of the Agenda 21 document, which resulted from the first Earth Summit in Rio⁶¹ in 1992, specific objectives for the operationalisation of the SD norm were elaborated. In Agenda 21 – recognised as the first authoritative suggestions of operationalisation of the concept of SD – energy features next to

59 Principle 5 of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (UNCHE) Declaration: ‘The non-renewable resources of the earth must be employed in such a way as to guard against the danger of their future exhaustion and to ensure that benefits from such employment are shared by all mankind.’

60 The other five challenges identified by the report are population and human resources, food security, species and ecosystem, industry, and urbanisation.

61 The Conference’s formal name is United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

transportation and industrial development under the document's atmospheric protection goals⁶². This progress confirmed the relevance of energy as an operational tool in the implementation of SD. More generally, together these two documents – the Brundtland report and Agenda 21 – established the SD norm and directly linked sustainable energy to its achievement, thereby 'normalising' the field of energy.

In parallel, the growing prominence of climate change as a distinct issue dealt with under its own dedicated processes meant that energy issues also started appearing under this heading, in the form of emissions reductions. Recognising the issue of climate change as resulting from human activity, the 1992 UNFCCC proclaimed in its Article 2 the aim of emissions stabilisation, with specific binding targets being adopted under the 1998 UN Kyoto Protocol. What came to be seen as the pre-eminence of the climate change agenda over the broader sustainable development agenda, or as Drexhage and Murphy (2010: 2) would argue, it becoming a 'proxy for implementation of the SD agenda', further confirmed the assimilation of energy as a tool to achieve SD.

4.4.3. Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency in the Operationalisation of Sustainable Development

The formulation of SD goals since the Brundtland report and the linkage of energy to the norm of sustainable development also meant the need for the elaboration of concrete guidelines delineating the ways in which SD could move from a concept and development paradigm to a strategy. In fact, the institutionalisation of a normative approach to energy naturally gave rise to concrete policy recommendations in order to bring energy use in line with the requirements of sustainability. The study of the main UN SD texts showed that RE and EE are present from the start and consistently so in a large majority of these documents as two main pathways to SD.

⁶² Chapter 9 of Agenda 21 entitled 'Protection of the atmosphere'.

The overall objective as formulated in the Brundtland report is one of decoupling energy use from environmental degradation and climate change. Compiling energy related measures in each of the UN's key documents on SD showed that related recommendations for energy policy mainly fall into 3 main categories: (1) energy reduction, which comprises energy efficiency and energy reduction measures, (2) energy mix, and (3) emissions mitigation, with (4) development-related measures as a fourth yet much less comprehensive category. Energy efficiency and energy reduction clearly appear as main goals of energy reduction strategies, with the promotion of renewables as the reduction of fossil fuels as the second major category. For emissions mitigation, air pollution is the major theme addressed. The Brundtland report thereby establishes that the normative approach to energy translates into promoting energy efficiency and renewable energies next to other targets such the reduced use of fossil fuels and mitigation of emissions. It is however important to note here that these dimensions are all highly intertwined so that these goals often overlap, in their implementation in particular.

With the gradual development of the sustainable development agenda into more workable targets, energy matters became formulated into precise recommendations identified as being essential to the pursuit of SD. This is reflected in the Agenda 21 document. As a plan of action for the implementation of the SD agenda, Agenda 21 presents a series of objectives organised according to issues in which energy is integrated. As such Agenda 21 offers far more action-oriented types of measure, and adds a series of specific goals such as the promotion of efficiency in production processes and the reduction of wasteful consumption (obj. 4.17 b.), the promotion of energy efficiency standards at the national level (art. 9.12. j), and the formulation of national action programmes to promote integrated development of energy-saving and renewable energy technologies (art. 7.51 a iii). EE and RE have been identified as relevant choices for implementing SD's energy agenda, together with the other dimensions identified in Brundtland.

With the parallel development of climate change governance, energy targets all focused on the reduction of emissions established as a principle under the 1992 UNFCCC declaration (Article 2) and associated with binding targets under the 1998 Kyoto Protocol. Recommended measures fell again under energy reduction and the promotion of renewables, but mainly under emissions reduction. The process of defining the nature of energy measures for SD and sustainability therefore further

established energy efficiency and reduction and the promotion of renewable energy, together with the reduction of use of fossil fuels in energy mix and emissions mitigation, as the pillars of a sustainable energy policy. EE and RE have thus been identified as two of the main tools to promote SE and thus SD.

With time however, EE and RE really came out as the two main priorities of the SD's energy agenda. In 2011 the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon launched the Sustainable Energy for All initiative (SE4All), which has the promotion of energy efficiency and renewable energy as two of its three main goals, together with the more poverty-eradication objective of increasing energy access around the world. More specifically, the initiative aims at doubling the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency as well as the share of renewable energy in the global energy system (SE4All, no date). Its aim is to prioritise SE within the UN SD agenda and it is an acknowledgement that SE 'is central to all aspects of sustainable development' by the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon (SE4All 2012: 2). This underlined the trend to normalise energy and to establish EE and RE as two indispensable elements to concretely promote SE.

4.4.4. Integrating Sustainable Development into Policies

One of the implications of the advent of SD as the dominant development paradigm and its normative dimension is the introduction of a sense of responsibility for all countries in striving towards SD, moving development from being the exclusive concern of less-advanced countries. In the case of developed countries, the formulation in the Brundtland report implies the need to adapt their "more affluent life-styles within the planet's ecological means". The aspiration of a sustainable form of development is a quintessentially global project as mentioned by Baker (2006b: 52), formulated at the international level. Agenda 21 states that SD's successful implementation is the responsibility of governments (Agenda 21 Preamble: 15). In order to become a reality, it therefore requires SD to be translated into national and regional plans as well as involving stakeholders at all levels. The UN called on all countries to get involved and review their policies in view of the SD objectives (Bonanomi 2015: 24), suggesting adaptation of 'national strategies, plans policies

and processes' (Agenda 21, UNEP 1992: 15) and thereby instituting the translation of the SD norm, and thus SE, at national level, including the EU.

The institutionalisation of SD also established the responsibility of developed countries to help developing countries in the application of these principles. By virtue of their advanced development stage in terms of technology and capacity, the founding SD texts conferred developed countries with the responsibility to provide developing countries with technological, capacity-building, and general help in setting up and implementing the whole range of measures needed to be taken for effective transition to sustainable energy. This is particularly to be found in Agenda 21 in which provisions relating to the three main criteria are accompanied most of the time by a call on developed countries to contribute through cooperation with developing countries⁶³.

The climate change framework even institutionalised this responsibility under the principle of 'common but differentiated responsibilities', according to which developed countries committed to take the lead in emissions reductions. Global governance on sustainable development and climate change thereby established concrete measures for countries to guide their energy policies, but also encouraged international cooperation between countries to collaboratively work towards sustainable development. It thereby encouraged the EU's integration of SD and SE into its objectives and policies.

4.5. The EU's Integration of Sustainable Energy

4.5.1. The EU's Formal Commitment to Sustainable Development

The EU's commitment to the SD norm can be seen as a process, which started as early as 1988. That year, SD entered for the first time the EU's political discourse in

⁶³ Agenda 21's preamble for example states that international cooperation should support the national efforts of implementing the SD strategy in national policies, strategies, plans and processes. For provision on energy specifically see Chapter 9, B. Promoting SD, 1. Energy development, efficiency and consumption and 3. Industrial development .

the Rhodes Council conclusions, and SD was called upon to become 'one of the overriding objectives of all EU policies' (European Council 1988). Only one year after the release of the Brundtland report, the EU, through the Council of the EU, thus expressed the will to have SD enter its system and be promoted to become an objective of the EU. Objectives are very relevant as they set out the fundamental goals for the Union as a whole, have to be taken into account by all EU institutions, and should be promoted in EU policies. This commitment was repeated in the 1990 Dublin Council conclusions in the intention to have the Community and member states' actions 'be developed on a coordinated basis and on the principles of SD and preventive and precautionary action.' (European Council 1990: Annex II Article 1.36).

It therefore came as a surprise that a few years later the Maastricht Treaty made no mention to the term SD beyond development cooperation, and therefore did not go as far as expected to enshrine SD principles into the Treaty. As Pallemmaerts (2006: 22-23) suggests, no consensus could be reached on recognising SD as a formal objective of the EU even though sustainability had been debated. As a result, a compromise was reached to refer to the term sustainable growth instead. In spite of the eventual predominance of the growth and economic integration programme over the sustainability agenda⁶⁴ preventing direct reference to SD, 'the notion of 'sustainable growth', (it) nevertheless represented an advance that subsequently could be built upon, as Wilkinson (1998: 115) recalls.

Whilst the EU's environmental policy - through its 5th Environmental Action Programmes (EAP) (EC: 1993) - initiated the shift of policy focus from environmental protection measures to that of promoting SD (Baker 2006b: 136), the Amsterdam Treaty finally made the principle of SD a formal objective of the EU:

The Union shall set itself the following objectives: to promote economic and social progress and a high level of employment and to achieve balanced and sustainable development (Treaty of Amsterdam: 1997, Article B)

SD is introduced in the preamble of the Treaty as a principle that establishes the ubiquitous nature of its commitment to SD:

⁶⁴ See Pallemmaerts (2006) and Wilkinson (1998) for further explanations drawing on the political agenda of this precise time to explain the eventual predominance of economic issues.

DETERMINED to promote economic and social progress for their peoples, taking into account the principle of sustainable development and within the context of the accomplishment of the internal market and of reinforced cohesion and environmental protection, and to implement policies ensuring that advances in economic integration are accompanied by parallel progress in other fields. (Treaty of Amsterdam 1997: Preamble)

SD appears as a task of the EU relating to economic activities and introduced the idea that ensuring economic growth is not an end in itself but must be accompanied with the notion of SD, which is not a minor step considering how vital the economic goals are for the European project:

The Community shall have as its task, by establishing a common market and an economic and monetary union and by implementing common policies or activities referred to in Articles 3 and 3a, to promote throughout the Community a harmonious, balanced and sustainable development of economic activities. (Ibid: Article 2)

It also sealed the connection between environmental policy and the goal of SD:

Environmental protection requirements must be integrated into the definition and implementation of the Community policies and activities referred to in Article 3, in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development. (Ibid: Article 3c)

The subsequent Treaties of Nice and Lisbon both confirmed the general application of the SD principle as an objective of the EU. SD has since then not only come to permeate the EU's discourse (Baker 2006b: 155), but the EU has also devised a set of criteria to measure the level of attainment of SD goals (Eurostat 2001; European Commission 2005c), and a set of criteria which are used internationally along those of the OECD (2000) and the UN (1996). Through this process, the EU provided Treaty status and thereby integrated SD - a principle born out of the UN system - into the EU's own internal set of rules, which demonstrates its commitment to having SD as a guiding norm for its actions and an inherent element of its identity. This leads Baker and McCormick to conclude that 'there is probably no single government or other association of states with such a strong 'constitutional' commitment to sustainable development as the EU. Sustainable development is now a norm of EU politics, both domestically and internationally.' (Baker and McCormick 2004 in Baker 2006). The commitment to SD established the necessity for sustainability to be accounted for in all EU policies. As the next section will show, from the start this was

combined with a corresponding process of implementing this commitment via viable policy goals where energy – EE and RE in particular – has all along been consistently identified as an operationalising tool.

4.5.2. Energy and the Operationalisation of the Sustainable Development Norm into EU policies

The term SD entered EU discourse as early as the 1988 Rhodes Council conclusions⁶⁵ and was further addressed in the 1990 Dublin Council conclusions, to culminate in 1997 when SD was legally made an objective of the EU in the Amsterdam Treaty. The process of devising a programme for the implementation of SD within the EU however only started in earnest after the Rio 1992 Earth Summit which gave the international impetus for the integration of the norm into policies. This process established energy and SE in particular as key elements in the translation of the concept of SD into a workable programme.

The 1993 5th EAP can be seen as the EU's first attempt at taking the concept of SD and devising a strategy for its implementation⁶⁶. Even though originally a document aimed at setting the EU's environmental policy and targets for the 1992-2000 period, the EAP entitled '*Towards sustainability*' presented the first clear blueprint for transforming the concept into action. It identifies energy as one of the five key sectors in which Community action is to be taken. The document states that 'energy policy is a key factor in the achievement of sustainable development', and energy efficiency as well as renewable energy are also 'key elements of the strategy' to be followed. At this point, measures were not yet very detailed but not only did the 5th EAP, from the start of the EU's SD integration process, establish energy as a central policy through which implementation must take place but it also enshrined SE as the main instrument for doing so

65 'As early' when looking at the EU process of integrating the norm of SD, but also in fact 'as late' considering that it is still 10 years after the Brundtland report which marked the establishment of the SD norm at global governance level.

66 See Pallemmaerts (2006).

The 1998 review process of the EAP which followed not only confirmed the commitment to the concept of SD but also signified the EU's commitment to stepping up the actual implementation of the SD concept into practical measures (EP and Council 1998). The review represented the implementing tool for the operationalisation of Agenda 21 in the EU constituting "an appropriate point of departure for the implementation of Agenda 21 by the Community and the Member States" (point 13). With regards to energy, these efforts for the greater implementation of SD goals further confirmed the role of energy policy in this process, with the Commission calling for increased efforts in the field of energy as part of the five key sectors identified in the 1993 EAP. In line with the Brundtland report approach and following key SD texts, EE and RE are particularly singled out as essential means through which to implement SD goals. SE is the object of all three energy-specific objectives, with the promotion of energy efficiency and support for renewable energies for which appropriate measures and programmes are called for (Point a), the encouragement of energy conservation measures (Point b), and the strengthening of energy efficiency standards for appliances and their energy efficiency labelling (Point c). What is telling in the EAP review regarding the role of energy in relation to SD is that not only have energy and SE been included in the EU's commitment to SD in the 5th EAP, but that when it comes to devising more specific measures, energy, and SE in particular, have also been considered a priority for the implementation of SD.

With a different, because more strategically framed approach to sustainable development implementation, the 6th EAP covering the period 2002 to 2012 is in keeping with the strong commitment to SE as an instrument in the EU's implementation of SD. With a challenge-based approach centred on four thematic areas – climate change, nature and biodiversity, environment and health, management of natural resources and waste – energy as a headline has disappeared to be replaced by the more environmental fight against climate change. Even though climate change has climbed to the top of both the EU's internal and international agenda and has gained great visibility as one of the biggest challenges to SD and to the world, by no means does this signify the disappearance of SE matters from the SD agenda in the 6th EAP, but only that SE has re-appeared under the climate change umbrella. Combined with other specifically climate change measures such as the setting up of a European emissions trading scheme (ETS) for

the promotion of research on climate change, all three of EE, RE and energy saving appear as the main instruments for achieving reducing emissions confirming the importance of SE, even when subsumed under a climate change-driven approach⁶⁷. In particular, this document contains some precise targets in terms of SE including a 12% target for renewable energy share in electricity production by 2010, a 1% energy efficiency improvement in the industry sector as well as more indirect SE measures (EP and Council 2002).

In 2001 SD moved from being addressed under the environmental framework to become the subject on an EU-wide Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS). This move was also about the operationalisation of the SD concept into policies reframed in a more “threat-focused” approach, focusing on few but severe and long-term issues where a European dimension is legitimate (European Commission 2001d). Once again, SE was addressed not in its own name but under climate change matters. Framed as such, only two out of six measures address explicitly energy efficiency or renewable energy. The press statement makes it clear however that SE is central to the climate change issue stating that ‘decoupling economic activity from emissions of greenhouse gases – notably carbon dioxide – requires a major shift to clean energy use, which will not be achieved quickly or easily.’ (European Commission 2001d: 15). The subsequent Göteborg Council conclusions, which constitute the third element of the SDS, include a substantial section on an SDS, which even though more sparse than the Commission document on climate change includes a commitment to the renewable energy target in electricity consumption. Overall, SE has survived the reframing of SD into a broader but more limited strategy and thereby asserted its relevance for the implementation and operationalisation of SD throughout the SDS process, thus also when SD is approached under its more holistic understanding.

The process of the SDS did not stop there and was complemented by a review process started in 2004 and concluded in 2006 by the Council’s adoption of a ‘*Reviewed EU sustainable development strategy*’. In keeping with the climate change and clean energy approach, this strategy presents a much more detailed programme

67 The document calls for “specific measures to enhance energy-efficiency, energy saving, more use of renewable energies and raw materials, and the reduction of greenhouse gases other than CO₂.” (point 16).

and finally includes in the SDS clearer SE targets, with a 9% target of final energy consumption savings by 2017, a 12% goal of energy consumption met by renewables, and 21% for electricity consumption specifically, with consideration to raising their share to 15% by 2015 (Council 2006). The following two progress reports in 2006 and 2009 assessed the progress of the SDS's implementation and continued monitoring developments in the implementation of SE measures in the EU.

Looking back from the beginnings of the process leading to the EU's implementation strategy of SD and its operationalisation into its policies to the review of a more comprehensive approach to SD, SE has been present during the entire course of the numerous developments and key documents that have emerged from it. From the first SD strategy under environmental policy, the following EAP with the environmental pillar of SD or the later comprehensive but reduced SDS with all its subsequent and more detailed reviews, it has been shown that SE was considered an essential tool for the attainment of SD for the EU.

4.6. Conclusion – Sustainable Energy within the Remit of 'Normative Power Europe'

The aim of this chapter was to show how energy became a concept with normative value in order to substantiate its use in this work as an expression of SD. Firstly, we established the link between energy and sustainability with regard to scientific data connecting the use of fossil fuels to power human development, underlining that this phenomenon is still ongoing as societies remain dependent on fossil fuel for their development. Energy's responsibility in this process constitutes the basis for energy's link with the normative concept of sustainability. Secondly the study of the SD concept itself showed that even though there are debates as to the exact meaning of such a contested concept, it carries a normative dimension of human responsibility towards the environment, which appears in energy's link with climate change. It is however only the international acknowledgement of this link between human development and environmental degradation, as shown in *section 4*, that was the determining factor in the institutionalisation of the SD norm. Importantly, it is only once SD was made a norm, that energy could become normalised. Key SD texts in their attempts at operationalising the new development paradigm associated energy

– in the form of the promotion of EE and RE in particular – to the goal of achieving SD. In that sense, SE became normalised as an ‘operational principle’ of the SD norm (Braun 2014). Turning then to the EU, this normalisation could also be found within EU texts and policies as well. The need for SD – an essentially international norm – to be implemented in national policies and plans in order to become a reality prompted the EU to translate the concept of SD into its own texts and policies. The process of articulating a SD implementation approach enabled the relevance of EE and RE for the EU to be established and institutionalised the role of energy as an operational principle of the SD norm for the EU.

In conclusion, the normalisation of energy is a direct consequence of the establishment of the principle of SD as an international norm. This same process was also responsible for the translation of this normative approach to energy into national plans, as was the case for the EU. This is seen to have laid the ground for SE cooperation to be studied in the light of normative theories. The following three empirical chapters investigate whether this normative connection is indeed driving the EU’s SE cooperation with China, in line with its commitment to promoting SD.

CHAPTER 5 – PRINCIPLES

5.1. Introduction

Manners devised the tripartite ‘Principle-Actions-Impact’ (PAI) analytical framework to test the EU’s assumed different kind of power because of its inherent non-material and ideational nature (Manners 2009b: 2). Each of its three dimensions set out to address a different facet of what constitutes a normative power. The principles underpinning the EU’s normative enterprise are the first of these three different paths identified by Manners to judge of the EU’s normative status. Guided by its grounding in virtue ethics, ‘principles’ relates to the “virtues or moral character” behind the EU’s external relations (Manners 2008: 55-56). The aim of this chapter is to investigate this dimension of the EU’s SE cooperation with China. Consequently, the main research question guiding this chapter is whether the EU is normative by principle in the sense of cooperating with China on sustainable energy (SE) with the intention of promoting sustainable development (SD) in China.

Applied to the case of the EU’s SE cooperation with China, investigating the character of this cooperation is thus defined as determining if the EU promotes SE with the intention to contribute bringing China closer to a sustainable development path – in the sense of being environmentally viable and durable. As addressed in *Chapter 4*, SD is a concept that requires operationalisation in order to bring about the change intended and the promotion of SE has been endorsed as one component to contribute to the process. It must be stressed that a European contribution to SD in general would not be deemed sufficient here to qualify as normative since as Forsberg (2011: 1194) noted “even bad intent can lead to good results and vice versa”. As this is a study about the EU’s normative power in relation to China, the EU must be found to support SD *for the direct sake of China*. Ensuring the EU’s intentions are directed towards China is a way to clarify the EU’s motives and better defines the scope of what it takes for the EU to be normative by principle.

In order to establish if indeed the quality of intentions is normative at heart, the PAI framework suggests looking at their legitimacy, coherence, and consistency. Each of

these criteria investigates the EU's intention from a different angle. Following this method, the principle promoted must firstly be seen as legitimate in the sense of emanating from a widely accepted and consensual source, as opposed to being an arbitrary self-creation (Manners 2009b: 2). Secondly coherence of principles is about the compatibility between differing principles and practices used to promote them (ibid). This is understood to refer to the presence of material interests and the role they play in the promotion of the principle. If these are found to be too prevalent, they risk undermining the normative intention. Thirdly, consistency examines compatibility from a location perspective, within the promoting entity (ibid). Altogether the three criteria can be compared to an analytical checklist which ultimately enables at least in principle conclusions to be drawn on the EU's normative quality. Therefore, each of them is to be examined in this chapter in order to establish the nature of the EU's intentions. Adapted to the study of EU-China SE cooperation, they determine the outline of this chapter. Each aims at answering a different research question:

1. (Legitimacy) Is the EU aiming to promote SE with the intention to advance SD in China and if so, is it based on universally agreed references?
2. (Coherence) Is the promotion of SE also motivated by material interests and if this is the case, do they challenge the normative intention of SD?
3. (Consistency) Is the EU promoting SE in line with SD *across* all of the places where SE promotion takes place within the EU – in this case Commission Directorate General (DGs)?

For research into the legitimacy criteria, the legitimacy of the SD norm promoted with China is established through references to universally accepted texts on SD such as previously established treaties, conventions, or texts, especially from the United Nations (UN) system (Manners 2009b: 2). Practically however, if the EU's SE cooperation with China is to be legitimate, the presence of SE promotion by the EU with China must first be established. Secondly, to be legitimate, the EU's SE cooperation with China must be the result of intentions to promote the SD norm, as encapsulated in key SD reference texts. It should therefore be possible to trace back the link between SE and universally agreed SD reference texts. These two elements structure the investigation into the first legitimacy criterion. Research into these questions has been conducted by analysing the EU's China policy throughout the years from 1995 to 2013. European Commission China policy papers are generally

accepted to be the main basis for the EU's China policy (Mattlin 2009: 99) and therefore constitute an adequate source for evaluating the EU's SE cooperation. The analysis took place in two stages with a combination of content and discourse analysis. Both methods are used for "exploring the social reality" expressed in textual form but they significantly vary in their epistemology as well as the results they yield since they "construe the social world differently" (Ruggie 1998: 86). Content analysis represents a more positivistic analysis of text, enabling analytical categories to be established and uses quantitative analysis, whereas discourse analysis, with its approach to discourse as a construction of reality, enables the meaning behind text to be explored and understood within its context (Hardy et al 2004: 19). A combination of the two has been applied in order to understand the quantitative presence of sustainability as well as the meaning of this presence and its potential connection to normative motivations.

Secondly, establishing the EU's coherence of SE promotion with China first entails locating the competent entity within the Commission for conducting the cooperation on the European side – in this case DG Energy – and the type of interests at play, before detecting their relevance and prevalence in the motivations guiding EU SE cooperation. This section goes on to single out energy security interests based on their particular relevance in DG Energy's SE cooperation with China. In terms of sources, EU policy papers both on the EU's internal and external energy policies were used in combination with interviews of DG Energy officials in order to identify the interests most relevant to this study – in this case those of energy security. In order to uncover the links between SE and energy security in the EU's relations with China, the same internal and external energy policy papers were extensively used. The analysis of the EU's conduct of SE cooperation to examine the relevance of energy security interests in the day-to-day cooperation, as opposed to EU political strategies, was performed by means of interviews with DG Energy and DG for External Relations (Relex) - later European External Action Service (EEAS) - officials. Due to the relative lack of literature specifically on EU-China energy relations, appropriate literature on EU energy policy (internal and external) was also used.

Finally, for 'consistency', the emphasis is put on identifying a dependable and constant normative approach in all the Commission DGs where SE is promoted with China. This firstly leads to determining the DGs involved in such cooperation, and

secondly to assessing the degree of consistency in SD promotion when cooperating on energy with China. The methods used are a combination of interviews, primary sources and secondary literature sources. A total of 21 European Commission DG officials involved in SE cooperation have been interviewed over 8 DGs. This includes the EEAS, which at the time fieldwork was mainly carried out was still DG Relex and thus a DG of the European Commission. Interviews served as the main source for the study but were triangulated with other primary sources from the EU – mainly EU Commission policy documents on China as well as financial statements. Considering the relevance of development cooperation framing relations with China and its potential impact on the consistency of SE cooperation, the study has been further grounded within secondary literature on EU development cooperation.

5.2. Legitimacy

5.2.1. The Sustainability Discourse in the EU's China Policy Papers

In the 1994-2013 timeframe, the Commission produced five policy documents issued in the form of communications, in 1995, 1998, 2001, 2003 and 2006⁶⁸. They contain the Commission's policy orientations and strategies and encapsulate the Commission's intentions for its policy towards China. Consequently, all five policy documents produced by the European Commission in this timeframe have been analysed as the main source for identifying the EU's intentions, together with the 2013 joint '*EU-China 2020 strategic agenda for cooperation*'. This latter document, even though not precisely an EU China policy paper, since it is a joint enterprise with China, forms an integral part of the context in which the EU's China policy developed and contains elements of the EU's China policy.

Considering the relatively limited amount of research around the EU's SE promotion with China, this longitudinal content analysis aims at gaining a first understanding of

⁶⁸ In 2016, the EU released a new strategy on China (European Commission 2016i). This document has however not been taken into account in this analysis as it is beyond the 1994-2013 timeframe set for this work.

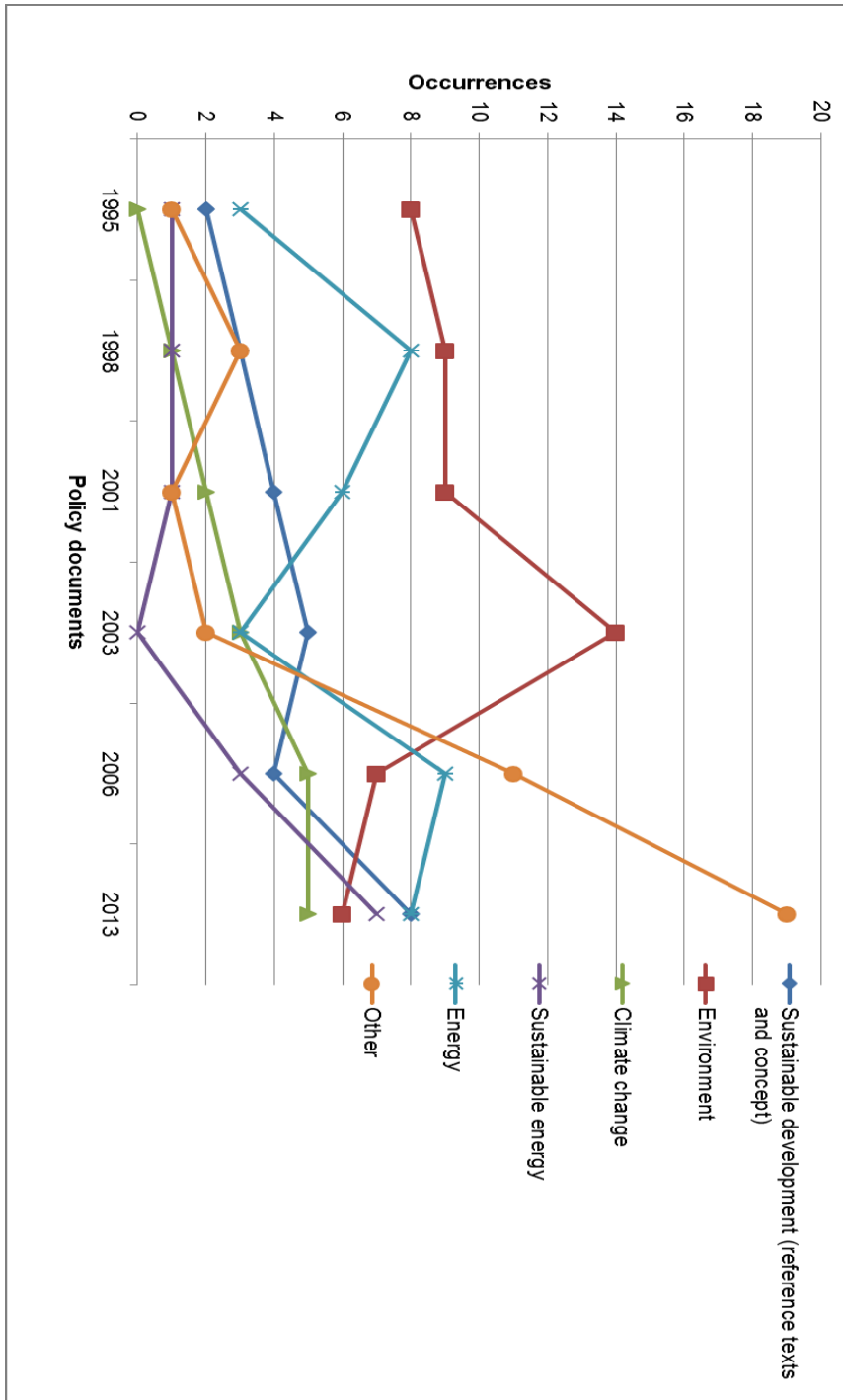
the presence of sustainable energy in the EU's China policy as well as providing a sense of the evolution of the relevance of this field of cooperation over the 1994-2013 timespan being studied. Similar to previous content analysis of the EU's China policy discourse and cooperation⁶⁹, it sets out to identify within the EU's China policy documents the quantitative occurrence of key concepts of the EU's sustainability discourse. Concepts have been chosen for their representative quality in the sustainability discourse and their occurrences have been counted and translated into Figure 5 below⁷⁰. These involve concepts related to sustainability at large, such as 'sustainable development', 'environment', and 'climate change', concepts related to SE such as 'sustainable energy', as well as more specific concepts such as 'renewable energy', 'energy efficiency', or even 'wind' or 'solar' energy, and finally references related to the concept of 'energy' in general. This latter concept was aimed at capturing the whole picture of the EU's energy cooperation with China, going beyond SE alone, with a broad range of occurrences pertaining to energy security, nuclear energy, or legislation matters – as long as they relate to the concept of energy. Finally, concepts which do not fit neatly into these categories but still belong to the sustainability discourse were recorded under 'other'⁷¹, with the intention of providing a broader understanding of the presence of sustainability issues in EU-China relations at large.

69 See Mattlin (2009) and Holslag (2011).

70 Considering the difficulty to unequivocally categorise some concepts encountered, the occurrences are used as an indication of the presence of the sustainability discourse rather than an absolutely rigorous account of such references. This method has mainly been chosen to give an overall understanding of the EU's sustainability discourse with China.

71 This includes concepts such as 'sustainable production and consumption', 'clean industry' or 'green technologies'.

Figure 5 - Sustainability discourse in key EU China policy documents 1995-2013



(Source: Author)

The analysis of the EU's China policy documents brought to the fore two main trends. Firstly, all of the sustainability concepts investigated were present from the start of the EU's China policy and consistently so until 2013. Originally all concepts were present, yet at the start occurrences were mostly concentrated around environmental matters. With time there was a relative broadening of the EU's sustainability-related discourse towards other concepts, hinting at a more diversified and quantitatively substantiated presence of sustainability issues within the cooperation. References to SD are on the whole relatively frequent, which suggests SD possibly being a policy priority with China. This appears to be the same for climate change, which is also a regular topic in the EU's China policy. Energy matters have been present from the start of the cooperation as well and are growing to be very well represented in it. SE specifically can also be seen as a matter addressed by the EU with China, yet to a smaller extent and with a clear increase after 2003.

Secondly, even though the evolution did not take place in a constant fashion, the figure shows that with time, the general trend was towards a general increase in sustainability as well as energy occurrences, especially in the last two documents (2006 and 2013). SE in particular increased in number of occurrences suggesting that with time, sustainability, and SE specifically, has become a more relevant subject in the EU's China policy. This corresponded as well to a congruently clear increase in sustainability/other occurrences – which includes the larger universe of concepts related to sustainability that arise in policy documents such as 'alternative energy resources' (1998), 'sustainability challenges' (2003), or 'green growth' (2013). This combined proliferation of sustainability-related discourse further suggests that sustainability issues at large have become more prevalent over time – mainly after 2003 – in the EU's China policy.

5.2.2. Sustainable Development Reference Texts and Normative Intentions in the EU's China policy

As the content analysis just showed, sustainability issues as well as energy and SE topics are present in the EU's China policy. This allows the motives behind such a presence to be investigated, and especially whether the EU's sustainability discourse – and SE discourse in particular – is directly related to key SD reference texts.

Commonly accepted reference texts for SD include the Brundtland report, the 1992 Rio Conference and its Declaration of Principles, as well as Agenda 21, and could extend to subsequent outcomes of the global SD process such as the Plan of Implementation emanating from the 2002 Johannesburg Summit for Sustainable Development or the latest 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development.

Taking the six documents studied, a total of 15 occurrences of key SD references can be found. These include mentions of the Rio process (the 1992 summit, the post-Rio summit agenda), Agenda 21, the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), as well as the Kyoto protocol, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the works of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCCC), and the Montreal protocol⁷². These texts are all the product of the UN's work and are thus assumed to be universally accepted as legitimate references to the SD process, or related to it. Looking at these references in their context, a large majority of them relate to global governance on climate change processes – even when mentioning non-exclusively climate-change events like 1992 Rio Earth Summit (1998:7). They overwhelmingly refer to the EU's effort to see China, one of the world's major modern-times polluters and thereby climate change contributors, engage in these multilateral processes. This is especially so with the gradual development of EU-China climate cooperation, which took off in 2005 with the EU-China Partnership on Climate Change document⁷³. Such engagement ultimately feeds into the promotion of SD by supporting both commonly negotiated solutions to climate change at global level as well as incentives for China to take action at national level. As Holslag argues (2011: 307-308) even though

72 This number has been obtained counting all instances where key SD, environmental or climate change texts were quoted within all six China policy documents and cooperation strategy.

73 Examples include the following quotes from EU-China policy documents:

“In particular, the EU should encourage China's further involvement in the pursuit of global environmental objectives in the context of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit and its follow up, notably in the area of climate change.” (European Commission 1998a:7).

“Both sides should build on the Climate Change Partnership, reinforcing bilateral cooperation, and strengthening international co-operation, meeting shared international responsibilities under the Climate Change Convention and Kyoto Protocol and engage actively in the dialogues on international climate change co-operation post-2012.” (European Commission 2006a: no page).

China and the EU have converging interests in this field overall – China being aware of the need to tackle pollution and sustainability issues for the sake of internal stability – cooperation remains difficult⁷⁴. With time, references to the EU’s engagement process increasingly translated into bilateral EU-China cooperation incentives, fuelling the EU’s engagement attempts towards China. It is nonetheless argued here that the main driver behind such an approach is not the EU’s support of SD in China but instead the EU’s constructive engagement policy with China.

Constructive engagement is one of the cornerstones of the EU’s policy towards China. It permeates all aspects of EU-China relations (Pan 2012: 39) and provides the ideological guidelines under which this cooperation developed. Laid out in the 1995 communication, it draws on the EU’s liberal beliefs that its economic and security interests are best met by encouraging China’s transition to greater political and economic liberalisation (Casarini 2009: 8). Sometimes defined as ‘the opposite of confrontation’ (Fouquet and Lim 2007: 127), this policy approach serves to justify the promotion of human rights (Gaens 2009: 61) as much as support towards economic liberalisation⁷⁵. Scholars like Hakenesch and Ling (2009) have underlined the dual type of engagement the EU follows with China – both normative and material. Whilst it does frame some of the EU’s normative initiatives, as some scholars argue (Pan 2012), placing constructive engagement back into its original context shows however that it can be seen as the result of an interest-based logic originating from the perceived necessity to engage with Asia to serve European economic and political interests. In 1994, responding to Asia’s meteoric economic and political rise and the opportunities this creates, the EU defined its first ever Asia strategy. It was directly motivated by economic interests and the ‘urgent’ need “to strengthen its economic presence in Asia in order to maintain its leading role in the world economy” (European Commission 1994: 1), as well as by political interests. Asia’s increased political weight required the EU to engage Asian countries if the EU were to “keep [...] its major role on the world stage” (ibid: 7). As such, even if normative actions were performed under the constructive agenda approach, the

74 See Men (2014) for a detailed historical overview of the EU’s commitment to climate change seen in comparison to China’s most recently developed position on the matter.

75 The 2003 European Security Strategy clearly states that trade and aid are “powerful tools for promoting reform” (European Council 2003: 10).

interest-driven nature of the intentions motivating the establishment of such agenda with China would invalidate them as normative in principle.

Engaging countries considered outside the bounds of international society, or violating international norms, by encouraging them to participate in global governance mechanisms is one of the ways constructive engagement is carried out and is a central aspect of the EU's 'responsible partner' approach with China (European Commission 1995b: no page). According to the EU, China is encouraged to become a 'responsible player' by engaging with global environmental and climate efforts, just as it is by in other key areas like human rights texts (ibid). This is further fuelled by the EU's self-proclaimed leadership role in climate matters (Gross and Jian 2012: 209) which supports the need to see China respond positively to global efforts (Torney 2012a: 7) combined with the EU's attachment to multilateralism in the international system (Chatham House 2007: 18). These two EU policy objectives feed into and reinforce its constructive engagement policy with China on climate change and offer an explanation for the prevalence of climate change concerns in the EU's sustainability discourse with China.

In fact, the only two direct references to SD-specific processes – Agenda 21 and SD development goals – also fit in the EU's constructive engagement logic. The one can be seen to underline China's potential readiness towards the EU's engagement process⁷⁶ whilst the other reflects China's evolution to being an aid donor and the move to a more equal EU-China partnership, which translates into SD being used as a tool to engage China to work commonly on SD issues abroad⁷⁷. With the evolution of EU-China relations to a more established state and the 2003 move to a strategic partnership, the nature of the EU's China engagement on SD also evolved. Reflecting the call for more equal relations and creating more mutually beneficial relations as opposed to being the EU's support of China, the EU's engagement of

76 "The environmental challenge faced by a rapidly developing China has been recognized by the Chinese government in its "Agenda 21" follow-up programme to the Rio Summit, with its accompanying list of specific projects leading to sustainable development." (European Commission 1995b: 14-15).

77 "Strengthen EU-China dialogue and cooperation on major international development issues as well as their respective development policies, including efforts to formulate and implement post-2015 development agenda and sustainable development goals. Both sides agree to start an annual development dialogue at senior official level." (European Commission and China 2013: 14).

China to become a more responsible player shifted to encouraging *joint* SD promotion in the world. In its 2003 policy paper the EU speaks of its interest in working together to "safeguard and promote SD, peace and stability" (European Commission 2003a: 3), moving in 2006 to engaging China in structured dialogue on Africa's SD (European Commission 2006a: 6). Even though it co-evolved with the relationship itself, the joint promotion of SD abroad essentially remains a variation of the 'responsible partner' approach the EU has been adopting since the beginning of EU-China relations. This approach is not about promoting the SD norm to see China progress on the way to more sustainability, but seems instead to be an expression of the promotion of the EU's own China policy of constructive engagement.

In view of this, it is not possible to establish that the EU has linked its sustainability cooperation with China (including SD and SE) in China to legitimate international references that would have provided the EU's cooperation with normative legitimacy. There is no evidence that the EU has been using these references to support a SD agenda with China. Instead, key SD references mostly reflect the EU's constructive engagement policy with China on climate change and thus does not correspond to promoting SD through SE within China and for the benefit of China. The quantitative study in Figure 5 however showed there are more references to sustainable development as a concept. This is to be seen in the context of a whole body of sustainability references including SE, environment, and climate change, which is clearly present and increasing with time, indicating that sustainability is a relevant cooperation field between the EU and China that has been growing in significance with the years. There is therefore an explanatory gap between the quantitative presence of a sustainability discourse and the reason for that presence, which requires turning to alternative qualitative methods to uncover what these occurrences relate to.

5.2.3. Explaining the EU's Sustainable Development Discourse on China

Concerning references to the SD *concept* in the EU's discourse – as opposed to SD *key texts* – content analysis shows it has been a consistent feature from the first up to the last policy document with about 11 references. In the EU's first Asia strategy paper in 1994, from which the EU's first China policy originates, SD is established

along with poverty alleviation as one of the EU's priorities with the region, and cited repeatedly in the 2001 Asia strategy entitled '*Europe and Asia: A strategic framework for enhanced partnerships*' (European Commission 2001c). This appears to grow out of a real concern from the EU for the region's environmental situation and sustainability. Whilst the document reflects the EU's initial priorities focused almost exclusively around politically engaging Asia and maximising the benefits of this growth for Europe, the strategy also shows the EU's understanding of the particular relevance that environmental sustainability issues have for Asia's development. The responsibility of non-sustainable energy systems is directly quoted and the energy predicament, and energy efficiency (EE) in particular, is thereby directly identified as one of the levers of the environmental sustainability of Asia's growth (European Commission 1994: 16). This concern is also largely present in the EU's first China policy. The EU's position is built on the acknowledgment of China's exceptional rise and the transformation that this involves, both within China and at globally, with an impact on economic, security, but also environmental issues. In particular, China's impact on the environment – including its rising energy consumption – is taken stock of as an issue of relevance:

China's size makes its impact on the physical environment unique. Despite its one-child policy, China's population increases by around 15 million people every year. But in addition, China's energy consumption is already second only to that of the USA. The consequences for the environment of such a huge country reaching western levels of consumption, and pollution, in the future are impossible to ignore. Hence the importance of China playing a full part in the wider policy exchange on such key issues as the environment, population, or health.⁷⁸ (European Commission 1995b: 4).

The study of the EU's SD discourse with China however shows that this concern has not been translated into the development of a SD specific agenda with China. In fact, even though the EU wants to "promote SD and help China integrate environmental policy concerns" (European Commission 1998a :22), there are no evident signs this translated into any such dedicated agenda being put in place, or SD-specific aims and objectives or action plans being formulated. References to the concept of SD

78 Emphasis original.

are instead mainly embedded in the rationale of integrating China in the international community and making it a 'responsible partner'. Expanding on these rationales, SD was in fact first introduced in the EU's China policy under the goal of engaging China as a responsible player both through multilateral and bilateral engagement. The EU attempted to bring China to be "an active promoter of the post-Rio Summit environmental agenda at the heart of government policy", but also defined "co-operation towards sustainable development and for the protection of the environment and global resources" as a shared interest for cooperation with China (European Commission 1995b: 4). This even extends to energy issues which "encourage[d] China to become an active and responsible energy partner" (2006: 5), as part of China's "new responsibilities" coming with the status of a strategic partner. As such even if they relate to climate change or other sustainability issues, the SD references cannot be explained by the EU's intention to promote SD in China for the sake of China, but they rather pertain to fulfilling EU objectives formulated under EU's China policy. This however leaves the intentions of the sustainability discourse and references to SE unexplained. Research into their context in policy documents show that they relate mostly to the EU's support for China's political and economic reform.

5.2.4. EU Intentions behind Sustainable Energy Cooperation with China

The support of China's economic, social and environmental transition process is how the EU translated its engagement approach, whereby EU economic and security interests are best served by a reformed and thus more liberal China with a practical cooperation agenda⁷⁹. It relates to China's fast-paced and wide ranging economic and social development undergone since the late 1980s and aims at helping China in achieving success in the deep and large-scale changes triggered by the country's development and also by its reform process. The EU identified support for China's reform process as a way to practically engage China and this agenda constitutes its broad strategic objective since the EU's first China policy paper in 1995 (Mattlin 2009:

79 In its 2003 policy strategy with China the EU states "Europe thus has a major political and economic stake in supporting China's transition to a stable, prosperous and open country that fully embraces democracy, free market principles and the rule of law." (European Commission 2003a: 3).

102). It guides many of the EU's cooperation policies with China and considering the immense environmental implications of China's development, the support of China's transition agenda also constitutes an important justification for its support to sustainability issues,⁸⁰ and China's green energy transition in particular. In view of China's reliance on coal and oil to fuel such an unprecedented growth-spurt, and the known impact of fossil fuels on the environment and climate, the promotion of clean energy solutions is linked to supporting China's economic and environmental transition. Consequently, sustainable energy promotion – including EE, clean coal and alternative energy resources – can be seen as part of the rationale of 'support to China's transition', and a large number of SE references as well as the EU's sustainability discourse are grounded in it. SE is presented as one of the tools to contribute to the sustainability of China's transition, which is the case from the 1995 paper already and then onwards.

Whilst there is a normative quality to this discourse as it promotes the transition to a more sustainable development in China, it also appears that its grounding in the reform agenda means it is exposed to other norms coexisting in the agenda. The promotion of the EU's economic and trade interests is in fact one of the EU's main priorities under this agenda. As Casarini argues (2009: 51), the promotion of China's sustainable development was identified early on as a way to protect the EU's economic security, whilst Narramore (2008: 97-98) suggests conducting a mainly economic-driven policy enabled more sensitive political and security issues with China to be bypassed. The presence of economic interests should come as no surprise since the EU's China policy was largely born out of the EU's economic concern of engaging one of the key economic drivers as well as a main trading partner (Wiessala 2002: 91). As a result, and considering the fact that SE is also a lucrative trade sector as addressed in *Chapter 6*, this logic also applies to the EU's references to energy and SE. SE is addressed throughout the policy documents as an economic sector where the EU can benefit greatly from its cooperation with China.

80 In its first China policy document the EU establishes support for China's reforms as a cooperation strategy priority, including on environmental matters: "EC cooperation should both be reinforced and more closely targeted on support for reform in all areas of Chinese society: reform to promote the integration of China into the world trade and investment system, reform of the underdeveloped and restrictive civil society in China, reform to bring China closer into the global information society, and reform to prevent further damage to the physical environment in China." (European Commission 1995b: no page numbers).

This appears under trade sections specifically, as well as other trade-related sections such as research, technology, and innovation cooperation, and later on in the more recent urbanisation cooperation. It also offers an explanation for the volume of the sustainability discourse, as it not only appears in connection to the promotion of sustainability but to trade interests.

As a result, since sustainability and SE do not benefit from their own dedicated agenda linked to the promotion of the SD norm, the promotion of SE is at the mercy of the objectives and sets of norms of the agenda they are embedded in – in this case constructive engagement. Trade has been one of the main historical interests since the beginnings of EU-China relations, but with time and the maturing of EU-China relations energy security also became associated with the energy and SE discourse. Since 2006, SE and energy are openly quoted as instruments of energy security cooperation. The use of SE together with reductions in the growth of energy consumption, as well as other measures such as energy standards, is part of a set of measures targeted at energy security. Energy security is one of the newest additions to the EU-China energy cooperation. This was enabled by the establishment in the 2006 policy document of what appears to be the first dedicated energy agenda with China – even though limited – where SE became integrated into the agenda as one of the tools to achieve energy security notably. Suggestions to “strengthen China's technical and regulatory expertise, reducing growth in energy demand, increasing energy efficiency and use of clean renewable energy such as wind, biomass and bio fuels, promoting energy standards and savings through the development and deployment of near zero emission coal technology;” (European Commission 2006a: 5) are located under the now double goals of ensuring sustainability and security of energy supplies.

SE being mainly located in the transition agenda, which is a product of the EU's China policy and therefore serving the range of European interests towards China rather than part of a strategy to promote the SD norm in China, indicates the relative lack of normative intentions behind the EU's SE cooperation. SE is an instrument of the EU's China policy and not a means of the promotion of SD. The volume increase in the sustainability discourse over the years is simply the result of the success of the EU's transition agenda and the support of sustainability-related issues like SE in EU-China relations. In fact, a lot of the sustainability discourse relates to the institutionalisation of the relations in that field. The 1998 policy paper for example

states as an objective “develop[ing] dialogue on environment and sustainable development” (European Commission 1998a: 8), the 2003 (European Commission 2003a: 4) policy document mentions strengthening the existing energy dialogue, and the 2013 joint cooperation strategy calls for enhancing policy exchanges on industrial EE. With time, issues relating to sustainability became a pillar of EU-China relations. The 2006 policy document is the first to have unified all sustainability-related matters – including SE – previously scattered across other policy priorities under one SD title, and the 2013 joint EU-China cooperation strategy made ‘sustainable development’ one of the four pillars of the cooperation. Instead of being evidence of an SD agenda with China, it is the result of a functional logic of aggregation of a growing range of sustainability-related cooperation following their success in EU-China relations areas under one single title.

5.3. Coherence

5.3.1. Inside EU-China Energy Cooperation: Norms or Interests?

In line with Manners’ definition of coherence (Manners 2009b: 2), the purpose of which is to determine if other principles and practices in the norm’s promotion are coherent with a normative approach, the aim of this section is thus first to investigate which interests are at stake in the case of the EU’s SE cooperation with China. This implies looking for coherence where SE cooperation is carried out from within the EU. Within the Commission, it is DG Energy that is in charge of the EU’s energy cooperation with China. Although energy has been at the very origin of the European integration process, it mostly remained a competence of the member states. As argued by Maltby (2013), it is thanks to the Commission’s entrepreneurial role that supranational competences were acquired over the years, resulting in formal – yet shared – energy competence under the Lisbon Treaty⁸¹. This was mostly attained by the Commission’s adroit framing of internal energy issues as European issues

81 Article 4 and 194 of the Lisbon treaty.

which thereby required a European solution (ibid: 437). External energy however mostly stayed outside of the Commission's remit, reflected by a lack of formal mandate⁸². Instead the Commission's energy cooperation with China – along with other areas such as human rights, development, or environment cooperation – was enabled by the Maastricht Treaty, which opened up the inclusion of non-trade related issues in the EU's relation with China (De Matteis 2010: 451), as well as adding a number of other areas to the EU framework (Smith 2012: 699). This enabled the development from 1994 onwards of a sectoral dialogue on energy. Energy was thus introduced through the channel of expanding EU-China relations, as opposed to the development of a formal European external energy competence. DG Energy's International relations and Enlargement Unit (Unit 3) within the Directorate for Energy Policy (Directorate A) is in charge of relations with China. DG Energy is responsible for both the dialogue as well as energy projects with China, where SE is largely represented and makes up a large part of DG Energy's energy cooperation with China⁸³. DG Relex (and then the EEAS) also played a role in the cooperation but less in daily conduct than for the coordination of the EU's position when cooperating with China.

Looking into DG Energy's energy cooperation policy with China, interests are clearly present as motives for energy cooperation with Asia and by extension China. Interestingly these follow the ones established in EU internal energy policy. The 1996 *'Europe-Asia co-operation strategy for energy'* (European Commission 1996a) document, which outlined a first dedicated energy strategy with Asia, spelled out the three main goals as "strengthening the security of supplies of Asia and Europe, participating in Asia's energy markets and protecting the global environment." (ibid: 3). The presence of interests is to be attributed to the fact that this strategy is to be understood within the EU's energy policy as an emanation of the 1995 White Paper entitled *'An energy policy for the European Union'* (ibid: 4), which calls for the elaboration of international energy relations and is a translation exercise of the EU's energy policy objectives to its external relations with Asia. In line with the normative

82 Maltby (2013: 439) underlines that "no Community action was set out in the external dimension in either the Maastricht (1992), Amsterdam (1997) or Nice (2001) Treaties."

83 See Chapter 6 for a detailed presentation of the institutions supporting DG Energy's cooperation with China on SE and Chapter 7 for a review of projects and programmes.

triangle conceptualisation, the EU follows not only sustainability but also interests of an economic and energy security nature with Asia which are to provide guidance for DG Energy's policy with China. Interviews with DG Energy officials confirmed these three elements form the guiding principles of the DG's mission with China (EU-8). One DG Energy official expressed this saying that "in the overall framework of our energy relations, our objectives are just to comply with the three main objectives of the EU" (ibid). Is that however the case in the actual conduct of SE relations with China?

Interviews with DG Energy officials in charge of the China file confirmed that all three elements of the EU's energy policy objectives – sustainability, economy, and energy security – flow into DG Energy's motives for cooperating with China. Sustainability is present in the DG's discourse as a motivation for cooperation with China, albeit in a rather limited way and mainly for the sake of the EU's climate change policy. China is understood as a key player to have on board in order to efficiently fight against climate change and SE promotion plays a direct role in achieving this. This was exemplified by a DG Energy official, in saying that "we know that we can make as many efforts as we want here in Europe, we will not succeed in getting anything meaningful unless we convince our Chinese partners that the huge new cities in China need to get an intelligent approach vis-à-vis energy emissions and things like this and this is very much based upon SE systems." (EU-8)

Sustainability is a rationale for DG Energy's SE cooperation with China, however not in the normative sense of promoting the SD *in* China and *for the benefit* of China but rather to advance the EU's climate change policy by involving China. Promotion of sustainability in China through SE appears rather as a benefit by association. Interviews have also uncovered a trade rationale in DG Energy's work with China. Enabling access for European SE companies to the lucrative Chinese market was stated most of the time by DG Energy officials as one of the most interesting reasons to cooperate with China on SE. One official stated it in the following terms "Europe is still a leader in the production of EE and renewable energy (RE) technologies and China is the most promising market so there is a very clear business case there." (EU-8). This also applies to its more recent urbanisation cooperation which is also aiming at providing companies with a platform to enter the Chinese market: "The advantage of having such a partnership is market access, in order for our companies to gain access to the Chinese construction market which will be huge!" (EU-9).

Though trade appeared to motivate DG Energy's cooperation with China, energy security has been found to play a comparatively more important role in driving DG Energy's SE work with China. "We have all interest to help China to reduce its demand for the benefit of our security of supply" (EU-8). According to one official it is one of the biggest priorities within DG Energy. As the interviewee said when asked for the motives of cooperation, "all my bosses ... go for the themes that they are most scared of like energy security [...]" (EU-8)⁸⁴. Whilst this finding does not allow for weighing up the comparative importance of energy security in relation to the other rationales, energy security's large presence is nevertheless indicative of strong material interests. As such it identifies energy security as a relevant motivational factor to study in order to establish potential threats to any normative intentions in DG Energy's energy security concerns. In this light, the next section looks deeper into the energy security motives for cooperation in SE cooperation practices. Having established that DG Energy's interest in energy cooperation with China draws on EU internal energy policy objectives – the sustainability, competitiveness, and energy security triad – the next section reviews EU internal and external energy documents in order to establish the relation between SE and EU energy security interests.

5.3.2. Energy Security and Sustainable Energy Cooperation with China

5.3.2.1. Sustainable Energy and European Energy Security Strategy

Energy was at the very origin of the European project, with two out of three founding Treaties revolving around the field of energy⁸⁵. Even if these treaties are considered instrumental in starting the European integration process, energy has largely remained a national issue. This did not prevent the EU from producing a body of texts

⁸⁴ Energy security is a contested concept and does not have a consensual definition.

Understood at its narrowest, energy security refers to the "reliable and adequate supply of energy at reasonable prices" (Bielecki 2002: 237).

⁸⁵ The European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) Treaty (1951) and the EURATOM Treaty (1952) establishing the European Atomic Energy Community. The third and non-energy specific treaty is the Treaty of Rome (1957) which established the European Economic Community (EEC).

and policies on energy. Looking at the EU's successive energy policy papers, it is noteworthy that it has integrated the concept of SD into its energy policy to create a type of "sustainable energy security" approach (Hadfield 2006: 218). The Cardiff process in 1998 started the sectoral integration of SD into energy policies and saw both energy and environment as mutually reinforcing areas within the SD discourse (ibid: 221). Looking further down the line, the integration of sustainability concerns into EU energy policy facilitated by the gradual importance given to environmental and sustainability issues, as argued by Kanellakis et al (2013), can be found in a number of documents such as the 2001 Council resolution further integrating SD and environmental concerns into EU energy policy (Hadfield 2006: 222). Over the years SD and sustainability continued to be integrated into evolving EU energy policies and linked the need for energy security with the requirements of sustainability. SE and sustainability were framed to contribute to the EU's energy security in large parts of the EU's policy framework⁸⁶. The EU has also produced a number of directives directly addressing renewable energy and energy efficiency creating a large body of texts dedicated to implementing SE promotion in the EU. The 20/20/20 climate and energy package released in 2008 and the more recent EU 2030 strategy all pursue the goal of sustainable energy strategy, which has become part of EU-wide goals with the Europe 2020 strategy. SE has even become part of the new Lisbon Treaty article on energy under Article 194(c).

In fact, already in 1990 the EU was interested in developing sustainable energy and becoming a world leader in this field (European Commission 2006b)⁸⁷. However, it was only in the year 2000 with the Green Paper '*Towards a European strategy for the security of energy supply*' (European Commission 2000b) that the EU's energy security strategy openly shifted from an essentially supply-side policy to a demand management approach⁸⁸. The Green Paper came to the conclusion that "the EU had

86 This includes - but is not limited to - the Commission's 2006 Green paper entitled '*A European strategy for sustainable, competitive and secure energy*' (European Commission 2006c) and the 2007 Communication '*An energy policy for Europe*' (European Commission 2007a).

87 The EU already had in 1998 a Communication on energy efficiency (European Commission 1998b).

88 As suggested by the EU itself, "the Green Paper on security of supply proposed a clear strategy anchored in demand." (European Commission 2005b).

just too little room for manoeuvre on energy supply and that it was in the area of energy demand that it could act.” (ibid.) With this milestone document, the EU began developing an energy security strategy focused more towards reducing its own consumption of energy and fossil fuels through the promotion of energy efficiency and renewable energy as core instruments. This approach gathered support, as expressed in the 2002 Communication (European Commission 2002c) on the debate around a new energy security approach and was conducive to launching a set of directives promoting SE in Europe. This included directives on electricity production from renewable sources, on energy saving in buildings, on promoting biofuels, and a White Paper to improve management of the transport sector, which accounts for close to a third of its energy consumption and carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions⁸⁹. Further directives were released to contribute to the continued promotion of SE and establishing more firmly the demand-side management strategy⁹⁰. Sustainability concerns were of course not absent when turning to SE to drive the shift towards a low energy consumption society. Reflecting this, policy texts generally mentioned the need to take into account sustainability issues within energy policy. This shows that sustainability concerns, and in this case the transition to more sustainable energy sources and uses through SE energy promotion, were used as a tool to trigger a shift of energy security strategy focused on managing the EU’s demand. As a result, the promotion of SE became tightly linked to the EU’s energy security interests within the EU. Evidence shows that this strategy was also gradually translated to the EU’s external energy relations and with China in particular.

5.3.2.2. Sustainable Energy and the Expansion of the EU’s Demand-Oriented Strategy to Relations with China

Similar to its internal energy policy, the EU had even more limited formal competences when it came to external energy relations. In spite of that, the EU also translated its internal energy policy goals to its relationships with partner countries

89 Respectively directives European Commission 2001e, European Commission 2002b , European Commission 2003b and a White paper (European Commission 2001f).

90 One of them is the 2005 green paper on energy efficiency called ‘Energy Efficiency or Doing More With Less’ (European Commission 2005b).

and in particular with other consumer countries like China. EU energy policy documents show a strategy that originally focused on producer and transit countries such as Russia – the EU’s main fossil fuel supplier – Central Asia, and the Black Sea region. Gradually however, the EU’s demand-side management strategy for improving its own energy security became part of European external cooperation objectives on energy, as did SE. The 1998 Commission communication on the integration of environmental concerns into energy policy (European Commission 1998c) addressed the need to have an increased dialogue with consumer countries whilst the 2000 *‘Action plan to improve energy efficiency in the European Community’* (European Commission 2000a) called for international cooperation on energy efficiency.

In parallel, the EU started showing awareness of the threat to its energy security posed by the rise of large consumer countries – mainly China and India. This encouraged a shift and expanded the EU’s understanding of its own energy security beyond supplier countries only. This was reflected in 1995 when the Commission released the White Paper *‘An energy policy for the European Union’* where it recognised the need to establish an Asia-specific energy strategy and called for the development of an external energy policy (European Commission 1995a). One year later, the *‘Europe-Asia cooperation strategy for energy’* policy paper was released, which aimed at addressing the effects of the rise of Asian countries – including China – on the EU’s energy situation (European Commission 1996a). In 2000 the Green Paper *‘Towards a European strategy for the security of energy supply’* showed awareness of the EU’s continued acknowledgement of this situation and the relevance of China in the long term energy situation:

In the long term, it is the energy choices made by the developing countries - and in particular China, India and Latin America, whose populations and energy demands will see the strongest growth - which will have the most decisive and lasting influence on the international energy markets. (European Commission 2000b: 27)

The EU’s relatively limited external energy competences meant restricted energy cooperation ties with China, since energy security was thought of as depending more on energy exporting countries. Yet establishing cooperation with China imposed itself as crucial for the future of the EU’s energy security. In the 2005 Green Paper *‘Energy efficiency or doing more with less’* (European Commission 2005b), the EU clearly

connected sustainable energy – in this case energy efficiency – to energy security interests and presented energy efficiency as a tool to be used for consumer countries:

The recent increase in oil prices highlighted the impact of increased energy demand resulting from rapid growth in energy consumption in a number of countries, including *China*. Given the scarcity of energy resources and the limited spare production capacity, especially for hydrocarbons, it is obvious that energy-importing countries increasingly become competitors for the same energy resources, for example in Russia, the Middle East and the Caspian region.

*Therefore energy efficiency is an issue in the interest of all energy importing countries, including the Union, and should be integrated into their global strategy for security of energy supply.*⁹¹ (European Commission 2005b: 33)

The Union called for establishing a structured dialogue between consumer countries so as to extend a demand-based energy security strategy. From then on, all major EU energy policy papers further established the EU's intention to enhance relations with major consumers, and China in particular, with a focus on sustainable energy.⁹² The 2008 European Council report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy '*Providing security in a changing world*' clearly enshrined the use of SE as a means to guarantee the EU's energy security by stating under the energy security title that "with our partners, including China, India, Japan and the US, we should promote renewable energy, low-carbon technologies and energy efficiency, alongside transparent and well-regulated global markets." (Council 2008). The latest 2001 Communication on security of energy supply and international cooperation, '*The EU energy policy: Engaging with partners beyond our borders*' further confirms the EU's demand-oriented strategy with China and the continued presence of SE at its core (European Commission 2011a). This entire process shows that, beyond pure sustainability interests, SE became connected to European energy security interests with China as part of a response to the threat China's rise posed on the EU's energy security.

⁹¹ Emphasis added.

⁹² See European Commission (2006b).

5.3.3. The Role of the Energy Security Rationale in the EU's Sustainable Energy Cooperation with China

Although energy relations constitute one of the earlier sectoral cooperation areas in EU-China relations, energy was mostly addressed as a technical matter. EU-China relations though long-standing have for a long time focused on trade issues and have evolved more slowly on political matters, so that issues like energy security did not necessarily have clear channels for cooperation. Energy security's much more political nature only became addressed as an issue of its own very recently, as part of the high-level strategic dialogue established in 2010 where the more high-profile foreign and security issues are discussed.⁹³ In the meanwhile, building trust and rapport with Chinese partners has been identified by European Commission interviewees across the board as a necessary though time-consuming prerequisite before being able to cooperate in a fruitful manner, and on energy security in particular. DG Energy officials working on China have acknowledged that "it takes months and even years to build trust and to manage to discuss some issues; also on the Chinese side for them to get a mandate to negotiate on that [energy security]. For now, we are not there yet. It has been a year, we keep bringing up the topic [...] we already managed to introduce the idea that energy security will be a cooperation topic. It looks like nothing but in fact it is not bad." (EU-7). Reaching a point where energy security is a discussion topic is generally thus seen as an achievement by DG Energy officials as well as by EEAS staff (EU-7, EU-20, EU-22 and EU-24).

The evidence that flowed out of interviews and that is presented here is that SE played the role of a trust and rapport-building mechanism in substantiating the relationship and helped create the conditions to tackle more politically sensitive energy security issues. SE first served as the main means to give more substance to the relationship, which is otherwise not underpinned by consumer-producer links. Quoting a DG Energy official, "one of the key elements of the relations between China and the EU is to create a high density of relations. We have 60 [sectoral dialogues] and we wouldn't mind having 80. This is probably the best possible investment. SE is embedded into these frameworks and is creating closeness

⁹³ Energy security and of resources in particular was for example on the agenda of the 2013 Sino-European Strategic Dialogue meeting in Beijing (CICR 2013).

between players, so that SE doesn't have to play a prima donna role. It is a different approach. So the density of the relation is more important, and that many things are going on, not whether or not they are very visible." (EU-8). Secondly, SE cooperation contributed to substantiate the partnership by positioning the Commission as credible and legitimate partner as well as increasing the relevance of China within external energy matters. On this note a DG Energy official said: "Now, they [the Commission] don't try to bypass us, which was not the case four years ago. We had to fight to be heard, to talk to them, but now it all happens naturally. The same way that we now talk naturally with them. Before, in here China was not of much interest. We only talked of Russia. And even now, there is only one person and a half on China, which in terms of staffing is not much." (EU-7). China not being a producer country, and therefore not directly relevant for the EU's security of supply, nor a major cooperation partner – China is not a member of the International Energy Agency (IEA) for example – it did not naturally rank very high on DG Energy's list of priority countries.

SE was thus instrumental in building rapport within the development of EU-China energy relations. When asking what area was the most successful in the cooperation with China the answer was straightforward: "Renewables. Everything is connected to renewables, grid integration, smart grids", as mentioned by a DG Energy official working on China (EU-7). This is underpinned by the fact that of the bulk of EU-China relations in the time-frame of this study – between 1994 and 2013 – a majority of activities were devoted to SE energy cooperation and SE appeared in most energy summits, so much so that energy came to occupy a central position for the whole of EU-China relations. As mentioned in interviews with DG Energy, "these past two years [2009-2010] energy has taken a substantial place in our relations. Good or bad, as important as human rights for example. Now we speak more of energy than of human rights. This shows the degree of importance of our energy cooperation in overall EU-China relations." (EU-7).

China's great interest in the cooperation around SE and in learning from the EU in this field certainly enabled SE to play the role of engagement tool. It resonated with China's own commitment to achieving a transition to a more sustainable society. High targets for renewables and energy efficiency were set, creating a great deal of interest in all issues around the low-carbon society where the EU had already

become a prime-mover thanks to its demand-driven energy strategy⁹⁴. EEAS and DG Energy officials have confirmed the relevance of the European experience in their cooperation with China. “They [China] have seen that we boosted an entire industry. The renewable energy industry in Europe experienced an incredible boom which is thanks to Europe-led policies after all. I think this creates some interest in the Chinese. So yes we became a key figure, but not unique.” (EU-7). According to EEAS official this interest eventually created an “entry point” for cooperation with China (EU-23), especially in fields with less obvious connection such as energy security. An EEAS official working on energy confirmed this point when saying that “when you start to engage it is true that the Chinese were interested in our know-how and expertise, say in energy efficiency in the building sector. [...] When you start and build such relation at the lower and practical level then you realise there are other aspects which are more controversial or political on which you can engage as well. [...] On the one side you have working relations on energy-related issue and on the other side you have the international dynamic, which you also have to address somehow.” (EU-23). And in fact, most recently energy security became an established topic of cooperation. The EU and China signed a joint declaration on energy security in 2012 and in their 2013 joint cooperation strategy, the EU and China pledged to reinforce cooperation on global energy security matters within the Energy Dialogue (EU and China 2013: 10).

It therefore seems that SE was essential in building a bridge from technical and low-key SE issues to the more political energy security issues. SE served as an engagement tool driven by the shared interest in sustainability to create the right conditions within the cooperation to safely move on to energy security. In view of this SE directly served the EU’s energy security strategy and interests as opposed to SD development concerns. This finding is in line with other research stating the challenges that energy security interests can pose to sustainability goals on energy (Dyer 2012: 362).

94 Vice-President for the Energy Union Maroš Šefčovič mentioned the EU’s ‘first-mover’ advantage in renewable energy and energy efficiency (European Commission 2016a).

5.4. Consistency

5.4.1. Sustainable Development as Guiding Principle of EU Sustainable Energy Cooperation with China

In EU rules, China had the status of developing country (Sautenet 2010: 107) until 2013. China's status is of relevance for the EU's relations with China since it means that cooperation objectives are framed as part of its development cooperation which has the promotion of SD as guiding principle. Fostering SD is one of the major goals of EU development cooperation (EU 1992)⁹⁵. Historically, the promotion of SD was much more easily accepted as the role of the EU in relation to developing countries, especially when compared to the not uncomplicated process of establishing SD as an objective of the EU with the Treaty of Amsterdam. As early as 1990 – only three years after the Brundtland report – whilst the concept of sustainability and SD was still under debate as to how it could be integrated as a legal objective of the EU, SD found its expression under the development cooperation aspect. Tracing back the emergence of the SD concept into EU discourse, Pallemmaerts (2006) noted that in the 1990 Dublin presidency conclusions, the Council linked the promotion of SD with that of development cooperation. It called the EU to “use more effectively its position of moral, economic and political authority to advance international efforts to solve global problems and to promote sustainable development and respect for the global commons” and to “play a major role in assisting these countries in their efforts to achieve long-term sustainable development.” (European Council 1990: 27-28). Three years later, whilst the acceptance of SD as an objective of the Union was still tormented by reluctance to fully commit to the principle, the Treaty of Maastricht enshrined the promotion of sustainable development as an objective of the EU's development cooperation⁹⁶.

95 See article 130u of the Maastricht Treaty, title XVII 'Development cooperation'.

96 “Community policy in the sphere of development co-operation, which shall be complementary to the policies pursued by the Member States, shall foster: the sustainable economic and social development of the developing countries (...)” (Title XVII, art. 130u,

SD guides not only the EU's development cooperation in broad terms but the commitment to the promotion of SD translated to its cooperation with China. The EU devised a development cooperation strategy with China encapsulated within its two Country Strategy Paper (CSP) with China - 2002-2006 and 2007-2013. Introduced in 2001, CSPs are essential for the EU's multi-annual programming strategy with developing countries and sets central priorities to guide both development assistance and other Community activities as noted by Orbie and Versluys (2008: 70). In the EU's first CSP, the commitment to SD appears as a guiding principle for the implementation of the EU's China policy⁹⁷. Furthermore, there is evidence that the commitment to cooperate on energy issues is present in the development cooperation strategy and linked to the SD objective. In the 2002-2006 CSP, the EU was to help China "pursue a better balance between environmental protection, social development and economic growth." (European Commission 2002a: 5). Energy and in particular sustainable energy were singled out as elements of the EU's support to China's development process under the "environment and sustainable development" title. The strategy calls for "promoting energy efficiency, as well as transferring energy technologies, e.g. clean coal, natural gas, nuclear fission and alternative energy technologies [and] notably [that] the fields of new and renewable energy technologies should be top priorities." (European Commission 2002a: 28). In spite of the presence of trade considerations there is a clear intention of relating the promotion of environmental issues as part of the larger promotion of SD in this document⁹⁸. The subsequent 2007-2013 CSP represented a change of tone in the EU's stance towards development cooperation with China, which had undergone spectacular progress. While the support for China's reform process and SD remains key, it was now framed under the goal of dealing with China's changing status and

para. 1). As Pallemmaerts (2006: 23) recalls, this was the only reference to SD made in the Treaty.

97 Next to the EU's support to China's economic and social reform process "The second focus will be the promotion of sustainable development and assisting China to pursue a better balance between environmental protection, social development and economic growth." (European Commission 2002a: 5).

98 "As an important element of sustainable development – i.e. the pursuit of balance between economic growth, social development and protection of the environment – co-operation on environment remains a key area of bilateral cooperation with China." (European Commission 2002a: 27).

the attention is concentrated on the issue-areas specific to such a transition⁹⁹. In this context, the EU restated support for China's reform process and pledged assistance to "China's efforts to address global concerns over the environment, energy and climate change" as two of its main goals (European Commission 2007b: 4).

Development cooperation implementation documents – the 2007-2010 Multi-annual Indicative Programme (MIP) and the 2011-2013 National Indicative Programme (NIP) – reflect the commitment to SD and the link between SD and SE. Whilst the previous NIP from 2005-2006 only mentioned the issue of energy as part of their SD objectives, the following MIP and NIP fully engage with the SE promotion¹⁰⁰. As part of the EU's contribution to supporting China's own reform process outlined in its 11th Five Year Plan (FYP), the EU aimed to concretely support environment and energy-related challenges, including China's own EE targets (European Commission 2007c: 14). Concretely, under its environment, energy, and climate priorities, the MIP 2007 supported China's efforts to save energy and fight climate change. The EU suggested among other things to provide technical assistance "to promote energy sector reforms, enhance energy security, energy efficiency, energy savings and the use of renewable and clean energy and energy technologies" (ibid: 10). EE measures through economic tools and the increased use of RE were two of the expected results of the MIP 2007 environment, energy, and climate priorities (ibid: 9).

The analysis of key cooperation documents has established that SD is posed as a guiding principle in the EU's cooperation policy and that it translates to all subsequent implementing documents analysed. As to specific SE promotion, only very limited references to economic and energy security interests are present in those documents which remain under the guidance of SD promotion. It would thus appear that the EU's treaty commitment to SD in its cooperation policies could ensure the prevalence of the normative principles over very relevant interests in the SE cooperation. The next section explores whether the commitment to SD can be found throughout the DGs' cooperation with China on SE.

99 This is also linked with the EU's 2005 European Consensus on Development (ECD), which as a new development strategy aimed at concentrating on a reduced number of areas in the EU's cooperation policy.

100 Previous NIP for the period covering 2002 to 2004 could not be found in the public domain.

5.4.2. Sustainable Energy Cooperation Drivers across the Commission's Directorate Generals

One of the first striking features of the EU's SE cooperation with China is the amount of DGs playing a role in EU-China SE cooperation. Beyond DG Energy, there are at least nine other DGs involved across the European Commission. Reflecting the cross-sectoral nature of energy issues, each DG addresses aspects of SE cooperation that relate to its own specific competence¹⁰¹. DGs involved can be divided into three main groups according to their degree of involvement with SE issues. As shown in Table 1 below which details the various DG competences on SE, in first place is DG Energy which is in charge of energy cooperation with China. It is responsible for the political cooperation on energy – including SE – such as running the various energy-related high-level conferences, the energy dialogue, and, more recently, the urbanisation partnership as well as bilateral energy projects such as Energy and Environment Programme (EEP) or Europe-China Clean Energy centre (EC2). As the only DG dedicated solely to energy issues, DG Energy suggests cooperation priorities in the field of energy and SE and is often the impetus for cooperation in specific areas. SE cooperation can however also be found under a second group of six DGs including DG Climate Action, Development cooperation, Enterprise and Industry, External relations, Research and Innovation, and Trade. These DGs do not have SE cooperation as part of their primary mission but deal with SE – a cross-sectoral issue by nature – as one aspect of their DG-specific competence. DG Trade for example deals with issues relating to renewable energy and energy efficiency in relation to goods that are being traded between the EU and China, whereas DG Enterprise works with China on industrial energy efficiency, DG Climate Action (Clima) is involved in SE through its clean development mechanism, and DG Research and Innovation (RTD) works on research cooperation in solar panel technologies.

Within the third group of DGs are those which are only indirectly involved in SE cooperation with China, such as DG Move, Regional Policy (Regio), and Infso (Information Society and Media) later named Connect (Digital Economy and

101 Confirmed by DG Clima official (EU-2).

Society). SE cooperation is neither their main task, nor a field of application for their DG-specific responsibility, but rather a field their main mission incidentally touches upon. This is the case when DG Move cooperates with China on clean transport and sustainable urban mobility as it indirectly addresses issues related to energy efficiency and energy conservation even though this is not directly DG Move's field of competence. In fact, the more recent urbanisation partnership as a cross-sectoral issue has provided a platform for bringing in additional DGs into a field of cooperation which in many aspects touches upon SE. This applies to DG Regio when working on sustainable urbanisation, sustainable housing, and energy efficiency, or DG Info when cooperating with China on green smart cities, which includes applying new technology to the energy sector (EU-38).

In sum whilst DG Energy is the only DG fully dedicated to energy issues, SE cooperation with China is far from limited to DG Energy but is fragmented between another nine DGs also involved in the cooperation. They address the aspect of SE cooperation that relates to their own competence.

Table 1 - Commission DGs and their role in SE cooperation with China

| DG | Main mission in relation to China | Main SE-related responsibilities |
|--|--|--|
| Energy | EU external energy cooperation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leads the EU-China sectoral energy dialogue including the following priority fields - renewable energy, smart grids, energy efficiency in buildings, clean coal, nuclear energy, energy legislation • Runs the High-Level EU-China Energy Conference and the EU-China Mayor's forum • Leads key SE projects such as EC2 • Leads the EU-China High-Level Urbanisation Partnership which includes energy efficiency in buildings, energy technology research, and RE integration in urban areas |
| Climate Action | Bilateral climate cooperation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes SE in the framework of the EU-China Climate Change Partnership (2005) including - reducing the energy intensity of both economies, reducing the cost of key energy technologies, and promoting their deployment and dissemination • Cooperation on energy efficiency, energy conservation, and new and renewable energy are two of the 9 priorities identified for practical cooperation |
| Trade | Bilateral trade and investment relations including goods, services, IPR and FDIs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protects Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) for European SE goods and technologies • Promotes favourable market access requirements for European investments, especially in the field of public procurements • Cooperates on standards, including in SE-related fields, and promotes European standards |
| Enterprise and Industry | Industrial cooperation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports access to the Chinese market for European companies and promotes a level playing field on IPR, including SE-related aspects • Cooperates on sustainable industrial policy and construction, including cooperation on eco-design and industrial energy-efficiency • Promotes business opportunities for European companies in the green growth area in China • Promotes regulatory convergence in resource and energy efficiency |
| Research and Innovation | Research and innovation cooperation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperate on low-carbon technology research with China through their participation in European research framework programmes which include energy as one of several priority fields of cooperation. SE-related projects include concentrated solar power and energy storage |
| International Cooperation and Development | International cooperation and development policy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funds SE-related projects through its regional programmes like Asia Urbs, Asia pro eco and Switch Asia |
| External relations / EEAS | External relations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishes SE as part of the EU's external relations' agenda with China by including SE within the priorities of the overall cooperation • In charge of the development cooperation programming strategy (CSP) with China, including SE objectives |

| DG | Main mission in relation to China | Main SE-related responsibilities |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| Indirect involvement in SE | | |
| Move | Clean transport and sustainable urban mobility cooperation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperates under the EU-China urbanisation partnership on climate change and energy issues related to urban mobility, including air pollution and congestion in particular |
| Information Society and Media | Digital issues - Information and communication technologies - cooperation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green smart cities cooperation which includes applying new technology to the energy sector |
| Regional policy | Regional policy and balanced development cooperation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperates on sustainable urban development including sustainable housing as part of the EU-China Urbanisation Partnership |

(Source: European Commission, Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, interviews)

Looking into the DGs motivations for cooperating with China on SE, interviews with all seven main DGs on SE as well as DG Move revealed that, without exception, DGs are mainly driven by objectives that are specific to their own mission as a DG. Their cooperation with China takes place within their own agenda which is encapsulated either in DG-level or EU-level frameworks, such as the Europe 2020 strategy for DG RTD, or the 2011 White Paper ‘*Roadmap to a single European transport area*’ (European Commission 2011d) for DG Move for example. Therefore, these mission or frameworks determine the objectives of cooperation that these DGs pursue with China. DG RTD expressed this clearly with reference to Europe 2020 when stating that “we work along those lines and everything we do must contribute to this and that’s also what we do.” (EU-18) The compliance to the DG-specific mission then conditions the nature of the objectives of cooperation with China on energy. DG Clima is interested in “bring(ing) to China policies that are compatible with the fight against climate change” (EU-2), whilst DG for International Cooperation and Development (Devco) is mainly driven by poverty reduction, and DG Trade by matters of “economic impact” (EU-19). It also directs the type of actions that can be taken with China as cooperation activities must comply with a DG’s own strategy outlined in such frameworks. DG RTD explained that “when we discuss with China

about deciding on strategic choices, we follow the same guiding principles.” (EU-18)¹⁰².

The resulting consequence is that DGs tend to consider their cooperation with China on SE like any other possible avenue at their disposal in fulfilment of their mission. In fact, when comparing the nature of motives DGs expressed in pursuing cooperation with China on SE to their main DG-specific mission, it appears that they almost perfectly match each DG’s primary objectives. DG Energy clearly states that its purpose is to comply with the DG’s three main objectives enshrined in EU energy policy – security of supply, competitiveness, and sustainability. As a result, a DGs’ intentions are determined by its own objectives. A DG Enterprise official openly stated that “from our point of view, we see it as a means to pursue the general objectives of the DG Enterprise, which is to promote business opportunities for companies from both Europe and China and also promoting a levelled playing field, which is very important in our cooperation with China.” (EU-12) Along the same lines, an EEAS official said that “at EEAS we do more of a policy dialogue about promoting EU interest on climate change and energy. We are more about public diplomacy” (EU-23). Consequently, even if the intention is of a normative nature, for example the promotion of environmental sustainability, because it is essentially self-serving rather than directed at China, it can hardly be defined as normative in the sense of virtue ethics. As a result of this investigation, the question that arises is how this apparent leadership of development cooperation principles did not translate into the other DGs approaches to SE cooperation with China? The next section investigates these questions and the reasons for the apparent lack of consistency.

5.4.3. Development Cooperation Principles and Sustainable Development, Decisive on Paper Only

Development cooperation principles have been shown to frame the EU’s China objectives yet this does not translate into widespread adherence to the SD principles. As research shows, this relates to the fact that development cooperation does not

¹⁰² See Appendix C for a detailed account of DG-specific drivers of the cooperation.

come in to play in its own name but is rather being used for the purpose of the EU's China policy – and thus its interests as discussed under the 'legitimacy' section.

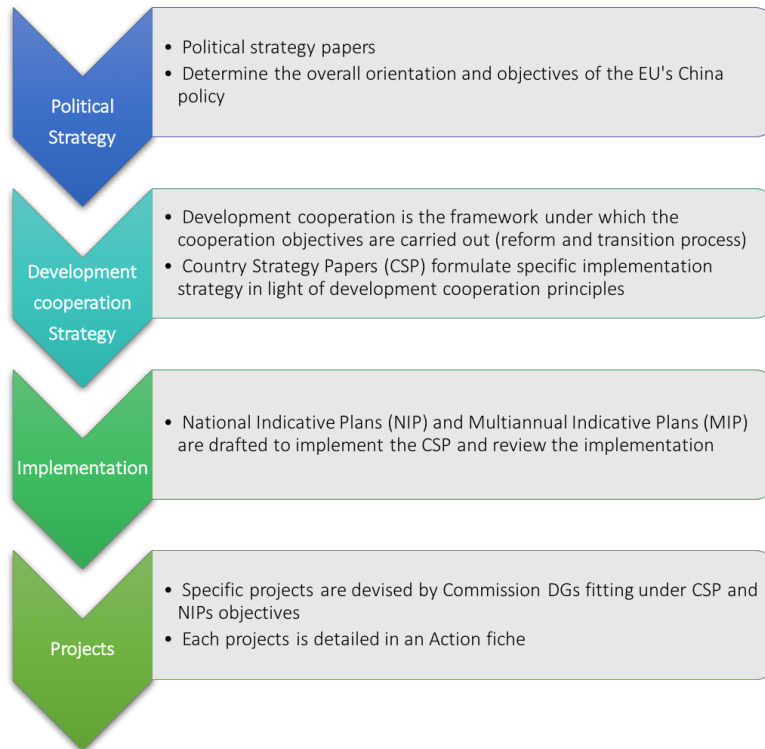
Development cooperation is a relatively recent competence of the EU. Even though intimately linked to the European project from the start as Orbie (2012: 18) notes, and although trade and development relations increased with Asia from 1992 with the adoption of an Asia and Latin America budget (ibid: 19), it is only with the Maastricht Treaty that the EU officially gained shared competence in the field (Orbie and Versluys 2008: 72). Within the Commission, development cooperation is not in the hands of one DG but the so-called 'Relex family' of DGs, which includes DG Devco¹⁰³, Relex/EEAS, and Trade and Enlargement (EU Platform 2007). DG Devco's role is central since it is competent for the formulation and implementation of policies and is responsible for coordinating EU institutions around the goals of poverty reduction, the promotion of SD, and democracy (European Commission 2016f). DG Devco's competence however only applies to ACP countries, so that in the case of China, even though it was formally a developing country in the period under consideration, it is under the competence of DG Relex (DG IA previously), together with Asian and Latin American countries. As opposed to DG Devco, the main goal DG Relex/EEAS is mainly to lead the EU's external relations, which in the case of China, is mainly interest-driven. Scholars have noted that such a division of tasks between Devco and Relex can lead to inconsistencies between a more normative against an interest-based approach (Dearden 2007), which fits in the broader argument according to which development aid is quite often interest-driven anyway (Schraeder et al. 1998; Storey 2006; Holden 2009).

Looking into the case of China, and the CSP in particular, it is clear that the development aspect does not guide the EU's cooperation with China but is in fact merely used to "to support the Union's key overall aims in relations with China." (2002a: 17). As Holden (2009: 158) puts it referring to the EU's 2002 CSP with China "EU aid [...] reflects its own economic and strategic interests, although worked out in agreement with the government" and adds this can be clearly found in the CSP's funding priorities. Figure 6 below illustrates how development cooperation is placed

103 DG Devco is the result of the merger of the EuropeAid Cooperation Office (AIDCO) and the DG for Development and Relations with ACP States in 2011 and officially named Devco in 2015 (European Commission 2016e).

under EU external relations objectives. More specifically, it is the implementation of the support to China's transition process – a key objective of EU external relations with China - that takes place under the development cooperation channel.

Figure 6 - Structure of the EU's cooperation with China



(Source: Author)

DG Devco and the principles it stands for does not have a policy-shaping role but instead development cooperation's financial resources were brought in to contribute to that effort and help provide the relationship with needed substance. Compared to other policies, "development policy is one of the few policy domains where the Union can draw on the power of the purse" (Orbie and Versluys 2008: 75). According to the EU's China Country Strategy Paper (CSP), China has been a major recipient of European aid funds, totalling to more than \$5 billion per year (European Commission 2002a: 19). The Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) is one of the main sources of funding for the development cooperation with Asian countries including China. DG Devco's development cooperation project fiches for EU-China cooperation projects and interviews show in fact that cooperation funds actually

support most energy and SE projects with China across the Commission's DGs. DG Devco funds at least four DGs and their SE projects, including DG Clima, Energy, Enterprise and Trade. Development cooperation funds, for example, the EU-China Trade Project (EUCTP) which is a trade project in charge of promoting the reform of the Chinese economy – including SE – and also EU-China industrial energy efficiency activities carried out by DG Enterprise and the EC2 managed by DG Energy. Table 2 below presents the main projects and programmes supporting the EU's SE activities with China.

DG Devco is considered a 'funding DG' by other Commission DGs. A DG Clima official said, when asked about DG Devco's role in the cooperation and the type of cooperation the interviewee's unit had with Devco, that "the 5 million are not coming from us but from the budget of Devco." (EU-2). As confirmed by a DG Enterprise official, it is indeed current practice for a non-funding DG to be supported by Devco funds in their SE activities with China (EU-12). This funding role is however limited to that only and does not appear to be linked to a form of agency from the part of DG Devco. As a DG Energy official working with China said about DG Devco's role when asked to list the DGs with whom he works, "they bring the money but they are not so important" (EU-20). In a word DG Devco does not implement SD through any leadership position within the Commission that would have enabled the promotion of SD but merely funds other DGs in order to underscore European policies with concrete assistance projects¹⁰⁴. As a DG Enterprise official said "[...] you won't find a strategy on SE. You would rather find a strategy on China, where this would be one of the instruments that contributes to various interests" (EU-12). This gives credence to the idea that DGs cooperate with the primary intention of fulfilling their defining mission rather than to see China on the way to more sustainable forms of development through the uptake of SE. Figure 7 below pictures how development cooperation through DG Devco is limited to making its resources available for funding SE activities throughout the Commission as long as these are in line with EU

104 This was also expressed in the 1998 policy document: "From the human rights dialogue through the WTO accession negotiations to questions relating to China's economic development, the EU should seize the chance to underscore its policies with concrete assistance projects where at all possible." (European Commission 1998a: 22).

objectives on China. Devco for example funds the EUCTP which is a trade assistance project

Table 2 – Development cooperation’s financial contribution to EU SE cooperation with China

| Project/Programme | Managing DG | EU contribution (in euros) |
|---------------------------|--|---|
| EEP | | 20 million |
| EC2 | DG Energy | 10 million |
| Icare | | 10 million |
| EC Link Eurocities | | 9.4 million |
| EUCTP I | DG Trade and DG Energy for energy activities | |
| EUCTP II | | 20 million |
| EUPDSF I | Relevant DG according to each activity | 8.8 million |
| EUPDSF II | | 12.2 million |
| Asia Invest | DG Devco | 87 million co-financed more than 320 projects on Asia |
| Asia Eco | | 55 million over 132 projects contracted in total on Asia |
| Asia Urbs | | 42.3 million 99 projects in total on Asia |
| Switch Asia | | 152 million for 2007-2013 for Asia |
| ENRTP | | 889.5 million for 2007-2013 including 158.9 million for sustainable energy and GEEREF |

(Source: Europe Aid and DG Energy)

under the EU-China economic and trade dialogues, which “implements specific initiatives that look more at trade perspectives than a development perspective, even though it is supported by Devco” according to a DG Enterprise official (EU-12). It also funds the Europe-China Clean Energy Centre (EC2) which is in fact led by DG Energy and is mainly about “soft diplomacy” as expressed by a DG Energy official (EU-7) rather than a means to promote a normative approach to energy. In other words, DG Devco funds the DGs to pursue their own objectives and interests on SE with China.

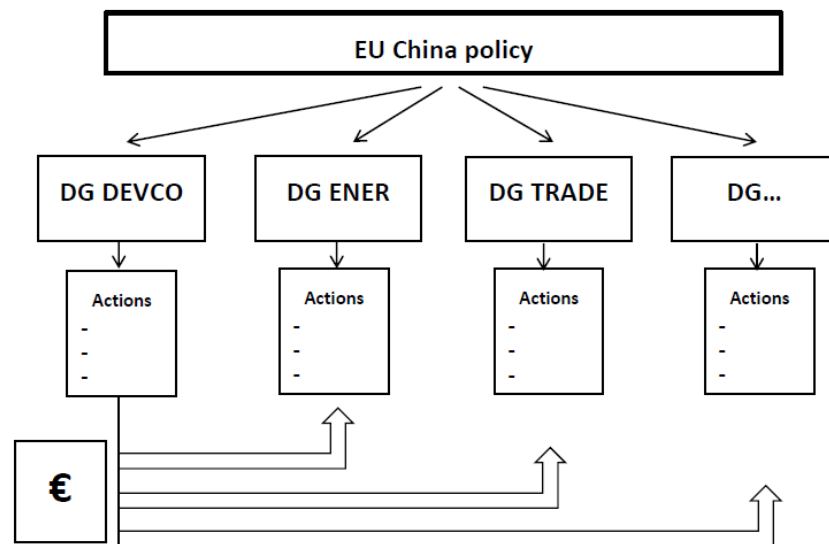


Figure 7 - DG Devco’s actual role within the European Commission in the EU’s China cooperation

(Source: Author)

A further element in DG Devco’s lack of agency is grounded in the perceived contradiction between its DG objectives of poverty alleviation and its role as the supporter of the cooperation. DG Devco does not deem the support to China as appropriate because it does not consider China a legitimate recipient of aid (EU-5 and EU-6). Yet China had been considered in EU rules to be a developing country until 2013 and is funded by development cooperation funds. This creates a sense of disengagement from DG Devco due to the perceived discrepancy between China’s status as one of the world’s major powers in economic and political terms and thus its capacity to deal with its own issues of poverty, and its positioning as a developing

country. A senior DG Devco official expressed this by saying that “if they want to be seen as a developed country, they should start behaving as one and not try to continue the developing part in a number of situations.” (EU-5). This position seems to be fuelled by a sense of contradiction towards DG Devco’s main mission understood to focus mainly on poverty alleviation. As expressed in interviews – and also supported by other scholars on the topic such as Carbone (2007: 48) – Devco considers poverty reduction as the essence of its work. As another Devco official said, Devco is even “obsessed with poverty reduction”. (EU-6). This also extends to energy cooperation, where the same senior official added “we concentrate our efforts on Africa or places where (energy) access is much more limited” (EU-5).

DG Devco’s disengagement adds to its lack of agency throughout the Commission, preventing Devco from engaging with China and from ensuring the promotion of its normative approach on SD within the European Commission. Within the European Commission, DG Devco – the one actor that could ensure some form of consistency in promoting SD across the Commission – is in fact not in a position to be a norm guarantor or promoter because DG Relex is in charge of cooperation with China, including the development cooperation strategies. Instead, the development strategy and its finances are allowed to be used for the promotion of the EU’s external policy objectives, which in the ‘legitimacy’ section were shown to be mainly interest-led. In addition to that, as seen in the ‘legitimacy’ section, the Commission also does not have a SD strategy with China that would include SE and ensure consistency across its DGs in their SE cooperation with China. In the absence of both a norm guarantor and a Commission-wide SD strategy, DGs are thus free to promote their own intentions with China on SE, as long as they comply with the EU’s China policy and their own mission.

5.5. Conclusion – The EU, Not Normative by Principles

In line with virtue ethics, the focus in this section lay on providing a study of the EU’s intentions when cooperating with China on SE. By means of Manners’ PAI framework for determining the quality of normative power, the three criteria of legitimacy, coherence, and consistency have been used as guidelines to determine whether the intentions that motivate the EU’s SE cooperation can be deemed normative and thus

qualify the EU as normative in principle. In order to be normative, the EU must be proven to understand its SE cooperation with China as a means to help China on the path to SD. SE is to be promoted for the sake of its contribution to China in this process. Therefore the main research question investigated was whether the EU is normative by principle in the sense of cooperating with China on SE with the intention of promoting SD in China. The study found that the EU cannot be called normative as the EU is not fulfilling any of the three criteria.

Legitimacy was first investigated in assessing whether the EU's SE cooperation is motivated by the promotion of SD, that is, whether the EU promotes SE in its cooperation with China and if so, whether SE promotion was motivated by the intention of supporting China's transition to SD. The study of the EU's China policy documents since 1995 showed the sustainability discourse – including references to SE – is largely present and growing over the later years of the cooperation. It shows a real acknowledgement from the EU's side of China's sustainability issues and how these constitutes an impediment to its rapid and large growth. The increasing volume of the sustainability discourse – including on SE – in the latest policy papers (2003, 2006, 2013) reflect its growing importance as an area of cooperation between the EU and China. However, when investigating the intentions linked to this discourse, little connection could be traced between this discourse and normative intentions. Instead of supporting China in its SD transition, SE and the broader sustainability discourse was instead found to serve the EU's 'constructive engagement' agenda, which constitutes a guiding principle of the EU's China policy. This agenda was shown to be motivated by securing EU foreign policy type interests of an economic and security nature. SE cooperation fed into it as a way to engage China either at bilateral or multilateral level and substantiate the growing relationship. As a result, references to SE are part of the EU's larger China policy and are thus embedded in an essentially interest-driven approach. The EU is therefore not legitimate in its SE cooperation with China.

The study then turned to the coherence of the various principles motivating the EU in its SE cooperation with China and in particular to their weight and compatibility with a norm-motivated approach. The interests at stake in the EU's SE promotion with China as well as their relevance for EU-China SE cooperation were investigated. After identifying DG Energy as the lead DG in charge of energy cooperation with China, with energy security as its prevailing interest regarding China, it was showed

that this concern actually overtook SE cooperation as the main motivation for working with China on SE. The rather technical and low-key field of SE in which China showed particular interest was exploited by DG Energy as a point of departure in order to create rapport and build trust so as to reach the more politically charged field of energy security cooperation. SE is thereby used for the sake of the EU's demand-oriented energy security strategy, which aims to work at reducing the demand of big consumer countries like China in order to ensure better security of supply for the EU. At the same time, SE cooperation also served to provide EU-China energy relations with more substance and profited the EU in both its energy and China policies. The pursuit of energy security through SE cooperation being incompatible with normative intentions, the EU therefore cannot be deemed coherent.

Finally, the study examined the consistency of SE promotion across the European Commission DGs. As with the coherence criterion, consistency looks at the weight of interests in the EU's intentions but with a specific emphasis on constant and dependable intentions *across* the locations where SE cooperation is taking place. The EU's aim is to promote SD via SE throughout the DGs working with China on SE. The research first looked at which DGs are involved in SE cooperation with China across the European Commission. Secondly it addressed whether SE is promoted with the intention of supporting SD in all the relevant DGs, and if not, why is that the case. As a developing country in the definition of EU rules, principles of development cooperation – and SD in particular – were established to frame cooperation objectives with China, including in SE. This is part of the EU's Treaty commitment to SD in relation to its development cooperation. However, SE cooperation is fragmented over at least nine other DGs and a study of their intentions highlighted that DGs use SE like any other channel to promote their own DG-specific objectives. The apparently paradoxical lack of relevance of the SD principle across DGs was attributed to the agency of DG Relex taking the lead for formulating development cooperation strategies and in fact using development cooperation strategies and funds to underpin the EU's largely interest-based China policy. DG Devco's self-imposed lack of agency meant it was not in a position to compel DGs to follow a SD-motivated approach and is also not supported by a dedicated SD strategy with China. In the absence of a SD strategy with China policy or a norm guarantor, DGs were left free to use SE cooperation as a channel to promote their own interests as long as these complied with the EU's China policy. The EU is therefore not being consistent

in its SE cooperation across European Commission DGs. Consequently, aggregating these findings, and in the absence of legitimate, coherent, and consistent promotion of SE for the sake of achieving SD for China, the EU cannot be deemed normative by principle. As this is however only the first of three dimensions to detect a normative power, the next chapter moves on to providing a more complete picture and investigates the nature of the EU's actions in relation to SE cooperation with China, as the second facet of the PAI framework.

CHAPTER 6 – ACTIONS

6.1. Introduction

Defining the EU as a different, because normative, type of actor (Manners 2002), Manners identified that this ought to correspond to equally different behaviours towards third countries, including in normative actions (Manners 2009b). Correspondingly, the second pathway to judge the EU's ideational normative power status from Manners' tripartite analytical framework focuses on the EU's actions and the way they are conducted. Whilst the previous chapter on 'principles' encouraged looking at the character motivating the EU's external relations in order to establish the EU's different type of power, 'actions' specifically concentrates on the actual conduct of these relations by the EU. Drawing this time on deontological ethics – as part of the framework's grounding in normative ethics – the EU is to be regarded as normative in its action if it is proved to be “being reasonable” (Manners 2008: 58). According to neo-Kantian thought, from which Manners inferred this, being normative by action “involves reasoning the merits of action without reference to, or derivation from, an external authority.” (Manners 2008: 57). In order to be normative by action, the EU is to use a method of dialogue and engagement instead of coercion or even violence. Translating this idea into operational criteria to guide research, Manners suggests determining if the EU makes use of persuasion, argumentation, and prestige and shame in its relations with third countries (Manners 2009b: 3).

Applied to the case study of EU-China sustainable energy (SE) cooperation, investigating the EU's promotion of SE with China in this chapter leads to asking as a main research question whether the EU is actively bringing China closer to adopting SE as an instrument for achieving sustainable development (SD) through its behaviour. Following the tripartite framework, this question is answered by looking at the three criteria one by one. Firstly, the study of persuasion addresses the institutionalisation of channels of cooperation by the EU on SE and the establishment of bilateral spaces for engagement and dialogue on SE. Secondly, argumentation investigates the EU's active advocacy of the uptake of SE as a contribution to SD.

Finally, prestige and shame approaches the question of symbolic incentives through the case of the EU-China solar panel (also termed solar PV for photovoltaic) dispute, and whether this counts as an instance of shaming China for the sake of SD. Consequently, each of the sections will answer the following research questions:

1. (Persuasion) In its cooperation with China is the EU actively working at establishing channels of cooperation on SE specifically?
2. (Argumentation) Is the EU actively convincing China of the use of SE for SD by making use of engagement and dialogue methods?
3. (Prestige and shame) Is the EU making use of the shaming instrument in the solar PV case as a symbolic reprobation measure against China's instrumentalisation of SE for reasons other than SD?

More specifically, the study of persuasion delves into EU-China energy cooperation, presenting its evolution over time with a focus on understanding its gradual institutionalisation. This contextualisation aims at determining the role played by SE in particular and whether over the years cooperation mechanisms in the field of SE have been put in place. In order to map out the energy cooperation with up-to-date information, primary data from the European Commission about the cooperation has been used, mostly taken from DG Energy's website. This was complemented with the small body of literature on EU-China energy cooperation which provides greater perspective on the topic and a more general overview on the institutionalisation process of EU-China energy cooperation.

Secondly, having established in 'persuasion' the successful institutionalisation of SE cooperation, and expanding on some of the aspects making up this success, the responsibility of the EU's argumentation efforts is investigated. In particular this section looks at whether the EU's conscious efforts to convince China of the uptake of SE played a role, if at all. Interviews with officials from the European Commission, mainly triangulated with interviews with Chinese officials in Brussels, were used in order to uncover the perceived motives of their Chinese counterparts. Then, in order to explain the relative lack of European agency, China's SE transition was studied in the context of academic literature specifically addressing China's support of SE as well as reports. This provides an understanding of its main drivers and the needs such a transition generates. The use of general SE transition literature then enabled the relevance of international cooperation to contribute fulfilling such needs to be uncovered, before moving back to interview material with EU officials to highlight

whether such utilitarian considerations actually underpinned Chinese interest in SE cooperation with the EU.

Finally, in order to test whether the solar panel dispute constituted an instance of symbolic sanctioning in light of the EU's promotion of SD in China, the section relies on a mix of academic literature and authoritative news sources to outline the case. It then utilises interview material and official interventions from EU Commission officials to investigate the weight of the trade rationale behind the EU's decision. Finally a second body of academic literature on the topic of green growth was used to put the trade dispute in its larger context, which contributes explaining the prevalence of trade interest in SE cooperation as well as finding the connection with SD. This was complemented with figures from the IEA and other relevant institutions.

6.2. Persuasion

6.2.1. Institutionalisation of Energy Cooperation

The institutionalisation of SE energy cooperation does not happen in a void and is therefore best understood with regard to the EU-China institutionalisation context. The aim of the following section is therefore to provide understanding using a funnel approach of the highly institutionalised nature of EU-China relations, in which energy cooperation and by extension SE dialogue take place.

6.2.1.1. Structure of EU-China Cooperation

EU-China relations are on the whole characterised by a relatively high degree of institutionalisation. Cooperation is framed by a set of agreements and is organised around three main pillars and a large array of so-called sectoral dialogues under which a large part of the cooperation takes place – including on energy¹⁰⁵. Originally

¹⁰⁵ For a more comprehensive account of the EU-China institutionalisation process, see De Matteis (2010).

the formal relationship was framed by the 1978 Trade Agreement. This was the first step towards establishing formal links since the start of diplomatic relations in 1975. Mainly aimed at providing a basis for increasing trade relations, it led to the creation of the EEC-China Joint Committee – the first permanent body to manage their common interest in trade (De Matteis 2010: 450). Reflecting the growing ties between Europe and China, this agreement was replaced in 1985 by the '*Agreement on trade and economic cooperation*' which remains since then the main framework ruling EU-China relations. Not simply limited to trade issues only, this agreement expanded economic cooperation to issues like agriculture, transport and communication, environmental protection and cooperation in third countries as well as on energy¹⁰⁶. In an effort to update this framework to a more comprehensive reflection of the relation, in 2007 the EU and China started negotiating on a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) which has since been under discussion. The institutionalisation process of EU-China relations in fact did not always run smoothly, as Garlick (2013:52) points out. Relations came to a halt in 1989 with the Tiananmen events in China followed by the EU's decision to impose an arms embargo on China, which to this day remains a contentious issue between the two. Institutionalisation resumed and developed in scope from the mid-1990s with – as suggested by De Matteis (2010:451) – the EU's 1994 Maastricht treaty and the broadening of activities far beyond trade alone. They accelerated further in the early 2000s growing from 17 areas of cooperation in 2004 to cover more than 50 areas,¹⁰⁷ encompassing a very diverse array of policy issues.

EU-China cooperation is taking place under three main pillars: a political, economic, and people-to-people pillar. Each of these pillars has its own high-level mechanism which reports to the annual EU-China Summit – respectively the high-level strategic dialogue, high-level economic and trade dialogue, and high-level people-to-people dialogue. Over the years however most of the cooperation has been articulated under the sectoral dialogues. As defined by Snyder, these are “institutionalised, periodic and more or less well-structured meetings between European and Chinese

106 See article 10 of the agreement.

107 See Appendix D for a more complete picture of the sectoral dialogues and the institutional structure of the overall cooperation.

authorities, involving staff at approximately the same levels in their respective administrative or political hierarchies” (Snyder 2009: 710). Essentially as he points out, their nature is rather fluid and mainly points at a structured space for dialogue to be held on a regular basis (ibid: 767). As made visible in the representation of the relations’ architecture in Appendix D, sectoral dialogues came to occupy a substantial position within the institutional structure. The expansion of the number of dialogues accounts for a big part of the EU-China institutionalisation, with a total of over 50 sectoral dialogues in 2011 (Bekofsky 2011: 127) growing to 56 in 2012 and reaching over 60 dialogues in 2015 (EEAS [no date]a). They grew the cooperation to encompass issues related to trade, like the intellectual property rights (IPR), and economic and financial dialogue, but also transport with the urban mobility dialogue, and the aviation and maritime transport dialogues, employment and social policies, agriculture, fisheries and the environment, etc. In the institutionalisation process, sectoral dialogues became one of the main vectors for structuring cooperation in a specific field, including in energy.

Overall the institutionalisation process and the high degree of structure provided EU-China relations – which did not always run smoothly – with a degree of stability and a continuity of exchange. Most importantly for the sake of this thesis, the large degree of institutionalisation reflects the mutual willingness to create pathways for engagement. Sectoral dialogues in particular were instrumental in providing a space to explore and formalise areas of mutual interests, to reflect the growing depth of the exchange, and possibly turn the initial interest into more established avenues for engagement. The gradual institutionalisation of energy and SE cooperation in particular is to be understood in this context.

6.2.1.2. Main Energy Cooperation Mechanisms¹⁰⁸

Energy cooperation started from the very early days of EU-China relations, making it one of the oldest and longest-running cooperation fields of overall EU-China relations. In its early stages, energy cooperation took place under several other

¹⁰⁸ This section is inspired from the author’s own contribution to the 2015 China-EU Energy Cooperation Roadmap: Concept Note by the Europe-China Clean Energy Centre (EC2) under the chapter entitled “EU-China energy cooperation review”.

frameworks such as trade and cooperation assistance. According to the Commission's 1995 China policy paper, energy cooperation began as early as 1981 – only 3 years after diplomatic relations were established (European Commission 1995: 31). At the time cooperation was mainly focused on technical assistance towards energy resource development and training in best practice (ibid.). A few years later, the 1985 agreement which provided the first basis for EU-China cooperation further encouraged increasing energy cooperation, identifying it as one of several areas to develop within the cooperation. Even though energy cooperation did not formally become institutionalised between the EU and China until about a decade later, energy relations took place under technical cooperation assistance channels like the Asia Latin America tool¹⁰⁹ which ensured a certain continuity in energy relations. China then also benefitted from the EU's first programme aimed at conducting external energy relations, named SYNERGY and established in 1995. In these first stages, energy did not have its own cooperation mechanism.

The institutionalisation of energy cooperation took off in the early 1990s in the wake of the EU's attempt at establishing and developing relations with China¹¹⁰ and revolves around three main mechanisms – the Energy Conference, the Energy Dialogue and the Urbanisation Partnership. China's exceptional economic growth and its correspondingly increased political clout triggered the need for the EU to engage with China, which materialised with the 1994 '*New Asia strategy policy*' document accompanied by a long-term policy for EU-China relations one year later. Both these documents identified energy – together with several other policy fields – as an area of mutual interest and therefore as a promising field to develop in order to bring substance to a beginning relationship. In this context, in 1994 the EU and China established the Energy Conference. The Conference was the first regular exchange mechanism on energy issues dedicated to energy research. Led by DG Energy on the European side and the Ministry of Science and Technology (MoST) on the Chinese side, this bi-annual event provides a platform for European and

109 See Article 5 Council regulation 443/92 of 25 February 1992 on financial and technical assistance to, and economic cooperation with, the developing countries in Asian and Latin America.

110 See Appendix E for the full picture of the institutionalisation of EU-China energy cooperation.

Chinese companies to meet and engage on a variety of topics related to energy research (European Commission 2013b). The 2010 edition focused for example on issues including renewable energy, smart grids and electrical vehicles.

The second main mechanism within sectoral energy cooperation is the Energy Dialogue. The Dialogue was formally established in 2005 on the basis of the 'Memorandum of Understanding on EU-China Dialogue on Energy and Transport Strategies' signed during the 8th China-EU Summit in September 2005 and is led by Directorate General for Energy (DG Energy) and the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), replaced in 2008 by the National Energy Administration (NEA). It was built on the premise of the 1996-created energy working group, which was the first permanent energy cooperation mechanism allowing for regular meetings of EU and Chinese energy officials (European Commission 1996b) and laid the foundation for greater institutionalisation of energy cooperation under the Energy Dialogue. The Dialogue, far from simply adding a cooperation mechanism to EU-China energy relations, provided energy cooperation with a dedicated and permanent energy platform enabling it to diversify and deepen engagement and dialogue to a variety of issues. The Dialogue expanded the scope of energy cooperation to six working groups under which to conduct issue-specific activities, such as workshops, seminars or study visits. Energy Dialogue outputs feed into EU-China summits.

Recognising the relevance of the Dialogue, the parties brought it to a new level by upgrading it to ministerial level to become the High-Level Energy Dialogue (De Matteis 2009). It was complemented in 2012 by the first High Level Energy Meeting, which took place in Brussels in presence of European Commission President Barroso and Chinese Vice-Premier Li Keqiang and gathered all 27 member states' European energy ministers or representatives. This upgrade, together with the High Level Energy Meeting, highlights political endorsement for the strategic nature and relevance of energy for bilateral relations. The High Level Energy Meeting also acted as a platform for further expanding energy cooperation fields to energy security by accommodating the creation of an energy security working group within the dialogue. Considering the highly politicised nature of energy security issues, this reflected the continued institutionalisation and deepening of energy cooperation to include more sensitive topics. Furthermore, the High Level Energy Meeting was the occasion of enhancing cooperation in the field of electricity markets with the signing of a joint

statement, but perhaps more importantly it launched the EU-China Urbanisation Partnership.

The Urbanisation Partnership is the third and also most recent addition to the main EU-China energy cooperation mechanisms. Urbanisation has risen to become one of China's most pressing challenges. As already half of China's population lives in cities, and this is forecast to grow to a 70% share, China's needs for sustainable urbanisation solutions are great (EC2 2015). The Partnership signed on 3 May 2012 provides a platform to exchange experience and know-how "on the economic, social and environmental challenges of urbanization" (European Commission 2014b)¹¹¹ and enables practical collaboration. Considering the cross-sectoral nature of urbanisation issues, the Partnership addresses topics ranging from sustainable development of urban industrial economy, urban public services systems, urban housing, urban energy supply and demand, urban mobility and urban governance to cover a total of more than ten focus-areas (European Union and China 2012: 2). Energy is thus very much present in many of the themes addressed. The role of energy is additionally underpinned by DG Energy's coordinating role within involved EU Commission DGs. Even though the decision to appoint DG Energy in charge is contested within the Commission, considering that cooperation goes way beyond sole energy matters, with other DGs like the Directorate General for Research and Innovation (DG RTD) feeling themselves to be the more legitimate leaders (EU-17), it still shows that energy plays a significant role in the Partnership.

In terms of the institutionalisation of energy cooperation, the Partnership provides a third platform from which to expand the scope of energy relations. The Partnerships are articulated around three pillars - the annual Urbanisation Forum, the Mayor's Forum, as well as the Exhibition on Urbanisation – and can be viewed as further engagement channels with China on urbanisation-related energy issues. The annual Urbanisation Forum is the political event organised back-to-back with the EU-China Summit, whilst the exhibition provides a venue for urbanisation stakeholders such as cities and businesses to share experience and build business relations.

¹¹¹ DG Energy's webpage on relations with external countries including with China has been fully renewed in 2015 so that the content accessed here is no longer available. The author has however retained an electronic copy of the original webpage, which can be presented upon request.

The sectoral energy dialogue just presented provides for the main source of institutionalisation of EU-China energy cooperation. Thanks to its three main mechanisms themselves acting as platforms for further engagement on a variety of energy issues, energy cooperation benefits from established and regular channels for engagement to discuss a wide scope of energy issues. Energy cooperation has been formalised outside the energy dialogue across the European Commission, providing for additional institutionalised dialogue and engagement opportunities.

6.2.1.3. Energy Cooperation Institutionalisation across the Commission

As a cross-sectoral issue by nature, energy dialogue between the EU and China has not been limited to DG Energy only, but has been taking place throughout the Commission as has its institutionalisation. Energy has profited from the 2007 establishment of the EU-China High Level Trade Dialogue. At the 10th EU-China summit, both sides decided to set-up the High Level trade mechanism mainly in order to tackle trade imbalance which reached its record in 2010 with a €169.3 billion trade deficit for the EU (DG Trade 2013). Energy – together with market access, IPR, environment, and high technology – was identified as an area to focus on and work towards more balanced trade flows (Council of the EU 2007: 12).

Energy institutionalisation has also taken place under DG RTD, in particular in the fields of nuclear energy and innovation and research. In 2008 the '*EURATOM-China agreement for R&D cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy*' was signed establishing a strong framework for cooperation in nuclear energy. The Agreement created a 'steering committee co-chaired by DG RTD and MoST, the China Atomic Energy Authority and the National Nuclear Safety Administration' (EC2 2015).

6.2.2. Institutionalisation of Sustainable Energy Cooperation

The study of the institutionalisation of energy relations shows energy cooperation to be well-endowed with cooperation structures facilitating engagement and dialogue. The purpose of this section is now to turn towards SE and uncover the significance of the institutionalisation of energy relations for SE cooperation. More specifically, did it translate into the institutionalisation of SE relations in a way that provides

relevant channels for the EU to engage into dialogue and discussion with China on SE issues? The main argument here is that not only did SE very much profit from the gradual institutionalisation of energy relations but also that it was actually instrumental to the whole process as it contributed to driving it.

6.2.2.1. Sustainable Energy at the Core of the Main Energy Cooperation Mechanisms

Firstly, SE proves to be central to the energy sectoral dialogue because it is at the core of all three main cooperation mechanisms presented above – the Energy Conference, the Energy Dialogue, and the Urbanisation Partnership. Regarding the Energy Conference – also the earliest of all three mechanisms – SE regularly features on the conference agenda. The 7th edition in 2008 addressed issues such as energy efficiency (EE), renewable energy (RE), hydrogen energy and fuel cells, and Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS), whilst the 8th edition in 2010 touched upon RE, smart grids, and electric vehicles (EUPDSF [no date]). The limited availability of data¹¹² only enables accessing the latest energy conference agendas, this however shows that SE appears to be a regular topic that makes a significant part of the energy research cooperation agenda. SE therefore benefitted from this first regular exchange mechanism providing a biennial dialogue platform for research stakeholders as varied as businesses, industry representatives and experts (ibid) to discuss SE issues.

The establishment of the Energy Dialogue in 2005 provided SE with its first dedicated channel of cooperation, with four out of six working groups counted by the Dialogue on SE topics – clean coal, energy efficiency in the building sector, renewable energy, and smart grids – thereby largely substantiating the Energy Dialogue. Each of these working groups provides a permanent and dedicated structure for relevant European and Chinese officials and experts to regularly engage on each SE aspect - RE and EE. Activities take place under each group, such as a 2010 workshop on renewable

¹¹² Available data refers to most recent Energy Conference agendas only (2008 and 2010 editions) as provided on European Commission websites.

energy and grid integration held in Brussels for Chinese industry representatives and officials (European Commission [no date]a: 2)

With time, the Dialogue was upgraded and also expanded into new fields. Whilst the upgrade provides the Dialogue – and by extension SE – increased political recognition of its relevance for overall EU-China relation, the expansion multiplied the channels for SE cooperation to be carried out. In 2009 EE in buildings became the topic of its own cooperation framework. Led between DG Energy and the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development (MoHURD), the bilateral '*Cooperation framework on energy performance and quality in the construction sector*' is intended to promote energy efficiency practices in buildings and construction processes, and also has an annual technical conference (European Commission [no date]a: 9). This new dialogue thereby formalised and allowed for deepened cooperation in the field of EE and provided SE with its first dedicated dialogue.

The opening in 2012 of a new avenue of energy cooperation to the field of energy security with the signature of the energy security joint declaration and the establishment on an energy security working group provided SE with a new dimension. SE in the form of smart grids, wind, and solar power is addressed under the auspices of the working group. This provides SE with another avenue for cooperation, this time framed under energy security issues. Similarly in 2012, SE framed under electricity market cooperation was provided with yet another field to be addressed under. The '*Joint statement for enhanced cooperation on electricity markets*' concluded between the Commission and the State Electricity Regulation Commission of China (SERC) stated that cooperation to include work on technical standards for the integration of RE to the electricity grid, EE, and demand-side management (European Commission and SERC: 1). This statement formalises cooperation on electricity markets and embeds SE into this relatively recent area of cooperation, providing another place for engagement and dialogue on SE.

Most recently, the creation of the Urbanisation Partnership provided SE cooperation another platform to deploy itself under. Even though the Partnership is not formally exclusively on energy, the emphasis on the need for sustainability in China's urbanisation process naturally involves the need for sustainable energy. As the DG Energy official in charge of urbanisation said, "clearly the Commission's objective is to create a sustainable city, whether through EE and RE but also culture and other aspects." (EU-9) SE therefore runs throughout the various dimensions around which

the Partnership is articulated – the urbanisation forum, the exhibition, and the mayors’ forum. SE was mentioned in several of the event’s five sub-forums – smart cities, green and inclusive cities, innovative cities, urban mobility, and cultural cities – whilst SE was the topic of several exhibition halls of the exhibition on urban development (Climate KIC 2013). The Mayors’ Forum is particularly interesting as it is the first established channel to enable direct cooperation between European and Chinese cities on issues such as clean energy. The energy aspect is underpinned by the fact that on the European side the Mayors’ Forum is organised by the Covenant of Mayors’ initiative¹¹³ - a cities’ movement established by the European Commission for regional authorities to voluntarily commit to increasing the use of EE and RE (Covenant of Mayors [no date]). Overall the Urbanisation Partnership contributed to the institutionalisation of SE cooperation by providing a new medium for SE dialogue framed under urbanisation issues, thereby also involving new types of actors such as cities in the dialogue.

In view of this, the Dialogue was instrumental in the institutionalisation process of SE cooperation since it not only provided SE with a series of channels for engagement and dialogue but it also acted as a platform for further SE cooperation opportunities.

6.2.2.2. Sustainable Energy Institutionalisation across the European Commission

SE also drove the institutionalisation of energy cooperation beyond DG Energy initiatives and across the Commission, multiplying both the number of channels through which SE dialogue takes place, and the number of DGs or fields involved. SE cooperation became institutionalised under climate change policy. In 2005 the EU and China agreed on a Partnership on Climate Change, pledging among other things to cooperate on clean energy sources, energy efficiency, energy conservation, and renewable energy (European Commission 2005a). The Partnership specifically caters for the two EU-China action plans on clean coal and on energy efficiency and renewable energies signed earlier that year by DG Energy and MoST (EEAS [no date]b). These two Action Plans specifically target RE cooperation; however as they

113 On the Chinese side, the Chinese Association of Mayors are organising.

are not public documents, how exactly they contribute to promoting dialogue on SE is not entirely evident. It is however clear that the Partnership has SE at the centre of its preoccupation, with the first goal to develop CCS and the second to ‘reduce the cost of key energy technologies and promote their deployment and dissemination’, as well as the reduction of energy intensity of the economy and clean development mechanism (CDM) cooperation (European Commission 2005a). These issues all touch, directly or indirectly, upon SE cooperation.

When it comes to research cooperation, SE also benefitted from the institutionalisation of the field. In 2010 DG RTD and MoST signed a ‘*Joint statement on energy research innovation*’ providing a framework for joint energy research cooperation. This framework supports the twinning of projects, programmes, or research calls, and led for example to cooperation on concentrated solar panels and innovative batteries. In many instances, SE cooperation on energy research takes place through the EU’s framework programmes like the Framework Programme 7 (FP7) and FP8 and more recently the Horizon 2020 programme.

Finally, DG Enterprise added an industrial energy efficiency and greenhouse gas reduction working group to its existing dialogue. In 2009 DG Enterprise and the Chinese Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT) signed a memorandum of understanding on a ‘*Dialogue and consultation mechanism on the industrial sector*’. In 2010 it was complemented by a specific working group on industrial energy efficiency and greenhouse gas reduction cooperation. The working group is articulated around “sector-based energy efficiency actions in industry, product policy (notably eco-design) and a sustainable industrial policy” (EC2 2015). In 2012 the third meeting of the working group was held in China and touched amongst other topics upon the measurement of CO₂ emissions, capacity for energy management, and remanufacturing.

6.2.2.3. A Comprehensive Sustainable Energy Cooperation Structure

Drawing on the energy and SE institutionalisation process just addressed, the EU and China can be said to have a very comprehensive SE cooperation structure. SE permeates all three mechanisms constituting sectoral cooperation on energy. SE firstly benefits from its own dedicated cooperation channels within the Energy

Dialogue, with a majority of working groups (4 out of 6) focussing specifically on various SE matters. SE being embedded directly within energy cooperation's central mechanism enables for permanent and regular dialogue opportunities between the EU and China on as many as four different SE energy issues. The Energy Dialogue was also the framework enabling the establishment of SE's own dialogue on EE in the construction sector, acting as another SE dedicated channel for cooperation. SE cooperation furthermore takes place under most energy but non SE-specific channels. SE uses the other two energy cooperation institutions – the Energy Conference and the Urbanisation Partnership as vectors for SE cooperation. Even if neither of these are specifically dedicated to SE, they both largely address SE issues providing SE with another two avenues for engagement on SE framed under energy research and sustainable urbanisation. Finally, SE cooperation institutions also span across European Commission DGs with SE dialogue in the field of industrial cooperation or cooperation mechanisms in the field of innovation and research. These last two points mean a multiplication of cooperation channels for SE, which is framed under a wide array of policy issues ranging from climate change, energy security, and urbanisation for example.

Overall the large and solid institutionalisation of SE cooperation – both dedicated or embedded in other fields – provides SE cooperation with a relatively high frequency of dialogue opportunities in a wide array of SE-related fields and involving varying actors of different levels in the dialogue. In fact, SE is quantitatively so important in EU-China energy relations compared to other themes and is present in most cooperation channels apart perhaps for nuclear energy that SE has become with time key for energy cooperation as a whole and thus for the entire EU-China relations.

6.3. Argumentation

6.3.1. Sustainable Energy – A Successful Area of EU-China Cooperation

When asked about the most successful area of energy cooperation between the EU and China, a shared consensus emerged from interviews with EU and Chinese

officials involved in the field around SE. DG Energy officials clearly stated that “generally everything that is related to renewables like grid integration or smart grids” is the most successful area of energy cooperation (EU-7). This matter of fact is however not only significant for DG Energy but goes well beyond the sole DG, across EU institutions. Relevant EU officials from the Parliament, the European Council, the European Commission and the EEAS, as well as the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) to a certain extent, agree along the lines of a EU Council official’s statement that “everything that is around low-carbon [...] works” (EU-26).

This success is firstly reflected by SE’s large presence within energy cooperation as demonstrated by the important institutionalisation of SE cooperation tackled in the previous section on “persuasion”. Compared to other energy issues, SE is overrepresented in these fora. Chinese Mission representative said that “the most regularly discussed topics are RE [and] new energy technology” (CN-2). On the whole, SE benefits from a comparatively large number of channels – dedicated or appropriated – where cooperation can take place. Since the inception of energy cooperation in 1994, SE has proven to be part of all main energy cooperation initiatives and ventures – apart perhaps when it comes to nuclear energy discussions – and continues to be a topic of cooperation within the most recent energy initiatives, even when like with urbanisation, energy is not necessarily the main focus of attention.

Finally, SE cooperation goes beyond EU-China cooperation and is also a popular field of cooperation between China and EU member states. Not all of the 27 EU member states, but a large number, have active SE cooperation with China, including Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Sweden, and the UK¹¹⁴ and when extended to the SE research field the list further includes Austria, Greece, Hungary, and Spain (EUD 2011). Sweden and Finland for example have established centres - respectively named CENTEC (Centre for Environmental Technology); and Tekes China, Finland’s China offices of its funding agency for innovation – aimed at facilitating cooperation in the field of energy and SE amongst others. In addition, several national agencies, like the German Gesellschaft für Internationale

114 This is based on a data collection process carried as part of the Concept Note on the EU-China 2020 Energy Roadmap. All EU member states have been contacted by mail and phone and asked to answer a questionnaire on their energy cooperation with China.

Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) or the French Agence de l'Environnement et de la Maîtrise du Territoire (ADEME) are involved in the cooperation, or as in the case of the UK, through a specific fund called the Prosperity Fund. Denmark has gone a step further by helping establishing the China National Renewable Energy Centre (CNREC) drawing upon Danish expertise. This centre comprehensively supports the development of renewable energy in China by means of policy research, industrial management, and coordination (CNREC [no date]). EU member states also cooperate on SE through their national chambers of commerce, which in the case of Germany or the UK for example have dedicated sections or projects on energy cooperation. Member states also make use of the European Chamber of Commerce in China (EUCCC) with a dedicated working group on energy.

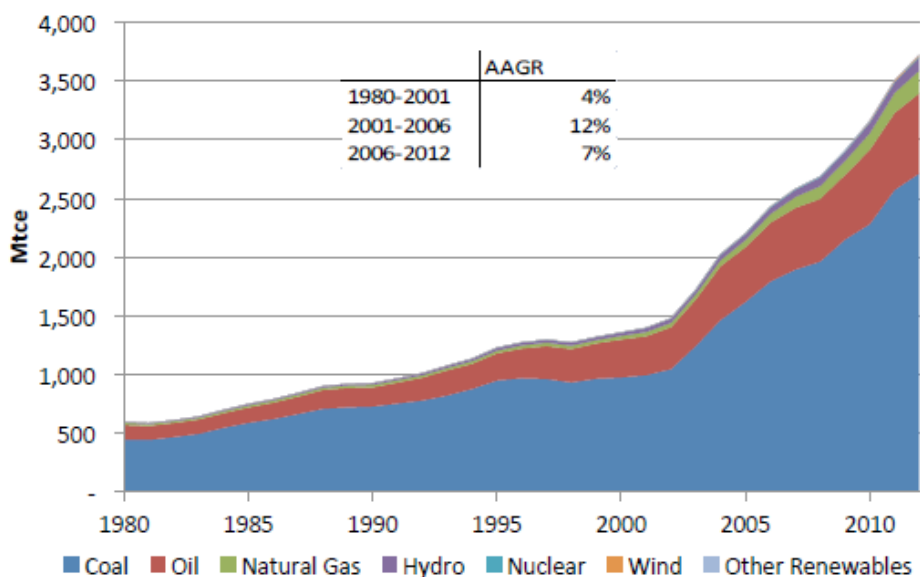
SE cooperation has proven to be a successful area of cooperation between the EU and China. Bringing this back to the investigation of normative power, the question therefore arises whether this is the case thanks to the EU's active efforts to convince China of the benefits of SE for SD. The next section shows in fact that domestic drivers were very much behind the dynamism of SE cooperation.

6.3.2. Already Convinced - China's Domestic Dynamics behind Interest in Sustainable Energy Cooperation

Interviews have shown that when it comes to bringing China to adopting the shift towards SE there is little evidence of the EU trying to convince China of the uptake of SE for the sake of SD. In fact China is "already receptive" to SD ideas as formulated by an EEAS official (EU-24). China's president Xi Jinping stated at the opening of a business forum preceding the G20 that "we will unwaveringly pursue sustainable development and stay committed to green, low-carbon and circular development" (Phillips 2016). China did not need any external intervention to realise the need for a transition to a more sustainable development path for itself, which renders convincing out of place. Instead domestic drivers mainly explain China's interest in promoting SE. As one DG Energy official stated "they do it for their own domestic reasons. The EU does not have to preach gospel, they have their own reasons for doing it" (EU-7). China decided for a shift to SE based on its own national situation. Scholars like Dent (2014) generally identify three main domestic drivers

behind support for SE development – environmental and sustainability concerns, energy security interests, as well as economic and developmental factors.

Since the economic reforms started in 1978, China has been experiencing an exceptional period of high and continuous double-digit growth. China’s exceptional growth is the result of the transition from a centrally-planned to a market-based economy which has seen China’s gross domestic product (GDP) average growth at almost 10% per year, which the World Bank quotes as “the fastest sustained expansion by a major economy in history” (World Bank 2016). This strategy, which strongly prioritised GDP, led China in 2011 to overtake Japan as the second largest economy in the world after the USA. It came however at a cost. China’s economic growth was enabled by an equally impressive growth in energy consumption which was mainly reliant on fossil-fuels and especially coal (see Figure 8 below).



Note: Natural gas includes LNG. Primary electricity is converted at its calorific value (1 kWh = 0.1229 kgce).

Figure 8 - China's total primary energy consumption by source (1980-2012)

(Source China Energy Group 2014: 10)

As a result of China’s fossil-fuelled development, the country suffered large-scale environmental degradation and resource depletion. The air pollution engendered is thought to have caused the death of 300 people per one million because of unsafe levels of particulate emissions (Dent 2015: 10). China’s main rivers suffer water

pollution. China ranks 116 out of 132 countries as measured by the Environmental Performance Index (Emerson et al. 2012). In 2006 the burning of fossil fuel and the consequent release of carbon dioxide (CO₂) in the atmosphere led China to overtake the USA as the world's largest emitter of CO₂. In 2011 China was responsible for more than a quarter of world emissions (IEA 2013b: 45). Overall, the cost to China's environment has been calculated by the World Bank (2013: 49) to amount in 2012 to around 9% of China's gross national income.

With regards to China's energy security, the country's high reliance on fossil fuels and depleting resources led the country to becoming import-dependent. China's development was mainly driven by energy intensive industries such as manufacturing (Dent 2014: 2) but also coal, steel, cement, and chemicals (Wang and Watson [no date]: 17). As a result, China became in 2012 the world's largest coal importer (Dent 2015: 15) and two years later the largest importer of oil (US Energy Information Administration 2015). This has led to power shortages in some provinces endangering China's production and growth. China's fossil fuel consumption therefore creates a sustainability issue, both at environmental and energy security level, which has led the Chinese government to react and turn towards SE. China's political response to these issues led to a large-scale support to SE. China addressed its energy demand growth early in its high growth period through aggressive energy efficiency programmes in the period from 1980 to 2001 (Zhou et al 2010: 6440). Multi-sector RE energy policies also started to be pursued in the mid-1990s with the 1995 China Electric Power Act and the 1996 Brightness Programme within China 9th Five Year Plan (FYP), both landmarks in the support to RE (Dent 2015: 35). China's 11th (2005-2010) and 12th FYP (2011-2015) – often also termed as China's blueprint for economic development – were instrumental in the extensive support to SE. They represented China's commitment to break away from growth-led models to a more qualitative and sustainable form of development (Loh 2012: 15). China set mandatory targets in order to green China's energy use (see Table 3 below). The 11th FYP set a 20% energy intensity reduction per unit of GDP by 2010 and the 12th FYP went further setting a new target of 16%. The 12th FYP also established a mandatory 11.4% share of RE energy in China's energy mix as well as a whole set of environmentally-focused targets on pollutants, carbon intensity, water intensity and forest coverage (ibid: 16). These policy-driven and domestically-motivated targets, which were further articulated in specific technical documents, generated a

great demand for anything SE-related and were instrumental for China's big interest in SE.

Table 3 - Summary of environmental targets for the 11 and 12FYP

| Target | 11FYP proposed (end 2005 to end 2010) | 11FYP achieved (end 2005 to end 2010) | 12FYP proposed (end 2010 to end 2015) |
|---|--|--|--|
| Energy intensity reduction | 20% | 19.10% | 16% |
| Carbon intensity reduction | n/a | 16.20% | 17% |
| Sulphur dioxide emissions reduction | 10% | 14.29% | 8% |
| Chemical oxygen demand (COD) reduction | 10% | 12.45% | 8% |
| Ammonium nitrate reduction (new) | n/a | n/a | 10% |
| Nitrogen oxide reduction (new) | n/a | n/a | 10% |
| Heavy metal reduction – lead, mercury, chromium, cadmium and arsenic (new) | n/a | n/a | 15% from 2007 |
| Water intensity reduction (water consumed per unit of value-added industrial output) | 30% | 37% | 30% |
| Non-fossil fuels proportion of primary energy mix | 15% RE by 2020 | 8.30% | 11.40% |

(Source: Loh 2012)

This ties in with the economic and developmental case for the large-scale support of SE. China's decision to purposefully put in place such favourable policies and incentives can be seen as part of an industrial strategy to foster strategic industries such as the SE sector, which in turn creates new levers for economic growth. The consumption of RE has been established to have a positive impact on economic

growth (Lin and Moubarak 2014) whilst the clean energy economy as a whole provides for nationwide job creation (Yi and Liu 2015: 18). In 2015 China along with Brazil, the US, and India was a leading employer in renewable energy technologies (REN21 2016: 17). Some scholars measured the impact of the development of renewable and new energy in China to amount to about 7 million new jobs from 2011 to 2020 (Cai et al 2014: 1155). Driven by massive Chinese investments, China became within around only ten years one of the world's most attractive markets for SE, based on an exponential growth in renewable energy. In 2013, China for the first time surpassed the EU and invested more in renewable power and fuels than the whole of the EU, one of the leaders in the field (REN21 2013). Altogether this allows one to say that China's incentives supporting SE development engendered substantial economic returns, but beyond this, it is argued that it enabled China to rebalance the structure of its economy as well as its industry (Wang and Watson [no date]: 17). In line with China's scientific development strategy which Dent (2014: 57) relates to an ecological modernisation process adopted in 2007, China is using the green energy sector at large to achieve a repositioning of its industry higher up on the value chain with higher value-added products, as well as meeting "long-term public and economic welfare" (ibid: 49).

China's energy transition from a brown to a greener development model, to use a colloquial expression, initiated through the set of policies and targets outlined above, is not simply a move to integrate sustainability constraints into economic development. They are in fact the trigger of an entire paradigm shift in the way development and in particular approaches to energy are understood. A sustainable energy transition involves working at replacing a fundamentally fossil-fuel based society where fossil fuels are the primary energy inputs with sustainably renewable resources (Sgouridis and Csala 2014: 2609). As described by Loorbach and Rotmans (2006: 3) it requires "shifting from one dynamic equilibrium to a new dynamic equilibrium". Touching the core of a society's functioning, as does a SE transition, does not go without adjustments. As with any transition as defined by Rootmans et al. (2000; 2001), such fundamental societal alterations require profound and wide-ranging changes in the way things are done. Considering this vast scope of changes, it is not surprising to note that the transition to SE has been compared to a revolution.

When it comes to a SE transition, the United Nations (UN) suggests change will include “major shifts in regulatory regimes in almost every economy; vast incremental infrastructure investments; an accelerated development and deployment of multiple new energy technologies; and a fundamental behavioural shift in energy consumption.” (AGECC 2010: 8). The practical implementation of such a complete overhaul in the way to deal with energy thus generates some equally wide-ranging needs. Typically, these are understood to fall under three broad categories – expertise, technology, and financial means (IAEA et al. 2005: 1): expertise in devising efficient and adapted RE and EE policies and tools in the broad range of fields concerned; SE technologies that allow the deployment, installation, grid-connection, and use of renewable energy for example; and the financial means to support these measures and investments.

Such a transformative process is a challenge for any society but perhaps even more so for developing and transitioning countries like China as they might not readily sufficiently dispose of some of the adequate means to achieve a SE transition. In order to overcome these issues, an international consensus emerged at the UN at the time of the definition of SD strategies which is still in place and has been reinforced most recently with the Sustainable Energy For All (SE4All) initiative around the need for international and bilateral cooperation to be employed (Agenda 21 1992, and later the 2009 SE4All initiative among others). Sharing knowledge on “policy and regulation expertise, capacity development, technical standards, best available technologies, financing and implementation approaches, and more coordinated, scaled-up research and development” as advocated by the UN serves the leapfrogging to sustainable energy systems for these countries (AGECC 2010: 8).

6.3.3. Realising China’s Sustainable Energy Transition – The Adequacy of the European Experience as Driver for China’s Interest in Cooperation

In the case of China’s SE transition, interviews have shown as developed in this section the country’s interest in the EU’s input based on the relevance of its experience to Chinese needs. China’s energy transition is creating immense

demands to practically achieve the shift, but there is an understanding that China – as with most developing and transitioning countries – does not necessarily dispose of all the necessary means to achieve it. In the case of RE some of the main issues as researched by Zhao et al (2011: 1105) can be summed up under lack of development experience, technology innovation, industrial structure, and funds. China has been officially calling for international cooperation to close this gap with the 2007 energy white paper released by China’s State Council entitled ‘*China’s energy condition and policies*’. From the interviews conducted both with European and Chinese stakeholders, it appeared that the EU’s experience was understood to be valued by China from the perspective of reaching its SE transition. One EEAS interviewee said that “(...) the EU is the most useful partner for them when they want to learn. Now they are changing their development model, they are looking for a more sustainable one. So I think we have many of the answers that they are looking for” (EU-22). This is primarily because of the adequacy of the EU’s experience as having addressed these issues for a much longer time. The EU’s experience is clearly valued by the Chinese as expressed by one official as follows: “they tell us they consider we have an edge. We have been worried about environmental issues, energy efficiency for a very long time, so they think we have improved a lot.” (EU-11)

In particular, China values the EU’s expertise and technology as expressed by a large number of interviewees across the board including DG Energy, Trade, Move, RTD, Enterprise, Clima, Devco, the EEAS, the Council, but also EU-China Policy Dialogues Support Facility (EUPDSF), Switch Asia, Energy Charter Treaty (ECT), CENREC, CNREC and confirmed by Chinese interviewees from the Chinese Mission to the EU in Brussels, but also officials from the China RE Industries Association (CREIA). On expertise, many Commission officials have mentioned China’s interest, as exemplified by a DG Move official saying that “we do have good expertise and experience and that’s recognised by the Chinese” (EU-21). Thanks to the EU’s prime-mover position in working towards SE transition since the 1990s, and the development of an *acquis communautaire* in the field through a set of directives¹¹⁵, the EU has in particular developed broad competences in operating such a transition. This experience in a policy-driven transition has been widely recognised by China

115 For the detail of the legislation making up the *acquis* see *Chapter 5*.

and has sparked interest. Based on interview data, this concerns two main areas: regulatory frameworks and market reforms. As a DG Energy official stated, “the need in China is huge for a ‘soft input’ such as on how to manage things like regulatory frameworks, market reform for better market signals (...) because we have done it. (...) There is a lot that China wants to learn from us” (EU-20). And in fact, China has been reported to show specific interest in EU directives and legislation, such as EU standards for car emissions (EU-16), standardisation of the building code (EU-7) or the EU energy labelling system (CN-1). On market reforms, China sought the EU’s input on electricity market reform. According to a DG Energy official they have been approached to share their experience on market liberalisation (EU-7). This was considered a big step for China since its electricity landscape is very much dominated by state monopolies like China State Grid and Southern Grid.

On two particular issues – urbanisation and the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) – the relevance of the EU’s experience has been particularly noted. It appeared that in these fields, the EU’s experience has been especially relevant to the Chinese case, in some instances adopted to a model as opposed to that of the US (EU-44 and EU-21). When it comes to urbanisation, the EU’s status as an urban continent with high urbanisation rates, with 75% of the population living in cities and the sustainability issues this implies is closer to China’s own urbanisation experience than the US. A DG Energy official explained for example that “our city models are much more adapted than the American ones” (EU-8). Generally, China is reported to be keen on learning from how the EU manages its diversity and works with 27 different countries (EU-4, EU-7, EU-44, CN-1 and CN-3) as this matches China’s administrative set-up and large regional differences as well. This is valid, given how the EU has managed to integrate countries with different development stages economically speaking but also with different energy situations (EU-7). China’s interest in this aspect is to be found in its cooperation with the EU on the ETS. China is for example learning from the EU’s experience in establishing an original, different national emissions allocation plan in contrast to the EU-wide plan, which was deemed sub-optimal by the EU in achieving emissions cuts. China is looking into developing its own ETS, and with 27 provinces, “China is very aware of this fact and doesn’t want to repeat our own mistakes” as a DG Clima official put it (EU-4).

The second area where the EUs’ experience is particularly valued is technology. It is widely considered to be a key driver to achieve energy transitions (UNDP 2002).

States have been encouraging them widely through energy roadmaps and national strategies (McDowall 2012). China in particular has elevated innovation to a strategic priority in 2006 through its '*National medium- and long-term plan for S&T development*' (Liu and Liang 2013: 489). China was long known for being "the world's factory" specialising in the production of low value-added goods, or, as stated by a Chinese mission official, "we are still much better in producing than developing technology" (CN-2). China has been promoting indigenous innovation but it has also largely relied on technology transfers from developed countries in order to perform technological leapfrogging, as investigated by Liu and Liang (2013). China's needs have driven its interest in learning from the European experience in the field, as confirmed in interviews.

Europe and its member states have consistently ranked in top positions in reports on clean technology innovation. Six European countries occupy the top ten list of the Global Cleantech Innovation Index 2014 edition, next to the Israel, USA, Canada and Switzerland (Parad et al. 2014: 13). European countries are leaders in clean technology patents, with European companies holding 40% of renewable energy technology patents (European Commission [no date]c). European countries are also very well-placed in terms of clean technology patents. In between 2005 and 2010, Germany was third with an average of 10% of the world's invention, France eighth, the UK ninth (Eurostat 2015). The EU also strongly supports SE innovation and research through its framework programmes (FP), and in 2007 launched the Strategic Energy Technology (SET) Plan which is specifically dedicated to accelerating the development and deployment of low-carbon technologies (European Commission 2016d). More than investment, China is interested in the EU's technology, as was expressed by members of the European Commission (EU-5 and EU-11), Council (EU-26), EEAS (EU-22 and EU-24) and the Chinese Mission in Brussels (CN-2). A Chinese official expressed this in direct terms saying that "it is not about investment, the Chinese government and companies have enough capital, but about the technology" (CN-2).

6.3.4. Sustainable Energy Cooperation Success as a European Response to China's Demonstrated Interest

The fact that China valued the EU's expertise and technology naturally led to an increased interest in cooperating with the EU on these issues. Areas related to building a green economy are in general understood as "a place where you see true Chinese demands" across the European Commission DGs as expressed by a DG Trade official (EU-19). In fact, several Commission officials have expressed how the EU's experience in SE transition generated more cooperation interest on the Chinese side (EU-4, EU-7, EU-8, EU-9, EU-12, EU-19, EU-20 and EU-21). A DG Energy official mentioned that "it is the Chinese who came to us because they have a challenge, people migrating to the cities. So this implies having to build liveable cities which provide a certain quality of life to its inhabitants, which will include energy access for everyone, a certain degree of EE and the use of technologies that enable the use of RE, meaning leapfrogging from basic to high technology in order to reduce CO₂ emissions (...)" (EU-9).

In fact, EU officials involved in energy and SE cooperation with China have reported that Chinese interest in cooperating with the EU significantly intensified after 2005 also confirmed by scholars such as Goujon (2015: 72), and even more so around 2010 according to EU sources (EU-19, EU-17, EU-7, EU-26 and EU-41). Commission officials seem to agree on the fact that before this period, cooperation on SE was rather low. This tends to correspond to the acceleration of China's SE transition under China's 11th FYP and the various SE plans and SE-promoting legislation mentioned in this section. The needs triggered by the SE transition boosted China's interest in working with the EU. A DG Energy official confirmed this, saying that "cooperation accelerated a lot at the end of the 11th FYP" driven by China's difficulties in meeting the national EE targets of 20% (EU-20). In 2005 the EU and China kick-started their Energy Dialogue, which provided energy cooperation with a regular framework followed by the range of agreements, working groups, and other energy dialogues outlines under 'persuasion',¹¹⁶ which further expanded the scope of the cooperation. SE-related cooperation did not only intensify, but also

116 For a detailed list of cooperation channels see the institutionalisation chart in Appendix D.

increased in profile, possibly signifying China's growing interest in energy cooperation with the EU. In 2010 the EU and China launched EC2 – a permanent SE cooperation platform - inaugurated by European Commission President Barroso and NEA head Zhang Guobao and in 2012 Chinese Premier Li Keqiang came to Brussels to attend the first EU-China High-Level Energy Meeting.

To this increased willingness in working with the EU, EU officials themselves expressed eagerness. When asked about what for them are the main successes of SE cooperation, one DG Enterprise official said “the main success is the interest the Chinese have in this. They recognise that it is extremely important, they are keen on cooperation.” (EU-12). The EU understands China's interest as one of the most relevant accomplishment. It provided evidence of the EU's relevance for China and represented an achievement for the EU's engagement strategy with China. The EU “became a key partner, even if it is not the only one. This was not the case four years ago (2007). We had to fight to get hear and to talk to them, but now it happens naturally.” (ibid.) Thanks to the EU's relevance in SE cooperation, the EU increased its credibility in China's eyes and energy took a central position in EU-China relations. The EU was therefore keen on supporting China's willingness to cooperate and showed interest in providing China with what it needed, as in the case of the electricity market reform (EU-7, EU-20).

It therefore appears that the EU was more responsive than pro-active in SE cooperation with China, responding to China's interest in working with the EU rather than readily promoting SE with China. This was confirmed by a DG Energy interviewee (EU-8) but also appeared to be the case outside bilateral cooperation as triangulated thanks to an interview with an official from the International Partnership for Energy Efficiency Cooperation (IPEEC). The interview highlighted the fact that within this organisation whose aim is to promote cooperation on EE and which counts both the EU and China as members, the EU did not show any significant interest in using the opportunity to engage China on EE issues as opposed to with Russia or the USA (INT-5). In the absence of Chinese interest, the EU does show signs of promoting SE with China. This underpins the argument made here that the success of EU-China SE cooperation is mainly due to China's own SE transition, and the adequacy of the EU's support in that endeavour to which the EU responded positively based on its own European agenda of engaging China.

6.4. Prestige and Shame

6.4.1. The Solar PV Dispute Case

In September 2012 the European Commission decided to open an anti-dumping and anti-subsidy investigation into Chinese solar panels imports to the EU. This came after mounting tensions between the EU and China in the field of SE related in particular to wind turbines and the EU's plan to bring aviation within the European ETS (Goujon 2015: 68). The Commission's investigation followed a complaint by the EU Prosun association of European solar panel manufacturers who accused Chinese solar panel companies of unfair competition in selling their panels below their production cost and thereby endangering the European solar PV industry (SETIS 2013). To this China retaliated, through its Ministry of Commerce (MofCOM) denouncing 'green protectionism' and the launch of a diplomatic campaign against the Commission's decision (Goujon 2015: 79). China filed an anti-subsidy case with the World Trade Organisation (WTO) against Greece and Italy on RE feed-in tariffs.

In June 2013 the Commission decided to impose provisional 11.8% tariffs on Chinese solar panels (SETIS 2013). In an attempt to divide European member states, China responded by launching an investigation into wine and solar-grade polysilicon exports – those being generally used by European solar panel producers (ECFR 2014). The trade dispute was far from being unanimously supported. Trade Commissioner De Gucht's decision was openly criticised, notably for undercutting the EU's emissions reduction targets related to RE installation because it restricts the use of cheap Chinese solar PV supply for European consumers (Goujon 2015: 80). A large number of member states did not back De Gucht's approach and were opposed to punitive tariffs on Chinese solar panels (ECFR 2014). The solar PV industry itself was also divided as to the measures, with PV installers being partly against import duties (PVtech 2012). The case ended with De Gucht pressured by some member states including Germany to negotiate an agreement with China (Rabinovitch 2011). In August 2013 the case was settled with an agreement by Chinese manufacturers to a minimal price of €0.56 per watt of imported modules to be exempt of punitive tariffs (Trabish 2013).

The solar PV dispute appeared to be a clear case of EU shaming of China on SE. Making use of a trade instrument, the EU thus shamed China's solar PV strategy. The case was the largest EU commercial dispute using a trade defence instrument (anti-subsidy, anti-dumping, or safeguard measures) in the EU's history (Stearns 2013). Before reaching an agreement, the EU planned provisional levies to start with 11.8% in June 2013 and move to 47.6% on average after August 6 (European Commission 2013a). The tariffs did not just target Chinese solar PV manufacturers but the Chinese state. The measures aimed to punish the state-subsidised solar PV industry, which could only afford to sell at dumping prices thanks to state support in the form of subsidies (Jungbluth 2015: 126), enabling them to sell their production on the European market below production cost and taking EU market shares (BBC 2013). The tit-for-tat response of the Chinese authorities who responded with other trade investigations tends to show how the European measures became political in nature. The dispute also received wide press coverage and went beyond the specialist SE press into more mainstream papers. A plethora of press reports and articles covered what was quickly termed a 'trade war' between the EU and China, which, with the element of publicity it provided to the dispute, exposed China's behaviour to a wider audience. The EU thus made use of both trade instruments and public condemnation to constitute shaming devices, as suggested by Manners (2009b: 3).

The solar PV case does appear to constitute an instance of European shaming of China on an issue that is deeply connected to the promotion of SD. As outlined in *Chapter 4* – the deployment of solar energy is considered as a fundamental instrument on the way to SD. In the case of China, its solar potential made solar PV a sensible and promising choice of RE. China's potential for solar energy use is considered especially promising, both in terms of market development and solar energy application (Jungbluth 2015: 125). China's solar resources are considerable, with about 60% of its land mass having more than 2,200 sun hours per annum (Deutsche Bank report 2012: 14). However, China's share of RE in its national energy consumption – excluding hydro power – was relatively small, with less than 1% in 2012 (EIA 2015). When looking at China's solar PV installation, figures are lagging. In 2008 China only had 1% of the world's solar PV installed capacity of 150 Megawatt (MW) (IEA 2010: 10, 16). China's market demand remained small with more than 95% of Chinese PV-cell products exported (ibid: 16). In 2012, one year

before the EU imposed its trade sanctions on Chinese solar PV, China only had an operating capacity of 3.1 gigawatt (GW), far below Germany (24.8), Italy (12.8) or Japan (4.9) or the US (4.0) (REN21 2012: 101). The situation however rapidly evolved in the following years. China increased tenfold its installed generation capacity from 2010 to 2012 (IRENA 2014: 12). At the end of 2014, China's solar PV generation capacity was the highest in the world before that of the USA, which also holds true for solar water heating (REN21 2015: 10), and in 2016 the country even overtook Germany as the world's top generator of solar power (BP 2016). These numbers, even though impressive, are to be seen in comparison with China's leading role in solar energy manufacturing. The country has been termed "as global production centre for the solar energy sector" as it produces about two-thirds of the world's solar PV equipment as well as three-quarters of the solar water heaters (Dent 2014: 175). Nevertheless, at the time of the dispute, China's solar industry did not necessarily correspond to an equally growing use of solar energy as a replacement for fossil fuel in a necessary shift to SD. As such, this could legitimate a shaming operation as a symbolic enforcement for an appropriate increase of domestic solar energy consumption.

Interview data however does not tend to support the SD rationale behind the EU's RE shaming instance. As underlined under 'argumentation', the EU recognises that China has adopted a sustainability-oriented development approach. A DG Environment official specified this in the following terms "with China it is the same (we share the same approach). We agree. With China there is a big emphasis on green economy" (EU-13). As a result, the EU does not feel the need to influence China on this, as stated by a DG Energy official (EU-20). This is supported by the understanding that the carrot and stick approach is not an appropriate influencing technique with China, especially considering the consequences of China's economic retaliation, which even led those European countries with tougher stances to review their approach (Mattlin 2012: 188). Instead, the EU's punitive measures are to be understood as an attempt to protect the EU's solar manufacturing industry in a purely economically motivated logic. Regarding the imposition of provisional anti-dumping measures, Karel De Gucht openly said that "with today's action the Commission takes up the role as the independent defender of European industry in the face of unfair trade practices from abroad." (European Commission 2013c). The EU simply made use of a trade instrument in order to protect one key sector of its economy

against the threat presented by Chinese manufacturers. In view of this, the EU does not appear to be normative in its use of the shaming instrument as it does not support the adoption of a SD-oriented development path. The next section attempts to shed light on the reasons explaining the prevalence of trade interest behind a key SE and SD tool related to the EU-China context.

6.4.2. The Green Growth Model and the Trade Rationale behind International Sustainable Energy Cooperation

Since 1975 and the inception of EU-China relations, economic relations have expanded remarkably. Underpinned by the EU and China's respectively growing economic clout – with the EU's formation as an efficient trade block and China's economic reforms – between 1978 and 2005 EU-China trade grew more than sixty fold and in 2015 close to 15% share of EU trade was related to China (European Commission 2016h: 2). The EU and China have become such significant trading partners to each other that China became the EU's second trading partner behind the USA, and the EU occupies the position of China's biggest trading partner (European Commission 2016g). With growing trade interdependence came also growing trade tensions that materialised as trade disputes. The EU and China have undergone a long series of trade disputes. In 2005 the widely covered textile dispute erupted over Chinese textile imports into the EU, and from 2010 to 2014, no less than 6 major trade disputes involving the EU and China were recorded on issues such as stainless steel, renewables, rare earths, X-ray security inspection equipment, iron and steel fasteners, and footwear (Hansakul and Levinger 2014: 15). In fact, trade dispute are very common amongst trade partners.

Growing trade tensions between the EU and China also took place in a general context of a heightened sense of competition and commercial threat on the part of the EU towards China. This appraisal is supported by the EU's economic problems since the 2008 crisis compared to China's double digit growth levels. DG Trade especially has reported seeing China as one of its most threatening competitors (EU-19). Relating back to the solar PV case, and starting from the premise that solar energy as a SE form and defined as a key instrument for sustainability, SD became

embroiled in the trade dispute logics. The answer can be traced back to the similarity of economic agendas between the EU and China known as the 'green growth' model.

The concept of green growth, also termed 'low carbon growth', 'green economy', or 'low carbon society', has made its way into the SD discourse to become a widely accepted strategy for the implementation of the SD concept to become part of what Goujon describes as "the creative reservoir of sustainable development terminology", developed by climate advocates and policymakers (Goujon 2015: 71). The concept does not have a consensual definition but as Bowen and Frankhausen suggest, "most analysts would associate the term with environmentally sustainable, biodiverse, low-carbon and climate-resilient growth in human prosperity" (2011: 1157). Much like the concept of ecological modernisation it is related to (Lorek and Spangenberg 2014: 33), the notion posits a break away from the idea that sustainability and environmental protection are to be cast as burden, turning the need for sustainability into an economic opportunity (Weale 1992; Bowen and Frankhausen 2011). Simply put, green growth offers a win-win solution to the SD and climate change issues by turning sustainability into a very profitable source of growth for the entire economy.

Green growth takes place through "investment in the upgrading of the entire production system to environmental and resource-saving processes and products" (Jänicke 2012:13). It thus spurs the development of clean industries such as renewables, but also waste management, recycling, and water treatment, and promotes research and innovation in those highly technological fields as well. SE in particular is instrumental to green growth. Countries such as Germany, Denmark, or the US all developed their SE sector as a source of economic growth (ibid: 14-15). In Germany for example the environmental sector was estimated in 2007 to be 8% of GDP and predicted to reach a 14% share of the country's GDP (ibid: 14). As a result of the successful uptake of the green growth model by an increasing amount of countries (Goujon 2015), clean technologies have become a very lucrative market worldwide. In 2015 the clean energy sector was estimated by some consultancies to be worth \$601billion (Yeo 2015), which represents a conservative estimate against the 2010 \$5 trillion estimated for "low carbon and environmental goods and services" by the Innovas study (Innovas 2010 in Jänicke 2012: 4).

Whilst at domestic level such a policy is to enable finding synergies between sustainability and economic growth, at international level the choice to turn to green

growth as an economic and developmental model by an increasing amount of countries triggered global competition over clean technology markets (Goujon 2015, Lewis 2014). The appeal of the green growth model was such that it has been termed a “common response to a common challenge” (Goujon 2015: 68). The multiplication of clean technology markets and actors in a globalised world meant that countries started competing over the leadership in the field. Countries like the US or India made declaratory statements about aiming their country to win the race (Jänicke 2012: 15). This global competition involves exporting clean tech products to other countries with a promising market. South Korea for example “invests billions to promote the export of “green technology” (ibid). Both the EU and China also engage in this competition, with China being one of the most aggressive exporters in the field. In the case of the EU-China solar PV dispute, a similar dynamic of competition appeared to be at play.

6.4.3. Dynamics behind the EU-China Solar PV Dispute

The EU has adopted the ‘low carbon growth’ model as a motor for its own economy. As supported by Andersen and Massa (2000: 339), the European Commission introduced ecological modernisation in its 1993 White Paper on *‘Economic growth, competitiveness and employment’*. In 2010 the EU launched its ‘Europe 2020’ strategy which placed sustainable growth at the core of its strategy for Europe. Green growth became one of the EU’s priorities for the 10 years to come. The EU has been successfully promoting the development of green sectors, which account for a significant share of the wealth creation process, and also in terms of employment. The sector has become one of the largest, representing in 2008 €309 billion and about 2.5% of the EU’s GDP (European Commission 2011b: 5). The sector including SE thus represents a big economic interest for the EU.

China, having triggered the most successful ecological modernisation processes, challenged the EU’s SE industries with its successful promotion of the solar industry. Within decades, the country became the world’s largest solar PV producer. In 2012 China’s installed solar PV capacity represented 12% of global installation with 3.2 GW (Lewis 2014: 23). This success is the product of China’s industrial policy to promote renewable energies (ibid:15). The country has put in place a comprehensive regulatory framework and policies detailed earlier which aim at

supporting and promoting the development of a SE industry. Most notably, in China's 12 FYP the government identified seven strategic industries – including energy saving and environmental protection as well as new energy – for which it aimed to have 15% share of the economy by 2020 (Rabinovitch 2011). China's ambitious policy was effective at triggering a general increase in production of renewables – mainly hydropower, wind, solar PV, and biomass¹¹⁷ – with the country's fastest growing sector however being solar PV with over a 100-fold increase since 2006 (Dent 2014: 32).

The creation and rapid expansion of an entire industry was however largely enabled by important government support in the form of subsidies and favourable policies (Jungbluth 2015: 126; Lewis 2014: 15). Government support is very usual in ensuring the development of nascent industries¹¹⁸ but what sets China apart from the rest of the world is the scale on which it is deploying such support (Dent 2014: 35). As Zhang notes, China took drastic measures to see its policies take off. The country invested \$34.6 billion in renewable energy in 2009 pushing the US back to second place with a mere \$18.6 billion (Zhang 2010: 6642). On solar PV specifically, China launched in 2009 the 'golden sun' stimulus programme whereby the government subsidised 50% of investment costs for more than 500MW of solar capacity (ibid). In 2013 for the first time, China even invested more in RE than did all of Europe combined (REN21 2014: 17). As a result, China rapidly became the largest solar PV manufacturer in the world (Lewis 2014: 23).

The issue however was that originally, most of China's production was used as export products. As noted earlier, China vastly overproduced solar panels and as a result exported a large share, notably to Europe. Europe represented China's main market with around 60% of China's solar products entering the European market, which amounted to about 7% of China's total export to Europe (Lewis 2014: 24). China captured 80% of EU market shares and thereby endangered EU solar PV producers (Baetz 2013). The low price of China's heavily subsidised solar PV came in direct competition with the EU's own solar PV industry in what has been termed

117 For detailed figures on the increase of installed capacity of the main renewable energy sources see Dent (2014 :29-30).

118 According to Dent (2014: 34-35) by early 2013, 127 countries in the world had put in place some form of RE policy support scheme and 138 had set defined RE targets.

dumping and unfair practice. The European Commission's justification for its defensive trade measures show that it understands the solar PV issue as a threat to its economic interest and intends on protecting its green industry against unfair Chinese competition. De Gucht stated that "it's clear that the dumping of these Chinese solar panels is clearly harming the European solar panel industry. This jeopardises at least 25,000 current jobs." (European Commission 2013c). Both green growth agendas have come to clash in turning SE into economic interests.

Green growth has created a coherence issue between environmental and commercial policy goals, whereby these do not necessarily match. This dynamic is also manifesting directly within EU-China SE cooperation. Commercial interests exacerbated by competition directly altered European SE cooperation efforts, as interviews with some Commission and European Investment Bank (EIB) officials working with China suggest (EU-17, EU-46). Since the solar PV and earlier wind energy issues, the EIB for example, which largely funds SE projects as part of its policy on climate change – the EIB contributed € 500 million to the China Climate Change Framework Loan – has made sure not to invest in industries that export to Europe or which use dumping (EU-46). As a result, the EIB excluded the possibility of cooperation on solar energy. The EIB also provides funding with strings attached such as encouraging China to choose European technology such as wind turbines (EU-46). European Commission officials also report finding China's interest in SE cooperation to be directed at fields where China can "gain better grounds amongst international competition" (EU-17). Commercial interests seem indeed to have taken precedence over environmental and sustainability matters in SE cooperation.

The EU-China solar PV dispute is to be seen in the larger context of growing SE disputes since the rise of the industry, linked to government support (Lewis 2014: 21). Earlier, in 2011, the US had already imposed import duties on Chinese solar panels for similar reasons, and in 2012 India investigated China, Taiwan, Malaysia, and the US over solar panels. Lewis further details all twelve RE related international trade disputes from 2011 to 2013 (Lewis 2014: 22). Interviews with DG RTD officials who work with other East Asian green growth actors – South Korea and Japan – further confirm the inherent occurrence of competition this generates (EU-17). This state of affairs underpins the argument according to which the adoption by many countries of the green growth model – originally suggested as a strategy of implementation of the SD concept - has contributed to turn sustainability into an

economic interest which translates at international level into exacerbated trade competition. Far from fostering much needed cooperation to achieve SD through the adoption of SE, as suggested by the Brundtland and subsequent reports, the green growth model pitches sustainability against trade interests and affects SE cooperation. In championing the green growth approach, the EU has indeed shamed China on SE yet not for the sake of ensuring China's use of solar energy but in order to protect its own industry.

6.5. Conclusion – Not Normative by Action

In line with deontological ethics, this chapter focused on investigating the EU's behaviour for its normative quality when cooperating with China on SE. Following Manners' 'principles, actions, impact' (PAI) analytical framework for judging of the EU's normative power status, this led to the study of persuasion, argumentation and prestige and shame as guidelines to evaluate if the EU's behaviour qualifies the EU as normative by action. According to Manners, if the EU is to be normative, it must behave in a reasonable way (Manners 2002: 242) and be found to be persuasive in promoting the norm. The aim of this chapter thus was to determine if the EU is behaving normatively in its actions when cooperating with China on SE by applying these three criteria to the EU's SE cooperation with China. The level of analysis was located mainly within the energy cooperation between European and Chinese policymakers. The study found that the EU is not normative when it comes to argumentation and prestige and shame. Whilst the EU is persuasive in establishing institutionalised links to further cooperation on SE with China, the study showed that this is however not the result of normative behaviour. The EU therefore cannot be called normative by action.

Persuasion first focused on determining whether the EU is actively setting up cooperation channels for exchanges on SE to take place between the EU and China. This also acted as the main research question for this section. The research uncovered that this clearly is the case. A chronological study of the gradual institutionalisation of EU-China relations and energy cooperation enabled it to be established that SE largely profited from the increasing density in cooperation mechanisms. SE proved to be at the core of all three main energy cooperation

institutions, either through dedicated channels like working groups or otherwise present as a topic within other channels like the Energy Conference. With time, the number of dedicated SE channels grew in number but also in political relevance with the energy dialogue – the central cooperation channel on energy – upgraded to ministerial level. SE also expanded its presence to newer cooperation fields like urbanisation and energy security which meant a multiplication of cooperation channels from which SE benefitted. This was shown to go beyond the boundaries of energy cooperation only. The institutionalisation of SE cooperation was shown to take place across European Commission DGs including DG Enterprise and DG RTD. Overall, SE institutionalisation – both dedicated or embedded in other fields – proved to be solidly anchored within energy cooperation and across the Commission, covering a wide array of fields and involving a large and diverse range of actors of various hierarchical levels. SE's instrumental role for the development of energy cooperation reached political levels to become relevant for the whole of EU-China cooperation. This leads to the conclusion that the EU did indeed contribute to put in place relevant institutions for SE cooperation to take place and that it is normative by persuasion.

Argumentation was preoccupied with identifying active convincing on the part of the EU for the uptake of SE for SD by China. The research question was contextualised using the findings of 'persuasion' related to the success of SE cooperation and thus investigated whether this success could be attributed to the EU's deliberate agency to persuade China. The findings showed that whilst the cooperation can be deemed successful beyond the sole institutionalisation process uncovered under 'persuasion', it is rather the result of China's interest in Europe's expertise and technology to perform the leapfrogging to SE systems met by the EU's willingness to engage China. China's rapid growth fuelled by fossil energy has taken its toll both on the environment and also on China's energy security, contributing to the country's politically-driven paradigm shift to green growth and SE in particular. Subsequently, in a utilitarian approach, China is turning to cooperation with other countries to help bridge its technology and expertise needs in order to facilitate and accelerate the development of SE domestically. The EU in this regard offers very adequate partnership opportunities thanks to its own relatively early adoption of an SE agenda and the corresponding skills, knowledge and expertise it has acquired. The EU positive response to China's interest in cooperation on SE led to increased and

intensified SE cooperation from 2005 onwards, which corresponds to China's massive support to SE. Research however found that this was more motivated by the EU's interest in engaging China as part of its broader external relations' goals rather than the intention of promoting SD in China. Conclusively, the EU cannot be deemed normative by argumentation.

Finally, prestige and shame reviewed the EU's incentivising for norm uptake through symbolic enforcement measures. A choice was made to focus on the EU-China solar PV trade dispute as it constitutes a major event of shaming related to SE. The study aimed to determine if this case can duly be regarded as an instance of shaming China as a symbolic way to encourage China to use SE for the sake of SD. Findings show that this is not the case. It was established that the solar PV case starting in 2012 is indeed a case of shaming on SE on the part of the EU but that it was motivated by economic interests rather than normative ones. The EU employed trade measures as protective actions against the perceived threat of China's cheap – because heavily subsidised – solar panels to Europe's own solar industry. This was found to relate to the green growth model and its widespread uptake. Introduced as a possible response to the SD and CC challenges, the green growth model offered a way to tackle those issues in an economically profitable way. Such a 'win-win' approach is very attractive and was adopted by large number of countries, amongst them the EU and China. The issue however is that by turning sustainability into a source of economic growth and development, it paved the way for international competition for lucrative green markets. China and its aggressive green growth strategy challenged the EU on its own turf, endangering the EU's own solar industry. As a response, the EU made use of trade tariffs to defend its economic interest. The EU's decision was therefore not motivated by an interest in having China make use of its solar manufacturing production for the deployment of solar energy but by material interests. As such, the EU cannot be called normative by shaming.

Conclusively, the three angles for studying the EU's behaviour in cooperating with China on SE suggest that the EU is being normative in only one of the three instances. A simple quantitative approach would lead one to say that the EU is not normative by action. As in the case of the 'principles' conclusion, it is in fact the interplay between the criteria that offer the more telling conclusion. Contrary to 'principles', where the guiding principle of legitimacy proved key for the overall outcome of the chapter, here the guiding criterion of 'persuasion' does not seem as

decisive. The positive outcome of 'persuasion' does not impact the two other criteria which are negative in their verdict on the EU's normative quality. Instead the linkage between persuasion and argumentation shows that the successful institutionalisation of SE relations is most likely not the product of a SD-driven rationale, but is rather the meeting of EU and Chinese interests, which are not directly related to the attainment of SD. This undermines the only normatively positive result obtained for 'persuasion'. The interplay between criteria thus enables the positive outcome of 'persuasion' to be overturned and leads to the conclusion that with three negative results, the EU is thus not normative by action. Having looked at both the 'principles' (*Chapter 5*) and 'actions' (*Chapter 6*) dimensions of Manners' tripartite framework, the following chapter turns to the investigation of the 'impact' of the EU's SE cooperation with China as the final aspect of what constitutes a normative power.

CHAPTER 7 – IMPACT

7.1. Introduction

The originality of normative power as opposed to the more usual understanding of power in IR is its ideational nature. A normative power does not only promote normative principles in the world but it does so in a normative way. Normative ethics has been used by Manners as a guide for determining how to identify such a different type of power (Manners 2008), defining three dimensions of what should constitute the EU's normative status. For the third and final part of Manners' tripartite analytical framework, consequentialist ethics defines the focus of study around the impact and outcomes of the EU's promotion of a normative principles in its external relations (Manners 2008: 58). According to consequentialist ethics these are to "do least harm" in its relations with third countries (Manners 2008: 59). Following Manners' tripartite framework, the aim of this chapter is to determine whether EU consequentialist ethics, in the case of EU-China sustainable energy (SE) cooperation, impacts on the EU's SE cooperation with China and indeed follows the least harm principle and empowers China to adopt SE as a means to support its own path towards sustainable development (SD).

As with the first two pathways of the analytical framework, Manners offers three workable criteria as tools for determining the EU's normative status. More specifically, if the EU is to be qualified as a normative power, the impact of its cooperation should include socialisation, partnership and ownership (Manners 2009b: 3) in order to prove it uses "reflexive thinking" and adopts an "other empowering" approach to cooperation, elements required from compliance with normative ethics (Manners 2008: 59). Each of the three criteria demands focus on one aspect of the question. As a generic framework, however, these must be translated to the case at hand. Applied to EU-China SE cooperation, the study of impact and its three criteria will be located at the level of the implementation of its SE cooperation with China, which has been located as taking place within the various projects and programmes (also called 'platforms' in this section). Extensive desk-

based research to map out the actors involved in the implementation phase of cooperation, as well as interviews with the platforms identified in Beijing but also in Europe, enabled identifying them as the relevant level of analysis. Not only does this focus correspond to the way the EU implements its cooperation with China on SE but it also enables a follow-up from the focus on policies and policy-makers' intentions in 'principles', the study of the cooperation and its institutions under 'actions', and to provide a holistic analysis of EU-China SE cooperation looking at the last stage of the cooperation – its implementation through joint projects.

Applied to the cooperation platforms, socialisation is translated in order to look at channels and socialisation spaces as mechanisms for engagement into the norm, partnership addresses the nature of the cooperation within these places and ownership focuses on their contribution to the assimilation of the norm. Research into each of these three criteria therefore constitutes the object of this chapter and the answer to its main research question. As with previous empirical chapters, this chapter combines both the criteria for the level of analysis previously identified and intends to answer the following question, which also informs the outline of the chapter:

1. (Socialisation) Is the EU providing China with SE cooperation platforms as socialisation opportunities to facilitate the domestic development of SE?
2. (Partnership) Within these platforms, is the cooperation carried out in the spirit of partnership?
3. (Ownership) Is the goal of the platforms' activities to empower China to keep carrying out its own SE transition?

Generally, as the platforms and their work constitute the very object of this research, this chapter reflects the need to first map out the landscape of these cooperation entities in a more descriptive section, before being able to extract, in a more analytical section, their contribution for each of the three criteria. The research into the first criterion invites looking at whether the EU is socialising China into the use of SE for the sake of achieving SD and especially if it is providing China with the opportunity to understand and question such use (Manners 2009b: 3). Socialisation however is a vast domain with studies ranging from sociology, psychology, anthropology and also international relations (IR) generally, socialisation agents nonetheless are largely agreed to play a major role in the process of norm internalisation. This has been researched in particular in relation to the EU, giving

rise to a rich body of literature¹¹⁹. This section will therefore specifically focus on EU-China SE promotion institutions and it will aim at determining whether they provide China with relevant socialisation opportunities and spaces for China to engage the EU on performing a SE transition. Sociological and IR constructivist literature is employed as underpinning for the socialisation agents' relevance as objects of study. The analysis of their contribution to socialisation is based on a detailed overview of existing platforms of SE cooperation with China. Since no such overview exists to the knowledge of the author, this required mapping out EU-China projects and programmes. Internet search and EU official documents were mainly used at first and when possible, this was then triangulated with interviews with officials working for the major existing platforms at the time of this work. This then allowed assessment of the platforms' contributions to EU socialisation efforts as well as uncovering their limitations in order to conclude on the EU's normative quality for this criterion.

The study into 'partnership' on the other side first requires establishing a working definition of the concept in order to be able to identify what constitutes partnership in SE cooperation platforms. Manners' tripartite framework only mentions what partnership derives from, rather than what it is (Manners 2009b: 3). To this end, development cooperation literature is employed to delineate the concept of partnership in international cooperation and also to extrapolate elements for detecting its presence. Because of this, the study is located within the analysis of the platform's functioning, looking at their instigation, financing, operation and activities. Primary data collected on each platform, originating from EU Commission documents and the platforms' own website, was used to assess the platform's 'performance' on partnership following these categories. Finally, limits of partnership are addressed using interviews with SE cooperation platforms and triangulated with interviews conducted with other EU-China SE cooperation stakeholders. Six out of the eleven platforms identified have been chosen as the basis for investigation. This choice reflects the availability of data publically accessible, which significantly drops after the platforms cease to exist.

119 See for example Beyers (1998) and Lewis (1998) on the longitudinal study of the role of meetings within EU institutions on socialisation or Joerges and Neyer (1997a; 1997b) for more qualitative studies (Checkel 2005: 807).

Finally, the investigation into the platforms' contribution to increasing Chinese ownership is first required – as for 'partnership' – to define the concept of ownership as applied to SE cooperation. The use of institutional documents from various authoritative international institutions was employed to do so, and to establish three areas to which platform activities must contribute if the EU is to be deemed normative in this area. First the type of fields the activities address, then the nature of the activities and finally the type of actors they benefit must all be relevant to achieving a SE transition. Activities are first assessed according to the relevance of the fields they address in achieving a SE transition. Platforms' activities were first organised thematically according to the same basic structure of energy demand, energy supply and crosscutting areas developed by the Europe-China Clean Energy Centre (EC2) '*China-EU energy cooperation roadmap 2020: Concept note*' (2015). The fields of activities thereby uncovered were then judged against the Sustainable Energy For All (SE4All) (2012) indicators list according to relevant SE transition fields. The nature of activities is then evaluated for their contribution to capacity-building and finally the relevance of the types of actors who benefit from their activities is measured against the categories established by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) SE transition policy agenda (UNDP 2002). A selection of five platforms have been chosen out of the eleven identified at the start of the chapter. This decision solely reflected the availability of data for the categories investigated so as to ensure comparability.

7.2. Socialisation

7.2.1. Socialisation Agents and Norm Internalisation

Socialisation is a fundamental concept of social sciences and is understood as “the process by which an individual learns the norms and values of society.” (Painter: 173) Socialisation is thus primarily responsible for the passing of common norms and values within a society, from generation to generation. This role in society is primary as it ensures the social reproduction and societies' 'structural continuity over time' (Giddens 2006 in Haralambos and Holborn 2013: 728). Socialisation is responsible

as a process for the passing of norms, it is socialisation agents who are largely understood to be the ones performing the action of transmitting norms within society. Sociology distinguishes between a number of common socialisation institutions accomplishing the role of socialising agents in society, ranging from the family, education, peer groups, the mass media, religion and work (Painter: 173-176). Family, for example, is seen as the main agent in the primary socialisation of young children, whereas education, religion, work and the mass media are places for secondary socialisation which takes place throughout life (Haralambos and Holborn 2013: 728). Together they are necessary vectors for the transmission and internalisation of norms within societies.

Similarly to the sociological approach to socialisation, Constructivism suggests that at a state level socialisation also plays a role in causing states to adopt and internalise norms and values. Finnemore and Sikkink's work (1998) on 'international norm dynamics and political change', for example, shows that socialisation is a dominant mechanism in the 'norm cascade' phenomenon, whereby an increasing amount of states adopt a norm. Paralleling the sociological approach further, at state-level, institutions such as states, international organisations or NGOs to name but a few, assume the role of socialisation agents in the process of norm transmission and internalisation. Checkel (2005: 806-808), in particular, highlights how constructivist scholarship views institutions as both promoters and sites of socialisation. Without entering into this specific debate, this underlines the fact that institutions are instrumental in the process of bringing states to internalise norms and that uncovering the presence of such institutions dedicated to the promotion of SE for the sake of environmental sustainability would constitute legitimate evidence that the EU contributes to socialising China into SD.

As previously investigated in the 'actions' chapter, the EU and China have a relatively highly institutionalised relation in the form of numerous SE-related dialogues. These are political dialogues, which serve as institutionalised forms of political cooperation and provide officials from both sides with a space to exchange and discuss energy and SE issues. Beyond political dialogues, the EU and China benefit from a number of specialised cooperation platforms that address SE. These are usually projects dedicated to implementing certain aspects of EU-China cooperation – often on specialised topics such as urbanisation or clean energy – in a practical manner. They usually involve a broad range of stakeholders such as experts, academics,

businesses or civil society. However SE cooperation platforms can also be the result of the EU's own regional policy towards Asia or even originate from the EU's thematic programming. Together they provide the relationship with either fully or partly-dedicated SE cooperation spaces. The following section will present and review the SE cooperation platforms that have been created since 1994 and analyse their contribution as socialisation agents.

7.2.2. EU-China Sustainable Energy Cooperation Platforms

There are 11 projects and programmes that address SE cooperation with China (see Figure 9 below for a complete overview). These are either of bilateral nature or part of regional or thematic instruments under the EU's development cooperation instruments. Three of them are fully-dedicated to SE cooperation whilst for the rest SE only constitutes one aspect of their mission.

7.2.2.1. Bilateral Sustainable Energy Projects

Sustainable Energy-Specific Platforms

In 2003 the EU established the first energy-specific cooperation project with China known as the EU-China Environment and Energy Programme (EEP). It is the first of three platforms dedicated to SE cooperation. This initiative aimed at promoting sustainable energy use in China and was one of the EU's first projects with the aim to promote sustainable energy use in China (EEP: 2004). More specifically the project was to promote an increased use of renewable energies and improve energy efficiency as part of a set of four main objectives also including cross sector energy policy development and natural gas. The programme aimed to support the Chinese government in its intention to achieve energy efficiency (EE) and improve its lacking

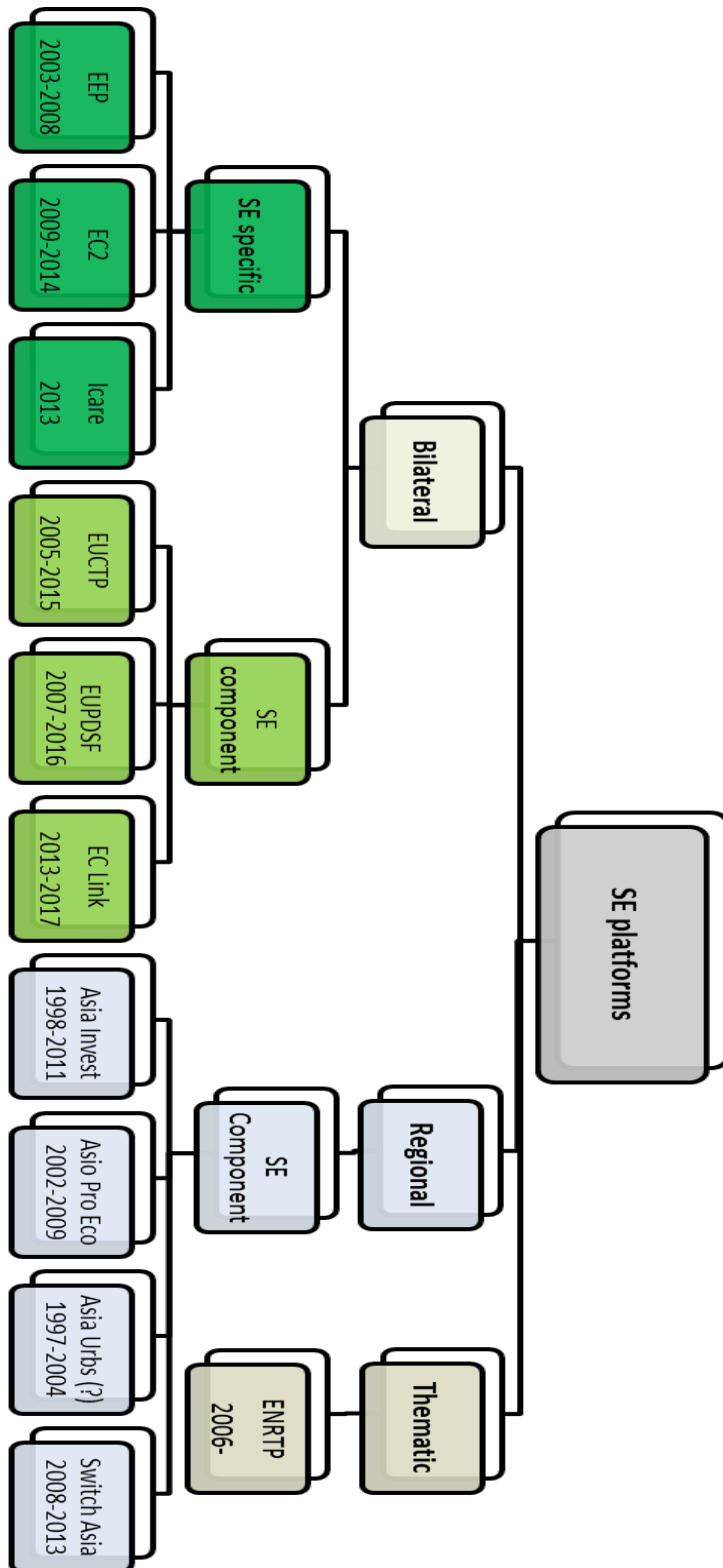


Figure 9 - Architecture of EU-China SE cooperation platforms

(Source: Author)

EE record. As the EEP brochure¹²⁰ (2004: 4) details this plan was “to increase energy efficiency by constructing a resource saving society and removing all energy bottlenecks”. The energy efficiency (EE) component of the EEP focused on three issue-areas deemed the most urgent: the improvement of effectiveness of energy standards, labels, and certification, the promotion of energy-saving potential in energy-intensive industries and improving energy efficiency and reducing pollutants in boilers.

The renewable energy (RE) component was aimed at reducing China’s use of fossil fuel and supporting China’s own SE policy aiming at a 10% increase of RE of by 2020 (ibid). The general objective, as stated in the brochure, was to “help China promote the increased use of renewable energy by participating in the implementation of laws and regulations and by encouraging cooperation between the EU and China in technology development” (ibid: 9). This was to be achieved by strengthening policy development capacity, developing biomass resources for rural energy provision, scaling-up China’s offshore wind energy resources and enhancing village power supply in Western China.

In 2009 Europe Aid funded the creation of the EU-China Clean Energy Centre also known as EC2 headquartered in Beijing, the second SE-dedicated platform. This Centre was created by the EU and China as a separate body with the specific task of “the use of cleaner energy technologies and to support energy conservation and efficiency, thus assisting China in its transition to a low-carbon economy.” (EUDC 2015b). As opposed to the EEP which had a broader scope, the general objective of EC2 was focused on SE specifically and aimed to “promote an increased use of clean energy in China and to support the Chinese Government’s efforts to shape a more sustainable, environmental friendly and efficient energy sector.” (ibid). To do so the Centre targeted the promotion of RE sources as well as increased EE in energy consumption in buildings, products and industry as two of its priority-sectors. Located in Beijing and with a twelve partners strong team from both China and Europe, the Centre was a concrete attempt for Europe to promote clean energy together with China. With a contribution of €10 million from the Commission and

120 Due to the long-past closing date of this programme, documents openly available are very limited. This brochure was provided in electronic form by a former official of the EEP and can be shown upon request.

€3.16 million from its implementing consortium led by the Italian Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea, this Centre represented a free-standing institution dedicated entirely to the promotion of clean energy – including SE - as part of the EU's support to China's SD.

Thirdly, two years later in 2011, the China-EU Institute for Clean and Renewable Energy (ICARE) was established as a joint EU-China initiative and targeted specifically the lack of trained workforce in the expanding field of clean energy. This China-based project aims to fill the demand for qualified workforce in the sustainable and clean energy field created by China's transition to more sustainable energy systems triggered by China's reforms, creating an estimated six million jobs and €22 billion annual income up to 2020 (EUDC 2015a). The institute not only provides post-graduate study for clean and renewable energy study courses but also offers vocational training for energy professionals on clean energy as well as a research support platform for scientific cooperation. Located in Wuhan and implemented by the Institute des Sciences et Technologies de Paris (ParisTech), the project supports China's energy transition by financing the training of the workforce and provides the country with the expertise needed in order to perform its own energy transition.

Bilateral Projects with a Sustainable Energy Component

The EU-China Trade Project (EUCTP) is a Europe Aid-funded project directly related to EU-China dialogues and physically located in China, which addresses the promotion of SE from a sustainable growth point of view. It is the first of three bilateral EU-China projects with a SE component (as opposed to being solely dedicated to SE). Running since 2010 and up to 2015 EUCTP II is the third one of this series of major trade project assistance with China since 2000 - with Europe Aid financing for €20 million euros and €5 million in kind by the Chinese counterpart (EUDC 2015d) - and its mission is to support China's economic transition and development by supporting the Chinese government's trade reforms and sustainable development agenda (EUCTP 2016b). Starting from the premise that "the issues of sustainable development will underpin China's economic development in the 21st century and will require a balance between sustainable economic growth, reduced environmental impact and reaching poverty alleviation targets" (EUCTP 2016a) the project focuses on reconciling China's economic growth or the economic aspect with sustainability

and social concerns. This seems to reflect the three dimensions of sustainable development in its most general depiction (Baker 2006). In fact on the EUCTP's webpage and action fiche, discourse on China's development is embedded in the SD paradigm under which this transition is to take place (ibid). Therefore the project does not only address SE issues but has four more components under which this aim is to be promoted - services, quality infrastructure, agriculture and food safety and customs. It is however under crosscutting issues that the sustainability aspect is being carried out with one component being specifically dedicated to energy and SE issues along with four more components - competition policy, corporate social responsibility, intellectual property rights, investment, public procurement, and regulatory reform.

Under the title 'low carbon economy', the EUCTP provides technical assistance to sustainable energy-related projects. With more than 400 files, projects on SE are numerous and address a large variety of concerns related to SE transition. Between 2012 and 2013 alone, a total of 15 projects have been led in the fields of generation and distribution of energy, consumption and European Trading Scheme (ETS) (EUCTP [no date]). In 2011 the EUCTP also set up an online low-carbon economy platform. Considering the large amount of SE-related activities undertaken by many different stakeholders whether from the European Commission or the 27 member states this tool aims to provide all stakeholders with visibility over SE projects by providing up-to-date listings. This is to ensure the rationalisation of activities by avoiding duplication of projects (EU-41).

Secondly, similarly to the EUCTP the EU-China Policy Dialogues Support Facility (EUPDSF) is a supporting mechanism for EU-China dialogues however it is not restricted to trade-related matters but it supports all EU-China dialogues and projects mandated by them. At the time it was first created in 2007, it constituted a novel approach to EU-China relations as it offered a new supporting facility for the implementation of projects decided by both European and Chinese parties under the dialogues and which could not be provided in the framework of existing programmes and projects (EUDC 2015c). The support facility has been a successful addition to the cooperation and has entered its second phase starting in 2012 and from then on called EUPDSF phase II. Actions undertaken by the EUPDSF range from short-to-medium term studies, logistical support for meetings, conferences, seminars and

workshops to external expertise or internships for dialogue partners¹²¹. The EUPDSF as a more functional tool is therefore not particularly geared towards the promotion of SD, or any specific norm for that matter, however as it supports the entire cooperation and the many dialogues that constitute the cooperation, the EUPDSF contributes to the implementation of projects, including on energy and more recently, urbanisation. In the second phase of the support facility, projects relating to SE have been implemented under the urbanisation, transportation, and enterprise (eco design) areas.

EU-China Eco-cities platform, also called EC-Link is the latest of the EU-China initiatives touching upon SE. The purpose of EC-Link is “to assist Chinese cities in adopting energy and resource-efficient ecological solutions by sharing experiences on sustainable urbanisation with European cities.” (EUDC 2015e) The platform - launched in 2013 - was born out of the EU-China Urbanisation Partnership signed in May 2012 by the European Commission and the Chinese government. Its main aim relates to urbanisation and SE thus appears only in relation to that. The pairing of European and Chinese cities is considered the key delivery mechanism of the partnership with 12 cities paired in 2012¹²² and aims to achieve more in the future. EC-Link gives the partnership some stability by offering a concrete platform to facilitate the cooperation between European and Chinese cities and the exchange of experience and give it some stability.

7.2.2.2. *Regional Projects*

One other channel through which SE cooperation has been carried out is through the EU’s regional aid to Asia. “The EC programmes for regional co-operation complement national assistance programmes. They aim at tackling challenges with a regional dimension and promoting interstate co-operation on issues of mutual interest.”(Delegation of the European Union to Vietnam [no date]).

121 The full range of activities can be found on the action fiche, see EUDC (2015c).

122 The 12 pairs of European and Chinese cities can be found here:
https://ec.europa.eu/energy/sites/ener/files/documents/12_cities.pdf

The 2013 '*Asia regional strategy paper*'¹²³ laying down the goals for Asia in terms of development cooperation indicated environment, energy and climate change as one of its main priorities (European Commission 2007d: 3). One of the main ways in which SE has been supported is through the sustainable consumption and production (SCP) priority-area as defined under the strategy paper (ibid). Asia's growth has been impressive, however, such achievements have increased the environmental pressure and have taken place in a context of growing income disparities (ibid: 5). SCP addresses qualitative improvements of growth, targeting in particular the ecological and energy sustainability of production and consumption patterns in Asia. SE is therefore one of the components that are promoted under a SCP strategy. Four main platforms address SE issues with China through the EU's regional cooperation with Asia

Started in 1998 and running up to 2011, Asia Invest was in fact the first and more business-oriented of these platforms. It aimed at facilitating direct exchanges between European and Asian Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) by developing their internationalisation. The programme granted over 60 projects to China including in the area of clean production and environment technology (EUDC 2010).

Secondly, established a few years later and running from 2002 to 2009, Asia Pro Eco was a programme aiming at bringing Asia and the EU closer in terms of environmental cooperation, specifically targeting the "protection and remediation of the urban environment" (EuropeAid 2007). This early SCP programme was one of the first ones to look at improving the quality of the Asian growth models and to introduce the importance of sustainability. Sustainable energy development was one of the pathways suggested by the program. Among the 132 projects funded, the programme funded at least 5 SE projects in China as listed by Table 4 below (Switch Asia [no date] a).

123 The previous 2005 '*Regional strategy paper*' could not be found and is not accessible on EU websites.

| Date | Name of project |
|------|--|
| 2003 | ENER-C: Toward a better environment: implementation of energy-saving buildings in China |
| 2004 | Reducing CO ₂ emissions in China: economic, legal, and technical viability for an architectural integration and local production of large photovoltaic modules in China's Yunnan Province |
| 2004 | Feasibility study on the extensive utilisation of biodiesel produced from waste and/or pure oils/fats in the public vehicles in Hangzhou (China) and preparations for the implementation of a demonstration plant (BIODIESEL-FS) |
| 2004 | Feasibility study for the design of an industrial park with very low energy consumption and energy integration between the manufacturing and residential buildings |
| 2006 | Policy Instruments for Chinese Sustainable Future: Environmental Policy Integration and Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Energy and Transport Sectors |

Table 4 - Asia Pro Eco SE projects with China

(Source: Author)

Thirdly, the Asia Pro Eco program was then merged in 2004 with the Asia Urbs programme. Starting in 1997 Asia Urbs targeted specifically urban development and aimed at promoting the sustainable development of cities. Increased exchanges and cooperation between European and Asian governments as well as local authorities aimed to improve the urban management capacities of local authorities and improve the people's quality of life via know-how transfers, as well as through the involvement of the private sector in solving urban issues (ADEME [no date]). However, as the programme was closed a long time ago together with websites and the source of information concerning the programme, it is difficult to establish projects funded under Asia Urbs and specifically whether China benefited from any SE promotion through this means.

Finally the Switch Asia programme is a more SCP-oriented follow-up of the previous Asia Invest I and II programmes it builds up upon. The programme was one of the

main tools for implementing the EU's strategy on SCP in Asia and China was one of the main beneficiaries of the Switch Asia programme. The goal of the European Commission's Switch-Asia programme is oriented at stimulating SCP with the aim to "promote economic prosperity and help reduce poverty in Asia by encouraging a sustainable growth with low environmental impact from industries and consumers" (Switch Asia [no date]c). This involves contributing to establishing products, processes, services and consumption patterns that are more sustainable throughout the region. For that matter, the programme aims at achieving improved exchanges with European retailers, producer and consumer organizations and the public sector (ibid). The Switch Asia programme and the China-specific projects by targeting SMEs and consumers addresses another aspect of the transition to SE energy systems and eventually SD, which is crucial in order to see policies and incentives being translated. In fact, such consumer- and SME-level projects ensure that transitions decided at policy-level through new energy legislation, as China did, are also understood by those who are the last link on that transition chain to implement it.

In total, 16 Asian countries have benefitted from the programme and 70 projects have been conducted between 2008 and 2013. Since its inception, more than 17 projects have been implemented in China – representing a large majority of the total of projects, with eight of them targeting sustainable energy issues in particular, as identified in Table 5 . Since resource efficiency is one of the main targets of SCP, most SCP projects also encourage energy efficiency improvements without, however, EE promotion being their main object. Table 5 only accounts for the projects, which have EE improvement as their main objective.¹²⁴

Switch Asia, whilst still also focusing on SMEs, has re-centred the EU's activities under Asia Invest, with the aim of contributing to SD targeting the production and consumption aspect, giving a space for SE promotion at SCP level to contribute to the SD transition. The network approach to SCP projects across Switch Asia additionally added the cross-border benefit to the promotion of SCP and eventually of SE. Switch Asia does not only fund projects but also supports policy-makers and

¹²⁴ The full list of projects implemented by Switch Asia is to be found on the old Switch Asia webpage available under: <http://archive.switch-asia.eu/switch-asia-projects/fact-sheets-of-projects.html> [Accessed 25.07.2014].

connects stakeholders via its network facility and thereby offers a holistic approach to SCP and SE promotion in Asia and China (Switch Asia [no date] b).

| Date | Name of project |
|-------------|---|
| 2008 | Improving Environmental and Safety Performance in the Electrical and Electronics Industry in China |
| 2008 | Train the Trainers: Training Chinese Construction Sector SMEs in Energy Saving Techniques and Technologies |
| 2008 | Electric Motor Systems Energy-Saving Challenge – Improving the Operating Efficiency of Chinese Electric Motor Systems |
| 2009 | China Higher Efficiency Power and Distribution Transformers Promotion Project |
| 2009 | Sustainable Building and Interior Decoration Initiative |
| 2012 | Improving energy-efficiency & environmental performance of SMEs & large companies by voluntary PPPs |
| 2012 | Low Energy Housing in Sichuan and Shenzhen, China - Enable and enforce energy efficient building construction |
| 2013 | China Heat Pump Water Heater Challenge Programme |

Table 5 - Switch Asia China projects

(Source: Author)

7.2.2.3. *Thematic Instrument on Energy and Environment*

A third development cooperation channel, besides the bilateral and regional ones, through which SE-related measures are implemented with China is the more recent Environment and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources (ENRTP) thematic instrument. Complementing regional and country-specific aid led under the development cooperation instrument (DCI), the ENRTP is a thematic programme with the aim of supporting developing countries with the management of environmental and natural resources issues. This relatively new instrument was formally established in 2006 by the Commission (2006b), finally replacing the EU's previous environment and forests regulations which both expired at the end of 2006. It is the first development tool dedicated entirely to the promotion of sustainability in general. Energy holds the position of key priority with support for sustainable energy

being made one of the five priorities supported by the ENRTP¹²⁵. Concretely, the ENRTP is to contribute “broadening the options as regards sustainable energy, in particular by developing a legislative and administrative framework which favours investments and businesses, and also by stimulating international cooperation” (DG Devco in Hadfield 2013).

The energy component is quite comprehensive and covers - but is not limited to - aspects such as policy support and the development component, attracting new businesses and investors through favourable legislative frameworks, promoting innovative financing approaches and encouraging regional cooperation (European Commission 2007e: 20). As a developing country under the period covered by this thesis, China is eligible for funds under the ENRTP. The 2007 ENRTP Strategy paper in fact highlights the relevance of EE promotion with emerging economies such as China and states that “emerging economies, including China, India, Brazil, Ukraine etc., also face similar environmental challenges to industrialised countries and need particular attention with respect to certain issues, notably ecosystems protection, including biodiversity and water resources, pollution, climate change and energy efficiency.” (ibid: 7). Up to now, China has only had the 2008 ‘SCP Roundtables in Emerging Economies: Mexico, India and China’ project related to SE. Data on the following years is however missing which does not enable researchers to paint a full picture of the relevance of this pathway in the EU’s SE promotion with China. It is however questionable whether the ENRTP will really be beneficial to SE cooperation with China. Since its inception – based on European Commission project list – only four projects have been implemented in China and in spite of proclaimed priority support to EE, it is difficult to find evidence for cooperation on SE with China apart from the above-mentioned project¹²⁶.

125 See the following website for the entire list of ENRTP’s priorities:
http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/how/finance/dci/environment_en.htm [Accessed 28.07.2014].

126 The full list of projects are available from:
http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/how/finance/dci/environment_en.htm [Accessed 28.07.14].

7.2.3. Platforms as Socialisation Agents

7.2.3.1. Multiple Sustainable Energy Cooperation Platforms

The striking element of this overview is the sheer number of SE-related platforms, EU-China relations is endowed with 11 platforms in total. Two factors seem to explain this situation – the multiple routes that SE platforms are established under (bilateral, regional and thematic) as well as SE's ability to appear in both platforms dedicated to SE cooperation as well as being embedded in non-specialised types of platforms. Altogether this multiplies the number of platforms it is addressed under and therefore SE's socialisation opportunities. Firstly, bilateral EU-China cooperation alone accounts for supporting the establishment of three platforms which are entirely or predominantly dedicated to SE cooperation – the EEP, EC2, and ICARE. This is complemented by three other platforms which are partially dedicated to SE – the EUPDSF, EUCTP and EC Link. Bilateral cooperation alone is thus promoting a total of six platforms and is an important dynamic behind the number of spaces for sharing SE experience and practice with China. SE cooperation platforms are not only the product of EU-China bilateral cooperation but it also benefits from two further channels through which cooperation takes place, bringing the total to three distinct pathways for cooperation – the bilateral, regional and thematic pathways. SE being embedded under several cooperation routes almost doubles the amount of cooperation platforms with a total of five SE cooperation projects or programmes including Asia Invest, Asia Pro Eco, the ENRTP and possibly Asia Urbs.

Secondly, SE is being addressed both in dedicated projects with programmes like EC2, the EEP and ICARE, but is also in fact addressed in a large majority under platforms that are not necessarily SE-specific like the EUCTP, the EUPDSF, EC Link as well as under the regional Switch Asia, Asia Invest and Asia Pro eco and the thematic ENRTP programmes. This ability to be embedded into projects of a larger nature, such as under SCP or dialogue instruments, more than doubles the amount of platforms promoting SE with China. SE is embedded in non-SE specific projects and programmes under all three cooperation pathways cited above. Once again, the bilateral cooperation provides for three platforms for SE cooperation to take place and both in the EU's regional strategy towards Asia (Switch Asia, Asia Pro Eco and Asia Invest) as well as in its programme for the Environment and Sustainable

Management of Natural Resources double that number, adding four opportunities for the EU to cooperate with China on SE.

Consequently, in terms of the EU's socialisation efforts the relatively large number of SE cooperation platforms indicates increased socialisation opportunities and quantitatively larger and more versatile exposure to various aspects under which SE is involved (education, urbanisation, SCP etc.) as all of them but one (ENRTP) could be found relevant in that regard. Chinese stakeholders are being engaged under all platforms, some of them being entirely dedicated to SE cooperation, which would indicate the possibility of more intense engagement and thus socialisation. Furthermore, all eleven platforms have not been operating all at the same time but operated during the 1997-2013 time span, 1998 being the establishment of the Asia Invest programme until 2013 and EC Link's creation. The take-off of SE cooperation through platforms also corresponds to the beginning of the institutionalisation of the EU-China cooperation period. The EU has provided continuity in its SE cooperation platforms and thus *ongoing* socialisation.

7.2.3.2. Limits to the Efficiency of EU-China Sustainable Energy Cooperation Platforms

Even though EU-China SE platforms are adequate socialisation agents for SE, their impact is limited by shortages, mainly in terms of scale and coordination.

Even though there are eleven SE cooperation platforms and numerous projects have been implemented, these remain very small compared to the size of China and the correspondingly large needs the country's SE transition requires. As mentioned several times throughout this work and supported by the SE transition definition quoted above, a shift of energy systems requires in any case a fundamental transformation, with structural changes of a holistic nature as they do not only affect a country's energy sector, but the whole spectrum of policies and sectors energy is embedded under, as well as the participation of a whole range of actors throughout society. China, however, is an exceptionally large country both in terms of population and geographic size, which requires a complete and structural shift from a mainly fossil fuel-based economy to one that includes a reasonable share of SE. China is the world's most populous country with a population of 1.3 billion people and is the

fourth biggest country in the world (July 2015 estimates, CIA [no date]). It heavily relies on fossil fuels to power its economy and society. For the past 20 years, more than 90% of its primary energy consumption was covered by fossil fuels (China Energy Group 2014: 20).

Additionally due to its political system and the fact that it is not a market economy as such but a socialist market state where the state retains a lot of the power, the depth of changes needed is of a different order. Obviously every country has its own specificities that render each SE transition characteristic. In the case of China, the monopoly of state-owned companies “dominate the whole value chain of China’s ‘incumbent’ fossil fuel, nuclear, hydropower as well as many aspects of RE industries” (Dent 2014: 84), which often have their own vested interest (Downs 2008). The task at hand, in order to achieve SE, is thus particularly large in scale and demands equally large efforts in order to implement the transition. The Chinese government acted accordingly and integrated adequate measures in their development blueprint since the 2001 10th Five Year Plan (FYP). The EU’s SE cooperation with China is not aimed at substituting the state however, but if it is to be impactful in supporting China’s SE, such efforts must match the scale of Chinese needs.

In comparison to this, the EU’s contribution appears quite meagre in size. The eleven platforms address some SE transition key requirements, but their size relative to China’s needs remains very small. Table 6 below presents a detailed account of the budget of each of the platforms. Even if the total amount comes to above a billion euros, since most of the funds come from regional and thematic programmes that cover many other countries or thematic priorities, only a fraction of them is in fact attributed to SE projects in China¹²⁷. Since these programmes represent the largest share of the budget for SE platforms, this leaves relatively little funds allocated to EU-China SE platforms, giving an idea of the size of the EU’s contribution to China’s SE transition as well as the actual socialisation impact they can expect to have. To take only one critical aspect, if it were to match the scale of China’s needs, platforms would need to socialise hundreds if not thousands of state officials from all concerned

127 As an example for the ENRTP - which of all platforms has the largest funds - only one project could be traced to a SE-related activity with China.

ministries – both at central and local level. This is obviously outside the scope of what the platforms are able to achieve.

| Platform | Budget in euros |
|--------------------|--|
| EEP | 20 million |
| EC2 | 10 million |
| ICARE | 10 million |
| EC Link | 9.4 million |
| EUCTP | 35 million |
| EUPDSF I | 21 million |
| Asia Invest | 87 million co-financed more than 320 projects (Asia) |
| Asia Eco | 55 million over 132 projects contracted in total (Asia) |
| Asia Urbs | 42.3 million and 99 projects in total (Asia) |
| Switch Asia | 152 million for 2007-2013 (Asia) |
| ENRTP | 889.5 million for 2007-2013 including 158.9 million for sustainable energy and Global Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Fund (GEEREF) |

Table 6- The EU's financial contribution to EU-China SE platforms

(Source: Compilation of European Commission documents) ¹²⁸

A second limitation to the platforms' socialisation impact is the lack of coordination – which originates from the fragmentation of the platform landscape. The eleven

¹²⁸ Data sources are Europe Aid project fiche of Action fiches as well as the EU's 2012 EU-China energy relations brochure. Amounts can differ slightly depending of the source since amounts might have been updated to reflect contributions at the date of the most recent document. Sources for regional programmes are Europe Aid webpages. For broader funding information on major EU-China programmes since 2005 see Lee (2012: 25).

platforms are not the product of any EU-China SE policy but the result of both EU-China bilateral relations and of the EU's own development cooperation. In fact, there is no such thing as an EU-China SE policy as demonstrated under the 'legitimacy' criterion. As such, platforms do not work together in a common, coordinated way. Within bilateral cooperation platforms, the dedicated SE-platforms (EEP and EC2) develop SE activities next to platforms which are the result of the political dialogue (EUPDSF and EUCTP) or of connected initiatives such as the EC Link on urbanisation or ICARE on education without much of a sense of coordination. This results in quite a piecemeal approach to SE cooperation, which translates according to platforms' official response to issues of a lack of efficiency with redundant activities (EU-41). Whilst the EEP was disappointing in its impact (EU-20), EC2 was created to remedy this and to provide SE cooperation with its own fully dedicated space, and in a sense a more comprehensive and coordinated approach. Yet, unlike other national initiatives like CNREC which were considered very successful, EC2 did not live up to its potential according to EU Commission officials (EU-20). EC2's contract was not renewed after the original five years. As a result, the lack of a SE cooperation policy reduces the socialisation impact of the platform.

Whilst both the issue of scale and of coordination raise questions about the platforms' actual contribution to China's SE transition, from a 'Normative Power Europe' (NPE) point of view this does not jeopardise the platforms' adequate role as socialisation agents. Even if their scale does not allow them to significantly help transform China's energy system compared to its huge needs, platforms provide at their level the function of socialisation agents to Chinese stakeholders in a way that reflects the needs of such a transition. EU-China SE cooperation platforms perform very adequately their role of socialisation agents for SE. The relatively large number of EU-China SE platforms ensures exposure to many socialisation opportunities for Chinese SE stakeholders and this has been the case continuously since 1997. As such they engage and provide spaces for understanding and questioning SE in a continuous manner.

7.3. Partnership

7.3.1. Defining Partnership in EU-China Energy Cooperation

Partnership is a well-known concept in the field of international development. It has been a guiding principle for the conduct of development cooperation since the 1970s (Fowler 2000: 1) to become ‘the pre-eminent model for donors working in sustainable development’ (Forsyth 2010; Mosse 2005). The United Nations (UN) Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have further formalised the relevance of the concept for development cooperation calling for a ‘global partnership for development’ (Goal 8). More recently, with the increasingly wide promotion of SE-related initiatives within development programmes, partnerships have in particular entered the field of SE and climate change (Kruckenberg 2015: 2), where it is almost universally understood as a requirement (Forsyth 2010: 683).

As with most key conceptual terms, the definition of partnership is subject to debate. In its simplest form it is understood to mean “a joint commitment to long-term interaction, shared responsibility for achievement, reciprocal obligation, equality, mutuality and balance of power” (Fowler 2000: 3). Partnership, therefore, refers to a normative conceptualisation of the type of collaborative relations between actors from different sectors, such as funders, state, business and society. Partnership, together with ownership has in fact been identified by the EU’s 2006 ‘*European consensus on development*’ – its guiding text on development cooperation – as a key principle for its development cooperation. Both are also consensually considered at international level as common principles of international development by the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, of which the Commission is a member, along with a large majority of countries across the world. Partnership according to this organisation is to be achieved “if they [development priorities] are led by developing countries, implementing approaches that are tailored to country-specific situations and needs” as stated in its fourth high level forum on aid effectiveness (The European Consensus 2006: 3). In this sense, partnership is to be achieved through an approach that focuses on the beneficiary country, also referred to in this work as ‘beneficiary-oriented principle’ as labelled by EU SE cooperation personnel in Beijing.

In relation to the EU's relationship with Asia, partnership appeared to be embedded in its energy strategy towards Asia since its early beginnings. In its 1996 '*Europe-Asia cooperation strategy for energy*', the EU identified "mutual interest and partnership" as a criteria for selecting energy cooperation activities.

The identification of a mutual interest between Asia and Europe will be the starting point to justify each new project, and this will be expressed in terms of benefits for both partners in the short, medium or long term. What is more, the concept of partnership implies that resources will be made available by both sides in the interests of the project. This principle is well accepted from the Asian point of view, as has been seen from recent energy co-operation projects. (European Commission 1996a: 12)

Without using this definition as an absolute yardstick according to which the EU's SE promotion should be measured, this definition will rather be used as a guideline about the quality of relationship the EU is to build with China in the scope of SE cooperation platforms identified earlier. Generally, what comes out of both definitions is the need for the cooperation to produce an inclusive type of collaboration, where both partners have an equal footing and jointly participate in practical cooperation aspects. Drawing on both the international development cooperation field and the EU's understanding of partnership, the assessment of the way these platforms operate will thus be made on the basis of the balance of power in the platforms' structure, a beneficiary-oriented approach and the evidence for such an approach in the type of activities conducted. The next section applies these criteria to six SE cooperation platforms.

7.3.2. Partnership and Sustainable Energy Cooperation Platforms

This section looks at the way in which SE platforms operate. For the sake of clarity, partnership criteria have been organised in Table 7 below, according to each platform in order to visualise their specific contribution to partnership. The following section will investigate the way six out of the eleven platform identified operate – EEP, EC2, EUCTP, EUPDSF, ICARE and Switch Asia. More EU-China cooperation platforms exists, such as the EU-China SME centre, as well as the IP-Key platform on intellectual property rights (IPR) and new ones are regularly added to the cooperation

as this corresponds to the mode of cooperation between the EU and China. However, not all of them address SE matters. The selection of six platforms studied was chosen for their relevance to SE cooperation.

7.3.2.1. Bilateral and Sustainable Energy-Specific Platforms

Table 7 below shows that the EEP as the first EU-China platform with a strong SE focus is the result of a joint enterprise between the European Commission and the Ministry of Commerce (MofCOM), with both the EU and China financing the establishment of the programme. In operational terms, the Centre was run in a beneficiary-oriented manner, with the NDRC – China’s main overarching body in charge of energy (Dent 2014: 81) - as the main beneficiary of the Centre’s activities. A project management unit composed of both European and Chinese experts ran the Centre in Beijing and decided on activities to be conducted in the fields of EE and RE, together with relevant Chinese energy bodies. This altogether points at the EEP’s beneficiary-oriented approach, whereby relevant priorities and actions of the programme are defined by China’s needs. Overall, the EEP indicates partnership in its instigation, funding, operations and activities.

Similarly to the EEP, EC2 was born out of the European Commission and National Energy Administration’s (NEA) shared interests in setting up the first cooperation project fully dedicated to clean energy cooperation in China. Both the EU and China participated in its funding. EC2’s approach was also beneficiary-oriented in that it aimed to support China in its SE transition. This was to be realised with an autonomous centre located directly in Beijing and directed by both a European and a Chinese co-director. EC2’s main objectives were decided in collaboration between the European Commission and in particular DG energy and the NEA. This was managed by a Sino-European consortium of universities, government and other bodies, including China’s main energy-related government bodies the National Development and Reform Commission’s (NDRC) Energy Research Institute (ERI), as well as its leading state research universities the Chinese Academy for Social Science (CASS), Tsinghua and Zhejiang University as well as the country’s main RE industry association CREIA (Chinese Renewable Energy Industries Association).

Table 7 - Functioning of EU-China SE platforms

| Platform | Aim | Main beneficiary | Initiators | Funding (in euros) | Operation | Activities | Partnership |
|--------------|---|------------------|-----------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| EEP | Promote sustainable energy use in China | NDRC | EU and MoFCOM | China - 22.9 million euros | The project management unit comprises a majority of Chinese energy experts and EU long-term experts issued from a consortium of three companies from the UK, Germany and Denmark. | <p>For EE</p> <p>Chinese implementing agency for EE component is the Department of Environment and Resource Conservation (DERC) of the NDRC. Together EEP and DRC decided on 5 focal areas for intervention</p> <p>For RE</p> <p>Focal areas have been identified in agreement with the Energy Bureau</p> | Partnership in investigation, funding, operations and activities |
| EC2 | Promote clean energy in China and assist the country in its low-carbon transition | China | European Commission and NEA | EC - 10 million Consortium of partners - 3.16 million Chinese government - 750,000 in kind | <p>EC2 is set-up as an autonomous body with a centre in Beijing. It is operated by a consortium of institutions and co-directed by one Chinese and one European director.</p> <p>Consortium composition</p> <p>Project lead – Polytechnic university of Turin</p> <p>Project partners – 3 Chinese and 5 European universities, government bodies and others</p> <p>Project associates – 2 Chinese and 3 European bodies</p> | <p>Main orientations given both by COM/DG energy and NEA</p> <p>Activities originally carried out by in-house experts from the consortium, later by external European and Chinese experts recruited for each project</p> | Partnership in investigation, funding, operations and activities |
| ICARE | Provide an education institute for EE and RE | China | DG Relax and MoFCOM | EU grant 9,360,229,59 Partner contribution China - 5 million 4,011,526,97 in kind | <p>The Centre is located on the premises of Huazhong University of Science and Technology (HUST) in Wuhan. It has one European and one Chinese co-Dean and is led by a Sino-European consortium.</p> <p>Consortium composition</p> <p>Project lead - ParisTech – a cluster of 12 French engineering and business schools</p> <p>Project partners - Six European universities, one association and three Chinese universities coordinated by ParisTech</p> | <p>The Centre relies on the shared involvement of Chinese and European experts from the consortium to deliver and participate in the Centre's main objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Masters programme on clean and renewable energy - Vocational training - Research platform | Partnership in investigation, funding, operations and activities |

| Platform | Aim | Main beneficiary | Initiators | Funding (In euros) | Operation | Activities | Partnership |
|--------------------|--|------------------------------------|---------------|---|--|---|---|
| EUCTP | Support China's trade and investment reform agenda in line with China's SD path | MofCOM | EU and MofCOM | EU – 35 millions China – 10.6 millions in kind | The EUCTP is composed of four bodies: - A Beijing-based Sino-European Technical Assistance Team (TAT) who manages the project and assists the Project Task Force (PTF) - The PTF is the executing agency made up of key MofCOM officials - It is assisted in the planning of projects by the Project Support Team made up of beneficiaries and related stakeholders in the planning of projects - The EUDC and MofCOM together in the Project Steering Committee formally endorse the work plans and reports decided at operational level. | Demand-based approach – activities must be the result of one of the EU-China sectoral dialogues and be relevant to the EUCTP's objectives. For energy issues the work plan for the team in charge of SE activities is drafted together by DG energy and NEA. Activities are usually designed together with its beneficiary to identify its needs and relevant expertise is provided | Partnership in investigation, funding, operations and activities |
| EUPDSF | Facilitate and support the EU-China policy dialogues | China | EU and MofCOM | EU – 21 millions China – 2 millions | The EUPDSF is made of a Support Facility located in Beijing led by a European consortium of companies | Activities are can be initiated by a European DG or a Chinese ministry or official body, as part of a sectoral dialogue. Both partners must agree in order for the PDSF to organise the activity. In their implementation, the PDSF generally works together with the Chinese beneficiary, assessing its needs and providing European expertise as requested. | Partnership in investigation, funding and activities. |
| Switch Asia | Promote sustainable growth and contribute to economic prosperity and poverty reduction in Asia | 16 Asian countries including China | EU | EU - 152 millions | The programme has three main components : - Grants for specific SCP projects, launched and selected by DG Devco and financed to 80% by the EU and to 20% by the partner - A network facility to disseminate the knowledge and ensure networking between Asian and European partners managed by a European body - A Policy Support component consisting of one regional programme and four national projects aimed at strengthening the implementation of SCP policies | Grant-projects in China must be implemented together with at least one Chinese partner and one European one. Projects vary a lot depending on the topic they address but generally they are conducted together with the local partner who often leads on the content definition and implementation of the project. The policy support component is implemented with Chinese policy makers. Needs are first assessed to ensure the relevance of the European and UN expertise on the policy tools to be employed. | Partnership in funding and activities |

(Source: Compilation of various EU sources)

Together, these bodies provided the Centre with in-house expertise on which it relied to provide China with policy and technological support activities. As with the EEP, EC2 has been instigated and funded in partnership between the EU and China as well as managing and providing activities in partnership between Europeans and Chinese for the ultimate benefit of China.

The EU-China Institute for Clean and Renewable Energy (ICARE) is the result of the European Commission (DG Relex) and MofCOM's joint political and financial undertaking to support China's SE transition by providing China with skilled human resources (ICARE [no date] a). The university-level education for students and professionals in the field of SE, ICARE provides relies on a consortium of Chinese and European universities. This includes some top European engineering and business schools in France. Using their joint expertise, they deliver both the university and vocational education components as well as the research aspect. As with the two previous institutions, ICARE's actions are highly beneficiary-oriented with the various curricula adapted to specific needs. Vocational training, for example, is designed together with the Chinese industry in order for the training to meet their requirements and to make sure that students acquire directly relevant skills whilst the research aspect aims at fostering partnerships between Chinese and European students and researchers by sending Chinese research students to European universities amongst others (ICARE [no date] b). Overall it thus appears that ICARE also shows that it has been created, financed, run and works in a spirit of partnership between the EU and China.

7.3.2.2. Bilateral Platforms with Sustainable Energy Component

The EUCTP was created as part of the EU's commitment to supporting China's development and economic transition. The EUCTP is openly beneficiary-oriented (EUCTP [no date]: 12) in its aim and this in fact translates at every level of the programme from its inception to its operation and the contents of its activities. The programme was established together with the MofCOM, with both the EU and the ministry endorsing its creation both politically and financially. The Programme's operation is geared at producing activities that best answer China's needs. Activities are decided on the basis of relevant EU-China policy and regulatory dialogues (ibid), DG energy and the NEA, when it comes to energy-specific activities. Their design is

conducted by a Beijing-based Sino-European team, with the direct input of representatives of beneficiaries and stakeholders like ministries and trade association representatives and eventually reports to MofCOM as the overall executing agency (ibid). The European Delegation to China (EUDC) and MofCOM work together to endorse and approve projects. The EUCTP and its SE-related activities are conducted in partnership between the EU and China.

The EUPDSF is a mechanism primarily aimed at supporting and facilitating the range of EU-China sectoral dialogues – including on energy - by providing them with cooperation activities and projects. As such, it can be seen as the implementing arm of the dialogues for the EU and China to explore, expand and deepen their cooperation. From this derives a partnership approach at the level of its instigation as it was jointly set up by the EU and MofCOM but also its financing and the way it decides on which activities to organise. Activities must be mandated by both the EU and China, either directly emanating from a dialogue, or else by a European DG or its Chinese counterpart and both sides must agree if the EUPDSF is to take it to the next step. Although its aim appears to be focused on the practical support to the dialogues, the EUPDSF aims to contribute to the EU's policy of support for China's reform programme (EuropeAid 2010: 1). As such, its activities are beneficiary-oriented in the support they provide to China's national priorities (ibid). A centre in Beijing run by a European consortium, together with Chinese beneficiaries, organises activities that respond to China's needs. An example of this is the cooperation on China's energy law starting in 2009. The EUPDSF responded to the Chinese Council of Legislative Affairs' demand to have European experts' input by recruiting them and inviting them to China, as well as providing logistical support and organising seminars (EU-38). The EUPDSF thus creates partnership in instigation, financing and activities.

7.3.2.3. Regional Platforms with Sustainable Energy Component

Switch Asia promotes SCP as a way to promote economic prosperity and poverty alleviation in Asia including China (Switch [no date] b). Developing countries in Asia are the main beneficiaries of this development cooperation initiative. In contrast to all other SE cooperation institutions studied, Switch Asia is part of the EU's regional development cooperation policy and as such it has been unilaterally created and

financed by the EU's development cooperation. With a budget of €152 million euros, comparatively it is by far the largest of all SE-cooperation institutions studied. The Programme's grant component is where the partnership aspect is to be seen in the form of projects. These projects must be based on the cooperation between European and Asian – in this case Chinese - partners who conduct a SCP project in China. This constitutes a *sine qua non* condition for a grant to be attributed. The policy support component, which targets Chinese policy-makers related to the field of SCP is also managed in partnership with Chinese government officials as it works together with them to identify their capacity-building needs (EU-44). Even though there is a clear element of partnership between the EU and China, mainly located in the grant and policy support components, the Programme's structure and operation reveal Switch Asia's main purpose as promoting capacity-building in the field of SCP. Switch Asia's third and final component – the network facility – exemplifies this. Based in Germany, its function is to make sure the knowledge acquired is being shared amongst the programme's various projects in order to share best-practice and increase capacity-building opportunities.

To conclude, this study which focused on identifying the way in which SE platforms function established that even though the six SE cooperation platforms analysed can differ in their operation, their activities and their size and budget, they all without exception evidence a partnership type approach with China. With only two exceptions, all platforms show partnership in all of the criteria analysed – instigation, funding, operations and activities. Only the EUPDSF is mainly operated by Europeans, as is Switch Asia, which is also instigated by the EU only. One possible reason for the positive results is the beneficiary-oriented nature of all the platforms. Indeed all platforms have a Chinese institution as their beneficiary and their goals are all oriented toward benefiting China. The requirement for projects to be of added value to China seems to enforce a sense of partnership in involving relevant Chinese stakeholders in the operation and activities, so as to best identify and serve China's interests in issues related to SE. SE cooperation is, however, not exempt from difficulties, which have the potential to affect the partnership on which they are built, which will be addressed in the next section.

7.3.3. Limits to Partnership

Based on interviews with SE cooperation platforms, a number of issues have been identified which affect the platforms' SE cooperation and the level of partnership that could be achieved. These fall under two main categories – the difference of administrative systems and governance approaches as well as of the working culture between Chinese and European partners.

7.7.3.1. Differences in Administrative Systems and Energy Governance

As expressed by the EUPDSF, EU-China SE cooperation promoted through the platforms can be hindered by the difficulty in some cases to find administrative matches between Commission DGs and Chinese ministries when organising activities (EU-38). The EUPDSF needs matching partners in order to be able to support a project and without this, the project cannot be supported. Other EU officials confirmed this to be the case in the field of energy in particular. China's energy governance is fragmented. China does not have an energy ministry or a single entity dealing with energy issues at government level that could coordinate energy cooperation. Instead, "authority over China's energy sector at national level is fractured among more than a dozen government agencies, the most important of which is the NDRC." (Downs 2008: 42)¹²⁹. The NDRC is the country's "macroeconomic management agency" in charge of formulating policies and studies for economic and social development and responsible in particular for energy and SD policy planning and coordinating at large (Tsang and Kolk 2010: 181) including on SE. Within the NDRC it is its NEA unit which replaced the Energy Bureau in 2008 which is the main body dealing with energy policy, including formulation and implementation, industrial policy, administering the major fossil and renewable energy sectors as well as conducting international energy cooperation¹³⁰. The NEA

129 Before the 1998 reforms of the state and the establishment of the State and Economic Commission, energy was addressed under several ministries such as the ministries of Chemicals, Coal, Gas and Petroleum. (Shambaugh 2000: 178).

130 The comprehensive range of NEA's competences can be found on its website: http://en.ndrc.gov.cn/mfod/200812/t20081218_252224.html [Accessed 10.08.16].

therefore constitutes DG Energy's main counterpart in the cooperation. There are three other major institutions dealing with energy under the PRC's State Council. The National Energy Commission (NEC), the State Electricity Regulation Commission of China (SERC) and the State Council Energy Conservation and Emissions Reductions Leading Group. Before 2013 when it was merged into the NEA, SERC also was relevant to the cooperation with the EU when it comes to electricity-related issues as it regulates and administers the electricity industry. Within the NDRC, the ERI – China's national research institute on energy - works with the EU on energy cities and smart grids, for example. The NEC as a very "high-level discussion body or think-tank with ministerial rank" (ibid) chaired by China's Premier, is involved in the formulation of an energy development strategy but was not found to play a role as day-to-day energy cooperation with the EU is devolved to the NEA (ibid). A variety of Ministries however are also involved in China's energy issues and also frequently appear in cooperation with the EU¹³¹. Further, a number of state-owned companies and agencies are also relevant to China's institutional energy landscape.

This fragmentation and lack of a unified energy policy-making body is known to create conflicting interests and a lack of policy coherence (Dent 2014). Such internal issues were seen to be reflected in China's energy cooperation with the EU, whereby the NDRC plays the role of main interlocutor but various other ministries also have responsibilities in this matter. This, in some cases, impedes cooperation because of issues in finding the right interlocutor (EU-22) or it can mean working with several Chinese ministries, sometimes forcing sometimes difficult coordination amongst them, such as with the initiation of cooperation on urbanisation (EU-8). China's reform of its energy governance has furthermore added the issue of continuity in personnel and the lack of interlocutors as the EUCTP reported it was the case during the 2013 merger between the SERC and the NEA (EU-41).

Cooperation is also hampered by the difference in governance approaches in Europe and China, especially with regards to urbanisation and city cooperation issues. The urban environment plays an important role in achieving sustainable development. As

131 Dent (2014: 83) identified eight ministries relevant to China's RE policy-making alone: the Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Water Resources, Ministry of Science and Technology, Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, Ministry of National Land and Resources and the Ministry of Environmental Protection.

outlined by a 2010 World Bank report (2010: 15) analysing the role of cities in climate change, cities are major contributors to greenhouse gas (GhG) emissions, with cities consuming as much as 80% of the world's energy production and emitting around an equal share of GhG. These figures are expected to rise in the future, notably due to an increase in urbanisation rates. These figures and trends underpin the need for sustainable urbanisation and for cities' engagement in this process. This is particularly the case for China, considering its rapid urbanisation and the impact of its cities on global emissions. In fact, Chinese cities emit more GhG than countries like Germany, Canada or India (ibid: 18).

Having identified the need for cooperation with China on this challenge, the EU and China launched an urbanisation cooperation in 2012 and engaged cities in establishing partnerships between Europe and China, whereby cities commit to work together on SE-related projects such as low-energy buildings and clean mobility (EEAS [no date])¹³². Cooperation platforms such as EC2 have also been involved in establishing cooperation at city level. EC2 set out to work in partnership with the city of Urumqi in bringing about European best practice, expertise and technologies for low-carbon city planning through the establishment of a demonstration zone for clean energy development (EC2 [no date]). Whilst, in modern times Chinese cities have most responsibility for social and economic development, the unitary nature of the Chinese state means that the central government retains power and delegates to the local level (OECD 2015: 161). This became an issue in establishing direct cooperation with Urumqi. Europeans attempted a direct approach with the local administration but this was barred by the central government who imposed itself as the intermediary with whom the European side had to deal in order to cooperate (EU-37). According to EC2, this had negative consequences on the ability to identify the city's needs by preventing the transmission of relevant information (EU-37). Such issues were confirmed as also taking place in other EU-China city-level cooperation initiatives (EU-8) preventing, to some extent, partnership between European and Chinese cities.

132 See also EEAS [no date] for the full chart of city pairings and the projects involved is also available on this website.

7.3.3.2. Differences in Working Culture

According to interviewees from SE cooperation platforms, differences in working cultures occasionally played a negative role in cooperation. Differences in decision-making styles and, in particular, the highly hierarchical approaches of Chinese counterparts were reported as creating issues with cooperation. This was in particular the case for the Switch Asia 'Train the Trainers' project. The project was to promote EE in buildings by promoting training courses to Chinese construction SMEs and was carried out in partnership with a Chinese University. Issues arose from the fact that the Chinese counterpart were not internally empowered to make decisions, so that even though they saw the benefits of some of the project's ideas, they were not in a position to have them implemented and those who had the power were not closely involved in the project to understand them to act on them. As a result, decisions like the establishment of a Centre within the university to carry out training after the end of the Switch project, even though supported by the Chinese counterparts working with Switch, took almost two years to have its funding approved. Although a project is effectively conducted in partnership with China, such differences in working culture are proven to create delays in implementation and cooperation difficulties, as confirmed by other officials working in EU-China energy cooperation (EU-9).

The final obstacle to partnership reported by SE platform interviewees is the lack of transparency that can affect cooperation. Reporting is standard practice in development cooperation and is an integral part of the work of grant-funded projects like those funded by Switch Asia, in order for the funder to be able to monitor and evaluate the functioning and efficiency of the project. In the case of the 'Train the Trainers' project, Chinese counterparts misunderstood this requirement as a sign of mistrust, which created a strain on cooperation. Communication about the meaning of such reporting as a funders requirement, rather than an attempt to control as well as attempting to build trust were used to mitigate such issues (EU-44). Lack of transparency issues have also been confirmed to affect cooperation beyond this project by EC2, DG Energy and DG Research and Innovation (RTD) (EU-9, EU-18 and EU-37).

This section enumerated some of the issues that surfaced in interviews with EU-China SE cooperation platforms that can act as obstacles to SE cooperation. It has

shown that difficulties in finding administrative matches between EU Commission DGs and Chinese ministries can hinder the organisation of SE activities and that differences in governance approaches to urbanisation are a hindrance in promoting SE at city level. Finally, differences in working culture with regards to decision-making styles as well as transparency requirements negatively affect the efficiency of a project, as well as the relations between European and Chinese partners. However, rather than questioning the partnership type of approach that all platforms without exception have chosen to embrace, these issues are instead the result of such an approach. It seems to be precisely because they all operate and organise their activities in partnership with China that they are exposed to such differences, that in turn create cooperation issues. As such these issues do not call into question the platforms' partnership approach so much as they tend to underpin it.

7.4. Ownership

7.4.1. Defining Ownership in EU-China Sustainable Energy Cooperation

In Manners' 'principles, actions, impact' (PAI) analytical framework, ownership is the final test of the EU's normative power. Manners, however, does not offer a comprehensive definition of the concept, or specific measures to identify it. As a central concept within the field of international development cooperation (Lopes and Theisohn 2003: 2), we will turn to its literature for additional tools to comprehend and extrapolate an evaluation mechanism for investigating ownership. Ownership is in fact very much linked to the practice of development cooperation and - as with many concepts - its meaning evolved with time and with the constant re-definition of what constitutes successful development cooperation. Generally, however, ownership can be said to refer to the "exercise of control and command over development activities by the country it benefits" (Edgren 2003: 4). Applied to the context of EU-China SE cooperation, this places the emphasis on the need for China to be the driver of its own SE transition. The EU thus needs to provide China with the means to be in control and responsible for performing the shift to sustainable energy systems.

As previously addressed under ‘argumentation’, the transition to a SE system implies changes akin to a revolution, due to the necessity to create a fundamental shift from a fossil-fuel based economy and society, to one that relies on renewables and energy efficiency. This requires “fundamental and multi-dimensional changes to a whole system” (Lockwood et al 2013: 10). The UN summed up some of these requirements as “major shifts in regulatory regimes in almost every economy; vast incremental infrastructure investments; an accelerated development and deployment of multiple new energy technologies; and a fundamental behavioural shift in energy consumption.” (AGECC 2010: 8). China has, since the mid-1990s, implemented this process, accelerated by its 11th and 12th five year plans and a series of SE targets. Due to the scale of transformation needed, such a transformative process however remains a challenge for any society, but perhaps even more so for developing and transitioning countries like China, as they might not readily have sufficient means to achieve a SE transition.

As a result, blueprints for achieving such a transition were set-up as guides to implement the shift. A number of international organisations produced guidelines outlining the possible steps to achieving a SE transition or performance indicators and tracking records to monitor progress such as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) ([no date]b), the World Bank (2013), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and International Energy Agency (IEA) (2001) as well as the EU (European Commission 2011d). To this date however there does not seem to be a single outline on how to perform a SE transition but several guidelines from the UN and its agencies – the SE4All Initiative (2012 and 2015) and the UNDP (Johansson and Goldemberg 2002). Compiling them identified three general and interconnected aspects necessary for transition. In order for a country to transition to SE, relevant actions need to be taken and the capabilities of all relevant actors must be in line with the needs created, so as to contribute to implementing the transition.

The SE4All’s ‘*Global action agenda*’ (2012) first identifies eleven ‘action areas’ either of a sectoral nature - modern cooking appliances and fuels, distributed electricity solutions, grid infrastructure and supply efficiency, large-scale renewable power, industrial and agricultural processes, transportation and buildings and appliances – or enabling factors - energy planning and policies, business model and technology innovation, finance and risk management and capacity building and knowledge

sharing – that must be addressed to achieve the SE transition goals. Secondly, there appears to be a consensus among global governance initiatives focusing on implementing such changes, including by the UN Environmental Programme (UNEP) (2002), OECD (2001), IAEA ([no date] a) on the need for capacity-building. According to UNEP’s Policy agenda for SE transitions, all other elements needed to achieve a SE transition depend on capacity building so that:

Developing the appropriate skills, among a variety of stakeholders involved, in both the public and private sectors, and at various levels – from regional to local – is at least as much of a challenge as developing the kinds of energy technologies that will support sustainable development. Capacity development must therefore be an explicit part of any successful strategy to use energy as an instrument of sustainable development. (UNEP 2002: 17).

Finally, this implies building the capacities of government, the private sector, civil society, academia and the research community as well as the media (Johansson and Goldemberg 2002: 182)¹³³. SE transition is a holistic process, which requires an equally large population to be trained and made aware of such changes so that activities “must address, develop, and reinforce the functions of various stakeholders in relation to their role in the energy system.” (UNDP 2002: 192).

The question that this section is therefore aiming to answer is whether the EU’s SE cooperation with China is conducive to China owning its SE transition following the three criteria identified: SE platforms identified at the beginning of the chapter and their activities should build the capacities of relevant Chinese actors in the eleven fields identified by the UN. The next section thus investigates the activities of the said platforms against these criteria in the attempt to identify their contribution to ownership.

133 See same source for a detailed account of the target groups.

7.4.2. Assessing Sustainable Energy Cooperation Activities

7.4.2.1. EC2

The aim of the Europe-China Clean Energy Centre is avowedly to support China in its transition to sustainable energy systems by promoting a greater uptake of clean energy in China. EC2's mission is thus clearly beneficiary-oriented and this should be reflected in its activities with initiatives aiming at providing China with the necessary skills to operate, manage and achieve its own SE transition. Analysis shows that overall EC2, through its activities, is engaged in providing China with comprehensive support to acquire skills and knowledge throughout the breadth of areas relevant to a SE transition. EC2 is particularly active in addressing Chinese government officials, as well as industry representatives and the research community to a lesser extent.

Looking specifically at the type of EC2 activities on the basis of Table 8 below, it is possible to notice that EC2 has offered the largest amount of activities in amongst all SE platforms. EC2 activities are quite comprehensive as they cover the whole range of topics from energy supply to energy demand and crosscutting issues. Using the UN's list of indicators designed to understand the required steps for achieving the SE transition enables an understanding of the nature of the EU's support to China and its relevance. It suggests that EC2 provides China with support in a large majority of action areas relevant to SE transition. The EU is active in grid infrastructure, large-scale renewable power, industrial processes, transport, energy planning, business models and technology innovation as well as capacity building and knowledge sharing.

Regarding the nature of its activities, they are all intended to contribute to building China's capacities in the field of SE. More specifically, EC2 is particularly active in providing China with policy and planning tools with about a third of its activities are dedicated to supporting Chinese government officials with energy modelling tools and projections, policies regarding EE standards and to sharing EU experience on electric vehicles. The rest of EC2 activities tend to focus on resource assessment methodologies for RE deployment, sharing best practice to improve energy productivity and the incorporation of RE, providing resource assessment

methodologies and finally supporting cooperation at government level between the EU and China. In terms of types of actors, EC2's activities are mainly directed at policy-makers and government officials from relevant ministries, regulatory bodies and state-owned companies. Industry representatives and research institutions also benefit from EC2's activities but to a lesser extent.

7.4.2.2. EUCTP

The EUCTP as the main trade technical assistance project is also strongly beneficiary-oriented and openly aims to support China's SD transition. The study of the EUCTP's activities shows that this is in fact reflected in its activities. Like EC2 it is also comprehensive in terms of the energy fields it supports – energy supply, demand and crosscutting – and provides China with good coverage of the relevant areas to address as defined by the SE4All agenda. The EUCTP is thus able to address the entire breadth of fields in energy cooperation, being equally active in all three areas of energy supply, demand and cross-cutting issues. This possibly relates to the fact that the EUCTP is a mechanism aimed at supporting all dialogues and can receive requests for cooperation activities from all energy-related dialogues. Looking more specifically at SE transition criteria offered by the SE4All initiative, here again the EUCTP is quite comprehensive and addresses six out of eleven 'action areas'. The programme supports China in the fields of grid infrastructure and supply efficiency, the development of large-scale renewable power, industrial processes, energy planning and policies, business model and technology innovation and capacity-building and knowledge sharing.

In fact, the EUCTP like EC2 presents a large amount of activities, which enables it to cover the main three aspects of energy cooperation. Like with EC2, the EUCTP is predominantly active in helping China with gaining relevant policy and planning tools as well as in fostering government cooperation but it is also especially active in promoting EE in buildings as well as grid infrastructures, which are crucial for the integration of renewables to the energy supply.

In terms of the actors, the EUCTP like EC2 has a strong focus on government, regulatory and standard-setting bodies as well as industry representatives. However researchers, academia and experts also benefit from its activities.

Table 8 - SE activities of cooperation platforms 134

| | I. ENERGY DEMAND | | | | | II. ENERGY SUPPLY | | | | | | |
|-------------|-------------------|---------------------|----------|-----------|-------|-------------------|------------|------------|------------------|----------|------|-------|
| | DSM | Energy Conservation | | | | Fossil Fuels | Renewables | | | | | |
| | Models and policy | Buildings | Industry | Transport | Other | Clean coal | Policy | Smart Grid | Grid integration | Bio-mass | Heat | Other |
| EC2 | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ |
| | 2 | | 3 | 1 | | 1 | 3 | 1 | | 2 | | 1 |
| EUCTP | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| | 3 | 5 | | | 1 | | | 2 | 3 | | | |
| EUPDSF | | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | ✓ | | | |
| | | 1 | 1 | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| ICARE | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Switch Asia | | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | | | ✓ | |
| | | 3 | 3 | | | | | | | | 1 | |
| TOTAL | 5 | 9 | 7 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 1 |

134 Data collected from the activities chart and complemented for EUPDSF and ICARE with web source. The data only includes activities until 2013 which relate to SE.

Activities of SE cooperation platforms (part 2)

| CROS-SCUTTING | | | | | | | | | | TOTAL | |
|-------------------|----------|---------------------------|----------|----------|-------------------|-------------------|----------|----------|----------|-------|----|
| Energy Regulation | | | | | Energy and cities | | | | Other | | |
| Energy Law | Policies | Electricity Market Reform | Other | Cities | Smart cities | New Energy cities | | | | | |
| EC2 | ✓ 4 | | | ✓ 1 | | ✓ 4 | | | | | 23 |
| EUCTP | | ✓ 3 | ✓ 1 | | ✓ 1 | | | | | | 15 |
| EUPDSF | ✓ 1 | | | ✓ 4 | ✓ 1 | | | ✓ 2 | | | 11 |
| ICARE | | | | | | | | ✓ 3 | | | 3 |
| Switch Asia | | | | | | | | | | | 7 |
| TOTAL | 1 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 5 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 5 | | |

7.4.2.3. EUPDSF

The role of the EUPDSF is to support the implementation of EU-China dialogues by organising activities requested by both partners, with the overall aim of strengthening EU and China relations. It is beneficiary-oriented in the sense that it is embedded in the EU's development cooperation strategy of providing support to China's reform programme (EuropeAid 2010). Looking at the sort of fields addressed by the activities, the nature of the activities and the type of stakeholders benefitting from them, the EUPDSF does support China's ownership of its SE transition.

Looking first at the fields, even though the EUPDSF only has half the amount of energy-related activities with China than EC2 or the EUCTP, it covers all three main areas of energy cooperation identified in Table 8. The difference however is that the EUPDSF's activities are particularly concentrated around the field of urbanisation. This could be due to a form of division of tasks between the EUPDSF and the EUCTP, who both work on energy issues. The EUPDSF, in fact, still manages to address a majority of key SE transition fields as defined by the SE4All initiative and supports China in industrial processes, energy planning and policies, business model and technology innovation, grid integration and RE power as well as capacity-building and knowledge sharing activities. This underpins the comprehensive and relevant nature of its activities.

When it comes to the nature of its activities, the EUPDSF mainly supports knowledge and best practice sharing, often from European experts or officials to their Chinese counterparts. This could take place in the form of seminars, such as with the eco design activities, comparative studies as was the case for the smart cities project, study tours to European cities for smart grids or also training programmes for the Chinese Academy of Governance in the field of urbanisation (see Table 8). These activities led in particular to supporting China's capacities in policy and planning tools, improving capabilities and methodologies for developing grid infrastructures or the support to deploying EE in China.

Finally, the EUPDSF through its activities mainly engaged Chinese government officials such as the NDRC, NEA as well as more specialised bodies like the national and local grid corporations, the ERI, ministries as well as cities. To some extent, industry representatives and companies were also involved as well as research organisations. The large prevalence of government actors can be explained by the

EUPDSF's role as implementer of the dialogues, which are mainly carried out by state officials of various ministries and state bodies. As such, the EUPDSF is able to work with a good variety of state actors from national to local level as well as state research bodies, or state-owned companies.

7.4.2.4. Switch Asia

Switch Asia is an EU programme dedicated to encouraging economic growth and prosperity in Asia by promoting a SCP paradigm (Switch Asia [no date]c). Its emphasis is thus specifically on the promotion of “sustainable products, processes, services and consumption patterns in Asia by improving cooperation with European retailers, producer and consumer organizations and the public sector” (ibid). Analysis showed this focus is reflected in Switch Asia's China activities with narrower cooperation fields and target actors but it does not appear to affect its relevance in providing China with appropriate means to perform its own SE transition.

In fact, Switch Asia has seven projects (see Table 5) that are relevant to SE cooperation, which represents a much more limited number of projects compared to EC2, EUCTP and EUPDSF. These projects are, however, the reflection of the programmes' specialisation in the field of SCP. They mainly address energy conservation in buildings and industry and to a lesser extent RE and are thus relevant to SE transition efforts. The use of UN indicators confirm that relevance by showing the projects address a whole range of issues within the SCP field ranging from technology innovation, buildings, industry, grid infrastructure as well as capacity-building and knowledge sharing. This would suggest that the projects, even though focused on the SCP topic still manage to cover a good range of relevant areas needed to perform a SE transition.

As previously mentioned in this chapter, Switch Asia is essentially a capacity-building programme aiming at providing participating countries with the competencies both at SME and consumer level as well as at policy-makers' level to make that 'switch' themselves. Data shows this is also reflected in the nature of the projects' activities. Most Switch Asia projects rely on sharing European best practice and expertise'. This can take the form of training through courses on EE in building for construction SMEs, as is the case for the 'Train the Trainers' project but also EU policy tours as

used for the project '*Improving environmental and safety performance in the electrical and electronics industry*' (ESEEC). Projects also focus on assisting SMEs with gaining the skills required to move to sustainable consumption and production patterns. The project on transformers aimed, for example, at building SMEs' capacities in designing and manufacturing higher efficiency transformers or providing information on relevant conformity standards as with the ESEEC project. Switch Asia projects often also have a government-level component and provide a more policy-oriented type of capacity-building activity for policymakers as for the sustainable building and decoration project.

In fact, in an effort to cover the range of critical actors in achieving SCP, Switch Asia projects decidedly address very specifically SMEs, consumers and governments at the same time. SMEs constitute the main beneficiaries of the Switch projects, whether they are from the construction, power, electrical or motor industries. Less often they also involve consumers as is the case with the interior renovation project and policy makers.

7.4.2.5. ICARE

The EU-China Institute for Clean and Renewable Energy (ICARE) has been established with the aim of providing education to Chinese university students and professionals in the field of SE and thereby to contribute to filling the gap in SE education and training in China (ICARE [no date] b). Although much more specialised than the other SE platforms - as it deals only with SE education – ICARE's activities directly contribute to providing China with qualified human resources needed to contribute to performing its SE transition and in fact address quite a comprehensive range of actors.

ICARE has the smallest amount of activities compared to the other platforms. This is due to its relatively narrow focus on SE education, as opposed to the much wider ones of EC2, EUCTP and EUPDSF, as well as the larger size of the Switch Asia programme. According to the SE4All indicators' list, ICARE's activities are, however, directly relevant to China's SE transition, as they contribute to building the country's human capacities in providing the necessary SE knowledge and skills for students. The Institute also provides training for energy professionals and encourages the

sharing of European best practice through a research platform that gives Chinese research students the opportunity to work in European universities and research centres. This underpins the Institute's comprehensive activities in the field of SE education and training and the fact that it contributes to building China's capacities in key areas for a SE transition.

ICARE is equally comprehensive in the type of actors that it targets. It mainly addresses Chinese students through its Masters course, but also offers continuing education to Chinese energy professionals, ranging from the fields of technical sales, tendering, engineering, project management, sourcing, commissioning, operation and service engineering, as well as policy makers.

7.4.2.6. Relevance of the Platforms' Activities to China's Sustainable Energy Transition

Aggregating the analysis of all five platforms and their activities together shows first, in terms of topics, that all of them address issues that are relevant to a SE transition. Table 8 indicates the platforms which address most energy-related topics and cover a majority of the specific fields represented. This is enabled through a combination of more generalist platforms like EUCTP and EUPDSF which cover a wide breadth of energy topics and more specialised platforms like ICARE and Switch Asia, who both focus on specific issues within the field of SE. EC2 is the only platform fully dedicated to SE cooperation ensures for a large number of activities that extend throughout the spectrum of key SE cooperation areas. The study of the nature of activities secondly demonstrates that the EU is dedicated to providing China with the type of activities that increase its capabilities in those fields. Whether training, seminars, workshops or study visits, the platform's activities aim at supporting China in gaining the necessary skills and knowledge to be the own actor in its shift to SE. This can be related to the beneficiary-oriented nature of all of the platforms' missions, which itself can be related to the requirements imposed by development cooperation funding of EU-China platforms.

Finally, such a variety of topics enables programmes to reach a large array of stakeholders¹³⁵. Platforms are found to engage with students, universities and academics (ICARE), as well as SMEs involved in sustainable production and consumption (Switch Asia, Asia Invest), industry and business representatives (EC2, EUCTP), researchers and scientists (EC2, EUCTP, ICARE and EUPDSF) and even, to a certain extent, with Chinese consumers and civil society (Switch Asia). The platforms are furthermore particularly relevant to China's SE transition since they engage China's key political actors involved in the country's energy policy. In order for structural change to take place, SE transition are highly top-down driven and rely on governments to design relevant public policies as highlighted by Markard et al (2012: 956) when saying that a "particularity of sustainability transitions is that guidance and governance often play a particular role"¹³⁶. EU-China SE platform engage all main Chinese government bodies on energy (NDRC, NEA, ERI) and this both a central and local government level in the form of Chinese cities (EC2, EC Link, EUPDSF). This is particularly relevant in the case of China, where central-level bodies like the NDRC largely superintend the country's energy policy due to its political system (Dent 2014). China is, however, far from being monolithic and local actors such as provinces and cities are instrumental in the implementation of policies.

Platforms also work with various Chinese ministries involved in SE. According to the UNDP's 2012 policy agenda on energy for SD, a successful energy transition requires adopting a 'systems perspective' that recognises energy's inherent cross-sectoral and cross-policy nature (page 23). SE platforms also address the cross-sectoral nature of a SE transition by involving a large array of Chinese ministries (Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development (MoHURD), Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT), Ministry of Science and Technology (MoST), MofCOM and the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA)) but also key state-owned companies like the State Grid Corporation China and the market regulation agency (SERC). They furthermore engage local official energy actors such as cities. The implications

135 For a list of stakeholders involved in the platforms' activities, this research relied on a comprehensive chart drafted for the EC2 (2015) China-EU Energy Cooperation Roadmap 2020 Concept Note. Due to its very large size it has, however, not been included in this work.

136 Emphasis added.

of such a diversity of engagement for understanding the platforms' relevance as socialisation agents are significant. SE transitions are, as defined by Markard et al. (2012: 956), "long-term, multi-dimensional and fundamental transformational processes through which established socio-technical systems shift to a more sustainable mode of production and consumption". As such, they require, as argued by Lockwood et al (2013: 6), the changing of practices "by the full range of actors in the energy system, ranging from electricity generators to wholesalers, supply companies, network operators, energy service providers and users of energy." The diversity of Chinese actors exposed to EU-China SE platforms increases the chance of reaching such a wide audience across Chinese society and thus is relevant to China's SE transition.

7.5. Conclusion – Normative by Impact

Impact was the final pathway in Manners' tripartite analytical framework used to test the EU's normative power status. Guided by consequentialist ethics, normative impact is defined in broad terms by the need for the EU's action to "do least harm" (Manners 2008: 46). As established by Manners (2009b), the study of socialisation, partnership and ownership were to provide results as to the normative character of the EU's impact. The aim of this chapter was to apply this framework to the EU's SE cooperation in order to establish whether the EU can reasonably be termed normative by impact. Following the same pattern adopted in the two previous empirical chapters, this was carried out by applying the three criteria to the EU implementation phase of the EU's SE cooperation. EU-China energy cooperation projects and programmes were identified as the appropriate level of analysis to do so. Drawing on the study of these three criteria, the chapter established that the EU can indeed be called normative by impact as it could be proven to offer socialisation spaces into the use of SE, to function in a spirit of partnership and to empower China in its own SE transition in these spaces.

Socialisation was first concentrated with pinning down the role of EU-China platforms as socialisation agents in SE promotion with China. Specifically, the research aimed to determine if the EU provides China with relevant socialisation platforms which act as spaces for engagement, debate and understanding on SE. It was found that in

fact this is clearly the case. Using some key constructivist literature, the study first showed that socialisation agents in the form of institutions are instrumental in the norm internalisation process at state level therefore justifying the relevance of EU platforms working on SE cooperation when studying socialisation. Before their role could be analysed, the landscape of projects and programmes that have the promotion of SE as an objective was mapped out in detail. Research found that there were eleven such platforms between the EU and China alone that are either partly (8) or fully dedicated (3) to working with China on SE, in a period from 1997 to 2013. This analysis then revealed that this significant number of platforms can be explained at hand of two factors. Firstly SE platforms were instituted not simply as a result of the EU's bilateral relations with China, but in fact SE platforms were established within the EU's regional and thematic cooperation programmes, multiplying the channels through which SE cooperation could take place. Secondly, SE appears in cooperation platforms that are dedicated to the topic (EEP, EC2 and ICARE) but also, SE's cross-sectoral nature means it can also be part of the EU's larger cooperation with China, even when platforms are not specialised in SE (EC Link, Switch Asia, Asia Invest and Asia Pro eco and the thematic ENRTP programmes). Overall, this leads SE cooperation to benefit from a wide array of platforms, with increased Chinese exposure to cooperation in a variety of SE fields. The fact that these platforms operated at different times between 1997 and 2013 ensured continuity in socialisation. Conclusively, even though some issues as to the limited scale of their impact as compared to China's vast needs, as well as coordination issues amongst platforms have appeared, these do not undermine the adequate impact of the EU's SE cooperation platforms. These offer China spaces to adopt a sustainable approach to energy in line with Manners' definition and as such the EU is deemed normative by socialisation.

Partnership then aimed to determine if the EU's SE cooperation with China is through its SE cooperation platform creating an identifiable sense of common purpose in SE promotion. Based on the close study of six platforms and in spite of the limits to their work, research has found that they are indeed operating with a sense of partnership. The study first focused on defining the concept of partnership in order to devise criteria that would identify signs of partnership in the platforms of cooperation with China. Development cooperation literature completed with the EU's understanding of partnership in its Asia cooperation fostering partnership was defined as carrying

out an inclusive type of collaboration, where both partners have an equal footing and jointly participate in practical aspects of cooperation. The analysis of the platforms' instigation, funding, operation and activities clearly showed that all platforms without exception work together with China in promoting SE either in a majority or for all of the criteria. The platforms' beneficiary-oriented approach seemed to ensure that operations and activities are conducted together with China and with the goal of fulfilling China's needs when it comes to SE. Whilst limits to cooperation were identified – differences in the energy governance system and administrative structure as well as differences in European and Chinese working cultures – these issues have not been found to jeopardise the partnership approach. Conclusively, the EU can be qualified normative by partnership.

Finally, the study of ownership was dedicated to finding out whether the EU in its SE cooperation with China provides the country with the relevant tools, knowledge and skills to support China in carrying out and manage its own SE transition. The analysis of SE cooperation platforms has shown that the EU - through the activities of these platforms – contributes to a greater sense of ownership thanks to capacity-building activities targeted at some of the most relevant Chinese stakeholders – policymakers and industry representatives – and in critical SE transition fields as defined by the UN SE4All initiative, used as reference. Using development cooperation literature combined with SE transition blueprints from authoritative international organisations including the UN, the World Bank, UNDP, UNEP and the OECD enabled pinpointing three essential factors in the promotion of ownership for SE – building the capacity of relevant Chinese stakeholders in fields that contribute directly to achieving a SE transition. The analysis of SE platforms looking at the field of activities, nature of activities and population addressed showed that the whole breadth of topics identified by the SE4All reference document were covered. More specifically, generalist platforms such as EC2, EUPDSF and EUCTP address a large array of fields relevant for a SE transition whereas the two specialised platforms – Switch Asia and ICARE – on the other hand, only focus on their particular area of expertise (SCP and education respectively) but do so in depth, which in turn increase the numbers of areas they are able to address. Secondly, the variety of purpose of the six platforms investigated proved useful to engage a large array of Chinese stakeholders ranging from policymakers – both from central and local level - but also industry representatives and researchers to a lesser extent from platforms like EC2,

EUCTP and EUPDSF to SMEs and consumers for Switch Asia and students and energy professionals for ICARE. As defined by UNEP (2002: 17) reaching such a variety is essential for engaging all relevant sectors of society to achieve such a large-scale transition. The overall larger engagement of policy-makers across platforms also seems to match the needs dictated by the policy-driven nature of a SE transition (Markard et al 2012: 956). Finally the types of activities pursued with these actors widely focus across platforms on knowledge and best practice sharing, often using the expertise of European experts through training, workshops, seminars and even study visits to Europe for policymakers aimed at providing the Chinese actors with tailored tools. Policymakers are shown some policy and planning tools, when SMEs are given training on energy efficient building techniques for example. The platforms' number and diversity of purpose altogether ensures that a variety of Chinese SE actors receive adequate and specialised knowledge focused on building their capacity to contribute to China's shift to SE. Even though here again the limited scale of the platforms' contribution could be criticised compared to the vast needs of such a large country such as China, in view of the fact that platforms provide relevant Chinese actors with capacity-building skills in key SE transition fields, it is possible to say that SE cooperation platforms work in favour of China's ownership of its own path towards more sustainable energy systems.

The EU has been proven to have a normative impact in all three of the criteria identified by Manners' tripartite framework as applied to SE cooperation with China. It is evident that the EU's projects and platforms which constituted the object of study are contributing to empower China in its own SE transition. Platforms provide relevant SE spaces for developing understanding and exchanges on the topic and they operate in partnership with China, which ensures that activities developed also serve China's needs in a 'beneficiary-oriented' type of approach. The platforms' activities in turn benefit from the EU's engagement with China on SE through their number and variety in purpose, which ensures they are of relevance to developing China's ownership in performing its SE transition. In view of this, the EU can be said to be normative by ownership. Having now investigated all three dimensions of what Manners established constitutes the main dimensions of a normative power, the next chapter will bring the findings of *Chapter 5*, *Chapter 6* and *Chapter 7* together to answer whether the EU can be legitimately called a green normative power.

CHAPTER 8 – CONCLUSION

8.1. Introduction

Today, few would any longer argue that environmental sustainability does not matter. At a time some scientists have called the ‘Anthropocene’, human activity has been such an important influence over our planet that it has been linked to a change of geological era (Crutzen and Stoermer 2000). Climate change is an established and widely-shared scientific fact and so are most of its consequences. Atmospheric and sea pollution, forest depletion, and biodiversity loss on the one hand, and growing world population, urbanisation, and transportation networks on the other, are some examples both of human impact and responsibility towards the state of the planet. Whilst the realisation of human responsibility towards its environment was not always duly acknowledged, the institution of the sustainable development (SD) paradigm by the international community starting in the 1970s was instrumental in enshrining environmental sustainability as part of its three fundamental dimensions. With it, environmental sustainability and the promotion of sustainable energy (SE) – renewable energy (RE) and energy efficiency (EE) – acquired normative status by association as an operational objective of the SD principle.

The EU has not only showed commitment to the promotion and defence of environmental sustainability through its policies, ten-year strategies, and its representatives, but it has made SD a part of its very identity by including SD as an objective in its treaties. Ian Manners was the first to conceptualise that this link between norms and European identity is in fact what sets the EU apart from any other actors in the international system. The EU “has been and always will be” (Manners, 2008: 45) an ideational power whose identity determines its relation to the world as a norm-promoter – making of it a ‘Normative Power Europe’ (NPE). As such the EU – if it is to be a normative power – is accountable to the world in promoting SE, which is widely recognised as a pivotal determinant if the shift to a more sustainable form of development is ever to be achieved.

The aim of this thesis was to test this conceptualisation of the EU by examining its commitment to SD from the perspective of environmental sustainability. This was motivated not only by the intrinsic relevance of environmental matters but to fill a gap in the NPE scholarship as the environmental dimension – so it is argued – has so far not been adequately taken into account to allow for a more comprehensive picture of Manners' 'normative power' conceptualisation of the EU's identity. As a main research question it sought to determine if the EU can be justifiably labelled a green normative power, with the EU's relations with China a case study in the field of SE. In line with Manners' dual understanding of what constitutes a normative power, this work aimed at addressing *both* the EU's promotion of SD and the way it promotes the norm. Manners' tailor-made tripartite 'principles, actions, and impact' (PAI) framework was used to operationalise the NPE concept and to drawing reliable and verifiable conclusions. Each of these three dimensions led to a further three sub-research questions. This chapter first presents the key findings, both substantial and methodological for each of the three empirical chapters or dimensions of NPE. The substantial findings are answering each of the 3 sub-questions leading to developing the main research question by bringing the findings together. Policy implications as well as avenues for further research are presented before ending with a summary of the contribution this research made to the field.

8.2. Substantive Conclusions

In order to determine if the EU can legitimately be called a normative power, this thesis' main research question asked whether the EU is promoting the SD norm through its SE cooperation with China. This was examined using Manners' tripartite analytical framework, which, drawing from procedural ethics, distinguishes three distinct facets of normative power – the EU's intentions or 'principles'; the 'actions' of the EU or the conduct of its cooperation; and finally the 'impact' of its actions. This framework offered two different but interrelated types of insights both into the EU's norm promotion in the world and at the same time into the way this is being carried out. It was used to inform the operationalisation of the main research question – is the EU a *green* normative power? - into three corresponding subordinate questions, each adapted to the case study. These therefore asked: (1) Is the EU normative by

principle in its intentions of SE cooperation with China and in aiming to promote SD? (2) Is the EU normative by actions in conducting its cooperation with China in order to support SD? Lastly, (3) is the EU normative by impact in implementing its SE cooperation activities in a way that supports China's road to SD?

In order to answer these questions, *Chapter 1* first introduced the relevance of the China case study as a litmus test for investigating Manners' NPE approach and it also drew on China's unique environmental impact for the planet to justify its significance for evaluating the EU's commitment to promoting SD in the world. The introduction furthermore defined the scope of the thesis as focusing the assessment of the EU on the European Commission due to its central role in EU-China energy cooperation. It also justified the choice of the longitudinal 1994-2013 timeframe, which represents the take-off and development of EU-China relations, and energy relations in particular, up to China's change of status of being no longer considered a developing country by the EU after 2013. The qualitative data collection and research methods employed in the form of interviews with key European and Chinese stakeholders as well as documentary sources were concluded to best correspond to NPE's constructivist focus and the need for an interpretivist approach.

The investigation into the power of norms as related to the EU which underpins this whole research required the NPE theoretical and corresponding PAI analytical framework to be detailed, as done in *Chapter 2*. This chapter started establishing the relevance of a constructivist approach for studying the EU's norm promotion activities in the world. Manners' NPE was then thoroughly described, both to understand the concept and its applications, but also to critically analyse its relevance as well as limits, from which it was possible to conclude that NPE constitutes the best-adapted, viable tool to study the EU's SD promotion with China. NPE has been developed precisely to conceptualise and understand the EU's role as norm promoter in the world. The tripartite PAI analytical framework also established by Manners was then presented in the light of its normative ethical foundations and compared to other available frameworks. The PAI system was chosen on the basis of its bespoke translation of Manners' original NPE approach into identifiable and adaptable dimensions ('principles', 'actions' and 'impact') themselves sub-divided into three further criteria each. Brought together in a funnelling-type of analysis this technique was expected to provide conclusive findings on the nature of the EU's identity. As such PAI provides a tailored analytical tools to put the EU's normative identity

asserted by Manners to the empirical test in a way that enables investigation of *both* the EU's promotion of a norm as well as evaluating whether the manner of doing so is normative (Manners 2002; 2009). This focus on the duality of what constitute a normative power is the framework's essential differentiation and what enables - as termed throughout this thesis - to perform a *comprehensive* assessment of the EU's normative identity. Its general application was finally discussed, as well as the specific translation to the SE cooperation case with China. The purpose was to translate this generic framework, which is originally meant to work for the study of various norms, to be operational for the SD norm and SE cooperation in particular.

Chapter 3 was used to survey the convergence of the main bodies of literature this thesis draws on – EU-China relations, NPE, and the literature on SD – to establish the gap it aims to fill. It can be said that so far, no study of the EU's SE cooperation with China has been performed to test the EU's commitment to SD in order to evaluate Manners' NPE approach. A preliminary review of EU-China relations was provided in order to contextualise SE cooperation in its wider background and provide an understanding of its relevance in this wider historical context.

In the following three chapters – *Chapter 5*, *Chapter 6* and *Chapter 7* - the PAI framework was applied to the case study in order to provide empirical evidence as to the nature of the 'principles' (*Chapter 5*), 'actions' (*Chapter 6*) and 'impact' (*Chapter 7*) of the EU's SE cooperation with China. Each of the chapters therefore addresses the three criteria, these directly informing the formulation of the research question of each chapter. The funnelling approach aggregates the results for the three criteria and enables determining if the EU is normative by principles, actions, and impact. Since Manners' analytical framework is formulated in a generic way, each of these criteria have had to be applied to the present case study. This was done by taking an 'integrated' approach, whereby EU-China SE cooperation – from policies to implementation - constituted the basis on which the analysis was developed. The results obtained are detailed in the following sections.

8.2.1. Is the EU Normative by Principle?

In this first part of the tripartite analytical framework addressed in *Chapter 5*, the EU's *intentions* were investigated to determine if they are of a normative nature. In

particular, it was asked whether in its SE relations with China, the EU is guided by the intent to promote SD. This required – following Manners PAI – establishing whether the EU was legitimate, coherent, and consistent in the promotion of the norm towards China. Applied to the EU-China SE cooperation case study, this translated into looking at whether the EU's China policy on SE is embedded in legitimate, because universal, SD reference texts. Secondly a coherent promotion of SD by the EU had to be confirmed, as opposed to finding SE cooperation being driven by other materialistic motives such as energy security or economic and trade interests. Finally SD had to be found consistently promoted throughout the various European Commission Directorate Generals (DG) involved in the cooperation. These questions placed the level of analysis at where the EU formulates and expresses its intentions.

8.2.1.1. Legitimacy

In this section the research traced back the legitimacy of the EU's intentions, in particular to determine whether the driving force behind the EU's SE cooperation with China is motivated by its commitment to the promotion of SD in the world as part of the universally agreed SD agenda. Manners suggests tracing back the normative quality of EU intentions to them being embedded in references to universally agreed texts as this would attest the EU's intentions are anchored in the promotion of a legitimate norm as opposed to a more self-serving behaviour. Practically this led to identifying whether the EU's sustainability discourse, and SE in particular, is part of a SD promotion agenda supported by references to SD milestone texts. Evidence in the EU's China policy documents showed a paradoxical situation whereby the EU's policy contains both a significant sustainability discourse – including SE – of ever increasing importance over the years, as well as references to key SD texts, although these are not numerous. However, connecting these examples to the EU's motivations could not establish a real link with SD promotion. In fact, the opposite was the case, as the EU's SE cooperation with China appeared to have been motivated by the EU's foreign policy-driven objectives embodied in its 'constructive engagement' strategy with China. SE was mostly considered an instrument to serve EU foreign policy objectives rather than the cornerstone for its support to SD in China.

In fact, the EU's SE policy objectives had to be researched by looking into the equivalent of its overall policy strategy – Commission policy documents on China – rather than a SD strategy. No such document has been formulated with China, in spite of the growing relevance of SE and sustainability issues in the cooperation. Instead SE cooperation is to be seen as embedded into the EU's larger policy strategy and has correspondingly been articulated in line with its related interests. In the years 1994 to 2013 these were strongly marked by the EU's willingness to engage China to become a 'responsible partner', in the sense of economically and politically transitioning to become more liberal or aligned with the EU. This was considered to be in the economic and security interests of the EU. As a result, references to key SD texts, especially regarding climate change, were rather an expression of the EU's aim to bring China within international society processes rather than for the primary sake of promotion of SD in China. SE on the other side could not be found to be legitimised by connections with SD texts. Instead SE was used as one of the levers to act on China's economic, social and environmental transition process, which is considered as the implementation strategy for the constructive engagement scheme. Environmental concerns were present in the EU's intentions; however, SE's embeddedness in EU foreign policy strategy and interests as opposed to serving a SD agenda underpinned by references to universally agreed SD texts lead one to say that EU intentions cannot be called legitimate due to this disconnect. Intentions behind SE cooperation could simply not be related to the promotion of the SD norm.

8.2.1.2. Coherence

For the second step, the research focused on the balance between normative intentions and material interests. The aim was therefore, firstly to determine what other interests specific to SE such as energy security and economic interests compete against environmental sustainability as conceptualised in Knodt et al's normative triangle (2013) as opposed to overall strategic interests guiding EU cooperation with China addressed under 'legitimacy'. Secondly this enabled researching how relevant these interests are in driving the EU's SE relation with China and whether they encroach on the pursuit of SE cooperation for the sake of SD. The study focused on energy security for its relevance in the conduct of SE

cooperation with China. It was found that, rather than being promoted for its contribution to sustainability through encouraging China to reduce its fossil fuel consumption, SE has been used by DG Energy as an instrument for its promotion of European energy security, effectively externalising to China the EU's internal energy policy objectives.

Far from being coherently promoted for the support to China's SD, SE was in fact employed as an engagement mechanism by DG Energy in order to build trust and rapport with China, with whom energy relations had been gradually building since 1994. The ultimate goal was to make use of the non-threatening – because quite technical – SE cooperation domain to create the right conditions. This was to eventually lead China to accept cooperation on energy security, considered in itself a highly political topic and thus possibly more contentious. This was shown to represent a form of externalisation of EU internal energy policy, as it came to include a more demand-oriented strategy and considered SE as an appropriate lever to reduce its own dependence on foreign fossil resources. The promotion of renewables and energy security therefore became tightly connected with the EU's energy security interests. It appeared that this thinking was then extended to the EU's external energy policy, with China in particular as China became one of the world's major energy consumers, competing with the EU and others for finite fossil resources as yet essential to the functioning of societies. Energy security was therefore established to be the main driver behind the EU's SE cooperation with China and therefore made for incoherent and not normative intentions.

8.2.1.3. Consistency

Lastly, the analysis turned to the consistent promotion of SD *across* all the various European Commission DGs involved in SE cooperation with China. This was guided firstly by determining where SE – a quintessentially cross-sectoral cooperation field - is promoted across the Commission and whether SE cooperation was driven by SD promotion in all these places. Once again a paradoxical result emerged according to which SD was indeed found to be a guiding principle of cooperation, applying as well to the EU's SE objectives with China, but this does not translate to the various DGs involved in the cooperation. These instead use SE cooperation with China as another

avenue to carry out their own DG-specific agendas. As a result, consistency across the Commission was sorely lacking.

The reason behind this directly relates to the instrumentalisation of China's developing country status and the corresponding funds allocated to the cooperation with China to serve the EU's foreign policy agenda. China benefitted from developing country status in EU rules until 2013. The EU's implementation strategy for cooperation was therefore framed by development cooperation approaches referred to as Country Strategy Papers (CSP) or National Indicative Plans (NIP), which explained the attachment to the SD principle and its application to SE cooperation. This however was not enforced any further because DG External Relations (Relex) (and later the European External Action Service), and not DG International Cooperation and Development (Devco), was in charge of defining the cooperation strategy with China, even though it was a developing country. DG Relex was therefore in a position to shape the strategy to serve the interests formulated in the Union's broader policy on China, which in the 'legitimacy' section was shown not to be primarily directed by the promotion of a SD agenda. The fragmented landscape of DGs involved in the cooperation were thus left free to promote their own interests with China on SE as long as those were in line with EU China policy. However the framing of the cooperation by development cooperation principles enabled DGs to tap into the corresponding development cooperation funds assigned to cooperation with China to support the development of their own projects with China and further their own interests. As such, development cooperation could not act as normative guidance in using SE as an engine of SD for China but instead worked as an enabler in the EU's engagement strategy, by funding the substantiation of the cooperation through new initiatives.

8.2.1.4. The EU, Not Normative by Principles

Putting together the results for these three dimensions shows that the EU's intentions cannot be normative because they do not intend to make use of SE as a vector for China's SD. In fact, the EU did not initially intend to promote SD with China in the first place. One clear hint was that the EU did not formulate a SD-specific agenda with China but only a more overarching policy approach, which guides the EU's relations with China. As one interviewee said "you won't find a strategy on SE, you

would rather find a strategy on China” (EU-12). The EU’s relations with China were therefore guided by the intention on the one side to establish, develop and substantiate its relations with China – a key partner to establish itself as a legitimate actor in the world – and on the other to engage China to bring about economic and political liberalisation embodied by the so-called ‘constructive engagement’ approach, shown to be motivated by European economic and security self-interest. SE cooperation is therefore to be seen as part of this set-up. As such, even though the growing relevance of SE for the cooperation might have indeed contributed to improve the environmental sustainability of China’s development, this was not the EU’s main original intention.

Being guided mainly by their respective goals on China, DGs involved in the cooperation operate according to the EU’s China policy in conjunction with their own DG-specific interests. The EU’s energy cooperation with China has therefore been used by DG Energy – the main actor of the cooperation within the Commission – to instrumentalise SE so as to ensure European energy security interests with China. Similarly, EU China policy objectives trump the promotion of the SD principle in the implementation of SE cooperation across the Commission, preventing the commitment to SD from being enforced across DGs. It was also shown that China’s developing country status in EU rules was at this stage not determining in ensuring SD promotion prevails even though SD figures as a prominent objective of the EU’s development cooperation principles with China. This can be explained by the lack of agency of DG Devco in terms of formulating policies with China and therefore translating the commitment to SD with development cooperation. Instead the DG in charge – DG Relex – seemed to make use of the funding tied to China’s developing country status to substantialise the cooperation with DG-led initiatives along the EU’s interests defined in the EU’s China policy. Altogether as opposed to being considered an essential instrument to support a partner country in achieving a crucial shift to more sustainable systems, SE is actually rather considered a means to an end in the greater framework of its own China policy. As such the EU is not normative in its intentions.

8.2.2. Is the EU Normative by Actions?

In the second part of the tripartite framework addressed in *Chapter 6*, the EU's *actions* constituted grounds for investigation, assessed against their contribution to promoting SD. This led the investigation to focus on the conduct of the EU's SE cooperation with China and whether it actively promoted China's uptake of SE as a lever for SD by means of engagement and dialogue, rather than force and coercion (Manners 2009b). The research firstly investigated the EU's effort to institutionalise SE cooperation with China (persuasion), then identified whether the EU is actively attempting to convincing China of the relevance of SE for SD (argumentation), and finally looked for evidence whether the EU is either positively or negatively incentivising China to support the use of SE to achieve SD (prestige and shame). These strands were brought together to determine if the EU can be called normative by action. The level of analysis required by the study of the conduct of SE cooperation demanded mapping out the various channels of cooperation across the Commission, identifying the motivations of EU officials involved and how they match with Chinese drivers for SE cooperation, as well as selecting the solar PV dispute case as a means to assess the normative value of EU shaming.

8.2.2.1. *Persuasion*

The study of persuasion focused on establishing the EU's purposeful institutionalisation of SE links with China as evidence of its promotion of SE using engagement and dialogue. From this, it clearly appeared that SE cooperation had been extensively and consistently institutionalised throughout the years, creating a large and diverse array of permanent channels of cooperation through which SE exchanges could be carried out between the EU and China. However, SE not only benefitted from the institutionalisation of EU-China relations, and energy in particular from which SE channels could flourish, but in fact SE was instrumental in contributing to drive the expansion of energy cooperation avenues.

Mapping out the development of EU-China energy relations showed that the institutionalisation took place along three main avenues. Firstly, SE cooperation channels were established alongside the growth of EU-China energy relations in which they were embedded. These provided a platform from which SE could grow

and be applied to the ever-growing number of topics addressed under the cooperation. The main three pillars of energy relations – the energy dialogue, the energy conference, and the more recent urbanisation partnership – have both provided platforms for SE cooperation to expand in the various fields they address (e.g. sustainable urban development, energy security, energy research), as well as opportunities to have SE-specific cooperation channels (e.g. energy dialogue working groups on energy efficiency in the building sector, renewable energy, and smart grids). SE remained crucial to the expansion of EU-China energy relations, most recently when it grew to include new fields such as energy security or electricity market cooperation. Secondly, SE developed its own dedicated cooperation channels thereby formalising SE cooperation in new and different fields and throughout the Commission, with EE in buildings or industrial EE (DG Enterprise) becoming the topic of their own dedicated dialogue. SE was also integrated within existing dialogues led by DGs across the Commission such as on research or climate change. Altogether, the variety and number of SE cooperation institutions and the issues they cover or the stakeholders they involve enable it to be said clearly that the EU did actively provide the cooperation with established opportunities for dialogue and engagement on SE with China.

8.2.2.2. Argumentation

Argumentation was defined as promoting the SD norm by deliberately convincing China of the relevance of SE for achieving SD by means of cooperative ethical means. In this case, the EU had to be seen convincing China of taking over SE in order to act on its SD prospects. Since SE was considered by European and Chinese officials to be the most successful field in EU-China relations, the investigation centred on determining whether this success could be attributed to European efforts to promote SD. The findings showed that this was not the case, as SE cooperation emerged rather from the nature of Chinese demands – largely domestically driven support to SE – combined with the adequacy of what Europeans had to offer – relevant expertise and technology. The success of SE cooperation was further enabled by Europe's readiness to 'constructively engage' China on this topic.

China's self-driven SE transition started in the 1980s and intensified in the mid-1990s to mid-2000s especially as a developmental strategy, but also to mitigate the

consequences on its environment as well as on its fast growing energy demands generated by decades of rapid economic growth. Considering the vast and lengthy overhaul the shift from fossil fuels to a more sustainable energy system – even if only partial – requires from a society, international cooperation is considered both by relevant international organisations and China to be a useful facilitator in that transition. Cooperating with a country with valuable experience in this process presented useful leapfrogging opportunities to acquire the appropriate means and knowledge from the cooperation partner. Europe in particular being a prime mover in the shift to SE was recognised as possessing both adequate expertise and technology, which are both essential tools to bringing about such a transition and also drove Chinese cooperation interests. SE cooperation did increase after 2005, signalling China's interest had been met. Europe on the other side, was keen to welcome Chinese willingness to work on SE. Europe considered it a validation of its engagement strategy with China, which constituted its overarching policy on China. In view of this, the success of SE cooperation could not be explained by European efforts to persuade China into the SD norm. Whilst this might have positively contributed to China's environmental sustainability, it is European responsiveness to Chinese demands legitimated by its own interest-driven China policy that underpinned the development of SE cooperation.

8.2.2.3. Prestige and Shame

Finally, prestige and shame was concerned with symbolic actions to either support China's uptake of the SD norm by conferring prestige or sanctioning a considered lack thereof through shaming. The EU-China solar panel dispute, when the Commission imposed tariffs on China starting in 2013, constituted a major case of shaming for China's export of solar panels to the European market. The motivations had to be questioned in order to determine if this instance represented a negative enforcement strategy using trade instruments to point at the mismatch between China's solar panel overproduction without however matching it with increased domestic solar capacity, and in that sense failing to harness its SE development to promote SD in China. It was however shown that economic interests were actually at the heart of the EU's decision to impose tariffs on China's solar panel production as cheap Chinese goods exported to Europe competed with European solar panel

producers and were seen to threaten their whole industry. Shaming was therefore not the result of the EU's concern for China's SD, but rather an expression of European industrial protectionism.

This finding was linked to the so-called 'green growth' development model. The model emerged from the larger debate on finding ways to implement the SD principle by offering to transform the necessity for increased environmental sustainability into industries and markets, ultimately turning what was considered an issue into a growth and development strategy. Both the EU and China adopted this attractive solution. However, as this model equated sustainability interests to economic ones, with its growing success being subscribed to by many countries, it appeared to create competition at global level by pitting national 'green' industries against each other. Whilst 'green growth' supports the development of green industries domestically, at global level it was revealed to encourage states and actors like the EU to prioritise economic benefits over sustainability concerns by protecting national industries by means of trade measures. In the case of the EU, China's successful developmental strategy driven by the state to support the expansion of SE with favourable policies and financial incentives created a very effective and large industry geared toward export that seriously challenged the EU's own solar panel industry. As the protection of this sector was clearly the priority of the EU in its decision to shame China, the EU could not be seen as normative for symbolic sanctioning.

8.2.2.4. The EU, Not Normative by Actions

Aggregating the findings for the three criteria presented a mixed picture for determining the EU's normative identity on actions. The research shows that the EU and China shared the interest in SE, as both actively promoted renewables and energy efficiency and put adequate policies and incentives in place. Both followed the 'green growth' model and turned sustainability requirements into an economic opportunity, supporting the domestic development of 'green' industries. Momentum for political cooperation around SE was spurred on by the EU's prime mover position in the shift to SE energy – with the corresponding expertise and technology this involves – compared to China's more recent support to SE, which China recognised as useful assets for accelerating its own SE transition. The convergence of interests, between China's appetite for the EU's SE experience matched by European

readiness as part of its China policy to engage China and substantiate the relation with new fields of cooperation – especially when in line with the EU’s own policies and objectives of support to SE – was the driver for increased cooperation and institutionalisation. Although this trend was noticeably identifiable, in particular after 2005, institutionalisation of the relation could not be attributed to EU SD promotion efforts towards China. As such, examples of shaming in the SE area like the solar panel case examined in this thesis were not related to normative intentions either. Instead, the same logic that underpinned greater SE cooperation and institutionalisation – the ‘green growth’ model – led the EU to favour economic protectionism over domestic sustainability concerns or SD promotion in China and caused the EU to impose punitive trade measures on the Chinese solar panels industry. Even though ‘green growth’ was not the primary research focus in this section, it appeared to have played a major role in motivating EU actions. The EU did institutionalise energy relations and it used shaming strategies. Yet since the concern for China’s SD could not be identified as a determining factor in the conduct of its SE relations with China, the EU could not be considered normative by actions.

8.2.3. Is the EU Normative by Impact?

The third and final part of the tripartite analytical framework led to the research conducted in *Chapter 7* to consider the *impact* of the EU’s promotion of SE and whether it was conducive to SD promotion in China. The implementation of SE cooperation was assessed for its role in encouraging China on its journey to SD through three means – socialisation into the norm, cooperation through partnership, and doing so in a way that is conducive to China taking ownership of its own shift to SE. Together findings for socialisation, partnership, and ownership were brought together to draw conclusions regarding the normative quality of the impact of the EU’s SE cooperation with China. The level of analysis required was quite different from the two previous normative pathways as the focus was this time situated within the EU’s energy cooperation projects and programmes with China, this being where day-to-day energy relations are put in practice. This demanded a mapping out of the landscape of platforms involved over the 1994-2013 period and looking into their

operation and activities to evaluate their contribution to SD promotion through the implementation of SE cooperation.

8.2.3.1. Socialisation

Socialisation oriented the evaluation of EU SE cooperation implementation to determine whether the EU created the right conditions to support China in its SE transition in the form of enabling norm internalisation meaning to adopt the norm as its own. The research focused on the EU providing adequate opportunities for China's understanding and questioning around SE in relation to the transition to sustainable forms of energy taking place. It traced back the presence of socialisation agents such as EU-China SE projects and programmes that could provide platforms to encourage exchanges and discussions around SE for SD. Mapping out the existing platforms throughout the years between 1994 and 2013 allowed the established nature of SE projects, centres and programmes to be clearly acknowledged, which constituted evidence of the EU's socialisation of China into SE. The EU established at least 11 platforms through which it cooperated with China on SE. These included both the three projects that are specifically dedicated to the topic of SE, as well as the eight others where SE is addressed as one element of their mission. The large number of platforms over the years 1998-2013 ensured consistent coverage of SE cooperation and a continuous framework for socialisation opportunities into SE. The remarkable variety of SE platforms, multiplying SE platforms beyond the one solely dedicated to SE, provided a wide diversity both of the SE-related topics addressed (science and technology, education, sustainable consumption and production etc.) as well as the different categories of Chinese stakeholders exposed to SE cooperation (scientists, business people, pupils, Chinese state and local officials, etc.). As such the diversity of topics and Chinese stakeholders involved increased the socialisation platforms' relevance for China's SE transition. Whilst limitations related to the scale of such initiatives as well as a lack of coordination between them were identified, these did not question the existence of EU socialisation platforms on SE with China.

8.2.3.2. Partnership

The modus operandi of the SE cooperation platforms was then investigated for their adherence to the principle of partnership between the EU and China. These platforms, which represented the implementation of SE cooperation, were expected to operate collaboratively and inclusively by the EU and China in order for the EU to be deemed normative in this aspect. Compiling data about their structural set-up as well as their activities distinctly showed that all of them operated in a sense of partnership with China.

Even though platforms varied in size, budget, as well as their degree of dedication solely to the SE field, together they showed a consistent partnership approach throughout the years studied. Their instigation was often shared between the Commission and China (Ministry of Commerce and National Energy Administration), as well as their funding, even though China sometimes participated in kind rather than financially. In their operation, the platforms were mostly composed of both Chinese and European partners, even though to different degrees depending on the platform. Finally, the platforms' main orientation and activities were mostly decided by both sides together, which tended to ensure the relevance of their objectives and activities for Chinese SE needs. Limits due to the differences in administrative systems, energy governance and working cultures were identified but were not found to threaten the solid partnership spirit under which SE cooperation was conducted. The beneficiary-oriented approach adopted by the EU referring to EU cooperation being directed towards China's needs first and foremost and apparently resulting from China's developing country status, seemed to be the common denominator between the platforms and an important factor in ensuring the partnership type of approach.

8.2.3.3. Ownership

Ownership represented the final stage of the norm promotion process because it is the turning point when the norm becomes internalised as one's own as opposed to being externally promoted. China did not need the input from the EU to move to sustainable energy systems in the first place, as it was its own driver for triggering and conducting its SE transition. As a shift that requires profound and novel

transformations, European SE activities however could contribute to providing China with the relevant means – such as expertise, knowledge and understanding – to be able to implement it. Analysing the activities of the EU-China SE platforms clearly showed once again that this was in fact the case, as platforms were found to provide capacity-building activities to the appropriate Chinese actors in SE fields pertinent to SE transitions.

Firstly, platform activities covered at least to some extent the whole range of topics identified by authoritative bodies – in this case the United Nations (UN) – as relevant to perform a SE transition. All three fields of the energy demand, energy supply, and crosscutting fields (like energy regulations, or energy and cities) were addressed by EU-China SE platforms. Secondly the nature of the activities themselves contributed to building Chinese actors' capacity in the SE domain, by providing training, workshops, and study visits on the wide array of SE fields mentioned above. Finally, even though policy-makers and Chinese state officials seem to be primarily targeted, these activities also benefit a larger variety of Chinese actors such as students or businesses. Environmental civil society bodies such as non-governmental organisations (NGO) were however expected to play a larger role in such activities for their growing relevance in Chinese society.

8.2.3.4. The EU, Normative by Impact

Once again bringing the results for all three criteria together led to conclude that the EU was indeed promoting SE in the implementation of its SE cooperation with China. More specifically the EU, through its various projects, centres, and programmes addressing SE was concretely supporting China's SE transition and this in a normative way. Thanks to the eleven platforms of cooperation instituted over the years, the EU disposed of an established and consistent network of socialisation venues for exposing China to the use of SE as a tool for SD. The variety of perspectives on SE they offered – addressing for example energy from the angle of regulations, technology, urbanisation, or education – combined with the diversity of Chinese stakeholders engaged contributed the relevance of socialisation into SE. Platforms were structured and operated in partnership with China, which together with the EU's beneficiary-oriented approach ensured their activities are beneficial to China and its SE transition needs. Additionally, the activities' focus on capacity

building throughout the platforms contributed to increasing China's ownership of useful knowledge and understanding for carrying out its own SE transition. All three – socialisation, partnership, and ownership – being respected by the EU allow the normative character of the EU's SE cooperation impact on China to be established.

8.2.4. Is the EU a *Green Normative Power*?

The research showed a mixed picture, with principles and action failing to some extent to display a normative quality, whereas impacts on the other hand were clearly found to qualify for the label. Behind these categories, it was found from the beginning of the analysis that the EU did not primarily intend to promote SD with China but rather that it was guided by the willingness to establish and develop its relations with its strategic partner. Self-interested motives such as economic and security interests, as well as ensuring its own status on the international scene by engaging China, played a greater role than the intention to support SD. Therefore SE, as with other fields of cooperation, was framed by this approach and essentially served its agenda instead of being used as a tool to promote SD for China. In the absence of a dedicated SD agenda to constrain them, Commission DGs involved in the cooperation could pursue their own objectives through the SE cooperation channel.

The success of SE in particular is to be attributed to converging interests between China's unprecedented support for green energy, starting in earnest in the 1990s and taking off in the mid-2000s, on the one hand, and the complementarity of European expertise and technology on the other hand, together with the EU's constructive engagement agenda. With matching interests, SE cooperation became well institutionalised mainly within the energy dialogues but also across the European Commission, facilitated by energy's crosscutting nature. This is to be seen within the overall growth of EU-China relations and institutionalisation during the period studied. Naturally following from this, SE projects and programmes were put in place and ensured the political cooperation achieved under the dialogues also became implemented. On the other side however, this lack of support for SD in the EU's policies and actions with China did not influence the way the cooperation was implemented. By means of quite a large network of platforms, the EU provided

spaces in which SE activities were designed with China to help the country deal itself with its domestically driven support for SE. The EU's SE cooperation was in effect relevant for China's SD in spite of the EU's original motivations, which is perhaps the most important dimension if the promotion of SE is to practically result in the advancement of SD in real terms. However, the fact that the normative quality of impacts was not the result of normative intentions or actions prevents from drawing unequivocal conclusions as to the 'green' normative quality of the EU, however nor does it allow to fully dismiss it.

In this case, Manners NPE approach is therefore not fully validated as the pertinent way to understand the entirety of the EU's SE cooperation with China. Even if the EU's identity might be normative, and it aims to promote SD in the world, as a project – as opposed to the EU as an idea – the EU is confronted to the demands of the international system, and as a polity its policies and actions are carried out by administrations which develop their own interests. In the case of the EU's SE cooperation with China, these demands prevented as often the case in scholarly studies of the EU to neatly label the EU on a binary scale – normative or not – in this case. Whilst the normative quality of the EU could not be established for the whole of its SE cooperation, this study nevertheless showed that norms far from being completely absent or completely subordinated to other interests do play a role in the EU's SE cooperation with China but that their role is dependent on a more complex set of dynamics explaining their pre-eminence or in this case, their relative weakness.

8.3. Methodological Conclusions

The NPE conceptualisation might not fully describe the European identity as an actor in international relations, however thanks to this empirical application, Manners' tripartite analytical framework was found to be useful to expose the role of norms as well as some of the reasons for their hindrance in guiding the EU's external relations. This section presents these main methodological findings, as well as discussing some of the challenges of the application of the framework.

8.3.1 'Normative Power Europe' as a Tool to Test and Explore the Role of Norms

This research found that it is the PAI framework's three-dimensional vision of normative identity which provided for a comprehensive and multifaceted understanding of EU norm promotion abroad as it was instrumental to capture the dynamics and issues at play behind the process of norm promotion (or lack thereof). Essentially this enabled conclusions to be drawn on the nature of the EU as a normative power as well as exploring the role norms play in SE cooperation beyond binary yes/no results. Many shorter pieces of empirical research into the EU as a normative power in fact rely on some selected aspects to make a judgement on the EU's normative power identity. By requiring all three aspects of intentions, actions, and impact to be explored separately as well as their interplay, the tripartite approach provides a holistic study of the norm promotion process from policy formulation, to the conduct of the cooperation, and the actors that are involved, to the implementation of the cooperation by projects and programmes. This extends the levels of analysis to include the whole process and gives a comprehensive picture of the context in which SE cooperation takes place in this case. Employing the framework appears to reduce the likelihood of concluding regarding the EU's normative identity based on partial accounts only. This was found to be essential, both to conclusively test the NPE approach, and beyond this, to deepen the understanding of the dynamics at play contributing and preventing the EU's turning commitment to norms into a reality in its relation with the world.

The case of EU-China SE cooperation in particular contributed to establish the role interests play as the primary threat to the EU abiding by the SD principle and its promotion. The framing and embedding of SE into an interest-oriented policy agenda with China was critical for these interests to prevail over the pursuit of SD. The case helped establish that in this particular instance, 'principles' or intentions contained in EU China policy were particularly determinative in explaining the EU's failure to promote SD through its SE cooperation. For SE – as a domain where sustainability cohabits with economic and security interests – the lack of intentions to embed the cooperation in a SD-specific agenda, programme, or objective on China in the EU's policy allowed for foreign policy objectives and interests to supersede the European commitment to SD, despite China's recent developing country status and the

possibly more norm-driven approach this status encourages. The intentions set the tone for the conduct of the cooperation as the lack of SD agenda and thus of protection or respect for the SD principle was not ensured and allowed for DGs simply to carry on their own objectives. The EU's rather interest-driven China policy again explained the success of SE cooperation in the overall context of EU-China relations, as well as the economically-motivated trade sanctions on Chinese solar panels. The role of intentions was furthermore made visible at the level of impacts – this time due to its absence – where the EU's China policy did not appear to be as influential. Instead the more development-oriented beneficiary principle seemed to ensure the normative quality of the SE cooperation implementation, hinting at the fact that where development cooperation rules are in a position to apply, the EU's China policy agenda gives way and the cooperation stands a chance to be more oriented towards supporting China's journey towards SD.

8.3.2. Applying the Tripartite Framework

The framework was devised by Manners to test NPE for the nine norms he identified as constitutive of the EU's normative difference. As such, it remains quite generic and does not provide specific guidance as to how to operationalise it for the specific SD norm. The normative ethics on which it draws was essential to elaborate a consistent interpretation of the various criteria with Manners' views. However, the fairly general nature of the framework and especially the often descriptive rather than definitional references to the nine criteria, mean that testing for the promotion of SD occasionally requires complementing the framework with specific concepts or instruments. The research into 'partnership' and 'ownership' for example had to be contextualised within the field of international cooperation literature to define the scope of research and develop appropriate tools to carry it out. The generic nature of the framework on the one hand certainly ensures its applicability to all norms, and on the other, combined with its grounding in normative ethics it warrants case studies across the board as valid tests of NPE. Nevertheless, the inevitable variations in operationalisation pose the question of comparability of case studies. Further case studies testing the EU for its commitment to SD using the PAI framework might

contribute to refining its application for SD in particular and ensure that flexibility and comparability will not have to be a trade-off.

Secondly, testing the EU's commitment to norms by applying the PAI framework demands the three facets of a normative power be explored – principles, actions, impact – themselves subdivided into three further criteria, increasing the levels of analysis to investigate. The comprehensive nature of the research that is required is instrumental for achieving a conclusive study and ultimately deciding on such a complex and multi-layered question as the identity of an actor like the EU for a specific norm. However, this holistic approach makes for a very large scope of study, which, combined to the longitudinal nature demanded by the case study, can be quite a challenge in practical terms. Manners even mentions ideally that studies of different norms should be combined with each other for a more comprehensive picture (Manners 2011), which would make in effect for a colossal enterprise. Without considering this last suggestion, limiting the valid scope of NPE studies to the complete application of the PAI framework could however tend to exclude smaller research projects and thereby lose valuable inroads into understanding of the EU's norm promotion activities. As is already the case in the literature published, the application of the framework could alternatively be focused on selected dimensions only, which in turn would however question the partiality of the study. Future work already begun by Birchfield (2013) to turn PAI into a policy framework could help make it a more practically workable research tool and eventually solve this conundrum.

8.4. Policy Implications

From this analysis flows a number of policy implications. Echoing Knodt et al's normative triangle (2013), it has been shown that SE is tightly connected to strong interests, which if left unchecked, tend to prevail and thus prevent the use of SE as a tool for SD promotion. Energy security interests driven by the EU's energy import dependence as well as economic interests related among others to its green growth agenda but also foreign policy interests of securing a constructive relationship and role for China, all influenced the EU's SE cooperation with China and made sustainability subordinate to material interests. Material interests are supported both

at policy levels and by conduct across the Commission. Employing the PAI framework showed that to ensure SE cooperation is geared at encouraging steps towards SD in the partner country, this must be made a priority from the very start by devising a SD strategy or agenda where SE cooperation is embedded – either within the larger cooperation objectives, or perhaps ideally separately as a stand-alone SD strategy. In order to support SD rather than simply being a dedicated repository for all the sustainability-related areas of cooperation, this strategy must be clearly formulated as aiming to contribute to global SD goals, and be linked to references to key international SD texts and processes. In a sense it should embed itself in the large efforts to promote SD as articulated by the UN. Also it must be aimed at benefitting the partner country first and foremost, and state this clearly to ensure a beneficiary-oriented approach rather than a ‘greenwashed’ self-serving agenda. The cooperation must build around the intention to support the partner country with the relevant means to be able to perform its own SE transition.

Secondly, in order to escape the influence of political, economic, and security interests, an actor with the promotion of SD or sustainability at the heart of its own mission would ideally be appointed in charge of conducting this strategy. DG Climate Action (Clima), Devco or Environment are all guided in their role by such a principle. However in reality and reflecting energy’s cross-cutting nature as a policy field, energy cooperation is fragmented over at least 10 DGs within the Commission. Whilst they all add different and valuable angles under which SE is addressed, and have contributed to expand and institutionalise it over the years, they tend to use the cooperation as a vehicle to promote their own interests. As a result, hierarchical precedence over other DGs rather than a mere financial role is essential if such an actor is to be able to enforce a SD-guided SE cooperation across the Commission. As energy is by nature a crosscutting issue and therefore will realistically keep being addressed under various DGs, ideally the leading DG or separate body managing the SD strategy would furthermore be able to coordinate the DGs involved in SE cooperation across the Commission. In any case, considering the interest-led role played by DG Relex/European External Action Service (EEAS) and also DG Energy as seen in the case of EU-China SE relations, if SE cooperation with third countries is to aim at promoting SD first and foremost, these DGs who have their own interest at heart should preferably not be in charge or be hierarchically be placed under such a body.

Finally, in order to ensure the cooperation is implemented in a way that promotes SD in the partner country and for the sake of it and its needs, putting in place joint projects and programmes is essential to make sure SD promotion also has direct impact in the third country. These must be bound by the beneficiary-oriented principle, in the sense of being directed at profiting the partner country. This guarantees platforms are established and operated jointly by the partner country and in turn, formulate objectives and activities that reflect the needs of the country. Platforms clearly contribute to the promotion of SD, especially thanks to their capacity-building focus, however their scope being quite limited, larger programmes such as Switch Asia with a central structure across the target-countries seem more appropriate to achieve impact. These platforms adopting a partnership approach with the host country is vital in order to make sure activities organised and the actors engaged are also relevant to the country's SE transition.

Overall these findings provide insights both as to the requirements and objectives an actor like the EU or any developed country could adopt to ensure their SE cooperation with developing countries - to the very least - indeed contributes to promoting SD instead of self-interest. Perhaps more relevantly, these recommendations could serve to raise awareness of the role international SE cooperation plays in the achievement of SD and the need to take this dimension into account in the efforts to devise SD implementation and monitoring strategies. These could contribute to elaborate guidelines at global governance level to assess the contribution of international SE cooperation to SD.

8.5. Avenues for Further Research

From the conclusions outlined here, several paths for further research emerged. This research is - as argued - the first to comprehensively test NPE for the EU's commitment to the SD norm. This thesis being solely focused on researching the EU's perspective on SE cooperation, it would also be interesting to extend the research into China's point of view. Exploration especially into how China perceives SE cooperation with the EU and whether it considers the cooperation relevant to its own SE transition would add valuable information as to the actual effectiveness of European efforts. This is particularly the case since SE cooperation has become a

standard element of bilateral cooperation with China carried out by other countries. The US for example has a dedicated programme for SE cooperation with China as well as a Clean Energy Research Centre and international institutions like the World Bank, the ADB or the UN all have specific programmes on the issue as well. As SE cooperation seems to have become a widespread foreign policy tool, investigation into China's assessment of the EU's SE cooperation, compared to others could shed light into its comparative efficiency and relevance to the Chinese context both in terms of SD contribution as well as foreign policy benefits. On the EU side, including EU member states' very active cooperation with China on SE, especially in relation to developing European external energy relations would be another interesting perspective to take as well as investigating in more details the SE cooperation by specific institutions. The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) for example was found to have dedicated links with China on SE and the European Investment Bank (EIB) is appearing to play a growing role in SE cooperation, as is started to being researched (Gippner 2016) especially now that China is not considered a developing country anymore.

Although China constituted a relevant country case for this study, it is acknowledged in the NPE literature to occupy a somewhat unusual place (Mattlin 2012). Far from being a 'regular' developing country in terms of EU rules, China's size, economic, and political status in the world, and competing position on SE, puts it in a category of its own. Results obtained particularly emphasised the role interests play in the EU's motivations when cooperating with China. Although it enjoyed developing country status in EU rules in the 1994-2013 timeframe examined, it was found the country was not fully treated as such when it comes to SE relations. Due to the EU's more openly value-driven development cooperation policy – even though this has also been criticised in the literature – cooperation with a more typical developing country defined and treated as such is expected to increase the likelihood of EU compliance to its commitment to SD promotion in the world. For example, choosing a country part of the UN's Sustainable Energy For All (SE4All) initiative – a UN campaign promoting SE and energy access in developing countries – could ensure this. Adding to the NPE literature an empirical case study of a less controversial developing country where EU compliance with the promotion of SD is expected to be at its highest would constitute a valuable way to enrich the understanding of the

EU's commitment to SD and act further as a more generally characteristic test of Manners' NPE on SD.

Next to adding new country cases to the NPE literature on SD, research into other SD-related fields could contribute to expanding understanding of the promotion of SD from a sustainability aspect. The norm is composed of various dimensions of which SE is but one – even if an essential one. Deforestation, sustainable consumption and production, biodiversity, or even climate change matters could be studied in order to complete the picture of the EU's SD cooperation abroad. In the NPE field, so far only a handful of studies have ventured to hold the EU accountable to its sustainability promise, notably on biofuels (Afionis and Stringer 2014) but they do not apply Manners' PAI. In view of this, further studies into the SD norm to test the EU's commitment using this analytical framework more systematically could also help refine the PAI framework for the SD norm.

Finally, beyond its relevance for testing NPE, a normative approach using a tailored framework such as the PAI analytical tool could be further developed and used in order to evaluate the contribution of international SE cooperation to global SD goals. Since the SE has been placed at the centre of the SD global agenda, studies have multiplied measuring, assessing, and guiding the shift to SE. Examples of the types of tools developed by researchers and authoritative bodies include blueprints for setting up and managing a SE transition within a country¹³⁷, methodologies for SE development at regional level¹³⁸, SE strategies for SD¹³⁹, and the elaboration of indicators for measuring and monitoring progress towards SE¹⁴⁰. Such assessment is essential to determine the trajectory in the achievement of a more sustainable form of development. However so far, a preliminary literature search hinted at the fact that international cooperation has so far relatively been left out of such assessment. The closest attempts evaluated voluntary public-private partnerships designed to

137 See for example IAEA et al (2005) or IEA (2014) for the work of international organisations on the topic.

138 See Cosmi et al (2015).

139 See Midilli et al (2006).

140 See Vera and Langlois (2007) for general energy indicators on SE and See Streimikiene and Šivickas (2008) for the EU's energy policy indicators framework.

“complement government-led action in realising sustainable development” (UN [no date]c) following the Rio+20 conference¹⁴¹. International cooperation has been utilised as another vector for supporting developing country’s SE transitions by international institutions and integrated by many developed countries as part of their development programmes. As such, international SE cooperation has come to constitute a key contributor to SD progress. Yet as this research has shown, SE cooperation is often embedded into economic, security, or political interests that eventually harm sustainability objectives. Therefore, making sure this dimension’s contribution to SD is also reflected in the larger assessment of global progress towards SD is necessary in order to complete the picture. Manners’ NPE approach and PAI applied to the SD norm – since they enable international SE cooperation to be tested for its actual contribution to promoting SD rather than self-serving interests – highlight the application of normative approaches to doing so. Further research could therefore refine the use of such a normative tool into assessing the contribution of international cooperation to achieving SD.

8.6. Academic Contribution and Concluding Remarks

This thesis makes several original contributions to the existing NPE field of study. First of all, this work offers a comprehensive empirical study into the EU’s commitment to the promotion of the SD norm abroad. NPE has become a very popular approach to study the EU from a normative point of view and gave rise to a large body of empirical literature testing Manners’ conceptualisation of the EU. Many of the nine core and minor norms constitutive of the EU’s assumed different identity have been studied empirically. However, being conclusive about such a complex and multifaceted question as pinpointing the EU’s identity requires at least to have tested all these norms as it is the proven commitment and ability to promote them in the world that will determine if the EU is to be called a normative power. As a self-proclaimed green leader, the EU’s commitment to SD is not simply enshrined as an objective of the Union but it is also part of the Union’s self-representation. Whilst the

141 See Beisheim (2012).

SD norm has already been investigated to some degree, this study provides a comprehensive evaluation of the EU's accountability to environmental sustainability by applying Manners' dedicated analytical framework to test the NPE approach. The tripartite analysis into policies, conduct, and implementation of the cooperation from the EU's perspective – themselves investigated from three different angles each – enables a holistic evaluation of the EU's SD commitment both in terms of the promotion of the norm as well as the quality of its promotion.

In a connected manner, using the PAI framework also allows methodological contributions to be made. Employing this analytical tool expands its application to a further case study and develops the understanding of its use for testing the NPE approach. Other frameworks have been developed and applied to demonstrate or invalidate European normative identity claims, but so far only a few studies have made use of the full set of criteria developed by Manners. By rolling out the whole framework, this thesis provides empirical evidence into its applicability as well as insights into some of the challenges these methods involve.

Thirdly, SE was used as the field through which to test the EU's SD promotion. SD being a principle and development paradigm, it has to be applied to one of its constitutive fields in order to be tested. This study links SE – EE and RE – to the investigation into the SD norm, in that sense 'normalising' it. Considering the essential role sustainable energy plays to achieve a more sustainable development and mitigate some of the greatest risks posed to the planet, like climate change, focusing on SE enables a key element of the SD agenda to be brought into the study of NPE.

Finally, investigating the EU's promotion of SD through its relations with China empirically expands the corpus of NPE-related case studies on EU-China relations. China is not only one of the EU's ten strategic partners but also one of the most relevant when it comes to SE cooperation, due to China's exceptional environmental impact relative to other countries. Whilst existing studies on human rights promotion are essential to keep the EU accountable to its promises, delving into the EU's SE cooperation contributes by adding an environmental dimension to NPE case studies on China, as well as a valuable litmus test on the EU's identity.

It is part of the ongoing academic debate around the NPE concept that it is criticised by some to be positively biased towards the EU. Sjursen (2006) sees it rather as a self-representation of the EU and how it wishes to be perceived whilst Diez (2013) criticises Manners' famous statement about the EU having always been and always remaining a normative power (Manners 2008: 45) for the lack of critical thinking this tends to impose on assessments of the EU. According to some scholars, the resulting effect is the equally positive bias of NPE researchers towards their study subject (Forsberg 2011). It is the duty of researchers to remain critical of their research and show awareness for such debates and opinions as well as for their own vision of the EU – the researcher acquired most of her academic and some of her professional experience in the European studies field, institutions or affiliated having worked as a *stagiaire* for the Commission and as an expert on one mission for the EU-China Clean Energy Centre (EC2).

However, it is not the aim of this thesis to make use of the NPE approach for the sake of 'EUlogising' (Vasilyan 2014) the EU as some form of morally superior kind of actor in international relations. Instead this work is attempting quite the opposite by critically testing the EU's self-imposed normative commitment conceptualised by Manners, using its corresponding tripartite analytical framework to ensure this is carried out objectively with the best-adapted tools. This choice has been deemed best-suited to assess the EU's normative pursuits following critical investigations. The rigorous application of the framework with its three normative dimensions drawn from procedural ethics, and their three criteria each, is believed to vouch for the objective nature of the evaluation. The very nuanced results obtained in this thesis should underpin this further.

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List of Abbreviations

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| ACP | Africa Caribbean and Pacific countries |
| ADEME | Agence de l'Environnement et de la Maîtrise du Territoire |
| AIDCO | EuropeAid Cooperation Office |
| BRICS | Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa |
| CASS | Chinese Academy for Social Science |
| CCS | Carbon Capture and Storage |
| CDM | Clean Development Mechanism |
| CENTEC | Centre for Environmental Technology |
| CNREC | China National Renewable Energy Centre |
| CO ₂ | Carbon Dioxide |
| CREIA | Chinese Renewable Energy Industries Association |
| CSP | Country Strategy Papers |
| DCI | Development Cooperation Instrument |
| DG | Directorate General |
| DG Clima | Directorate General for Climate Action |
| DG Connect | Directorate General for Digital Economy and Society |
| DG Devco | Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development |
| DG Energy | Directorate General for Energy |
| DG Enterprise | Directorate General for Enterprise and Industry |
| DG Environment | Directorate General for the Environment |
| DG Infso | Directorate General for Information Society and Media |
| DG Move | Directorate General for Mobility and Transport |
| DG Regio | Directorate General for Regional Policy |
| DG Relex | Directorate General for External Relations |
| DG RTD | Directorate General for Research and Innovation |

| | |
|----------|---|
| DG Trade | Directorate General for Trade |
| DG Tren | DG for Transport and Energy |
| EAP | Environmental Action Programme |
| EC | European Communities |
| ECD | European Consensus on Development |
| ECT | Energy Charter Treaty |
| EC2 | Europe China Clean Energy Centre |
| ECSC | European Coal and Steel Community |
| EC-Link | EU-China Eco-cities |
| EE | Energy Efficiency |
| EEAS | European External Action Service |
| EEC | European Economic Community |
| EEP | Energy and Environment Programme |
| EESC | European Economic and Social Committee |
| EIA | Energy Information Administration |
| EIB | European Investment Bank |
| ENRTP | Environment and Natural Resources Thematic Programme |
| EPC | European Political Cooperation |
| ERI | Energy Research Institute |
| ESEEC | Improving Environmental and Safety Performance in the Electrical and Electronics Industry Project |
| ETS | Emissions Trading Scheme |
| EU | European Union |
| EUCCC | European Chamber of Commerce in China |
| EUCTP | EU-China Trade Project |
| EUDC | European Delegation to China |
| EUPDSF | EU-China Policy Dialogues Support Facility |
| FDI | Foreign Direct Investment |
| FP | Framework Programme |

| | |
|--------|---|
| FYP | Five Year Plan |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| GhG | Greenhouse Gas |
| G8 | Group of Eight |
| GIZ | German Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit |
| GMO | Genetically Modified Organism |
| G20 | Group of Twenty |
| IAEA | International Atomic Energy Agency |
| IEA | International Energy Agency |
| ICARE | China-EU Institute for Clean and Renewable Energy |
| IPCC | Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change |
| IPEEC | International Partnership for Energy Efficiency Cooperation |
| IPR | Intellectual Property Rights |
| IR | International Relations |
| IRENA | International Renewable Energy Agency |
| MDG | Millennium Development Goals |
| MIIT | Ministry of Industry and Information Technology |
| MIP | Multi-annual Indicative Programme |
| MoA | Ministry of Agriculture |
| MofCOM | Ministry of Commerce |
| MoHURD | Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development |
| MoST | Ministry of Science and Technology |
| MW | Megawatt |
| NDRC | National Development and Reform Commission |
| NEA | National Energy Administration |
| NEC | National Energy Commission |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organisation |
| NIP | National Indicative Programme |

| | |
|-----------|--|
| NPE | Normative Power Europe |
| OECD | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| PAI | Principles, Actions and Impact |
| ParisTech | Institute des Sciences et Technologies de Paris |
| PCA | Partnership Cooperation Agreement |
| PV | Solar photovoltaics |
| R&D | Research and Development |
| RE | Renewable Energy |
| SCP | Sustainable Consumption and Production |
| SD | Sustainable Development |
| SDS | Sustainable Development Strategy |
| SE | Sustainable Energy |
| SE4All | Sustainable Energy For All |
| SERC | State Electricity Regulation Commission of China |
| SET | Strategic Energy Technology |
| SME | Small and Medium-sized Enterprise |
| TEC | Treaty establishing the European Communities |
| UK | United Kingdom |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNCHE | United Nations Conference on the Human Environment |
| UNDESA | United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNEP | United Nations Environmental Programme |
| UNFCCC | United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change |
| USA | United States of America |
| WCED | World Commission on Environment and Development |
| WSSD | World Summit on Sustainable Development |
| WTO | World Trade Organisation |

Appendix A - Table of Interviewees

| Code | Institutional affiliation | Location of the interview | |
|--|--------------------------------|---------------------------|----------|
| European Commission | | | |
| EU-1 | DG Clima | Official 1 | Brussels |
| EU-2 | | Official 2 | Brussels |
| EU-3 | | Official 3 | Brussels |
| EU-4 | | Official 4 | Brussels |
| EU-5 | DG Development Cooperation | Official 1 (senior) | Brussels |
| EU-6 | | Official 2 | Brussels |
| EU-7 | DG Energy | Official 1 | Brussels |
| EU-8 | | Official 2 | Brussels |
| EU-9 | | Official 3 | Brussels |
| EU-10 | | Official 4 | Phone |
| EU-11 | DG Enterprise and Industry | Official 1 | Brussels |
| EU-12 | | Official 2 | Brussels |
| EU-13 | DG Environment | Official | Brussels |
| EU-14 | DG RTD | Official 1 | Brussels |
| EU-15 | | Official 2 | Brussels |
| EU-16 | | Official 3 | Brussels |
| EU-17 | | Official 4 | Brussels |
| EU-18 | | Official 5 | Beijing |
| EU-19 | DG Trade | Official 1 | Brussels |
| EU-20 | | Official 2 | Beijing |
| EU-21 | DG Move | Official | Brussels |
| External Action Service (EEAS) | | | |
| EU-22 | China unit | Official 1 | Brussels |
| EU-23 | | Official 2 | Phone |
| EU-24 | Global Issues unit | Official | Brussels |
| EU-25 | Central Asia | Official | Phone |
| Council of the EU | | | |
| EU-26 | Asia division | Official (senior) | Brussels |
| European Parliament | | | |
| EU-27 | DG External Policies of the EU | Senior analyst 1 | Brussels |
| EU-28 | | Senior analyst 2 | Brussels |
| EU-29 | | Senior analyst 3 | Brussels |
| European Economic and Social Council (EESC) | | | |
| EU-30 | Presidency | Official 1 (senior) | Brussels |
| EU-31 | | Official 2 | |

| Code | Institutional affiliation | | Location of the interview |
|---|---|--------------------|---------------------------|
| EU-32 | Administrator - Transport, energy, infrastructures, information society section | Official | |
| EU-33 | Permanent Study Group on International Trade | Official (senior) | Brussels |
| Joint Research Centre | | | |
| EU-34 | International Scientific Relations | Official | Phone |
| Executive Agency for Competitiveness and Innovation | | | |
| EU-35 | China, Japan, Korea focus | Officer | Brussels |
| Europe-China Clean Energy Centre (EC2) | | | |
| EU-36 | | Officer 1 | Beijing |
| EU-37 | | Officer 2 | Phone |
| EU-China Policy Dialogue Support Facility II (EU-China PDSF) | | | |
| EU-38 | | Officer 1 (senior) | Beijing |
| EU-39 | | Officer 2 (senior) | |
| EU-China Trade Project II (EUCTP) | | | |
| EU-40 | | Officer 1 | Beijing |
| EU-41 | | Officer 2 | |
| EU SME Centre | | | |
| EU-42 | | Officer | Beijing |
| Switch Asia | | | |
| EU-43 | Project related to China 1 | Officer 1 | Beijing |
| CN-1 | Project related to China 2 | Officer 2 | Beijing |
| EU-44 | Project related to China 3 | Officer 3 | Wuppertal |
| EU-45 | Project related to China 4 | Officer 4 | Wuppertal |
| European Investment Bank | | | |
| EU-46 | | Official (senior) | Phone |
| European Member States embassies | | | |
| EU-47 | UK Embassy to China | Official 1 | Beijing |
| EU-48 | | Official 2 | |

| Code | Institutional affiliation | | Location of the interview |
|------------------------------------|---|------------|---------------------------|
| EU-49 | French embassy to China | Official | Beijing |
| EU-50 | Royal Danish embassy | Official | Beijing |
| EU-51 | Swedish embassy | Official | Beijing |
| EU-52 | Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) | Official | Beijing |
| Chambers of Commerce | | | |
| EU-53 | French Chamber of Commerce | Official | Beijing |
| EU-54 | UK Chamber of Commerce | Official | Beijing |
| EU-55 | German Chamber of Commerce | Official | Beijing |
| EU-56 | Cleantech Switzerland | Official | Beijing |
| EU-57 | EU Chamber of Commerce in China (EUCCC) | Official | Beijing |
| Chinese Institutions | | | |
| CN-2 | Embassy of the PRC to the EU | Official | Brussels |
| CN-3 | China National Renewable Energy Centre | Official | Beijing |
| CN-4 | Shanghai Caohejing Hi-Tech Park Innovation Center | Official | Shanghai |
| International Organisations | | | |
| INT-1 | UNDP China Country Office | Official 1 | Beijing |
| INT-2 | | Official 2 | |
| INT-3 | Asian development Bank (ADB) | Official | Beijing |
| INT-4 | World Bank China office | Official | Beijing |

| Code | Institutional affiliation | | Location of the interview |
|--|---|---------------------|---------------------------|
| INT-5 | International Partnership for Energy Efficiency Cooperation (IPEEC) | Official | Phone |
| INT-6 | European Charter Treat (ECT) | Official 1 (senior) | Brussels |
| INT-7 | Secretariat - Directorate for Energy Efficiency and Investment | Official 2 | Brussels |
| NGOs and Not for profit organisations | | | |
| EU 58 | Globe International | Officer | Beijing |
| CN-5 | Global Environmental Institute | Officer | Beijing |
| CN-6 | Greenpeace East Asia | Officer 1 (senior) | Beijing |
| CN-7 | | Officer 2 | |
| CN-8 | EU-China Energy trip | Officer | Beijing |
| Lobbies and industry associations | | | |
| EU-59 | EUFORES | Officer (senior) | Brussels |
| EU-60 | FORATOM | Officer | Brussels |
| CN-9 | REEP - CREIA | Officer | Beijing |
| EU-61 | EuropElectro | Officer 1 (senior) | Beijing |
| EU-62 | | Officer 2 | |
| Academics | | | |
| EU-63 | Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB) | Academic 1 (senior) | Brussels |
| EU-64 | | Academic 2 | Brussels |
| EU-65 | | Academic 3 | Brussels |
| CN-10 | Carnegie-Tsinghua Centre for Global Policy | Academic | Beijing |
| CN-11 | CASS | Academic | Beijing |
| CN-12 | Shanghai Institute for Strategic Studies | Academic 1 | Shanghai |
| CN-13 | | Academic 2 | |

Appendix B - Participant Consent Form

Title of Research Project:

EU-China Sustainable Energy Cooperation

Name of Researcher: Léa Pilsner

Initial the box if you agree with the statement to the left

1 I confirm that I have read and understand the information letter dated *[insert date]* explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.

2 I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without there being any negative consequences. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline.

You can do this by contacting directly the lead researcher – Léa Pilsner.

Contact number: + 44 (0) 7586 457 340.

Email: leapilsner@gmail.com / mllp@leeds.ac.uk

3 I understand that my responses will be kept strictly confidential. I give permission for members of the research team to have access to my anonymised responses. I understand that my name will not be linked with the research materials, and I will not be identified or identifiable in the report or reports that result from the research.

4 I agree for the data collected from me to be used in future research

5 I agree to take part in the above research project and will inform the principal investigator should my contact details change.

Name of participant

Date

Signature

(or legal representative)

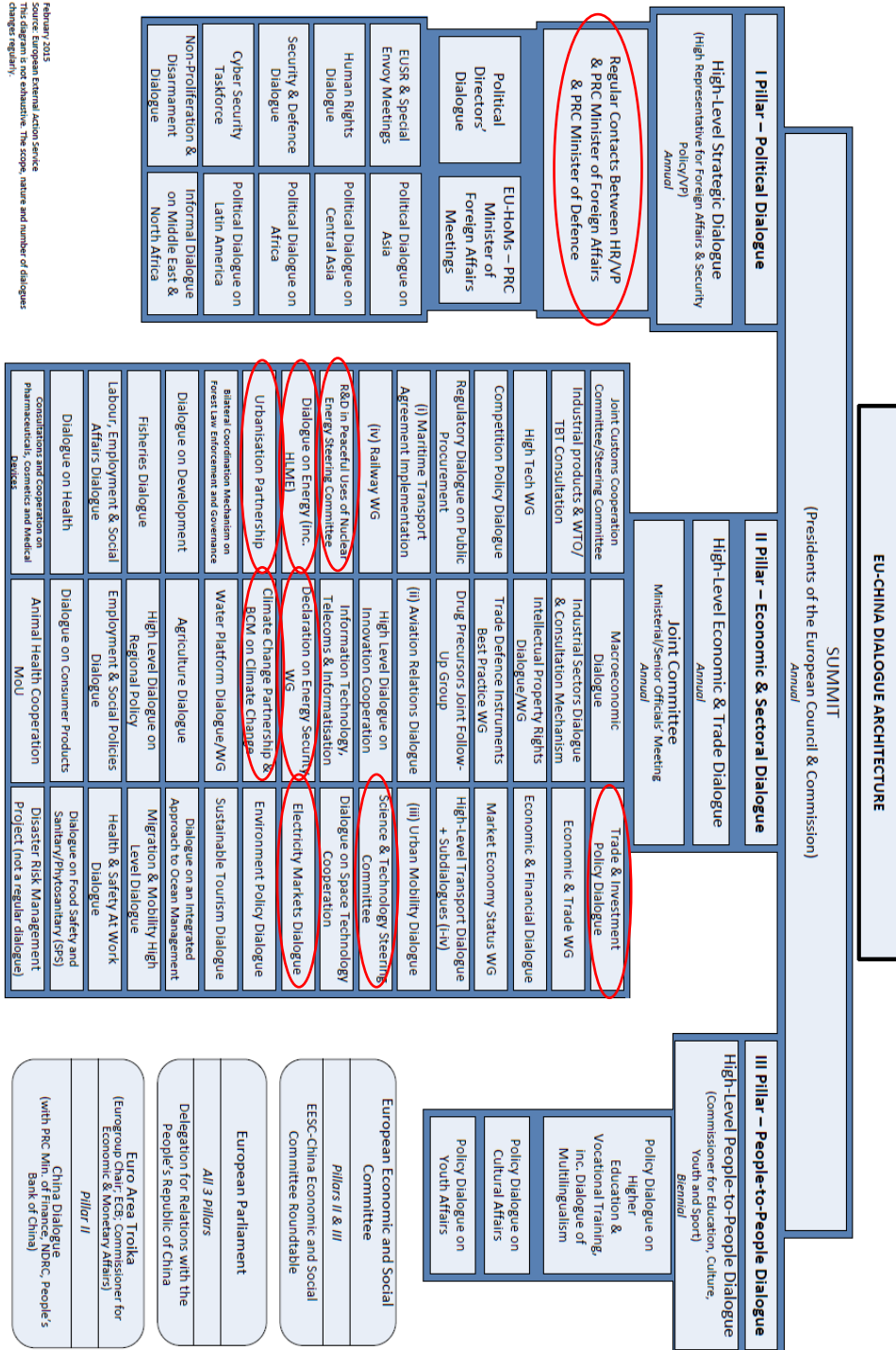
Appendix C - DG Cooperation Objectives with China on SE

(Source: Author)

| DG | Objectives with China on SE |
|------------|--|
| CLIMA | "The climate change directorate deals with policies, so our interest is to bring to China policies that are compatible with the fight against climate change. (EU-2) |
| DEVCO | "What we do, we follow a development objective, which is linked to our thematic direction" (EU-5) |
| ENERGY | "In the overall framework of our energy relations, our objectives are just to comply to the 3 main objectives of the EU: 1. Security of energy supply - We have all interest to help China to reduce its demand for the benefit of our security of supply 2. The competitiveness of the industry, the internal energy market. Discuss with the Chinese market regulations. It is going to become a big issue with China, because they are buying a lot of energy companies, like in Portugal. We think they are doing this - a part as an investment - as a kind of way of ensuring the supply of strategic resources, having posts all over the world. Let's see how it goes, but it is a real challenge. Also support the competition of European industry is helping them to sell in China. 3. Climate change strategy , the environment and SE is a key issue." (EU-8) |
| ENTERPRISE | "From our point of view, we see it as a means to pursue the general objectives of the DG ENTR and IND which is to promote business opportunities for companies from both Europe and China, and also promoting a levelled playing field, which is very important in our cooperation with China." (EU-12) |
| MOVE | "With third countries we focus on the climate change and energy aspects. If you look at the last part of the White paper (WP), there is a specific part on the external aspect of our policy. Although the work in China tends to be more specifically about air pollution and congestion. That's because they are priorities for the Chinese governments, and we don't necessarily come back and insist that we only work on the CC and energy aspects because that it is what is in our White Paper, because they are not conflicting objectives. And the kind of solutions and broad policy responses you might have on air pollution and congestion lead you in the same direction." (EU-21) |
| RELEX/EEAS | "At EEAS we do more of a policy dialogue about promoting EU interests on CC and energy. We are more about public diplomacy." (EU-23) |
| RTD | "We work within the framework of Europe 2020 and so for us the slogan is "smart, sustainable and inclusive growth". We work along those lines and everything we do must contribute to this and that's also what we do. So with the Chinese, when we decide on priorities together we stick to smart, sustainable and inclusive. [...] This is our guiding principle." (EU-18) |
| TRADE | "[regarding] energy issues, [we work on] all issues which have economic impact. So we discussed energy-related issues, standard issue in a bunch of areas, in energy efficiency, that's an obvious area. [...] So all that [is] to say that under that umbrella there are also a lot of energy-related things, but more in the sense that they facilitate the economic exchange in relation to energy." (EU-19) |

Appendix D - EU-China Dialogue Architecture

(Source: European Commission 2015)¹⁴²



February 2015
Source: European External Action Service
Source: European Commission, 'The scope, nature and number of dialogues changes regularly.'

142 The main known dialogues which include energy issues have been highlighted in red by this author.

Appendix E - The Institutionalisation Process of EU-China Energy Cooperation

(Source: Author, inspired from Snyder (2009: 770-789))

| Year | Institution | Main focus | Normative Framework | Parties and activities | Significance | Outcomes |
|------|--|--------------------|---|---|--|----------|
| 1994 | Energy Conference* ⁸ | Energy research | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Platform for exchange between companies • Bi-annual • TREN (Energy) + MoST⁹ • Focus includes RE – 2010 event addressed smart grid and electric vehicles • Annual • Senior level meetings (bi-annual according to press release) | Energy cooperation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First regular exchange mechanism on energy issues SE • Started off SE exchange | |
| 1996 | Energy Working Group | Energy cooperation | 1996 Joint declaration at occasion of DG Energy Commissioner's visit to China | | Energy cooperation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First regular and permanent energy cooperation mechanism SE • Laid foundation for institutionalised energy cooperation • Provided channel for SE cooperation to develop and take off | |
| 2004 | Nuclear Energy Agreement | Nuclear Energy | Agreement for R&D Cooperation for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperation in peaceful uses of nuclear energy | | |

[8] Stars indicates the main energy cooperation mechanisms

[9] Energy was originally dealt under the DG for Transport and Energy (TREN). In 2010 the DG was split in two with DG Energy one the one side and DG Move in charge of Mobility and Transport on the other.

| Year | Institution | Main focus | Normative Framework | Parties and activities | Significance | Outcomes |
|------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|--|--|---|
| 2005 | Energy Dialogue* | Energy cooperation | MoU on Energy and Transport Strategies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established in September 2005 at 8th EU-China Summit Annual (first meeting held in March 2006) DG Energy and NDRC then NEA since 2008 Feeds into EU-China summits Upgraded to ministerial “High-Level” Energy Dialogue Six main areas of cooperation – RE, smart grids, EE in the building sector, clean coal, nuclear energy and energy law | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upgraded and diversified cooperation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> High Level Energy Dialogue High Level Energy Meeting |
| 2005 | Action Plan on Clean Coal | Zero emissions Coal technology | Partnership on Climate Change | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DG TREN and MOST Develop and demonstrate clean coal technology in China | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Energy Formalises and creates a dedicated framework for clean coal technology | |

| Year | Institution | Main focus | Normative Framework | Parties and activities | Significance | Outcomes |
|------|--|---------------|-------------------------------|---|--|----------|
| 2005 | Action Plan on Industrial Cooperation on Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energies | Industrial EE | Partnership on Climate Change | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DG TREN and MoST • Reduce the cost of clean energy technology and support their deployment and dissemination • Cooperation on energy markets, security of supply, and protection of the global environment • Advice and capacity building to national and local authorities (ibid) | <p>SE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Underscores EE and RE cooperation commitment • Embeds EE and RE cooperation in climate change cooperation | |
| 2007 | HL Trade Dialogue | Trade | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European Commissioners for Competition Policy, Economic and Monetary Affairs, Trade and other members of the European Commission and the Chinese Vice-Premier for Economic, Energy and Financial Affairs as well as relevant ministers and vice-ministers • Addresses imbalance in trade flows including in the field of energy • Provides cooperation to foster “better and cleaner technologies for energy production” • Activities on energy include standards and public procurement | <p>Energy and SE cooperation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anchored energy and SE issues into trade cooperation • Diversified channels for SE cooperation | |

| Year | Institution | Main focus | Normative Framework | Parties and activities | Significance | Outcomes |
|------|--|---|---------------------|--|--|--|
| 2008 | EURATOM-China Agreement for R&D Cooperation in the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy | Research in the peaceful use of nuclear energy | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DG RTD and MoST, the China Atomic Energy Authority and the National Nuclear Safety Administration • Implemented by a steering committee | <p>Energy cooperation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deepened energy cooperation to nuclear energy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (2010) Sub-committees on fission-coordinated actions and nuclear security and safeguards • (2011) Sub-committee on nuclear safety |
| 2009 | Dialogue on Energy Performance and Quality in the Construction Sector | Promote energy efficiency practices in buildings and construction processes | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DG Energy and MoHURD • Annual technical conference • Focus on capacity building in EE in the field of standards, regulations, legislations, and training | <p>SE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formalised and deepened cooperation in the field of energy efficiency in buildings. • Multiplies the fields in which SE dialogues are being pursued | |

| Year | Institution | Main focus | Normative Framework | Parties and activities | Significance | Outcomes |
|------|--|-------------------|--|---|--|----------|
| 2010 | Working group on industrial energy efficiency and greenhouse gas emissions reduction | Energy efficiency | MoU on a Dialogue and Consultation Mechanism on Industrial sectors -2009 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DG ENTR and MIT • Sector-based energy efficiency actions in industry, product policy and a sustainable industrial policy | <p>SE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formalises cooperation in EE action in the industry • Multiplies the fields in which SE dialogues are being pursued | |
| 2010 | Joint Statement on Energy Research and Innovation | Energy research | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DG RTD and MoST • Cooperation on concentrated solar panels and innovative batteries • Support to the twinning of projects, joint programmes or joint calls based on mutual interest and equal partnership | <p>SE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional support for joint research cooperation on innovative SE fields | |

| Year | Institution | Main focus | Normative Framework | Parties and activities | Significance | Outcomes |
|------|-----------------------------------|--|---------------------|--|---|--|
| 2012 | High Level Energy Meeting* | High-level Energy cooperation platform | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First meeting on 3 May 2012 • President level - President Barroso and Chinese Vice-Premier Li Keqiang • Gathered 27 EU member states energy ministers or representatives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy cooperation • Political endorsement of the strategic nature of energy for the bilateral relations. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urbanisation Partnership • Signature of Joint Declaration on Energy Security between NEA and DG • Energy and establishment of working group • Joint Statement for Enhanced Cooperation on Electricity Markets |
| 2012 | Urbanisation Partnership* | Sustainable urbanisation | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DG Energy (coordinates across the Commission) and NDRRC • Fields of interest include – EE in buildings, energy technology research, innovative RE integration in urban areas • European and Chinese city pairing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SE • Provides another platform for SE fields to be addressed. • Embeds SE cooperation into urbanisation issues. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Urbanisation Forum • Mayors' forum • Exhibition on urbanisation |

| Year | Institution | Main focus | Normative Framework | Parties and activities | Significance | Outcomes |
|------|--|---------------------|---------------------|--|---|----------|
| 2012 | Joint Statement for Enhanced Cooperation on Electricity Markets | Electricity markets | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> European Commission and SERC Enhance the efficiency of electricity markets and support China in its reform process towards low-carbon economy | <p>SE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formalises SE cooperation in the field of RE grid integration, energy efficiency and demand-side management Expands SE institutionalisation to a new field | |
| 2013 | Energy Security Working Group | Energy security | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DG ENER and NEA (signed the declaration) 2013 first meeting held in Beijing; launch of the EU-China energy security cooperation roadmap Focus includes smart grids, offshore wind power, solar thermal utilisation, natural gas infrastructure | <p>Energy cooperation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expands the scope of institutionalised channel to energy security <p>SE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embeds SE into the energy security field Provides a further permanent channel for SE exchanges Diversifies SE fields of application | |