

学校代码: 10246

学 号: 19210170122

復旦大學

硕士学位论文

(学术学位)

了解欧洲联盟的规范性权力对"一带一路"倡议的影响： 意大利、塞尔维亚和拉脱维亚案例

**Understanding the Impact of the Normative Power of the European Union on
the Belt and Road Initiative:**

The Case of Italy, Serbia, and Latvia

院 系: 国际关系与公共事务学院

专 业: 中国政治和外交

姓 名: Saman Nazari

指导教师: Andrea Ghiselli 教授

完成日期: 2020年06月06日

Table of Contents

Abstract	3
1. Introduction	4
1.2 Research Question	5
1.3 Scope	5
1.4 Case Countries.....	6
1.4.1 Serbia.....	6
1.4.2 Latvia.....	7
1.4.3 Italy.....	7
1.5 Dissertation Outline.....	8
2. Background	9
2.1 EU as an Actor in the International Arena	9
2.1.1 EU Norms and Regulations	9
2.2 BRI	13
3. Literature Review	15
3.1 Institutional Norm Diffusion	15
3.2 Literature on the BRI, the Existing World Order and Europe	16
3.3 EU as a Normative Power – Critique and Arguments.....	17
4. Definitions and Theory.....	20
4.1 Social Constructivism.....	20
4.2 Norms	20
4.3 Socialisation	21
4.3.1 Mimicking	22
4.3.2 Social Influence.....	23
4.3.3 Persuasion.....	24
4.4 EU Socialisation.....	24
4.5 Criticism Against Socialisation Theory.....	25
5. Research Design and Analytic Framework.	27
5.1 Epistemology.....	27
5.2 Qualitative Content Analysis Method	27
5.3 Text Analysis.....	28
5.3.1 Data Collection.....	28
5.3.2 Sampling.....	29

5.3.2 Coding	30
5.4 Validity and Reliability	31
5.5 Methodological Issues	31
5.6 Data Analysis	32
5.7 Applying Theory	36
5.7.1 2015 Belt and Road Initiative Policy Document	37
6. Analysis	41
6.1. Italy	41
6.1.1 Norms	43
6.1.2 Relevant Interview Input	50
6.2 Latvia	52
6.2.1 Norms	52
6.2.2 Relevant Interview Input – Latvia	57
6.3 Serbia	58
6.3.1 Norms	59
6.3.2 Relevant Interview Input	66
6.4 EU	67
6.4.1 Relevant Interview Input	67
7. Discussion	70
7.1 Country Comparison	70
7.1.1 Settings	70
7.1.2 Differences Between the Cases – Norm Diffusion and Affiliation Relevance	71
7.2 Socialisation and Micro-processes	72
7.2.1 EU Socialisation Methods	73
7.3 Hypothesis and Research Question Answered	74
8. Conclusion	76
8.1 Recommendations and Alternative Theories	78
9. Appendix	80
9.1 Appendix 1 – Coding	80
9.1.1 Main Themes and Sub-themes	80
9.2 Appendix 2 – Data Collection and Sampling Process	86
9.3 Appendix 3 Qualitative Content Analysis – Full Results	86
9.3.1 2015 Belt and Road Initiative Document	86
9.3.2 Case Countries	92
9.4 Appendix 4 – Interview Questions and Interviews	119
9.4.1 Questions	119

9.4.2 Interviews	120
10. Sources	133
11. Acknowledgements	143
12. Declaration of Originality and Licensing Agreement	146

Abstract

Chinese

中国于 2013 年提出“一带一路”倡议 (BRI)，引起了许多国家的关注。”一带一路“倡议承诺对包括欧洲在内的世界各地做出大量投资，引发了关于其如何影响国际政治的热烈讨论。尽管已经发表了许多关于“一带一路”如何影响不同国家和地区趋势的研究，但还没有关于这些国家在与中国互动中如何尝试使“一带一路”社会化的研究。本论文旨在通过研究一个国家与欧盟的隶属关系水平（通常被认为是规范性力量）是否等于中国与该国之间的 BRI 互动中存在的欧盟规范水平来为这一领域做出贡献。论文对与中国和三个案例国家（意大利，拉脱维亚，塞尔维亚）的“一带一路”倡议互动相关的官方协议和其他文件进行了定性分析。论文还研究了 2015 年首次定义 BRI 时 BRI 中存在哪些规范，以便更好地了解哪些规范源自欧盟。为了补充论文的数据并为其提供更多的背景信息，本文还与国别专家和中欧专家进行了专家访谈，并在需要时也利用了二手或第三手资源。论文得出的结论是，欧盟的内部规范正在影响“一带一路”倡议和隶属于欧盟事务的水平。一个国家与欧盟的隶属关系越强，中国与该国的 BRI 互动中就会出现更多的欧盟规范。与中国互动中出现的隶属关系水平和欧盟规范可能会随着时间而变化，并会受到案例国对欧盟的态度和对欧盟的依赖度的影响。

关键词：一带一路倡议，欧盟，欧盟规范权，中东欧国家对中关系

English

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) was announced in 2013 and has attracted much attention from many countries. Promising significant investments all over the world, including in Europe, the BRI has prompted vibrant discussion regarding how it will shape international politics. While many studies have been published on how the BRI is influencing trends in different countries and regions, there has not been any research on how those countries try to socialize the BRI during their interaction with China. This dissertation aims to contribute to the by looking at if the level of a country's affiliation with the EU, which is usually considered as being a normative power, equals the level of EU norms present in China's BRI interactions with that country. The dissertation used a qualitative content analysis of official agreements and other documents related to China's BRI interactions with our three case countries (Italy, Latvia, Serbia) to study the topic. The dissertation also studied what norms were present in the BRI when the BRI was first defined in 2015 to be better able to see what norms originate from the EU. To complement our data and give our data more context, we have also conducted expert interviews with country experts as well as EU-China experts while also utilizing second hand or tertiary sources if it is needed. The dissertation concludes that the EU's internal norms are affecting the BRI and the level of affiliation to the EU matters. The more a country is affiliated

with the EU, the more EU norms are present in China's BRI interactions with said country. Affiliation levels and EU norms present in China's interactions can change over time and be affected by the case country's attitude towards, and dependency of, the EU.

Keywords:

Belt and Road Initiative, The European Union, Normative power EU, CEE-China Relations.

1. Introduction

While there have been academic papers written and discussions had on how the Chinese Belt and Road initiative (BRI) affects the European Union, no discussion has yet to be done on if the BRI is affected by the European Union (EU). The international system has been formed by the western powers, with all the norms and most institutions that comes with it (Johnston, 2019). Therefore, this dissertation observes a need to understand how the BRI has been affected by the norms of the EU.

This dissertation aims to understand if the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is influenced by the European Union's internal norms when China is through the BRI interacting with European countries. By doing so, this dissertation hopes to understand better the BRI as well as China's relation to the EU and the success or failure of the EU's normative influence.

The agency of small actors, such as EU countries, to have a say in and be able to shape the interactions with larger ones, such as China, has been overlooked in the research done regarding the BRI. This paper also aims to highlight the possible influence these smaller actors can have on their relations with China in the context of the BRI.

The EU has been named a normative power because of their ambition of promoting norms internationally. Normative power is important for the EU as the EU lacks other types of foreign policy instruments due to the EU not being an actual state. The EU lacks policy instruments such as an independent military and having a typical decision-making structure. The norms promoted by the EU in their external relations are, according to Sicurelli (2010, p. 13), the same norms that are in the foundation of the European Union. Sicurelli (ibid) further writes that the way international actors interpret these norms may have consequences for the EU's foreign policy preferences as these norms might influence the EU's relations with the actor in question.

The focus of this dissertation is the Belt and Road initiative, which is a Chinese global development strategy, containing many different projects, that seeks to improve connectivity between China and large parts of the rest of the world. Affecting over 62% of the world's population (Bird, Lebrand & Venables, 2019, p.2), the project can put China into a position of significant influence over the countries involved in the Initiative and have significant ramifications for the power balance of the world (Chatzky & McBride, 2019). The BRI stretches from China to Europe, covering a large variety of countries, including countries in Central and East Europe (CEE) (Mitrovic, 2019, p.206). Before the BRI launched, another initiative was ongoing in CEE called the 16+1 framework. The 16+1 contained 16 countries from CEE, including both Latvia and Serbia, which are two of the countries this dissertation will focus on, and China (being the +1). Some of these countries are within the EU, while others are in the accession process of joining the EU. The 16+1 framework now seems to be integrated into the

BRI. China is now coming with real promises of investment (Brown, 2017). The 16+1 has changed its name to the 17+1 as Greece has become a member (Kavalski, 2019).

1.2 Research Question

The research questions this dissertation aims to answer is: Are the internal norms of the EU affecting China's Belt and Road Initiative related interactions with European countries and if so, how does the level of affiliation to the EU affect the degree of norms noticed in the interactions?

This dissertation defines "Interactions" as agreement writing, official statements and documents, projects, and other types of actions concerning the BRI. These norms can, for example, be present in the language used in the documents, agreements, statements, the actions taken during projects, and other deeds. Answering the research questions would answer which normative affect the EU has on China in relation to the BRI in Europe and explain the normative power of the EU.

Hypothesis: The EU's internal norms will be reflected differently in the language and deeds China use in their BRI interactions with our case countries depending on the affiliation of the country to the EU. A higher degree of affiliation should mean more EU norms in China's interactions with the country.

1.3 Scope

This study will focus on the Belt and Road Initiative in Europe and the European Union. While the BRI is much larger than just the initiatives efforts in Europe, this dissertation will not explore the Initiatives efforts in these other regions.

This dissertation will focus on three different countries, Italy, Latvia, Serbia, to analyse and understand the effect of European norms on the BRI. We will first analyse China's different actions, agreements, speeches, and more concerning the BRI that are related to our case countries, to see what norms are present in them. After that, we will compare them with the norms present in the EU, as discussed before. We will not limit the norms we are going to look for; instead, we are going to perform our analysis and see what norms are present in our data and compare them with the internal norms of the EU. The main goal is to show norm diffusion.

As the BRI is an ongoing initiative, we need to limit the time scope of the study as things might change during the time of this study. The study's scope will be from 2010 to September 2019, covering the lifespan of the BRI with a three-year margin to study the context of our case countries and their relations with China even shortly before the BRI's creation. Furthermore, it also gives us the ability to understand the context of the BRI better. We will not cover the 17+1 in this dissertation due to time restraints.

1.4 Case Countries

To answer our research question, we are going to use three case countries. The purpose of using case countries is that they will give us clear examples we can try our hypothesis and research question on. The case countries used are Serbia, Latvia, and Italy.

The overall reason for choosing these countries are the different levels of association they have with the EU. Serbia is a country that is in the process of joining, Italy is a core and founding EU state and Latvia a relatively new EU nation-state.

Before conducting this dissertations research, this dissertation conducted a preliminary study to see if the cases were suitable and to see if there were any norms present at all. Some of the internal norms that the preliminary study has found in the EU's Lisbon treaty's article 2 are norms regarding: "human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights". Furthermore, in article 3, norms regarding cultural preservation and sustainable development are found (EU, n.d. p.15). The preliminary research has also shown that the BRI has some of the EU's normative language in their memorandum of understanding with Latvia, Serbia, and Italy. The memorandums written between China and our case countries are advocating cooperation, sustainability, peace, and mutual benefits (Republic of Latvia and People's Republic of China, 2019, p. 1-5. & Italian Republic., and the People's Republic of China, 2019, p.1-6) as well as the rule of law (People's Republic of China, Hungary, and Republic of Serbia, 2015).

1.4.1 Serbia

The first case country is Serbia, who applied for full EU membership in 2009, was confirmed as a candidate in 2012 and is now having accession negotiations with the EU (BBC, 2014). Serbia has a problematic past, and current difficult diplomatic situation with Kosovo. This difficult diplomatic situation is an obstacle in their membership into the EU (Brajshori, 2019). While still not being an EU country, Serbia is to some extent integrating into the European Union and is going through a process of socialisation into the EU's norms and rules through the accession negotiations process (Braniff, 2010, p.180). Serbia is a part of the 17+1 framework and is a Belt and Road Initiative member (Kavalski, 2019). Serbia has portrayed itself as China's leading partner in Europe and has already received substantial investments from China (Surk, 2017).

This dissertation chooses Serbia as a case because of them being in the process of joining the EU while being a part of the EU enlargement strategy (Holman, 2017, p.7). As Serbia is not yet a full EU member, they have freedoms that the other two countries do not have regarding what norms and regulations they need to follow. Serbia being a 17+1 member and Serbia's strong relations with China and the EU, make them a compelling case to study.

While we acknowledge that countries like Albania and North Macedonia are countries that are in the EU accession process, their accession negotiations with the EU started in March 2020, after our cases were selected (Pisonero-Hernandez and Smerilli, 2020). Montenegro was one of our other candidates, as they are on their way of joining the EU. The accession date is set to 2025 and Montenegro has been argued to be likely to achieve what is required of them for joining (Lilyanova, 2018, p.1). With all this said, Albania, North Macedonia and Montenegro are all smaller countries than Serbia and from what we have seen have significantly less interactions with China. Serbia both has a better depth of data, deeper and longer interactions with China, and represents its category of countries well, making generalisation easier.

1.4.2 Latvia

The second case country is Latvia, which is a relatively new EU country situated by the Baltic sea. They joined the EU in 2004 and have been a rapidly developing country. Latvia has, in the past, been a Soviet state but became a democracy directly after their independence (Matthews-Ferrero, Bruge, and Steenland, 2019). Latvia is a well-integrated country in the EU that have had different important political roles (Austers, 2014, p.31 & 39). Latvia has a central part in the 17+1 as they host the Logistic Coordination Centre and is a member of the BRI (Pendrakowska, 2017, p.500). Latvia joined the BRI in 2016 (Yongqi and Yun, 2016) and are to act as a relationship facilitator between other EU countries as well as the Eurasian Economic Union. Latvia is also a trade hub in the region (Kols, 2017).

This dissertation picked Latvia as a case because of their membership in the EU, 17+1, and BRI. Latvia is a relatively new EU member, joining the EU in 2004, which makes them interesting to study. The process of joining the EU is a lengthy process that makes the country adapt to EU regulations, norms, and institutions (European Commission, 2016). Hence, if the EU integration has worked, these norms should be present in China's interactions with Latvia. While there are other new EU members, such as Romania and Croatia, it seems their interactions with China in relation to the BRI are relatively small, compared to even Latvia. We have been unable to find sufficient data or possibilities of collecting data that would allow for good analysis. We argue that Latvia can be used to generalise these new EU countries involved in the 17+1 relatively well, as they are a key part of this framework as we have discussed before.

1.4.3 Italy

The third and last case country is Italy. Italy is a country in the Mediterranean that has been a central part of European economic and political unification. Italy has the third-largest economy in the Euro-zone but has, in recent years, suffered from economic problems (CIA World Factbook, 2019). Italy has historically been a terminal into Europe for the ancient Silk Road. In 2019, Italy became the first G7 country to join the BRI and have created controversy in the EU. Through the BRI, China has opened up the possibility of investing in developing Italian ports and giving Italy back its historical role as a trading terminal into Europe once again (Lau, 2019).

The reason this dissertation choose Italy as a case is due to Italy being a core EU state and a G7 member (Toussaint, 2011). Furthermore, Italy is a country that has not had any institutional relations with China previously (Rizzi, 2018, p. 239-278). While Latvia is an EU country connected to China through the 17+1, Italy has no such previous connections to China as previously mentioned. Italy should have a higher association with the EU than Latvia as Italy

was a founding member and have not had any strong associations with China before the BRI. The reason we did not choose other core-EU states such as Germany and France are due to these countries not having the same kind of relationship with China. France and Italy have not signed any BRI MoU's with China. Italy is the only core EU state that has done so and is a significant case that is more valuable to study compared to other cases.

1.5 Dissertation Outline

In the background section, coming up next, the EU as an actor in the international arena will be discussed in order to give some context on the BRI. In the same chapter, we will also be defining the internal norms of the EU, which this dissertation will use in its analysis. Thereafter, we will look at the background of the BRI to better understand the meaning, scope, and importance of the initiative, before moving on to presenting our definitions and theories. In the definitions and theories section, we will discuss social constructivism, define norms, and socialisation as well as the different micro-processes of socialisation and the EU's different socialisation methods before finishing the chapter with some criticism against socialisation theory. The next chapter is the literature review. In the literature review, we will look at the literature on institutional norm diffusion, literature on the BRI, the existing world order and Europe, and some literature on EU as a normative power.

In the chapter on research design, we will discuss our methodology, which is a qualitative content analysis using a socialisation theory from social constructivism. As a part of the methodology, this dissertation will analyse the EU's social environment, giving us some context on the EU as a social environment, as required by our theoretical framework. After that, the dissertation presents an analysis of the BRI's 2015 policy document to establish the norms that are already found in the BRI. After establishing a methodology, the dissertation analyses the case countries with the theories discussed in previous chapters. Each country also has a subsection with inputs from expert interviews. After this, the dissertation will present notes from EU-China experts not directly related to our cases, but that contribute to our understanding of the normative power of the EU on China's BRI interactions in Europe.

The dissertation discusses the findings in the discussion chapter. In this chapter, all parts of the analysis become tied together. In this chapter, the dissertation shows a country comparison and then answers the research question and try the hypothesis.

In the conclusion section, the dissertation then discusses the weaknesses and strengths of our research and our findings. It also explains some challenges that the dissertation faced. After finishing that, we then present alternative explanations, recommendations, and future research suggestions.

2. Background

2.1 EU as an Actor in the International Arena

To better understand the EU and the norms of the EU, we first need to establish what the EU is. The European Union is a union of 27 countries. Together they form a political actor that has more influence in the world than what any of the member countries can have by themselves. The reason the EU can represent these countries in international relations is the Lisbon Treaty which gave the EU the legal ramifications of becoming an international actor. For example, it gave the EU the ability to join an international organisation or sign international treaties in the areas of its attributed powers (Panizza, 2019). The Treaty of Lisbon had an immense effect on the structures and norms of the European Union. It defined the power the EU had and made the EU a fully legal actor in the international space. It also defined the principles of the European Union regarding human rights and democracy (Panizza, 2019, p.2) as well as norms about free and fair trade, sustainable development, loan taking and investment requirements (Bonde, 2009). The Treaty of Lisbon is one of the documents this dissertation will analyse to understand the EU's norms and regulations better as the treaty contains the EU's norms.

Going back to this dissertation's theoretical approach, Manners (2002, p.236) argues that the EU is a normative power that can shape what is standard in the international space. The EU, as a normative power, is characterised by its mutual principles and their willingness to disregard Westphalian conventions and pool together their sovereignty (ibid, p.239). After the atrocities of the world wars, the EU countries pooled their resources to keep and strengthen peace and liberty. The EU is a post-Westphalian cross-cutting polity and is a new type of player in the international space with actor qualities, Manners argues (ibid, p.239-240).

2.1.1 EU Norms and Regulations

Now that we know where the normative power of the EU comes from, we can look at the EU's norms. To be able to identify how the EU's norms have affected China's BRI's interactions in our case countries, we first need to know what the EU's norms are. These norms will be later used in our analysis to understand how the EU has affected China's BRI interactions with our cases. The EU has many norms and regulations regarding Human rights, trade, investment and more (EU, n.d). The Lisbon treaty and different other policy documents contain these norms. These norms have been collected on the EU's website, worded as goals and values:

(1) Promote peace, (2) EU's values and (3) the well-being of its citizens. (4) Offer freedom, (5) security and (6) justice without internal borders.

(7) Sustainable development based on price stability and balanced economic growth, a highly competitive market economy with social progress and full employment, and environmental protection,

(8) Combat social exclusion and discrimination,

(9) Promote scientific and technological progress,

(10) Enhance solidarity and social, territorial, and economic cohesion among EU countries,

- (11) Respect its rich cultural and linguistic diversity,
- (12) Create an economic and monetary union who uses the euro as its currency (ibid),
- (13) Human dignity, (14) Freedom, (15) Democracy, (16) Equality, (17) The Rule of law, and
- (18) Human rights.

These norms are to be a starting point for our research, and we can compare them with the norms we have found in the BRI, but we also need some more detailed academic research on the topic to establish which of these norms appear in practice.

Looking at Manners (2002, p.242-244) research, he has identified some of the same norms this dissertation has through studying a series of treaties, declarations, policies, criteria, and conditions. In the EU's laws and policies, one can find these norms. These are:

(1) Peace and (2) liberty - based in the defining futures of the post-war period in west European politics.

(3) Democracy, (4) the rule of law, (5) respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms – took shape during the cold war due to the importance of differentiating democratic western Europe from communist eastern Europe.

(6) The aspiration to have social solidarity - found its importance in becoming a countermeasure to the drive of liberalisation in the single European market act and economic and monetary union.

(7) Anti-discrimination - norms and measures arose from worries about racism and persecution of minorities in the early 1990s as well as from progressive social legislation.

(8) Sustainable development - became an essential norm after the Rio Earth summit when it became a part of the Treaty of Amsterdam.

(9) Good governance - arose from the resignation of the European Commission in 1999, the concern for double standards when applying EU's demands for democratic reform in the central and east European countries as well as in recognising the vital role of good governance in successful aid programmes (ibid, p.243-244)

Another aspect of the EU's norms is economic norms related to the liberal open market. These norms dictate public procurement (Bovis, 2012, p.1-2), competition, free trade, market-oriented and non-interference by states in the market (Mulder, 2019, p.18-22).

While this dissertation is not to discuss how China has socialised the EU, it might still be interesting to see how this has happened. One example of how China has through the BRI socialised the EU is the EU's adaptation of a new connectivity policy (Gaens, 2018, p.21., & Joshi, 2019, p.1). The policy connectivity document: "Connecting Europe and Asia – Building blocks for an EU Strategy" (European Parliament., The Council., the European Economic and Social Committee., The Committee of the Regions., and The European Investment Bank, 2018) outlines different connectivity norms of the EU. The three central norms connected to EU's connectivity approach are sustainable connectivity, comprehensive connectivity, and rules-based connectivity.

Sustainable connectivity: Connectivity should be economically, fiscally, environmentally, and socially sustainable in the long term (ibid, p.2).

Comprehensive connectivity: Connectivity seen as about networks and the flow of people, goods, services, and capital that is passing through them. The institutions emphasise the importance of synergies between different networks of transportation. Furthermore, they highlight people's rights and interests as central to policies regarding connectivity (ibid, p.2).

International rules-based connectivity: For people, goods, services, and capital to move efficiently, fairly and smoothly, there is a need for rules and regulations. For there to be interoperability of networks and trade across borders, there is a need for internationally agreed practices, conventions, rules, technical standards that are supported by international institutions and organisations (ibid, p.3)

Because these connectivity norms are presented as a result of the BRI, this dissertation will not have a broader focus on them. They will not contribute to understanding how the BRI has been affected by the norms of the EU.

2.1.2 EU as a Social Environment

The theoretical framework this dissertation is going to use requires us to understand the EU as a Social Environment. This section of the dissertation will cover this so we can draw from it later on in the analysis. We are taking help from the excellent summary done by James McBride (2019) as well as information from the European Commission (2016).

The EU is an exclusive and large institution that is based on representative democracy. Each country has delegations that are equal to the size of its population. The EU's democratic rule has challenges, and there are EU-Sceptic governments in the Union right now, but the EU still has much legitimacy. The voting procedures in the legislative body of the EU, the European Parliament, is done by qualified majority voting. The European Parliament has power over the EU budget, legislative powers, meaning they can shape laws that have to be implemented by member nations and much more. The European Council can set up EU policy agendas that form the EU's long-term focus. In short, the mandate of the EU is robust (McBride, 2019).

EU members must follow the EU's laws and regulations, but they still have autonomy over many areas that the EU do not control. The EU controls the custom union, business competition rules, trade agreements, and monetary policy for eurozone countries.

There are also some shared competencies that the member state's national governments can legislate if the EU has not already done so. The fields that this is possible are the single market (free movement of goods, services capital, and people), agriculture, regional development spending, transportation, energy, consumer, and environmental protection as well as public health, research, and technology (ibid). The EU has received different levels of authority over different areas from member states. These are known as competencies. These exclusive competencies are areas in which no national governments can pass laws. Only the EU can do so. These areas include much of the core activities of the EU. These include the business competition rules, customs union, trade agreements, and, for eurozone countries, the eurozone's fiscal policy.

National governments are allowed to legislate in areas that are shared competencies. The national governments can only legislate in these areas if the EU does not already have related

laws. These laws apply to the single market, which provides for the free movement of capital, services, goods, and people. It also applies to regional development spending, agriculture, energy, transportation, environmental and consumer protections, and research and technology as well as public health (ibid).

Supporting competencies are areas in which the EU can only bolster activities that have already been undertaken by member states. They include culture, education, sport, and many social policies. The EU also has a mutual foreign and security policy. It covers diplomacy, security, and defence cooperation. The national government sets the mutual foreign and security policy through the European Council and the Council of Ministers. The decisions regarding the mutual foreign and security policy must be unanimous, giving the member states substantial power. Member states also remain free to make their foreign policies. This legal framework gives the EU member countries a level of autonomy in the areas that are not already clearly legislated or are within the exclusive competencies. National governments are sometimes in different situations forced to adapt legislation, such as the to be mentioned case of Italy on investment standards (ibid).

To join the EU, one needs to go through EU accession procedures. First, the country becomes a candidate for EU membership. This candidacy qualifies them for participating in formal EU membership negotiations but does not guarantee this process to happen. The country needs to get unanimous agreement from all members of the EU Council on a framework or mandate for negotiations with the candidate country. When the EU seems fit, the EU starts formal membership negotiations with the country. This process involves adopting EU laws, preparing to make reforms in judicial administrative, the economic sector as well as other sectors necessary for the country to meet the EU's conditions for joining. These are known as accession criteria. When the negotiations and reforms taken as a result of the negotiations have come to a place where all parties are satisfied with them, the country can join the EU. For a more detailed explanation of these procedures, please follow the link that this section is using as a reference (The European Commission, 2016).

The social environment of the EU is hence a very persuasive environment with considerable social influence. Through the legislation and policies created through the EU's framework, the EU can form norms of countries. The social environment should have a socialising property that is rather strong towards countries that a part of it, countries that aim to join it, as well as countries that are trying to act within it.

2.2 BRI

The Belt and Road Initiative was proposed by the Chinese president Xi Jinping in October 2013. It is a development strategy that aims at creating connectivity and cooperation between participating countries. Although it aims to connect countries, via policy, infrastructure, trade and culture, the Initiative emphasizes that it respects the country's sovereignty. In the core of the Initiative objectives, one can find mutual benefits for the countries involved and collective security. These countries are primarily the ones situated on the former Silk Road and the ones on the Maritime Silk Road (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China, 2015).

On land, the Initiative aims to build a new Eurasian land bridge and to develop international transport routes. The sea component of the Initiative aims to build smooth, safe, and efficient shipping routes to connect significant seaports (Ibid). The Initiative will include more than 130 countries primarily across Asia, Europe, and Africa. It will cost significant amounts of money. Other countries have raised significant criticism against the BRI because of lack of transparency, lack of controls (over-lending to countries that cannot pay back) and other issues. China has promised to meet these issues, but the criticism still stands (Li and Han, 2019).

2.2.1 Setting and China Insight

This paper will use the 2015 BRI policy document in our analysis. It was the first policy document that outlined the BRI's goals and visions (National Development and Reform Commission People's Republic of China, 2015). We will use this document to understand what norms originally came from the BRI to be able to say which EU norms are a result of norm diffusion. Later in the methodology chapter, the theoretical implications of this will be discussed. As a part of our method, we also need to understand the context of our data. Hence, this section of the text will discuss the context of the 2015 BRI policy document. We will be using our expert interviews, that will be discussed later in the method section, as well as Chinese government sources and academic sources. To understand the 2015 BRI policy document, we also need some understanding of the context of China and the BRI. The BRI policy document was written in 2015 and was the first document released to the public about the goals and objectives of the BRI.

Professor G. Stahl (Personal Communication, 23 February 2020) means that the initiative has developed over time. At first, it looked far less ambitious and was more focused to link up China to neighbouring countries. Now it has become a catchword for the external dimensions of Chinese initiatives. Among the broad titles of the BRI, one also has concrete projects and activities related to investment and development projects, some of which are related to EU countries. The Swedish Expert (Personal Communication 11 February 2020) means that the BRI is a normative tool for China that is meant to spread China's normative power.

To give context on some of the values present in the BRI, it is also worth noting some of China's overall policy directions. The Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China (2011) has written in a white paper that peaceful development, upholding world peace and promoting joint development and prosperity for all countries in the path of development

China has chosen. To achieve this, China is to, among other things, work for equality and mutually beneficial cooperation (ibid).

China has received criticism from the west for giving preferential treatment to state-owned Chinese companies and questioned if Chinese companies can compete fairly on the international market due to the support these enterprises get from the Chinese government (Lee, 2018). China has over the years, when dealing with countries without open tender procedures, made deals that are giving China preferential treatments, such as giving loans and make investments that make the countries have to rely on getting their products and services from Chinese companies (Kopinski, Polus & Taylor, 2012, p. 48), further deepening the criticism towards China. This practice has also been continued in the BRI. Ghossein, Hoekman, and Shingal (2018, p.3-31) have made a study of how different public procurement processes have been done concerning the BRI, and through the limited data they had, they were able to conclude that Chinese companies have taken a majority of BRI-procurements.

3. Literature Review

This literature review will present literature that explores the EU as a normative power, research on BRI and the European Union as well as research on Norm diffusion. No academic papers are investigating how the EU has affected the BRI, nor any journalistic articles that this research has been able to find. Hence, before even going into a review of the literature that covers subjects that are close to the subject of this dissertation, we can already see a need to study this topic.

3.1 Institutional Norm Diffusion

Institutional norm diffusion is a widely discussed topic. Park (2006) explores how international organisations (IO) promote and diffuse norms in world politics. She asks the question: “where do norms come from?” (ibid, p.345). She concludes that IO’s are norm consumers that are socialised by states and non-state actors. Furthermore, she concludes that the identity of the IO and the influence norms have within the IO determine the appropriate behaviours of actors within the international system (ibid, p.353). IO’s identity is influenced by the social structures that they act within. They may also be socialized by NGOs and transnational advocacy networks through direct or indirect processes. (ibid, p.359).

In his PhD dissertation, Ring (2014) further explores norm diffusion concerning the international system, and he asks the question: “Why do states express support for norms that go against their underlying beliefs?” (ibid, p.vi). He identifies three aspects of the international system: Hierarchy, Neighbourhood, Identity, as well as four social mechanisms: Coercion, Competition, Emulation and Learning. These can lead to the spread of norms in the international system, he argues. He does a quantitative analysis with the help of the four mechanisms previously mentioned and compares three dynamic patterns across different model specifications (ibid, p.24-41). He then applies his framework to the diffusion of quotas for women’s representation and finds that weak states learn to adapt this method from other weak states in their neighbourhood. Competition is a driving mechanism in this, he argues (ibid, p.85-141). He also studies the diffusion of human rights norms. He concludes that human rights treaties are adopted in relation to worse human right behaviours. He explains that strong European countries were the first to sign the Convention Against Torture and that weaker states adopted it in a regionally contingent pattern. He argues that not only institutions spread norms, but rather countries adapt norms also through their neighbours. Meaning, a country does not need to belong to the same institutions to be able to be affected by the nearby countries’ norms (ibid, p.145-175).

ASEAN is an institution that has been discussed as a normative player in its region. Allison-Reumann (2017) has written an article about the norm diffusion capacity of ASEAN. She defines ASEAN’s norms as: “non-interference, respect for sovereignty, informality, and consensus” and mean that they primarily reflect processes of interaction. The article studies ASEAN’s norm diffusion by exploring two diffusion mechanisms – enmeshed and innocuous as well as analysing the challenges connected with norm diffusion (ibid, p.5). She managed to conclude that ASEAN had weak norm diffusion capabilities, but that more research is needed (ibid, p.25-26). She argues that ASEAN manages to effect other countries through norm

diffusion but that this effect is small compared to the EU. She focuses on regional norm distribution as well as how different ASEAN is from the EU in the aspect of norm diffusion towards its members (ibid, p.12).

Checkel (1999) discuss Europe and the EU's norm diffusion and institutions (ibid, p.107-109). He explores two issues he has found in the constructivist study of norms: "Reintegrating agency into largely structural accounts and unpacking its arguments at the national level" (ibid, p.83). In his paper, he adds social content to the concept of diffusion to be able to explain the motivation that domestic actors must accept new normative prescriptions. Further, he argues that the previously mentioned actors will vary cross-nationally as a function of state-society relations (ibid).

The discussion on norm diffusion is ongoing, and institutions are a big part of the discussion. While institutions play a significant role in norm diffusion, there are researchers such as Ring (2014) who also present other aspects that might lead to socialisation, such as geographical aspects and the strength and coherence of the country's government (ibid, p.145-175). This dissertation is going to contribute to this research through one of the steps that are going to be used to answer the research questions. We will be further contributing to the understanding of how institutions socialise states into their norms and how different levels of engagement with the institutions might lead to different levels of socialisation.

3.2 Literature on the BRI, the Existing World Order and Europe

This dissertation has been unable to find any articles on the topic of how European norms affect China through the BRI. Nevertheless, some articles are covering the relationship, impact on and implications for EU and China regarding the BRI.

Casarini (2015) discuss the economic opportunities and possible risks presented by the BRI. The BRI, he argues, will present the EU with significant political challenges. These challenges, he argues, are based on the interest of EU countries in the initiative leading to a further divided EU that has difficulties creating common positions against China. He also presents the risk of populist backlash and a worsened relationship with the US (ibid, p.1-10)

The BRI is not the first time the EU has been engaged with Chinese institution building. The 16+1 framework is something that Vangeli (2017) discusses in his article. He studies how China has constructed the 16+1 as an institution and how China is complementing its economic approach with institution-building as well as policy coordination. He concludes that the 16+1, its policy coordination and the role of institution building will remain central in the relationship between China and the countries involved in the 16+1 framework (ibid, p.101).

When it comes to the BRI effecting EU China relation, the BRI creates a complicated situation with both challenges and opportunities for EU and China (Zhao, 2016, p.8). The EU is, according to Zhao welcoming China to take on more responsibility in international development but Zhao means that the EU is worried about the BRI's lack of transparency rules might threaten the competitiveness of EU enterprises (ibid, p.8). Zhao seems to conclude that the EU should be open for the cooperation and that it might become mutually beneficiary (ibid).

Another essential question to be asked is if the EU matters for China's BRI and how Europe/the EU fit into China's strategic narrative (Zeng, 2017, p.1). Zeng argues that the EU and Europe is not a focus of China and that Europe plays a marginalized role in China's policy discussion (ibid, p.1). This article puts perspective into China's view on the EU but is not including any normative discussion, nor any discussion of how the BRI is affected by the EU. It does, however, point out that China is taking on the EU as individual member states and not a unity, which might contribute to our understanding of China's approach (ibid).

China's opening-up policy is another aspect that takes space in the academic discussion about China's foreign relations. It is meant to enhancing China's role in global governance (Ohashi, 2019, p.1). The BRI is seen as a new grand strategy in of said opening-up policy. Ohashi (2019, p.1-17) argues that the BRI is a part of China's growing role in global governance in large international economic regimes. He argues that China is a significant beneficiary of the existing world order and that China does not seek to restructure it. Regardless of China's intentions, the BRI is still a challenge to the international economic regimes of the world (ibid, p.1-17).

The literature on China's institution-building is extensive but is not covering the aspects of socialisation or cultural implications. This paper has not found any discussions on how Chinese institutions abroad, like the 17+1 and the BRI, have been affected by international norms. China must adapt to international norms that that was created by the western countries, and hence this dissertation is set out to study if these norms have any effect on the BRI.

3.3 EU as a Normative Power – Critique and Arguments

This dissertation is partly studying the normative power of the EU. The EU has been positioned by scholars as a normative power, and there is a long discussion ongoing regarding that claim. Other scholars will argue that the normative power of the EU is none-existing, and that the EU is unable to socialise actors. This section will discuss the literature on this topic.

Skolimowska (2015, p.111) is one of the academics that are critical to the EU's normative power. EU integration, specifically in the context of foreign affairs, has turned out to be a harder experience than expected, she argues. She further writes that between the member states, there is a lack of unity and cohesion in their reactions to, as well as resolving, international issues. This is the result of EU member states diverse interests. They cannot form characteristic traits of the EU in their international relations. She questions that the EU is a normative power, as the EU fails to satisfy some essential aspects of one such power. She calls for better and neutral tools of analysis to understand the EU's activities in the international sphere (ibid. p.111).

Sjursen (2006) problematises the concept of the EU as a normative power as it lacks precision, is normatively biased and that it is problematic to call the EU a force for good without identifying criteria and assessment standards that make it possible to study and value of such a claim. She also asks how we can know if the EU's pursuit of norms is legitimate. She defines one such method of legitimisation as looking at how the normative power would act to strengthen the international legal system. From this perspective, the EU's approach to international affairs has a level of tension to in, she argues (ibid, p. 235)

Savorskaya (2015), contrary to the others argue that the EU is a unique integration of states that has the power via their ability to change the international communities' ideas of norms (Savorskaya, 2015, p.71). She concludes that soft power is a contrast to hard power and does not apply to the EU because it is mainly a concept connected to the US (ibid, p.71). Further, she specifies that the EU's founding rules and norms are implemented in the EU's foreign policy (ibid, p.72).

Bialasiewicz, Giaccaria and Minca, (2012) studied the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and EU macro-region building as a way of socialising countries into EU norms. The EU Macro-regional initiatives have the goal of widening the EU's territoriality beyond and across the EU's current borders (ibid, p.60-61). The macro-regions are problematic as they bundle up widely different countries together that do not always cooperate well. The Macro-regions had the purpose of socialising the countries into EU norms, of creating stability and peace around the EU's borders by making them into friends (ibid, p.63-68). In recent years, this has changed somewhat to focus more on security and stability (ibid). They argue that these attempts have failed somewhat due to the EU using too general strategies and the political instability of, for example, the Mediterranean (ibid).

Börzel and Lebanidze (2017, p.17) mean that the EU's attempts to promote democracy and the rule of law in its neighbourhood regions has been acknowledged as a failure by researchers. Most of the European neighbour countries that are affected by the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) have, after ten years still not shown high qualities of democratic development. The exceptions to this are Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine, and Tunisia. While these exceptions exist, the EU is still surrounded by failed and authoritarian states (ibid). The reason for the failure of the ENP has been argued to be because of the lack of membership opportunity as an incentive as well as a lack of coherence in EU's external governance. This limits the transformative power of the EU in its neighbourhood.

Börzel and Lebanidze (2017, p.17) further argue that the EU's transformative power's main issue is the selective sanctioning of non-compliance with democracy standards. The selective sanctioning is caused by conflicting objectives of the EU concerning the neighbouring countries. These conflicting objectives can be found in the conditions for the EU's application of democratic conditioning. First, there must be an absence of a democratisation-stability dilemma; secondly, there must be a presence of pro-democratic reform coalitions. If these are not present, the EU will probably prefer authoritarian stability over uncertain democratic change (ibid, p.18). The ENP need to offer the neighbouring countries incentives in return for domestic reform, other than institutions (joining the EU). These can be increased financial aid and advanced access to the EU's internal markets in exchange for greater liberalisation (ibid, p.18).

This democratic socialisation (including the rule of law norms) of EU neighbours is not prioritised over other foreign policy goals of the EU. These can be trade, energy security and stability. This mindset is what has undermined the ENP's democratic socialisation that is done through conditionality. The socialisation into EU's norms in their neighbouring countries is done through rewarding democratic progress or sanctioning when there is a lack thereof (ibid, p.18).

Börzel and Lebanidze (2017, p.21) argue that the effectiveness of democratic socialisation through conditionality is dependent on the consistency of it. When the EU uses democratic conditionality, it leads to democratic progress or democratic breakthrough. Examples of this can be seen in Georgia, Moldova, Tunisia, and Ukraine. The only exception to this is Belarus where the democratic conditionality has been inconsistent and undermined by both Russia and Western actors that stabilised the regime of the country. The golden carrot of EU membership, or rather the lack thereof seems to be the reason for the EU's democratic conditionalities ineffectiveness of promoting democracy in the European Neighbouring Countries (ibid, p.22).

The low attractiveness of incentives is one reason for the low transformative power of the EU in its neighbourhood; another is the lack of coherence. Coherence means the capability of the EU to speak as one and overcome institutional complexities in the EU's foreign policy arena. The reason for the EU's limited influence on democracy in the ENP is caused by the member states being unable to agree about how and when to use democratic conditionality. The high degree of EU's coherence does not lead to the effectiveness of the application of democratic conditionality by the EU. The example of Belarus is an example of this as the pressure of the EU failed to reach its results (ibid, p.22-23)

To conclude, some of the main criticism that could argue against the theory I am applying is: The EU lacks consistency and unity to be able to socialise countries. Different member states have competing interests that prevent the EU from socialising the countries into EU norms as this might compromise these interests. Having a combination of both pressure and incentives that is consistent leads to socialisation. The lack thereof will not succeed, and the EU is divided on the BRI.

Most of the studies presented here have focused on EU socialising countries outside Europe or trying to socialise them without having the incentive of joining the EU. All the countries studied in this dissertation are either EU members or in the process of joining the EU. The BRI has the incentive of wanting to act within the EU. Something that could be argued as problematic is that the EU is divided on their approach to the BRI (Peel and Hornby, 2019)

This dissertation is going to engage in the discussion regarding the EU being a normative power, as this is one of the central parts of this study. While there have been many studies regarding this topic, this dissertation is hoping to engage the topic with this new set of cases to give a more contrasted view on the matter as well as engage the cases with different theories than the ones used by other academic work on the topic.

4. Definitions and Theory

4.1 Social Constructivism

This dissertation is going to use social constructivism as its core theory. Within social constructivism, we find the other theories used in this dissertation.

The debate around social constructivism starts with if state actions are affected by structures, such as anarchy and distribution of power, or processes which entails interactions, learning, and institutions (Wendt, 1992, p.391). Wendt (1992, p.395) argues that anarchy is what states make of it. Meaning there is no inherent anarchism in the world order, rather anarchism in the world order is just a social construct, created by the nation-states themselves (ibid).

Collective meaning is what decides over the structures that shape our actions. An example of this is that if two warring factions decide that a war is over, it is over. Actors in the international arena have their own identities, and these identities are all within socially constructed worlds. A state may also have different types of identities that they define themselves. These definitions that actors hold about each other and themselves form the structure of the social world (ibid, p.397-398).

Institutions are stable sets or structures of identities and interests. The structures usually take the form of norms and rules. These hold motivational power only if the actors are socialized and participant in collective knowledge. Institutions are constructed entities that need the existence of actors' ideas about how the world works. They are nothing but beliefs while still being real and objective. Identities and interests are internalized through institutionalisation, but institutions are also built from identities (ibid, p.399).

4.2 Norms

This dissertation is going to use Jepperson, Wendt and Katzenstein's (1996, p.10) definition of norms. A norm is a collective expectation regarding correct behaviour for a specific identity. At times, norms operate like rules which are defining and, hence constituting an identity. One example is how a president's power within a government is defined, compared to the power of other individuals, found in the government. To get recognised, validated, and responded to as an international actor, one needs to perform specific normative actions that come with being an international actor. Norms also shape how we act when meeting different types of circumstances. For example, how an international actor reacts to humanitarian distress. To summarise, norms can both constitute identities by "generating expectations about the proper portfolio of identities for a given context" (ibid) or regulate behaviours for already established identities by "generating expectations about how those identities will shape behaviour in varying circumstances" (Jepperson, Wendt and Katzenstein, 1996, p.10).

4.3 Socialisation

This dissertation will use Johnston (2008) theory on Socialisation found in his book “Social States – China in International Institutions” to analyse how the norms of the EU have affected the BRI and to analyse the three cases. The reason this book is chosen is because of its critical and developing characteristics. We will compliment Johnston’s (ibid) theory with other scholars as well to give more depth.

The EU already has its norms and policies that need to be respected if one wishes to act within Europe. This dissertation has previously hypothesised that norms diffuse when a country is dealing with the EU; hence, they should also affect the neighbours that have close relationships with the EU (European Council, 2018). Compliance with institutional norms is one of the things one can use socialisation theory to study (Johnston, 2008, p.1). This theory will help us better understand how the countries in question have been affected by membership and proximity to the EU.

In social constructivism, socialisation is a central concept. It is a well-adapted approach to study normative socialisation as it sets out with the view that institutions and norms form international actors in their behaviour in the international space. Social constructivism holds the belief that social relations construct or make individuals into the type of person they are (Johnston, 2008, p.15).

Checkel (2005, p.804) defines socialisation as a process of inaugurating actors into the rules and norms of a specific community. When an actor adopts a given communities rules, the theory means that the actors start following a logic of appropriateness, instead of purely a logic of consequences. The actor can do this by learning a role, acting appropriately in the contexts without necessarily agreeing with the norms, or by internalising the norms (ibid).

Johnston (2008, p.20) means that socialisation is a process were social-interactions leads novices to adapt normative ways of thinking, feeling, and acting (ibid). Through the practice of social interactions, countries internalize and gain performance competence in socio-cultural defined contexts. Socialisation is the complete and consistent initiation of an actor into the objective world of a society or part of said society. Socialisation provides actors with identities that give them a specific place in the world (ibid, p.20-21). Socialisation involves internalisation. Internalisation means accepting and adapting to norms, making them into the way one observes events and do things. The process of socialisation has the purpose of creating membership in a society where members take for granted the same understanding of their society (ibid). In political science, Socialisation is defined as a process where people learn to adapt themselves to the values, attitudes, norms, and behaviours accepted by the ongoing system (ibid, 21). In IR, socialisation is defined as a process that results in the internalisation of norms (ibid).

Institutions such as the EU can be social institutions. In these social institutions, the actor’s expectations converge. Inside the social institutions, members socialise each other through interactions such as meetings (Checkel, 2005, p.807-809). International agents, such as international organisations, have teaching values and are constructing domestic institutions and

procedures inside states. These reflect emergent international norms and practices. This has led to states following these norms and practices, regardless if they go against their material welfare or security interests (Johnston, 2008, p.16).

Norms are transmitted in an institutional environment, where the institution itself or actors that are a part of said institution try to transfer norms of the structure to new members. The new member tries to process these norms, filter it through prior features of identity before they mediate the development of foreign policies and practices that govern interactions with other actors and institutions. When interacting with these policies and practices, original social structures and institutional environments are reproduced and possibly modified (ibid, p.17).

While China is not a part of the EU, nor have any interest in joining the EU, China is acting within EU borders and neighbourhoods. This dissertation's hypothesis is that China must hence adapt to their norms when interacting with EU member states and their neighbouring countries. Hence, although China is not a part of the EU, this dissertation argues that they still need to adapt to EU norms as they are dealing with countries that are limited by the same norms as well as trying to act within the territory of the institution. We do not argue that the norms of the EU will be diffused to the entirety of the BRI or China, but we argue that the EU's norms should be diffused at least to some extent. It is not within the scope of this study to quantify to what extent EU's norms diffusing to China. Due to the nature of the BRI, i.e. an initiative that needs to be negotiated and agreed upon between actors, we can argue that at least the norms found in our data are norms that have been accepted and not objected to by China and our case countries during their negotiations. This means that there is minimally the shallowest form of socialisation taking place if we find norm diffusion mechanisms in our data.

Socialisation is something that actors in world politics, such as China and the EU, try to do to each other. International institutional life can be treated as an environment where social interactions, not being dependent on material rewards and punishments, may change things in their preferences and beliefs. This behaviour could explain to us the conditions of international cooperation (ibid, p.20). The effect of socialisation is the most crucial aspect of the process and depends upon how the actor adapts the norms taught to them. This is the aspect that we will need to focus on in this research as it is here that micro-processes are at work in world politics. We need to see if, and how, socialisation micro-processes are working regarding the EU and the BRI (ibid, p.18). Micro processes are usually the way that socialisation occurs. The transformation of norms and values happen through mimicking, social influence, and persuasion. These processes are likely to be interactive with each other (Johnston, 2008, p.22).

4.3.1 Mimicking

Mimicking is the practice of copying the behavioural norms of a group to navigate through an uncertain environment. Mimicking is usually used to adapt to uncertainties before any detailed end-means calculation of the benefits of adapting to the group (ibid, p. 23). Mimicking can also come from the will to persuade another actor. Hence, mimicking could be a behavioural outcome for persuasion and social influence (ibid, p.24). Mimicking other members of a group or society can be found in the way actors develop procedural constraints, work habits and standard operating procedures to be able to function inside an institution (ibid, p.24) minimally.

Mimicking can be done to get access to resources or some other type of carrot. For an actor to get access to act in the EU or a country, they might want to or have to Mimic the norms of the EU (Wiener, 2004, p.197-198). Through mimicking norms in their interactions with EU countries, an actor can also start to adopt the same norms in the norms they adhere to in their other international cooperation (Greenhill, 2010, p.130).

Mimicking was detectable by studying how the norms in the BRI's interactions in the EU countries might differ from the norms in the BRI's 2015 document. We looked at the development of procedural constraints, work habits/action plans, and standard operating procedures to see if they are like what the BRI outlined in their 2015 document. This way, we studied how the BRI is mimicking EU norms to be able to operate within the EU's institutional framework and the vicinity of the EU.

We can establish that this type of socialisation is at play when we see that China is adopting certain norms but only for a short period of time. Mimicking is visible if China is adopting norms to handle an uncertain environment that they want to operate inside. Mimicking can also be a result of China trying to avoid social influence consequences such as criticism or being a result of persuasion. If mimicking is present, we can then see that China has adapted itself to that specific norm of the EU and will then at least to some extent diffuse that norm through its interactions with our case countries.

4.3.2 Social Influence

The micro-process of social influence is when a new actor's behaviour is judged by the in-group and rewarded with encouragement or by being given status markers. The judging can also take the shape of punishment by opprobrium and status devaluation (Johnston, 2008, p.24). Park (2014, p.338) also means that shaming can be a way of social influencing an actor to shape itself after norms. Punishments can also take the form of shunning, exclusion, and demeaning the actor for not acting according to what is expected of them. Coercion can also be used as a part of the socialisation process if material power is used for normative purposes (ibid). A part of social influence is also the connecting of interests, attitudes, and beliefs in one attitude system to another. Attitudes towards trade can, for example, be connected to attitudes regarding sustainability (Johnston, 2008, p.25).

Checkel (2005, p.809) describe this micro-process as intergovernmental reinforcement and describe it as a method international institution use to offer governments a positive incentive. Such an incentive could be rewarded, such as being allowed to act within the EU, with the condition that the government adopt and complies with the institution's norms. For this to work, the target government needs to perceive the reward worth it compared to what is required from them. The institutions also need to be strong enough to be able to put pressure on the government to follow their norms and see the cost of putting pressure on the government as worth it (ibid).

Social Influencing was detected by studying if the BRI has been formed by the judgment of the actors involved. For example, if a speech by a foreign minister of one of the case countries rewards China in a statement for following European norms. Furthermore, the connection of

interests, attitudes, and beliefs in one attitude system to another was analysed by looking at how different themes interact with each other.

If China is criticized for something, given praise for something or if China is given any other type of reward or punishment, or is coerced in any other way and then adopts a norm in response to this in their interactions with our case countries, we can then say that the diffusion of that norm is a case of norm diffusion through the micro-process of social influence.

4.3.3 Persuasion

The last micro-process is persuasion. It is the process where new actors in a system are convinced to follow and see norms, values and causal understandings as correct through a process of cognition (ibid, p.25) A successful persuasion process can be the cause of the gap between actors' basic causal understanding getting smaller (ibid, p.26). In socialisation, it involves changing opinions, minds and attitudes regarding effect and causality when there is no explicit coercion (mental or material) going on (Park, 2014, p. 338). This process can create common knowledge or what Johnston (2008, p.26) calls "epistemic conventions" that may or may not be cooperative. It can also lead to homogenization of interests.

Persuasion can be detected when the data shows the actors are using a process of cognition to get China to see and follow the EU's norms, values, and causal understandings as correct. An indicator of success is if the normative world view of China and the normative world view of the EU become more similar. This can be seen in the data from how common knowledge is the same or different.

If we can see that norms are developed through the processes of cognition without the use of coercion between actors and EU norms are becoming adapted into the countries' BRI interactions, we can then conclude that norm diffusion has happened through persuasion.

4.4 EU Socialisation

Björkdahl (2012, p.82) identifies the EU as a norm-maker who has a strong commitment to a particular set of norms and who will advocate said norms in order to cause normative change. The norm-maker has normative power, meaning the ability to change the normative beliefs of others. The EU is defined as a norm maker that is a norm community. In norm communities, norms define the interests and identity of the community members. The members of the community share expectations about what is considered appropriate behaviour and the norms that are considered to be a part of the appropriateness (ibid, p.83). A norm community might be able to influence other actors outside their members. The purpose of this is usually to create normative change in line with the community's normative standards and to recruit new members. Norm diffusion might also be done in order to strengthen the community's norms, identity, and coherence (ibid).

Knowing the specific micro-processes of socialisation, then how does the EU socialise other actors? According to Manners (2002, p.244), the EU's normative power stems from six factors. The first factor is "Contagion" (ibid). The diffusion of norms is a result of the unintentional

diffusion of ideas to other political actors from the EU. Meaning, EU is leading by “virtuous example” (ibid), and other political actors are seeing the EU as a role model for regional integration.

Informational diffusion is based in the EU’s strategical communication through, for example, new policy initiatives as well as declarations from heads of the EU’s different institutions (ibid).

Procedural diffusion is when the EU institutionalise its relationship with a third party. Examples of this are inter-regional cooperations agreements, membership of an international organisation or enlargement of the EU (ibid, p.244).

Transference diffusion is when the EU exchange goods, trade, aid, or technical assistance with another actor through mostly substantive or financial means. During such transactions, there might be an export of EU norms and standards or a carrot and stick method of financial rewards and economic sanctions can be used to force norms onto an actor (ibid, p.245).

Overt diffusion is a result of the physical presence of the EU in a non-EU state or international organisation. This can take the shape of member state embassies or other political representations abroad as well as monitoring missions in war-torn countries (ibid).

Cultural filters are the final factor that forms norm diffusion. Cultural filters affect the impact of international norms and political learning in non-EU states and organisations leading to learning, adapting, or rejecting norms. The cultural filter is created by “an interplay between the construction of knowledge and the creation of social and political identity by the subject of norm diffusion” (ibid, p.245).

Björkdahl (2012, p.84) also identifies Norm negotiation as a way the EU is socialising other countries through norm-diffusion. This method is similar to the previously mentioned micro-process of persuasion. The EU can also socialise their member countries and other countries through a variety of economic and political sanctions if they do not follow the EU’s norms when interacting with EU countries (Greenhill, 2010, p.128). If a country chooses not to follow the norms of the EU, when they are interacting with the EU and its member states, the EU can through different actions withhold international cooperation goods (ibid, p.129).

Furthermore, Pu (2012, p.341) has argued that socialisation is a two-way process, and this dissertation argues that in the case of the EU and China, this can be apparent. While we will not engage in this discussion in this dissertation, as it is outside our scope, we will just shortly touch on one aspect of it here as it still holds importance.

4.5 Criticism Against Socialisation Theory

Pu (2012, p.341) argues that socialisation is a two-way process. That states socialise each other. As a whole, actors are not just socialisers or socialisees, Pu (2012, p.346-347) further writes. Actors can act as proactive agents who can influence the content and outcome of the socialisation process. The one-way process that Johnston discuss is ignoring the agency in international politics, and that agent has agency to shape social and political change. China should hence also be able to socialise the EU into some of its norms (ibid, p.347).

Another point brought up is that if a state was not a founding member of an institution, then there is no inherent obligation to abide by the existing norms of that institution (ibid, p.348). This does, however, not hold for the EU as the EU require its members to abide by the existing norms of their institutions.

Another critique of the theory is that one should not take the success of socialisation for granted. The country being socialised could resist. China could be resisting the normative pressure of the EU and that the EU might hence not be able to affect China with its norms (ibid, p.348). This dissertation is aware of this and is hence not taking this for granted. Instead, trying to ask if the BRI is affected by EU norms (ibid, p.348-349). While this dissertation acknowledges that countries socialise each other, the scope of this dissertation is limited to study the effect of EU norms on the BRI. Further research should be done in the future on the normative impact of the BRI on the EU.

Van Esch and de Jong (2019, p.183-184) bring up national culture as a factor. They argue that national culture takes president over the norms of the EU when EU member states decision-makers need to make a decision. Hence, socialisation into EU norms might not be adequate when they go against the countries own culture (ibid). This dissertation is aware of this and will consider this as one explanatory factor if the hypothesis does not hold.

There are also arguments against smaller states being able to influence larger states norms. We hence notice a need to address why we believe that China's norms regarding the BRI's actions in Europe can be influenced by small countries such as our case countries. Scholars have studied how smaller countries, like the Scandinavian countries, can be norm entrepreneurs and change international and other countries' norms around different questions. Ingebritsen (2002, p.11) discuss how Scandinavian countries despite their dependent economies, a weak military, and small states have been able to act as norm entrepreneurs and influence global eco-politics, conflict resolution, and the provision of aid. Björkdahl (2013, p.333) argues that small states, such as Sweden, can have great success in being norm entrepreneurs and altering the normative architecture of peace and security. Kronsell (2002, p.287) also argues against the argument that small states do not have power in international relations as norm-setters, and positions Sweden's environmental norm entrepreneurship in the EU as a case of this.

5. Research Design and Analytic Framework.

This dissertation will apply a research design based on qualitative content analysis as described by Drisko and Maschi in their book called *Content Analysis* (2015). Other than that, secondary literature will be used to supplement and contextualise the content analysis. Expert interviews will also be done with different researchers who are regional expert to get a local and expert perspective on the BRI and get access to local data that language barriers are preventing this dissertation from finding it.

5.1 Epistemology

This dissertation has adopted Wendt's (1999, p.1) constructivism epistemology. Wendt (ibid) argues that rather than the structure of human association being decided by material forces, it is primarily determined by shared ideas. Actors identities and interests are not given by nature; instead, they are constructed by ideas. The world is constructed from shared perceptions rather than having objective reality (ibid). Through this understanding, we can say that China's approach towards different EU countries is not just dictated by natural norms, rather through socially constructed norms. Based on this premise, this dissertation has performed a qualitative content analysis to be able to understand if the different norms present in the EU are affecting the BRI's interactions with European countries. The qualitative content analysis is an analysis of different normative patterns in data. It can help us understand how China is being affected by EU norms.

5.2 Qualitative Content Analysis Method

After collecting the appropriate data, this dissertation has first expanded the data with context, meaning and nuance by understanding the environment the data was created. To do this, we will explain which context the country at the time of the agreements being signed. The purpose of expanding the data is to get a better understanding of its meaning and nuances, to be able to dive deeper and better analytical responses (Drisko and Maschi, 2015, p.94).

After that, we started to analyse different normative themes present in the data. The original 2015 BRI document was first analysed, to give us a base understanding of what norms already are present in the BRI, before we analysed the actions of China concerning the BRI in the three different case countries by themselves. The themes represent the different types of norms detected in the data. Each of the three countries was analysed by themselves before, in the end, being compared. When the comparison was made, we were able to see if the EU's norms are affecting the BRI. If the norms of the EU are effecting the BRI, and our hypothesis is correct, then we can assume that the EU has done its job to make sure that their norms are respected in the countries in question and that the norms are also respected in the country's relations with China on the BRI. If the norms of the EU are not reflected on the country's relations with China on BRI, we can analyse the reason for this and see if this is caused by the norms not being upheld, to begin with regardless of the BRI or China. With the help of the original 2015 policy document detailing the BRI (National Development and Reform Commission People's Republic of China, 2015) we also saw the original, uninfluenced form of the BRI. By comparing

the findings from the original 2015 BRI policy document with what we found in China's BRI interactions in relation to the case countries, we got a better understanding of if the norms we observe in China's BRI interactions have always been a part of the Initiative or could be a result of socialisation.

Parallel to this, we performed interviews with regional experts. The content of the interviews was determined by the findings of the first preliminary qualitative content-analysis that was done somewhat early in the research. After that, we complemented the data with secondary data-sources to get a deeper understanding of the BRI. The data from the interviews and secondary data sources were tied in together with the qualitative content analysis to reach a conclusion.

After the interviews, this dissertation applied the theories specified previously to understand our findings further and answer the research questions. The goal of finding themes was that it helps us to identify and highlight the most relevant and meaningful parts of the data as well as help us see differences within the themes (Drisko and Maschi, 2015, p.93).

The steps presented hereafter has been done once on each actor.

5.3 Text Analysis

5.3.1 Data Collection

This dissertation has used an extensive collection of official documents such as the Memorandums of understanding between China and the different case countries, the 2015 document detailing the BRI (which seems to be the first complete policy document publicly distributed) (National Development and Reform Commission People's Republic of China, 2015), project plans and documentation as well as other types of texts and actions related to the BRI, EU and the three countries to answer the research question. To complement our data, this dissertation has conducted interviews with experts on the dissertations case countries and EU-China relations. This dissertation primarily gathered data from open sources and have contacted governments and ministries to get access to documents not publicly available. Some of the documents gathered have been key to understanding China's BRI interactions with these countries. The ministries and government officials were email and called throughout three months, trying to find the correct people to get access to the documents requested. Information requests were also created, and both the Serbian Government and the Italian government gave access to some documents. The Latvian government had already made available the documents needed in this research. The sources are primarily official websites of the different actors in question, documents, and agreements as well as press releases. Other data sources that are going to be used are the memorandum of cooperation between China and the countries, as well as press releases. Other examples of data sources are the EU's European Council's websites.

Furthermore, the secondary literature has been used to supplement our understanding of the EU, countries, and their relation to China through the BRI.

Qualitative expert interviews have been performed, and during these interviews, the experts have been asked for additional documents, articles and such that could be used in the content analysis and contextualisation. The interviews will be constructed based on the initial rounds

of data-collection to complement the data found. The interviews will complement the official data sources discussed before to give the research more depth. This is especially important concerning actions done in the BRI as there are few openly available documents on them.

The experts were chosen based on their previous experiences working with the BRI, and new experts were contacted based on the recommendations of other experts. Different types of experts were contacted as well, such as EU-China experts with no specific country expertise but that had substantial knowledge on the BRI, academic country experts and people with professorial experience working with the BRI such as journalists or practitioners with a solid IR background.

5.3.2 Sampling

The sampling method for data one use influences the data's trustworthiness and transferability as well as the credibility and applicability of the qualitative content analysis (ibid, p.96). The qualitative sampling method that was used is an ongoing "iterative" method that takes places simultaneously as data collection and analysis. The purpose of this is that it helps us to acquire a thorough and good enough sample for qualitative studies (ibid).

The practical methodology that was used for doing iterative sampling followed Drisko and Maschi (2015, p.96-102) methodology. The method is described below, and we explain how it has been done by us: A preliminary data collection was suggested in the methodology, and then the data collected was to be analysed as described further down the text (ibid, p.96-97). After that, the method required us to review and revise the initial sampling plan, based on the preliminary data collection and the analysis (ibid). This was to be done based on its appropriateness to the research question, the amount of information they provide and adequacy for exploring the research question (higher is equal to more prioritised), and the thoroughness (meaning containing potential disconfirming or elaborating evidence). Future sampling decisions were determined based on the results of the analysis (ibid). As we performed these steps, this paper narrowed down the data-sample, removing data that turned out not to be relevant or of high quality. A large amount of data was discarded due to not being related to BRI, despite being initially collected as such. Data was to be collected and review again until we had a large enough data-sample to be able to do our analysis and there were no newer data to be found or any more additions to the themes found (ibid). We did this process over a long period of time, and as we got access to more and more data, we also found other documents and people to of interests to include in our study. As Drisko and Maschi (ibid, p.97) described it would do, the iterative approach to sampling provided us with the ability to expand and alter the sample to provide adequate information. We did not know of all types of documents, and people were available until during the data sampling process, making the iterative approach very useful.

The Interview participants and secondary literature were selected on the same principles. Where there is lacking data, the secondary sources and interviews supplemented and contextualise as well as deepen the sample. For example, an article on a BRI project might give us an understanding of how sustainability norms are adapted in practice by China in Serbia.

5.3.2 Coding

This dissertation used open inductive coding as the coding method as described by Drisko and Maschi (ibid, p.104). Open coding is the practice of identifying relevant categories and labelling them descriptively. Each category used is close to the original content, relevant and modifiable (ibid, 104). The reason this dissertation chooses this coding method is that this dissertation argues that it ensures precision and flexibility. Despite that this dissertation had already identified norms in the EU, this dissertation did not use them as we argue that it could bias the study as it would limit our understanding. There might be other norms present in the BRI that are not the same as the norms present in the EU, and these can further our understanding.

The first step of coding the data was familiarisation, which means, reading through the data to get a preliminary overview. Familiarisation helps a researcher get a sense of the study as a whole and the different parts as well as awareness of context and nuance. This part of the study helps researchers become informed about the content in their data. A researcher is able to see key patterns and connections within the data through this method (ibid, p.102). We followed this method of coding and achieved the desired results that we described above. At this stage, we then created preliminary categories, as was also described by the method (ibid).

After a researcher further analyses the data, one can then establish the main categories and the subcategories within them by better seeing the key patterns and connections within the data (ibid, p.104). This was done in this research as we created our categories. For example, one main category is Sustainable Development, and a sub-category was made to be Social Sustainable Development. The data connected to sustainable development was found in an MoU where the nature of the two nations cooperation was being discussed. Data we found could be categorised into Sustainable Development, and then sub-categorised into Environmentally Sustainable Development. Drisko and Maschi (ibid, p.104) argue that subcategories are used to structure the content of each category as well as providing a more detailed and nuanced understanding (ibid, p.104). This was once again something we used in our research. The categories are based on trends found in the data, connected to the research question.

After 10% and again after 50% of the data being coded, a formative reliability check of the coding frame was performed (ibid, p.105). This being a modification of Drisko and Maschi's (2015, p.105) original method where they only did one check. This change was added to present an early revision and then a later one to increase the quality of the coding. Drisko and Maschi's (ibid) reliability check entails revisiting the coding frame to discarding rarely used code and reviewing the coding hierarchy. After that, the coding process continues (ibid). When this process was done, and all coding was done, a summative check was performed in the same manner as the previous review was done, as recommended by Drisko and Maschi (ibid). The purpose of these checks is to give the possibility for revision of the research question. They are also done to allow for final changes in the coding categories (ibid). At this last stage, we did not do major revisions in our paper.

After doing our coding, it was used as the base of our analysis. The coding of the data helps us order the content of the data into something we could use to analyse, compare, and discuss.

5.4 Validity and Reliability

To ensure the validity and reliability of our coding, we ensured the consistency and quality of coding by using a codebook with strict definitions of categories and subcategories as suggested by Drisko and Maschi's (ibid, p.107). This ensures that other researchers can validate the research and that the dissertation reliably coded the data throughout the process (ibid, p.107). While these efforts might help with validity and reliability, it would have been more optimal if the dissertation were able to use other researchers to review the data during the research process. Because of the limitations of this dissertation, this was not possible.

5.5 Methodological Issues

While the analysis is going to perform interviews, the interviews will not be more dangerous than everyday hazards. Furthermore, we will just be using data already available in the public domain. Hence the research is not required to be reviewed by an ethics panel (Drisko and Maschi, 2015, p.95). To ensure interviewees safety if they feel professionally or personally at risk by participating, we will offer them the option to be anonymous and handle their data with utmost security. After the study is done, any personal information will be deleted.

In the data collection period, we predicted and faced some issues. When it comes to the BRI, there is a lack of transparency when it comes to documents and agreements. While this is an issue, this dissertation argues that one can counteract it by trying to get access to more documents from the actors involved or try to puzzle together statements and online sources to get a good and nuanced picture. Using secondary sources and interviews helped us to get around this issue. The data already found in the preliminary research was proven to be enough to conduct an analysis to a satisfactory level. However, by supplementing it with more data, partly through secondary sources, contacting our case country governments, and interviews, this dissertation was hoping to get a deeper understanding of than what the data already found can offer. This was successful.

Qualitative content analysis, as a method, has its issues. Qualitative content analysis can be a time-consuming method, prone to human error and resource-draining. Nevertheless, this was to be avoided by applying a proper and systematic method, as was suggested by Stan (2010, p.226). The method has also been criticised for being too simplistic and descriptive (ibid, p.229). This dissertation acknowledges this issue and argues that by using it to do a comparative analysis and combining the content analysis with socialisation theory, we make it more complex and less descriptive.

5.6 Data Analysis

The coding process was a large part of the analysis. When this was done, the coding of the data regarding the BRI and the BRI's efforts in the country's was presented. The themes were to then be visually comparable, and one should be able to see similarities, which turned out to be true. The final step of the analysis was to analyse the similarities between the different actors and see if the normative chain between the countries and the BRI exists or if it is not there.

If the EU's norms are affecting the BRI, we could see the EU's norms in the BRI's interactions with the countries. For example, if the theme of sustainable development is present the EU and the BRI's interactions with the countries, this will be an indication of EU norms transferring over to the BRI. To then study the effect of the level of affiliation to the EU, we studied the number of norms transferred over from the EU to the BRI's interactions and check if the norms were already present in the BRI. The hypothesis presented before entails that if the country is closely affiliated with the EU (such as a core EU member), then they should have a higher number of EU norms transferred over to the BRI than a country that has lower levels of affiliation. The level of affiliation was measured by if they are core member states, a recent member state or in the process of becoming a member state.

To be able to see if the level of affiliation to the EU matters for how the BRI is affected by EU norms, we found contrasts in the different degrees of affiliation. If the same number of norms were present in all cases studied, then this would mean that the level of affiliation does not matter. It could also mean that the BRI already had all the norms from the start and have consistently been applying them to all the countries they worked with. If the norms were present in the BRI from the beginning, we could see this by studying the 2015 BRI document. If the norms found were already present in the BRI's original policy document to the same degree as it was found in China's BRI interactions with our case countries, we cannot say that the BRI was affected by the EU's norms.

Furthermore, to analyse the norms found in the data, we have compared them with norms found in the EU to see which ones are missing. The missing ones were added together with the norms found into the dataset called "Norms" which will be discussed below. Meaning if sustainability is missing from the themes, it has been added to the dataset as it is an EU norm. The reason for doing this is that we will then be able to see where norms exist and where they are missing. To simplify the visualisation, we removed the EU norms from our tables that were not present in any of our cases, with a few exceptions.

To present the data, this dissertation has used a comparative table to show the similarities and differences found in the data. The table was used separately in each country. The table shows the flow of norms from the EU over to the BRI as well as checks if the BRI already contained the norm, to begin with. The dataset "Norms" is the start of the chain, checking if the norms are present in the EU, in China's actions through the BRI concerning the case country studied and if the norm already existed in the BRI. This method was chosen as it is concise, simultaneously presents large amounts of data, clearly order the data displayed and was useful for the last stage of the analysis, namely applying theory to the results (ibid, p.111). Having the extra check on the BRI original document will also increase the value of the research as it removes the

uncertainty factor regarding if the norm was already present in the original form of the BRI. If it was, it means that the BRI was not affected by that EU norm in that case.

The matrix is represented by Figure 1 and will show us if the chain of norm diffusion is present or where it breaks.

Table 1						
Norms	Country Commonality	Country Importance	BRI 2015 Commonality	BRI 2015 Importance	Norm diffusion	Norm diffusion calculation (only visible in this example table)
EU-Norm 1	Very common	Important	Uncommon	Not important		
EU-Norm 1.1	Very Common (3)	Important (3)	Uncommon (1)	Not important (1)	Norm diffusion	6-2=4
EU-Norm 1.2	Common (2)	Important (3)	Uncommon (1)	Not important (1)	Norm diffusion	5-2 =3
EU-Norm 1.3	Common (2)	Important (2)	None-existent (0)	None-existent (0)	Norm diffusion	4-0=4
EU-Norm 1.4	Uncommon (1)	Not important (1)	None-existent (0)	None-existent (0)	Norm diffusion	2-0=2
EU-Norm 1.5	Common (2)	Fairly important (2)	Uncommon (1)	Not important (1)	Norm diffusion	4-2=2
EU-Norm 1.6	Very Common (3)	Important (3)	Common (2)	Fairly important (2)	Possibly norm diffusion	6-4=2
EU-Norm 1.7	Uncommon (2)	Important (3)	Common (2)	Not important (1)	Possibly norm diffusion	5-3=2
EU-Norm 1.8	Uncommon (1)	Fairly important (2)	Uncommon (1)	Not important (1)	Possibly norm diffusion	3-2=1
Norm 2	Common	Important	Uncommon	Not important	-	
Norm 2.1	Common (2)	Important (3)	Uncommon (1)	Not important (1)	Possibly norm diffusion	5-2=3
EU-Norm 3.1	Uncommon (1)	Not important (1)	Common (2)	Fairly important (2)	No Norm diffusion	2-4 =-2
EU-Norm 11	Uncommon (1)	Fairly important (2)	Uncommon (1)	Fairly important (2)	No Norm diffusion	2-2=0

Table 1 created by the author as a pedagogical tool to explain the analytical process. The tables in the analysis will not contain the norm diffusion calculation column. Please note that the numbering of norms as EU-Norm 1.1 etc. is just for the pedagogical purposes of this graph. The same is true for the last column to the right side.

“Norms” is a syntax that contains the normative themes the analyses have found in the data + some of the missing EU norms. The EU norms have a “EU-” written before their name represent EU norms like Norm: 1.1,1.2,1.3,1.4,1.6,1.7,1.8,3.1,3.2. “Commonality” (Uncommon, Common, Very Common) measures how common something is in the dataset we have on each

country. “Importance” (Not important, Fairly important, Important) measures if the norm is found in important places or take up much focus in the documents, showing that it is valued as important by the two parties. “BRI 2015” is a check on the 2015 policy document to see if the norm is found in the document, and it checks the two parameters as well. Something can also be “None-existent”, meaning that the norm is not present at all in the documents that have been studied. The reason why Non-existent and Uncommon both are an option is that there are some examples where the norm is only mentioned a few times or maybe just once, making it uncommon, while at other times it is not mentioned at all, making it non-existent.

The commonality and importance of a norm are dependent on a few key factors. How common a norm is depending on how often it is mentioned in all our data and how much space it takes in the documents. How much space the norm takes in our data is compared with the amount of space other norms take up in the data, meaning the commonality of a norm is dependent on the commonality of other norms. Meaning, if norm A (the most common norm) is mentioned ten times, it makes norm B not be common if it is only mentioned three times while if norm A is mentioned five times, Norm B being mentioned three times it would be common. After establishing the commonality of the norm, we can then establish the importance of it. Commonality plays a small role in the importance of a norm, but it can be an indicator of how much importance is put on a norm. Primarily, the importance of a norm is determined qualitatively by the relevance it has for BRI in our case. For example, even if a norm is only mentioned once or twice, it can be described as the foundation of the countries BRI interactions, or that the agreement is to be based on that norm, making it rather important. A norm that is common can also not be that important if the norm is not given much value in the places it appears. One example of this is how a norm is just discussed in a roundabout way, or not given more attention than just being vaguely mentioned. The stronger a language, the more the norm is discussed in greater detail, the more important it is valued by the analysis. The importance of a norm is also, to a small extent, dependent on the importance of other norms (to a significantly smaller extent than the dependency of commonality).

The commonality and importance of the sub-themes are first decided, before moving on to the main themes. The main themes do not have any specific analytical value and act more like a category to help us organise the sub-theme norms. Therefore, we do not analyse the main norm themes to see if they are cases of norm diffusion. The reason for this is that with cases like liberalism norms, there are a lot of other liberal norms that are not present in the BRI and that we do not include in our analysis or listing. Meaning, even if the main themes would indicate norm diffusion from our data, it would be a skewed result, not really representing that broad category of norms it is named after. Therefore, our analytic focus is put on the sub-themes, which are focused enough for this dissertation to be able to analyse. The main theme of the norms is not compared with others but are rather an average value of the sub-theme. The commonality and importance of these norms are decided by combining the values of the importance and commonality of the sub-themes and then dividing them with the total number of sub-themes in main themes. In the cases that the main theme of the norm has is mentioned directly, such as sustainable development, we will count it as its own sub-theme. If the result ends up being in between two numbers, we will round up or down based on how close they are to ether value. For example, if the average of the commonality of the main theme of a norm is

1-1.4 than that means that that norm is uncommon, while if it is 1.5-2.4, it means that it is common and 2.5-3 it means it is very common. If a norm is set to be non-existent in a case, then this norm is not counted, as we are looking for the mean of the norms present in our case. The non-existent value is present for us to be able to analyse the differences between our different cases better while the importance and commonality of our main norm theme are present to give us an average of the values of the norms present in the main theme and help us better visualise and organise our findings and data.

The key documents, such as plans of implementation of the BRI, original BRI MoU's and key press-releases, are more weighted in this assessment than some of the other documents due to their centrality to these agreements. Smaller agreements have less importance for the country's interactions, and for example, could be more focused on specific projects, making them less important in our evaluation of the cases norms.

The three different values found in Commonality and Importance are also equal to the numerical values of 0, 1, 2 and 3. Meaning, if the parameter called importance in "Norm 1" is equal to Important, then that is equal to a three while it is equal to 2 if it is Fairly important, one if it is not important and 0 if it is None-existent. After we establish the two parameters in both the 2015 BRI policy document and in our case countries, we can compare the norms in our case country with the norms of the BRI 2015 policy document to see if norm diffusion has taken place.

The Norm diffusion column identifies the likelihood of the presence of the norm in our case, being a result of norm diffusion. The options are Norm diffusion, Possibly Norm diffusion and No Norm diffusion. Norm diffusion means that the chain of norm diffusion holds and the norm transfers from the EU to the BRI. A norm shows norm diffusion if the added-up number between the case country and the BRI 2015 policy document is 3 or 4, as we see in norm 1.1-3. It can also be an example of norm diffusion even if the number is 2. This requires that the norm in the BRI 2015 policy document is uncommon and not important while the norm in our case is common and fairly important as well as the dissertation clearly qualitatively seeing the difference between the norm in the 2015 BRI policy document and the case, as seen in norm 1.5. If the norm is none-existent in the BRI 2015 Policy document than we can also establish that there has been a case of norm diffusion, even if the numerical value of the norms only adds up to 2.

Possibly Norm Diffusion means that there is no direct chain found in the data but that we cannot rule out the correlation. It could also mean that something is unclear. In the case of Possible Norm Diffusion, the norm will be more scrutinised and discussed later in the text. For a norm to be classified as Possible Norm Diffusion, it needs to have a point of one or two. Examples of these are norm 1.6,1.7 and 1.8. Norm 2.1 is also Possible Norm Diffusion and an example of a norm that is not an EU norm. This is why it is not a case of Norm diffusion. The norms that are not EU norms but have a stronger presence in the case than what they have in the BRI 2015 Policy document will also be Possible Norm Diffusion. None of the norms that are none-EU norms will be classified as Norm Diffusion.

No Norm diffusion means that norms have not transferred over at all and that there is no correlation or that the norms were already present in the BRI. For a norm to be red, the norm needs to have a higher value or equal value in the BRI 2015 policy document than what it has in our case. Meaning that the value needs to be zero, as seen in Norm 3.2 or negative as seen in Norm 3.1.

5.7 Applying Theory

This dissertation did, after finishing the qualitative content analysis, start applying Johnston's (2008) theory on socialisation to understand the empirical findings.

To analyse the presence and effect of socialisation, we need to check:

1. what the characteristics of the social environment are that the actors are interacting with each other. If the environment has teaching- or agent-like properties, we need to identify what norms and associated behaviours that actors in the environment are supposed to adopt and ideally internalise. Find the ideology present in the social environment that is the EU (Johnston, 2008, p.26-27).
2. We also needed to identify how these normative characteristics develop or hold back the socialisation process.
3. Lastly, we needed to identify how the actors interact with the environment and what the policy processes through which newly socialized actors act upon in the broader social environment.

The BRI's socialisation could be analysed in Europe because even if the socialisation doesn't affect the whole of China or even whole of BRI, it will affect the diplomats and decision-makers that are dealing with the EU and EU nations as these will need to negotiate within the EU:s framework (ibid, 27). Furthermore, international institutions often possess a link between the presence of specific normative structures that are found in institutions with the implementation of said norms in the actor's behaviour at a unit level (ibid, p.29-30). Institutions usually have identities, specific traits, as well as missions and normative cores (ibid, p.30).

It is also important to understand how institutions, such as the EU vary as social environments in ways relevant to socialisation as this determines the level of persuasion and social influence (ibid, p.30-31). This understanding would help us to understand the normative straight of the EU.

1. We need to understand the nature of membership – Small of exclusive/large and inclusive,
2. The franchise is the other aspect we need to understand. Meaning, if the authoritativeness of members is equally distributed or distributed unevenly (legitimately).
3. If decision rules require unanimity, consensus, majority or supermajority etc.
4. The mandate needs to be understood, as well. The mandate to provide information, to deliberate and resolve as well as to negotiate and legislate.

5. The autonomy of actors from principals. Looking at if they are low or high.

Different combinations of these five create different kinds of social environments and lead to different amounts of persuasion and social influence (ibid, p.31).

When this is done, the next step was to analyse the effect of the EU's norm diffusion on the BRI. To do this, we needed to look at the different micro-processes of socialisation: mimicking, social influence, and persuasion. These we studied by applying the theory of these processes onto the content analysis results to see if we can see any patterns that resemble any of these three behaviours. We did this to better understand how they are evident in the EU, how they affect EU neighbours, and how they are affecting the BRI in Europe.

5.7.1 2015 Belt and Road Initiative Policy Document

To be able to apply our theory on something, we also need to have a different variable that shows us what norms are initially from the BRI and what norms are coming from the outside. Looking at the original BRI document, we can see that there are a bunch of norms present. These can give us insight to which norms that are present in China's interactions with our case countries are more likely to come from China initially. Appendix 1 shows the themes and sub-themes used in the analysis below and Appendix 3 contains all the different pieces of data that we have used in the analysis of the 2015 BRI policy document.

Liberal Norms

Liberal Norms are not that prominent the BRI. Few liberal norms appear, and peace seems to be the only relevant norm present.

Peace is brought up in a few different places, some of them mentioned in appendix 3, and seems to be one of the more central norms of the initiative due to the weight it is given.

In the policy document, China claims that the BRI inject new positive energy into world peace. The initiative is claimed to lead to a more harmonious world where people can live in peace and prosperity. The BRI is to be in line with the Five Principles of Peaceful coexistence.

Equality is framed as one of the five principles of peaceful coexistence but is not mentioned more than that in the document, making it not so common. It is an undertone of the document, giving it some importance.

Cooperation

Cooperation has one norm connected to it that is relevant, while having another minor norm that is not as present but is an undertone, giving it some importance.

Mutual Benefit is a recurring norm throughout the entire document. It seems to be one of the guiding norms of the BRI. It is in many formative places of the document, giving it importance to the BRI.

The BRI is to be a win-win cooperation, built on mutual benefits for the parties, which is repeated throughout the text repeatedly.

This is the only mutuality norm not going under the “mutuality” theme as we argue it fits better with the cooperation theme as it is solely about mutual benefits through cooperation. Being a sub-category of cooperation rather than mutuality.

Common Development Is only mentioned once but is an undertone of the document. It is rare, but of some importance to the initiative. The initiative is to promote common development and prosperity.

Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is brought up in the policy document a few times. Mostly, environmental sustainability is discussed, and there is a complete lack of economic sustainability. In the policy document, China writes that the BRI aims to realize balanced and sustainable development in the countries involved.

Environmentally Sustainable Development Norms are present in the document and rather prevalent. Yet, there is some contradiction in this norm, as they also discuss developing fossil fuel industries which are not so environmentally sustainable

In the policy document, we can read that China encourages the promotion of green and low-carbon infrastructure construction and operation management where they are to take into full account the impact climate change has on construction. Wind power, solar power and other clean and renewable energy sources are to be developed together. In the same sentence, fossil fuel development is also propagated for.

Socially Sustainable Development is discussed in relation to poverty. It is minor and not central in any way to the BRI, at least from the perspective of this document.

Fairtrade

There is only one fair-trade norm present in the 2015 document, but it has large importance to the BRI, seen from the policy documents perspective.

Open and Market Economy Norms appear in different parts of the text and are given much importance. In the policy paper, China promises to be committed to their opening-up policy, and to build a new pattern of all-round opening-up, and to integrate China deeper into the world’s economic system. The BRI is to help China in this endeavour. China also promises that the Initiative will follow market operations, abide by market rules, international norms and let the market allocate resources while letting enterprises act independently.

Good Governance

Good governance is missing some of its key components but has a relevant presence in the policy document.

Financial Security is not given much space or importance in the agreement, but it is still present as a goal to achieve. The policy document promotes a sound business environment to be shaped within the related regions and countries. The countries are to push forward negotiations on bilateral investment protection agreements and double taxation avoidance agreements to protect the lawful rights and interests of investors.

Inclusive Norms can be found in some key areas of the policy document, and while it is not too common, it has an importance to it. China writes that they want to build a regional economic cooperation architecture that is inclusive. The BRI is to be inclusive and harmonious. The Chinese government also advocates inclusiveness in the initiative.

Transparency Norms Are a small norm that is not too visible. Mentioned a few times, it is not given much importance either. In the policy document, it is written that the countries should lower non-tariff barriers and jointly improving the transparency of technical trade measures.

Culture norms

Cultural norms are found in the sense that the BRI want to promote the spreading of different cultures among the nations. This is given some importance and is fairly common.

Preservation of Cultural Heritage is not discussed more than being mentioned once. Meaning, this norm had a small amount of importance to the BRI. The policy document encourages the actors to jointly apply for and protect World Heritage sites. This is the only cultural heritage preservation action mentioned, and it is not well defined or discussed.

Cultural Diversity Norms are discussed to a greater extent. The policy document encourages cultural diversity along the BRI and gives it some importance. In the policy document, China means that the BRI will promote cultural exchanges among the members of the initiative. Enhancing cultural exchanges is said to be one of the aspects required for mutual benefit and common security.

Mutuality Norms

Mutuality Norms are widely discussed, and some of them are given a lot of importance.

Mutual Understanding Norms are present in the agreements to a small extent and are not displayed as too important outside the cultural sphere. In the policy document, China writes that the BRI will contribute to mutual understanding for the people of the countries involved in the initiative. The initiative is to enhance mutual understanding to gain common development and prosperity and peace and friendship.

Trust is an important norm in some of the key aspects of the BRI. It is not common, but where it appears, it takes a prominent role. In the policy document, China writes that the BRI will contribute to mutual trust among the populations of the countries involved in the initiative. Mutual trust is again mentioned as a way to gain mutual peace and common development and prosperity.

Respect is another norm that has not been mentioned much but has been mentioned in defining places. China means that the initiative will lead to people in the initiative countries respecting each other more. Mutual respect for each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity is argued to be one of the five principles of peaceful coexistence that the BRI wants to achieve.

Mutual Recognition of Standards is a norm that is rarely expressed and do not seem to have much relevance. Mutual recognition of regulations, improved cooperation in the field of

inspection and quarantine, certification and accreditation and standard measurement is also encouraged in the countries along the BRI by the policy document.

Economic Integration is a norm that is common and appears in relatively important parts of the document. The BRI is said in the document to be embracing economic globalisation with deep integration of markets, economic policy coordination and in-depth regional cooperation of higher standards. The Initiative is to build a community with shared interests, destiny, responsibility featuring economic integration.

Government Control/planned Economy Practices

This is a norm with little mention and relevance in the 2015 policy document.

Preferential Investment Possibilities is the only component this norm has, and it is not a common, nor relevant aspect of the policy document. Speeding up Investment facilitation by the involved governments in the BRI is encouraged in the BRI policy document.

Table 2 – BRI Norms		
Norms	Commonality	Importance
Liberal Norms	Common	Important
Peace	Common	Important
Equality	Uncommon	Fairly important
Cooperation	Common	Important
Mutual Benefit	Very common	Important
Common Development	Uncommon	Fairly important
Sustainable Development	Common	Fairly important
Environmental Development	Common	Fairly important
Social Development	Uncommon	Not important
Fairtrade	Common	Fairly Important
Open and Market Economy	Very common	Important
Transparency	Uncommon	Not important
Good Governance	Common	Fairly Important
Financial Security	Uncommon	Not important
Inclusive Norm	Common	Fairly important
Culture Norms	Common	Fairly important
Preservation of Cultural Heritage	Uncommon	Not important
Cultural Diversity	Common	Fairly important
Mutuality Norm	Uncommon	Fairly Important
Mutual Understanding Norms	Uncommon	Not Important
Trust	Uncommon	Important
Respect	Uncommon	Fairly important
Mutual Recognition of Standards	Uncommon	Not Important
Economic Integration	Common	Fairly Important
Government Control /planned Economy Practices	Uncommon	Not Important
Preferential Investment Possibilities	Uncommon	Not important

Table 2: Table prepared by the author. It is describing the commonality and importance of different norms found in the BRI 2015 policy document.

6. Analysis

In this section, we are going to have the previous sections in mind on EU as a social environment, as required by our theory, as well as the norms found in the 2015 Belt and Road Initiative document when we are looking at our case countries and the documents we have collected from them. We will give short summaries and one or two examples per norm. To give context to the data we have, we will use the interviews we have done and a few third-party sources. We will understand our data by applying our theory on a country by county basis.

The data-gathering process took a long time, and all case countries' academics, ministries and even some journalists were contacted to get access to documents and perspectives on the topic. The research contains documents that are not released to the public, and a few classified documents as well.

Due to the qualitative nature of this dissertation, both indicators and keywords are used to identify the different themes and sub-themes in the coding of the data. They are listed in Appendix 1. A norm indicator could be the countries agreeing on having joint cultural events in each other's countries, which would indicate cultural diversity norms. The events can be worded differently (music month, culture year, film event and more.) but are still described as cultural events.

In Appendix 2, one can see the data collection and sampling process used. In appendix 3, one can read the full results of the qualitative content analysis, while in the sections below, one will read summaries of the data displayed in Appendix 3. In Appendix 3, one can also see the list of documents used for each country. In Appendix 4, one can read the summarised interviews and the profiles of the people interviewed. Nine interviews were done, and around 35 documents were coded and analysed.

Looking at Johnston (2008, p.26-27) method of analysis that we previously discussed, we need to identify the characteristics of the social environment that the actors are interacting with each other. This has been done first in the section about the EU and EU norms and will now be done at the beginning of this section of the paper. We have also seen how the EU, through their legislations and enlargement procedures, develop the socialisation processes as well as how the actors interact with the norms. We will further be delving into these topics throughout the coming section. We will now be analysing the results of the qualitative content analyses through the three micro-processes that Johnston's presented. The documents used have all been listed and explained in Appendix 3.

6.1. Italy

In the case of Italy, being the largest country of our cases, we have a large sample size 16 documents that we have analysed. They are a diverse selection, and the only type of agreement of relevance that was not found was agreements on education. It is unclear if there is any such agreement. The ministry of education of Italy has been reached out through different channels to but choose not to respond.

The Euro-sceptic and EU norm sceptic Italian government that signed the BRI MoU was not the same government that first started the BRI negotiations (G. Pompili, Personal

communication, 13 February 2020). Already in 2017, before the populist EU-sceptic government took power in Italy, negotiations were on the way about signing a BRI MoU (ibid). The EU-sceptic Italian government were looking for other actors to cooperate with to lessen their reliance on the EU. One possible partner was China (G. Pugliese, Personal Communication, 07 February 2020).

The BRI negotiations were sped up due to pressure from the Leagues and Luigi Di Maio, the now former leader of the Five-Star Movement and Michele Geraci, undersecretary of the ministry of economic development, willingness to get closer to China. Mr Di Maio sped up the BRI negotiations during the import-export fair in Shanghai. During the meeting, Di Maio and Geraci promised Chinese officials that Italy would join the BRI. When they got back from the expo, the League started being more critical towards the BRI, not supporting the signing of the MoU. March 2019, the date that Italy joined the BRI had already been decided for a state visit for when the MoU and other agreements were going to be signed. Domestic worries appeared about Italy being the first G7 country to join, and worries were expressed from the Trump administration (G. Pompili, Personal communication, 13 February 2020).

Poggetti (2019) write a similar story to what Pompili describes in her interview and highlights that Italy needed foreign investment to further grow their stagnating economy, but that the League changed their mind about the BRI when the U.S. started criticising Italy for considering joining the BRI. When Italy started to consider cancelling their signing of the BRI, China threatened to cancel investments (ibid), that were said to be worth 2.8 million dollars, according to Smith and Loon (2019).

Italy decided that they would sign the MoU, but that it would have a clear commercial profile and open the doors for other EU countries to join the BRI. The government tried to calm Italian sceptics and the U.S. by fixing the language of the MoU to make it more EU friendly (G. Pompili, Personal communication, 13 February 2020).

Looking at Italy joining the BRI from this perspective, we can see that Italy's hand was partly forced to sign the MoU in order to not lose out on the investments they needed to promote the growth of their economy. Despite this, they made efforts to minimise the backlash.

Michele Geraci, an undersecretary of state at the Italian Ministry of Economic Development and a strong proponent of the BRI in Italy, wrote himself in an article in the Financial Times that the MoU contains language and concepts that bring the BRI project closer to the EU best practises on issues of transparency, making sure the playing field is level and climate change (Geraci, 2019).

This shows that Italy intentionally tried to socialise China into the Norms of the EU through the BRI. The reason for this, based on our expert interviews and the statement of Geraci, seems to be to calm down and lessen the EU's and US's criticism and backlash.

Here we can see a case of mimicking as has been discussed previously in this dissertation. China is adapting its interactions with Italy, with the help of Italy, to handle the uncertain environment. The uncertainty is caused by the possibility of a backlash from both the US and the EU. To handle this uncertainty, diminishing the possibility of the EU sanctioning the agreement, we

can see that China adapted its interactions with Italy to mimic the norms of the EU. Partly, this might have been done to prevent the use of the micro-process of social influence, where the EU could sanction both Italy and China for stepping outside of the EU's normative framework.

Dr G. Pugliese (Personal Communication 07 February 2020) further means that in 2019, China had a lot of pressure from both inside and outside regarding the BRI. In China, there was a lot of scepticism against the BRI, even from elite members of the Communist Party. Elite members thought that the BRI was a waste. This helped Italy in its negotiations with China, making China scaling the BRI down concerning Italy and abiding by international good practice. Italy joining helped China as Italy became a symbol of the BRI's possible success and showed that the BRI is something that can be adapted and re-defined if it is needed (ibid). This is again something mentioned by Pei (2019) who highlight the uncertainty and scepticism against the BRI from the Chinese elite.

Outside of the normative language, Italy was not putting forward many demands in the negotiations. The Chinese side dictated the terms, and it was China's text. Italy only added the last part where they agree that all decisions that Italy make must be decided within the framework of the EU (G. Pompili, Personal communication, 13 February 2020).

The League changed their mind on China and the BRI after initially supporting it. A delegation from Italy went to Taiwan, and the League used their social network to make the visit public. The League also raised the Hong Kong issues, but all this was not a result of EU norms, rather it was a result of U.S. influence. The League wanted to get closer to the Trump Whitehouse, according to Ms G Pompili (ibid).

None of the BRI projects has been done yet in Italy. After the MoU was signed, The U.S. and the E.U. asked Italy to approve the golden-power law. This law gives the government control over foreign direct investment into the country's strategic infrastructure. Italy was asked by the EU to adopt this law on a country level due to the BRI, which the Italian government ended up doing (ibid). The law should influence China's future actions in Italy (ibid).

The Leagues resistance against China is not influenced by the EU, as both leading parties are EU-sceptic in the government, but rather more about the Leagues admiration for the Trump administration, according to Ms Pompili (ibid).

Here, due to the norms originating from the U.S. and not the EU, we cannot establish that this change of attitude towards China is connected to an EU micro process of socialisation.

6.1.1 Norms

We can see EU norms that have influenced China's interactions with Italy. In 5 clear cases, one can see that EU norms in the agreements that were either not present in the BRI initially or that have a significantly more substantial presence in the Italy-China agreements than they have in the original BRI document. There are also seven other norms that either are not explicit EU Norms and that are initially in the BRI 2015 policy document, or that are to a rather small extent stronger in the Italy-China interactions than what they are in the original 2015 BRI policy document.

Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is a significant norm in China-Italy BRI interactions. Sustainability is brought up in many different documents as something that needs to be adhered to in investments, development and cooperations. It is something the parties want to advocate. However, they do not always specify what type of sustainable development they mean.

In the core BRI MoU between Italy and China, the countries further discuss the need to promote sustainable development, in line with the Paris Accord on Climate change and in-line with the 2030 Agenda.

Sustainable Environmental Development is the most present of the sustainability norms. It is the one that has been the most clearly defined as well, and the parties put considerable importance to this norm. In the core BRI MoU between Italy and China, the parties highlight the importance of the Paris Accord on Climate change. The parties also agree on developing sustainable connectivity, sustainable energy, and to cooperate on environmental protection.

In the BRI 2015 Policy Document (called BRI-PD henceforth) it is a common and relatively important norm, meaning that it is a bit unclear whether there has been any norm diffusion through socialisation done here, or if this norm has become more important due to developments such as the Paris accord on climate change that was signed a year later than the BRI-PD was published.

Sustainable Economic Development is only outright mentioned in one of the documents. It has a small impact and relevance on the countries BRI interactions. In the core BRI MoU between Italy and China, the parties agree that their BRI interactions are to be guided by sustainable growth norms. The countries agree that they are to develop connectivity following a financially sustainable approach and have an approach of circular development. Investments are also supposed to be economically viable (sustainable). They are also to help other countries in this matter together. This norm holds the same importance and communality in China's interactions with Italy as it does in the BRI-PD, meaning there is no explicit socialisation happening concerning this norm.

Societal Sustainable Development is also a minor norm that is mentioned a few times. It seems to be a fairly important norm due to the actors defining it as a norm they should work towards socially sustainable investments. In the joint press release between Italy and China on the strengthening of their global strategic partnership, the two countries highlight their support of implementing the 2017-2020 Italy-China action Plan to further boost cooperation in the areas of sustainable urbanisation and to work towards socially sustainable investments. They are also to help other countries in this matter.

Social sustainable development norms are non-existent in the BRI-PD. This dissertation argues that this is an example of transference diffusion. Transference diffusion is a process that commonly happens during an exchange of services or knowledge as well as during investment. Through the action plan and the investments, norm diffusion happens through transference diffusion. This dissertation would also argue that this is a case of the micro-process of

Persuasion due to the norm establishing that they are to work towards socially sustainable investments, creating a mutual normative world view.

Good Governance

Good governance norms are highly visible in the two nations agreements with each other. It is the largest norm present in our data and is almost found in all documents.

Financial Security is the smallest norm in this category of norms and is only really mentioned in one document. In the original China-Italy BRI MoU, the two countries agree to communicate and coordinate on fiscal, financial, and structural reform policies to create a favourable environment for economic and financial cooperation. This norm is equally present and robust in the BRI-PD, indicating that there is no norm diffusion.

The Rule of Law norm is highly relevant and shows respect for Italy's EU membership. It is present in almost all the agreements and is a central norm in many agreements. In the core BRI MoU between Italy and China, the parties agree to work per their respective domestic laws and regulations, in accordance with their respective international obligations. At the end of the core BRI MoU, Italy and China agree that their MoU will be interpreted per the legislations of the Parties as well as international laws, and for Italy, the obligations Italy have from their EU membership.

This norm does not exist in the BRI-PD, and this dissertation argues that this is a case of the micro-processes Social Influencing and Persuasion. Social Influencing due to the reason this norm is present. The dissertation argues that this norm is likely to be present in all these documents due to the EU's harsh criticism in the past of China's financial dealings, where the EU believes that China has disregarded the rule of law and responsibilities of European countries they have worked in, as described by Peel and Brunsden (2019).

It is also a case of Persuasion, due to the two countries reaching a common understanding that the rule of law is to be upheld. It becomes common knowledge. The strong presence of this norm is a legitimisation of the EU, as the parties agree that the agreements are to respect Italy's obligations towards the EU. The strong presence indicates that China understands the importance of these obligations.

Inclusiveness is another common EU norm in the agreements. It is in core places for the agreements, making it reasonably relevant. In the core BRI MoU between Italy and China, they agree that they want to strengthen cooperation and promote regional connectivity with an inclusive framework beneficial to all. In the MoU, the countries also agree to promote inclusive growth. This norm is equally important in the BRI-PD, meaning there is no norm diffusion present regarding this norm.

Accountability Norms are a common norm and are important. Accountability Norms are norms that are present throughout the document, very vaguely, but can be seen when reading between the lines. In the core BRI MoU between Italy and China, the parties agree to make sure consistency and complementarity with existing bilateral and multilateral cooperation

mechanisms and with regional cooperation platforms. The countries dedication to these values shows a will to keep promises and to be responsible for one's obligations.

This same kind of promise of upholding their responsibilities in existing cooperations is found in many different documents in the same place that the rule of law norm is found. Accountability norms are not present in the BRI-PD and are a most likely a result of Social Influencing, due to the EU criticising China of not being accountable and conducting debt trap diplomacy (Brattberg & Soula, 2018).

Liberalism

Liberal norms are common and seem to be somewhat relevant in the country's agreements with each other. There are some specific liberal norms present, while many are not, which is a common theme among all our cases.

Equality Norms are noticeable in the agreements, both as a way they want to approach each other and in how they want to shape the global arena. In an MoU on cooperation in science, technology and innovation, the countries agree to base their promotion and support of cooperation between their research entities and institutions on the principle of equality. Equality is slightly more common and important in China's BRI interactions than what it is in the BRI-PD. It is not a large enough difference for us to be able to say that there is a norm diffusion present for sure. We will get back to this later.

Peace as a norm in international relations is present and highlighted as important for both parties. It is a minor norm in the number of mentions, but the two countries have put much importance to it. In a joint press release between Italy and China, the two countries say that their strategic partnership is aimed at contributing to world peace. In the core BRI MoU, the parties promise to work towards promoting regional peace. This norm is weaker in China's BRI interactions with Italy than in the BRI-PD, and hence we cannot see that there has been any norm diffusion.

Human Rights Norms in the international arena were only slightly touched upon, and is not discussed in-depth, but is still relevant to bring up. In the joint press release between Italy and China, the countries write that they want to strengthen the role of the UN in actions to protect human rights. This norm is not present in the BRI-PD, meaning that this is probably a case of norm diffusion. It is not a strong norm in the interactions between the two countries, but it should still be a matter of mimicking. China is an authoritarian state and has been highly criticised for its illiberal actions in the past, including human rights violations (Peel & Brunnsden, 2019). China could be mimicking this norm in the agreements to be able to find acceptance for their cooperation with Italy. The mimicking is likely a result of social influence due to it being a response to the criticism against China.

Cooperation

The norm of cooperation is spread out and at times, strong in the agreements. It is present in some core places, making it an important norm for China-Italy BRI interactions. None of the norms in this theme is stronger in China-Italy BRI interactions than what they are in the BRI-PD. Hence, we cannot confirm the presence of norm diffusion.

Mutual Benefit Cooperation Norms are what gives the cooperation norm its importance. This norm is outlined as a goal for how the cooperation is to be done under the BRI. In the core BRI MoU between Italy and China, the parties agree that their cooperation will be done in a mutually beneficial manner. It also says that they want to strengthen cooperation and promote regional connectivity with a framework beneficial to all.

Common Development Norms are preferably present among the documents but do not take up too much space. It is an uncommon norm in the sense that they rarely write it out to be a goal they want to achieve in their cooperation in the documents, from what we can see, but there is still an undertone of this norm in the way the actor's act. In the Cooperation Agreement between Port System Authority of Eastern Adriatic Sea – Port of Trieste and Monfalcone and China Communications Construction Company, the two parties agree on establishing cooperative relationships to explore opportunities to support, in collaboration, the development of projects, investment and infrastructure management.

Standardization Cooperation Norms are another minor norm that are barely present in the agreements. In an MoU on cooperation on frontier health quarantine, the two parties agree on together developing norms and standards on prevention and control of infectious diseases.

Culture

Cultural norms are a common set of norms in the dataset we have, which could partly be explained by the willingness of the ministry of culture and heritage to contribute with cultural documents that are not open to the public. Partly it can also be due to Italy's rich history, making this norm something that they put a high value on.

Preservation of Cultural Heritage is a common norm, appearing in many documents. It is given much value. In the MoU on world heritage twinning projects, we can see that the countries agree on working together on conservation and enhancement of world heritage sites. These are two of the primary purposes of the agreement, making them rather central in this document. This is a norm that is not as present in the BRI-PD as it is in China-Italy BRI interactions. This dissertation argues that this is 'an example of norm diffusion. The micro-process at play here is identified as Persuasion as China has adapted their otherwise small focus on this norm in the BRI-PD to become larger, sharing the view of Italy on its relevance.

Cultural Diversity is a norm noticeable through the countries accepting and distributing their cultures to each other. This is a norm that is prevalent among the two countries BRI interactions and has much relevance as much effort is put into exchanging personal, joint projects and events. In the joint press release between Italy and China on the strengthening of their global strategic partnership, the countries expressed their satisfaction in the growing number of cultural exchanges as well as in the people-to-people exchanges. The parties also agree on encouraging the teaching of each other languages in middle and high schools.

In the BRI-PD, this norm is seen as common and fairly important, while in Italy China BRI Relations, it is seen as common and important. The slight difference in importance makes it challenging to establish if this is a case of norm diffusion. This norm will be discussed later.

Fairtrade

Fairtrade norms are present in the two countries BRI agreements, and the ones that are present are highly important.

Norms on Equity being one of these fair-trade norms that have much importance to the countries BRI relationship as it is described as the spirit of the two countries bilateral relations. In the core BRI MoU between Italy and China, the spirit of equity is highlighted as the spirit of their bilateral partnership. This norm is not present in the BRI-PD, nor is it an EU norm. Hence, it is outside the scope of this study.

Transparency is another minor norm, but that has some presence in the agreements. In the joint press release between Italy and China on the strengthening of their global strategic partnership, the two countries also highlight the importance of transparency in a rule-based trading system of mutual benefit. Transparency is more important in China's BRI interactions with Italy than it is in the BRI-PD, but not by much. If it is a case of norm diffusion, all three micro-processes could be the cause of this. It is mimicking due to China having to be transparent if they want to act in Italy, due to the laws of the EU on open procurement and trade. Social influence due to China being criticised for not being transparent in their dealings and wanting to avoid further backlash from the EU, and Persuasion due to China sharing the view of Italy on the question which is present due to the norm appearing in their joint press release, indicating that this is something they agreed on.

Market Economy and Open Market Norms is another very relevant normative component in the two countries BRI interactions. It has an important norm in the agreements that are raised in both the press release and the original MoU with persuasive language. In the Original BRI MoU between China and Italy, the two parties reaffirm their mutual commitment to open and free trade and investment. They want to work to counter excessive macroeconomic imbalances and to oppose unilateralism and protectionism. In their cooperation in the BRI, they will promote free and open trade and industrial cooperation, open procurement and follow market principles. This norm is more common in the BRI-PD than it is in the China-Italy BRI interactions. This dissertation hence argues that norm diffusion has not taken place here.

Mutuality

Mutuality norms are present in the agreements between the two countries. While they are not mentioned a lot, they have some importance.

Mutual Respect as a norm is mentioned once in the agreements but in a core place. In the original BRI MoU between Italy and China, we can see that the countries agree to promote their bilateral partnership in the spirit of mutual respect. This is one of the core values of the agreement. This is a non-EU norm, and hence outside our scope.

Mutual Trust is mentioned in two documents, but do not seem to be central in the agreements. In the press release on global strategic partnership, the two countries draw up mutual trust as a pillar in their cooperation. This is a non-EU norm, and hence outside our scope.

Planned Economy and Government Control Norms

This is a small norm in the two countries interactions and is only mentioned once. It does not seem to have high importance to the two countries cooperation. It is a step away from market economy norms, in the sense that agreements encourage their financial actors to conduct business with each other's actors.

Government Intervention is the only aspect found in the different agreements that have been studied. It is minor, and not central for the two nations agreements. The parties promise to encourage their financial institutions to engage in partnership with each other to support investments and financial cooperation together. This is not an EU norm, but it is neither present in the BRI-PD. It is hence outside our scope.

Norms	Italy Commonality	Italy Importance	BRI 2015 Commonality	BRI 2015 Importance	Norm Diffusion
EU-Liberal	Uncommon	Fairly Important	Common	Fairly important	
EU-Peace	Uncommon	Important	Common	Important	No Norm Diffusion
EU-Equality	Common	Important	Uncommon	Fairly important	Possibly Norm Diffusion
EU-Human Rights	Uncommon	Not important	None-existent	None-existent	Norm Diffusion
EU-Cooperation	Very common	Fairly important	Common	Important	
EU-Mutual Benefit	Common	Fairly important	Very common	Important	No Norm Diffusion
Common Development	Uncommon	Fairly important	Uncommon	Fairly important	No Norm Diffusion
EU-Standardization Cooperation	Uncommon	Not important	Uncommon	Not important	No Norm Diffusion
EU-Sustainable Development	Very common	Important	Common	Fairly important	
EU-Environmental	Very common	Important	Common	Fairly Important	Possibly Norm Diffusion
EU-Economic	Uncommon	Not important	Uncommon	Not important	No Norm Diffusion
EU-Social	Uncommon	Fairly Important	None-existent	None-existent	Norm Diffusion
EU-Fairtrade	Not common	Important	Common	Fairly Important	
EU-Open Market Economy	Uncommon	Important	Very common	Important	No Norm Diffusion
Equity	Uncommon	Important	None-existent	None-existent	Possibly Norm Diffusion
EU-Transparency Norms	Uncommon	Fairly important	Uncommon	Not important	Possibly Norm Diffusion
Reciprocity	Non-existent	Non-existent	None-existent	None-existent	No Norm Diffusion
EU-Good Governance	Common	Fairly important	Common	Fairly Important	

Financial Security	Uncommon	Not important	Uncommon	Not important	No Norm Diffusion
EU-Inclusive Norms	Common	Fairly important	Common	Fairly Important	No Norm Diffusion
EU-Rule of law	Very common	Important	None-existent	None-existent	Norm Diffusion
EU-Accountability	Common	Important	None-existent	None-existent	Norm Diffusion
Cultural norms	Common	Important	Common	Fairly important	
EU-Cultural Heritage Preservation	Common	Important	Uncommon	Not important	Norm Diffusion
EU-Cultural Diversity	Common	Important	Common	Fairly important	Possibly Norm Diffusion
Mutuality Norms	Uncommon	Fairly important	Uncommon	Fairly important	
Mutual Understanding Norm	Non-existent	Non-existent	Uncommon	Not important	No Norm Diffusion
Mutual Trust	Uncommon	Not important	Uncommon	Important	No Norm Diffusion
Mutual Respect	Uncommon	Important	Uncommon	Fairly important	Possibly Norm Diffusion
EU-Mutual Recognition of Standards	Non-existent	Non-existent	Non-existent	Non-existent	No Norm Diffusion
EU-Economic Integration	Non-existent	Non-existent	Common	Fairly important	No Norm Diffusion
Gov Control/planned Economy	Uncommon	Not important	Uncommon	Not important	
Preferential Investment Possibilities	Non-existent	Non-existent	Uncommon	Not important	No Norm Diffusion
Government Intervention	Uncommon	Not important	Non-existent	Non-existent	Possibly Norm Diffusion
Lack of Open Procurement	Non-existent	Non-existent	Non-existent	Non-existent	No Norm Diffusion

Table 3: Prepared by the author. Describing China-Italy EU norm diffusion

6.1.2 Relevant Interview Input

Dr Giulio Pugliese (Personal Communication, 07 February 2020) and The Italian Professor (Personal Communication, 20 February 2020) both argue that the Italian government pushed China to include normative language in the BRI documents. Italy made these efforts due to the Italian government knowing that Italy joining the BRI would create a backlash, and therefore the Italian government made sure that the BRI MoU would include EU normative language. The Italian Professor (Personal Communication, 20 February 2020) means that it is to be seen if these norms will be fully respected in reality and more importantly if the MoU will have any results. This shows that China-Italy BRI interactions were experiencing an uncertain environment, making them adapt to the norms of the EU. To persuade Italy to sign the MoU, China made sure to mimic EU norms in the agreements to appease the worries of the Italians. This was a result of the Social influence of the EU who raised concerns regarding Italy joining the BRI.

Dr G. Pugliese (Personal Communication 07 February 2020) argues that while the EU prides itself in its attention to human rights, Italy did not for a long time criticize China on issues such as Hong King. Italy's lack of criticism is due to Italy wanting to be a part of the BRI for economic benefits and partly because these issues did not affect Italy. China's economic

behaviour, on the other hand, is something that directly affects Italy's national interests. Italy sees an opportunity in that if the standard of the BRI is raised, Western countries maybe could get a competitive edge over Chinese companies in getting contracts related to the BRI. The contracts might have to fulfil sustainability demands; something European companies are better on doing. Hence, promoting the norms of the EU in the BRI would profit Italy financially, and Dr G. Pugliese (Personal Communication 07 February 2020) thinks this is partly the reason Italy implemented these norms in the MoU (ibid). This dissertation argues that this is a case of Persuasion as Italy tries to create a shared understanding with China on the EU's norms to be able to better compete on BRI projects.

Our experts have not identified any specific norms that are more prevalent in Italy's interactions with China. Nether the Italian Professor (Personal Communication, 20 February 2020), nor Ms G. Pompili (Personal communication, 13 February 2020) who also means that nothing concrete has happened after the signature was done (ibid). This makes it hard for us to know if the Norms we have observed in the documents translate into real actions.

The only controversial issue is that happened is the cooperation on space issues. Italy must build a part of the Chinese space station, which goes against the U.S. will. The technology that Italy has and is to contribute to the space station is from NATO's and the EU's space agencies. It is forbidden in norms to do such a technology exchange. Italy stopped this agreement, meaning Italy do not have to build that part of the space station anymore (ibid). Here we can see the micro process of social influence taking place, as the China-Italy BRI interactions reacted to critique and adapted themselves to the norms of the EU and NATO.

All the country experts seem to agree that the countries are treated differently based on their different levels of affiliation to the EU.

The Italian Professor (Personal Communication, 20 February 2020) agrees with this dissertation's hypothesis and means that this is due to two factors: The pragmatism of China (and its ability to play its cards at different tables) and the division of the EU.

Ms G. Pompili (Personal communication, 13 February 2020) means that China's foreign policy is wise enough to have different approaches in every country. The BRI is already weakening and is not so strong in Italy. China understood that Italy is the sick Child of the EU at the moment of the MoU signing, which made China push for the signing of MoU. Now there has been a change in government, and the situation is a bit more unclear (ibid).

Dr G. Pugliese (Personal Communication 7 February 2020) argues that the difference with EU member countries contra non-EU member countries is that EU member countries can use the EU Framework as a tool in negotiating with China. Italy used the EU norms as a way to take cover and say no to China without causing damages to the two countries relations (ibid).

The adaptation of the BRI to the different countries indicates a high level of mimicking of norms. China is adapting its approach to the countries depending on the country's relation to the EU, and the countries can use EU norms as a tool in its negotiations with China.

6.2 Latvia

Latvia only has 3 EU norms present in their interactions with China that were not originally part of the policy document while they also have four that are either not found in the EU's internal norms or that are just slightly stronger in Latvia-China BRI interactions than they are in the 2015 BRI policy document.

Latvia joined the BRI partly due to the high potential it would give Latvia to become a logistic coordination centre for the region (Zuokui, 2016, p.20). Latvia has numerous times stressed their strategic position between Russia and the EU, among other geographic advantages, as one of the reasons they should be an important part of the BRI. Latvia also boasts its infrastructure's strength. Latvia has also expressed interest in improving a legal basis with the BRI partner countries (Ding, 2017).

The China-EU Expert (Personal communication, 02 March 2020) means that Latvia is more active in the 17+1, then they are in the BRI. While Latvia's focus lay on the 17+1 more, Latvia still participates in the BRI Forum and have some agreements concerning the initiative.

The reason Latvia joined the BRI is to improve their economic relations with China and bring new opportunities into the country (ibid). The China-EU Expert (Personal communication, 02 March 2020) means that in Latvia, the BRI is mostly focused on trade, connectivity, infrastructure, people-to-people exchanges and private investment over conventional infrastructure investment projects like the ones in Serbia. Furthermore, The China-EU Expert (Personal communication, 02 March 2020) means that there is a comparatively healthy Chinese-Latvian cultural exchange going on through the framework of the BRI. Both countries are teaching each other's languages at higher institutions while Latvia also has the only China culture centre in the region.

Joining the BRI has given Latvia a growth in China's activity in the country. Increased small scale trade, improved economic relations as well as large scale trade. The BRI has also given the countries a better opportunity for the countries to talk, conduct exports, people-to-people exchanges. Compared to other Baltic states, Latvia do not have as many Chinese projects present in the country (China-EU Expert, Personal communication, 02 March 2020)

6.2.1 Norms

Liberal Norms

Liberal Norms are not that common in the agreements, but when they appear, they are in critical places. The two EU norms that are present in China's BRI interactions with Latvia are more influential in the BRI-PD. We can hence not establish that norm diffusion has taken place.

Peace Is not a common norm in the Latvia-China BRI agreements, but it appears in key places, giving it some importance. In the core BRI MoU between Latvia and China, the two parties agree that they will uphold the Silk Road spirit of peace.

Equality is rare as a norm in this case. In the agreement, it can be found that it is positioned as a critical principle. In an agreement on cultural cooperation, the two countries agree that they will base their cooperation and exchanges on the principle of equality.

Cooperation

Cooperation norms are some of the most common norms in the agreement and are important for the two nations cooperation on the BRI. In the original BRI MoU, the countries agree on deepening their all-round cooperation with countries along the BRI on jointly establishing an open framework of economic cooperation. The two EU norms that are present in China's BRI interactions with Latvia are more influential in the BRI-PD. We can hence not establish that norm diffusion has taken place.

Mutual Benefit Is one of the core themes China-Latvia BRI cooperations. It is both important and common in the agreements. In the core BRI MoU between Latvia and China, the two parties agree that they will uphold the Silk Road's spirit of mutual learning and win-win cooperation.

Common Development is less important and common the previously mentioned norms, but still holds some relevance. In the original MoU between Latvia and China on the BRI, the two countries also agree on promoting coordinated development and common progress of the two countries economy society and environment.

Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is not that relevant in the two countries cooperations. The two countries have not discussed it much in their agreements, and two out of the three sustainability norms are missing.

Economic Sustainable Development is the only sustainable development norm present in the agreements between China and Latvia. It is minor and holds little importance. In the core BRI document between Latvia and China, the countries agree on translating their strengths into advantages for sustainable growth. This EU norms that are present in China's BRI interactions with Latvia is more influential in the BRI-PD. We can hence not establish that norm diffusion has taken place.

Fairtrade

Fairtrade is another common norm, due to the many uncommon norms in it, and important norm that is present in the two nations BRI agreements.

Market Economy Norms have a small presence, but the parties agree that their different cooperations and exchanges are to be done a though market-oriented approach, giving this norm some importance. In the core MoU, both countries agree that they are to conduct their different cooperations and exchanges through market-oriented approaches. This EU norms that are present in China's BRI interactions with Latvia is more influential in the BRI-PD. We can hence not establish that norm diffusion has taken place.

Transparency Norms is another small norm that is not that relevant in the various agreements. It is vaguely mentioned a few times and only once outright stated as a goal. In the core BRI MoU between Latvia and China, the two parties agree that they will uphold the Silk Road spirit of openness. Through the BRI, the countries are to increase transparency. This EU norms that are present in China's BRI interactions with Latvia is more influential in the BRI-PD. We can hence not establish that norm diffusion has taken place.

Equity is another norm with a small number of appearances in the agreements, but that is the basis of the Science and technology MoU. In an MoU on Science and technology, both countries agree that they need to take into consideration the needs and possibilities of the two countries. The entire agreement is based on this premise. This is a norm that is not present in the BRI-PD, nor is it an EU norm. Hence, it is either a norm developed later in the BRI's lifespan or a norm found in Latvia.

Reciprocity is a norm that has little spread and little importance outside science and technology MoU. In an MoU on science and technology, the two parties agree on jointly funding research, development, and innovation projects in areas of common interest, per the principle of reciprocity. This norm has the same situation as the Equity norm.

Good Governance

Good governance is a common norm with some importance to the country's agreements. It is well spread out in many different agreements and take up some important topics.

Financial Security is a minor norm in the agreement with small importance. In the original MoU, the countries agree to improve the investment environment and enhance the level of investment safety and facilitation. This none-EU norm that is present in China's BRI interactions with Latvia is more influential in the BRI-PD. We can hence not establish that norm diffusion has taken place.

Rule of Law Norms Are is common in the countries agreements and hold a fairly important role. However, it is not found in the original BRI MoU between Latvia and China. In a cultural agreement between the two parties, they agree that the activities in the agreements shall be undertaken per the two countries national laws and regulations as well as their international obligations. This is a norm that is not present in the BRI-PD, but that has a reasonably strong presence in China's BRI interactions with Latvia. Hence, we can establish that the existence of this norm comes from norm-diffusion. The case of Latvia is a bit different from Italy but rather the same. While the EU is not mentioned directly in the agreements, and Latvia's joining was not as controversial. Latvia had already joined the 16+1, but the EU had still raised concerns of China not respecting EU laws in central and eastern Europe, for example in the Budapest–Belgrade railway project which was criticised by the EU due to this regard (Kynge & Peel, 2017). As a result of this criticism, a social influence micro-process could be taking place.

Accountability Norms is a common norm and are important. It is found in the same places as the Rule of law norm is found and is probably a case of norm-diffusion for the same reasons as the Rule of law norm and due to the EU criticising China of not being accountable and conducting dept Trap diplomacy (Brattberg & Soula, 2018).

Inclusiveness Norms are present in the original MoU and is stated as a historical principle of the Silk Road that they want to uphold. In the core BRI MoU between Latvia and China, the two parties agree that they will uphold the Silk Road spirit of inclusiveness. This norm is stronger in the BRI-PD, meaning there is no norm diffusion taking place.

Cultural Norms

Cultural norms are strongly present in the BRI agreements between the countries. This could very well be due to our sample size, where two documents are culture related. Culture norms hold some importance in the agreements.

Preservation of Cultural Heritage as a norm is not a common norm, but it has a presence in the agreements worth noting. It does not seem to have much importance, as it is never mentioned entirely by itself. In an agreement on cultural cooperation, the two countries agree that they shall encourage the exchange of experience and cooperation in the fields of restoration, protection, and conservation of cultural heritage. This norm is equally strong in the BRI-PD, meaning no norm diffusion is taking place.

Cultural Diversity norms are, on the other hand, have a high presence and have been given much importance. The countries agree that to share many aspects of their cultures with each other and promote cooperations. In the core BRI MoU, we can see that the two parties are willing to cooperate in spreading each other's cultures through cooperations and people-to-people exchanges. This norm is slightly stronger in China's interactions with Latvia than they are in the BRI-PD. This norm has also transferred to real outcome in building a Chinese cultural centre in Latvia. It is unclear if this is a norm that is the result of norm diffusion, due to the small difference in importance and commonality. The micro-process of Persuasion could be at play, where China synchronise the strength of the norm to that of the EU, or it could just be that the data we have is skewed due to our small sample size and the centrality of cultural documents.

Mutuality

Mutuality norms not too common, but they do sometimes take up core places, giving them some relevance.

Mutual Understanding is not a common norm, nor that important in the two parties' agreements. In the cultural exchange program 2016-2020 agreement, the two parties agree that the agreement will lead to their common development of the understanding between their both peoples. This norm is not more noticeable than what it is in the BRI-PD.

Respect is not as a norm that regular in the agreements but has some importance when appearing. The bilateral cooperation between Latvia and China that is mentioned in the core BRI MoU is to be promoted on the principle of respecting each other's core interests and major concerns. This norm is not more robust than what it is in the BRI-PD.

Mutual Recognition of Standards is another rare and not too important norm. In the Core BRI document, the two countries agree on will promoting cooperation on mutual recognition of standards. The EU norm is stronger here than what it is in the BRI-PD where it is non-existent, indicating that the presence of the norm is a result of norm diffusion. Mutual recognition of standards as a norm is more likely a case of mimicking due to it being about cooperation on recognition of standards, which is a standard operating procedure and work habit that are needed to function inside the EU minimally. If China wants to export to the EU, China needs to adapt their standards to the standards of the EU, and vice versa. Hence, this cooperation is

about mimicking each other’s norms to be able to function inside an institution, e.g. the EU minimally.

Government Control/planned Economy Practices

This norm is not that common in different agreements, but it takes up a large section of the original MoU. It is fairly important for their agreement as it shapes some critical components of it.

Government Involvement and Intervention in Steering Businesses Norms are shaping a large part of the BRI interactions between these two countries. It is uncommon outside the original BRI MoU, but relevant and common in it. In the original BRI MoU, the countries agree to encourage two-way investment and various forms of mutually beneficial cooperation between their companies. The countries also agree on discussing the feasibility of jointly developing integrated industrial assembling, e-commerce, and consulting service centres in Latvia for promotion and easier access to Chinese exports to the EU market. In a section on financial cooperation, the two parties also agree on encouraging their financial institutions to provide financing support and services for trade and investment cooperation. They will facilitate the participation of Chinese companies in financing private, governmental, and regional projects in the Nordics and Baltics region. They are to do this by expanding cooperation between their state-owned and commercial financial institutions. They are also to encourage their companies to carry our cooperations in high and new technology and innovation by establishing new companies and innovation parks. In an MoU on Science and technology, both parties agree on encouraging their enterprises to launch cooperations in research, technological innovation, and product development together. This is not an EU norm, nor is it present in the BRI-PD. Hence it is outside our scope and not a case of EU norms diffusing.

Table 4 Latvia-China norms and norm diffusion					
Norms	Latvia Commonality	Latvia Importance	BRI 2015 Commonality	BRI 2015 Importance	Norm Diffusion
EU-Liberal	Uncommon	Fairly important	Common	Important	
EU-Peace	Uncommon	Fairly important	Common	Important	No Norm Diffusion
EU-Equality	Uncommon	Fairly important	Uncommon	Fairly important	No Norm Diffusion
EU-Human Rights	Non-existent	Non-existent	None-existent	None-existent	No Norm Diffusion
EU-Cooperation	Common	Important	Common	Important	
EU-Mutual Benefit	Very common	Important	Very common	Important	No Norm Diffusion
Common Development	Uncommon	Fairly Important	Uncommon	Fairly important	No Norm Diffusion
EU-Standardization Cooperation	Non-existent	Non-existent	Uncommon	Not important	No Norm Diffusion
EU-Sustainable Development	Uncommon	Not important	Common	Fairly important	
EU-Environmental	Non-existent	Non-existent	Common	Fairly Important	No Norm Diffusion
EU-Economic	Uncommon	Not important	Uncommon	Not important	No Norm Diffusion
EU-Social	Non-existent	Non-existent	None-existent	None-existent	No Norm Diffusion
EU-Fairtrade	Common	Fairly Important	Common	Fairly Important	
EU-Open Market Economy	Uncommon	Fairly important	Very common	Important	No Norm Diffusion
Equity	Uncommon	Fairly Important	None-existent	None-existent	Possibly Norm Diffusion

EU-Transparency Norms	Uncommon	Not important	Uncommon	Not important	No Norm Diffusion
Reciprocity	Uncommon	Not Important	None-existent	None-existent	Possibly Norm Diffusion
EU-Good Governance	Common	Fairly Important	Common	Fairly Important	
Financial Security	Uncommon	Not important	Uncommon	Not important	No Norm Diffusion
EU-Inclusive Norms	Uncommon	Fairly Important	Common	Fairly Important	No Norm Diffusion
EU-Rule of Law	Common	Fair Important	None-existent	None-existent	Norm diffusion
EU-Accountability	Common	Fairly Important	None-existent	None-existent	Norm diffusion
Cultural Norms	Common	Fairly Important	Common	Fairly important	
EU-Cultural Heritage Preservation	Uncommon	Not important	Uncommon	Not important	No Norm Diffusion
EU-Cultural Diversity	Very Common	Important	Common	Fairly important	Possibly Norm Diffusion
Mutuality Norms	Uncommon	Not Important	Uncommon	Fairly Important	
Mutual Understanding Norm	Uncommon	Not important	Uncommon	Not important	No Norm Diffusion
Mutual Trust	Non-existent	Non-existent	Uncommon	Important	No Norm Diffusion
Mutual Respect	Uncommon	Fairly Important	Uncommon	Fairly important	No Norm Diffusion
EU-Mutual Recognition of Standards	Uncommon	Not Important	Non-existent	Non-existent	Norm diffusion
EU-Economic Integration	Non-existent	Non-existent	Common	Fairly important	No Norm Diffusion
Gov Control/planned Economy	Uncommon	Fairly Important	Uncommon	Not important	
Preferential Investment Possible	Non-existent	Non-existent	Uncommon	Not important	No Norm Diffusion
Government Intervention	Uncommon	Fairly Important	Non-existent	Non-existent	Possibly Norm Diffusion
Lack of Open Procurement	Non-existent	Non-existent	Non-existent	Non-existent	No Norm Diffusion

Table 4: Table prepared by the author. Describing China-Latvia EU norm diffusion.

6.2.2 Relevant Interview Input – Latvia

Professor U. Berzina-Cerenkiova (Personal Communication 29 January 2020) means that when looking at Latvian – Chinese agreement, the Latvian documents contain less Chinese normative discourse than what is usually present in non-EU cases (ibid). Furthermore, the Chinese norm of “shared future for mankind” is more prevalent in the agreement. The EU norms, such as “level playing field” are also entering the interactions of China and Latvia, propagated by the Latvian side (ibid). Professor Berzina-Cerenkiova (ibid) also believes that the role of the internal EU norms is most visibly respected differently along with the EU/non-EU divide. China shows more respect towards EU normative discourse in their interactions with countries such as Italy that are not in the CCE or the Baltics.

The China-EU expert (Personal communication, 02 March 2020) further means that while China is expanding its presence in Latvia, Latvia is still following all the EU’s norms. Public tender is present in Latvia as well as other EU norms, even if the language depicting this does not have a strong presence in the agreements written between Latvia and China. One example the China-EU expert (Personal Communication, 02 March 2020) brought up is the Rail Baltica project. The project has a few hundred open tender procedures ongoing, and a lot of Chinese companies are interested in the project. Chinese companies have the same rights as all other companies. They are not given any preferential treatment and are following the EU’s

norms that are integrated into Latvia's internal regulations on how these types of projects are done.

The China-EU expert (Personal Communication, 02 March 2020) also highlights what they call the Latvian mentality on rules and regulations. Latvia is actively compliant with the rules and regulations of the EU. Strictly following rules and regulations is something that is rooted in Latvian political or bureaucratic culture. This is a culture related to the German political and bureaucratic culture.

Latvia also really values their EU membership, meaning they want to stay within the frameworks, regulations and norms of the EU, the expert means (ibid).

In the case of Latvia, we can see a lot of Mimicking of norms from China, based on what the two experts have said during their interviews. Latvia stands fast with EU laws and through the laws, EU's norms. China mimics the norms to be able to operate in Latvia.

6.3 Serbia

Serbia has the most substantial amount of data accessible. The Serbian ministries cooperated and gave access to many documents that were not accessible online. Twelve agreements, plan of actions, and MoU's written between Serbia and China related to the BRI have been analysed.

Serbia joined the BRI to closer their relations with China and got new investment into the country. China and Serbia already enjoyed good relations, and Serbia is one of China's key economic partners in the region. Serbia has an important geographical position for the BRI and acts as an essential link. Serbia is also in need of investment and loans to build its developing economy. This is something that China can provide them with, and Serbia sees the BRI as an opportunity to get China's support in this regard (Dimitrijević, 2017, p.68-78)

Both the Swedish Expert (Personal Communication 11 February 2020) and Professor I, Ladjevav (Personal Communication, 24 February 2020) mean that Serbia is playing different sides in their foreign relations. Serbia is both receiving investments from, and participating in the Initiatives of, Russia and China while also having EU accession as one of their main foreign policy goals. Despite the EU officials' disagreements, Serbia participates in both the BRI and Russia's Eurasian Economic Union. Serbia's method of playing different sides is something that has been regulated against in the EU in recent years, as new stricter rules are made for who is allowed to join the EU. Corre and Vuksanovic (2019) also discuss how Serbia play different sides while ignoring open procurement regarding China and the EU's scepticism against this.

Professor I, Ladjevav (Personal Communication, 24 February 2020) mean that since establishing diplomatic relations between two respective countries relations were primarily built on the international law norms, mutual respect for each party and principles of peaceful coexistence. Guiding line in recent relations remained the same, but with introducing BRI, their relations went even further, meaning that each interaction is dedicated to mutual interests and achieving mutual benefits. In the agreements related to projects designed within BRI, there are positive norms and respect for the spirit of the law (ibid).

Professor D. Pavlicevic (Personal Communication, 12 February 2020) highlights that Serbia is moving away from some liberal norms. Serbia is controlling the media, making changes in their high court, having weaker checks and balances, indicating democratic backsliding. This is also

something Ericsson (2019, p.46) has concluded in his dissertation. Serbia is not an EU country yet, and Serbia wants to use this flexibility to their advantage to get quicker and more funding as well as getting projects done quicker (ibid).

6.3.1 Norms

Serbia has five norms that are EU norms that are present in Serbia-China BRI interactions while not originally in the BRI. Seven Norms are either not found in the EU's internal norms or are just slightly more influential in Serbia-China relations than they are in the 2015 Policy document.

Cooperation

Mutual Benefits are one of the most central norms in China-Serbia cooperations. It appears in five documents and is a large part of two of the primary documents, the original MoU between Serbia and China and the bilateral cooperation plan between the two countries. In the Bilateral Cooperation Plan between Serbia and China under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative, the norm of mutual benefit through cooperation is mentioned as a goal to achieve. It is worded as a win-win cooperation. This norm holds the same importance and commonality in China-Serbia Interactions as it does in the BRI-PD, meaning we cannot establish the existence of norm diffusion.

Common Development norm is a central part of the two countries BRI interactions, based on it being described as the spirit of the Silk Road and appearing in different ways in many central documents. In the Bilateral Cooperation Plan between Serbia and China under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative, the norm of common development is present. Mutual learning and benefit as well sharing growth are mentioned as spirits of the Silk Road, and principles to achieve. This is a norm that is not an EU Norm, meaning we will not further discuss it.

The Norm on Standardization Cooperation has a rather small presence and importance. In the Bilateral Cooperation Plan between Serbia and China under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative, the countries take it upon themselves to strengthen cooperation in the field of standardization. This norm is here weaker than it is in the BRI-PD, meaning there is no norm diffusion.

Liberalism

Liberal norms are not strong in the Belt and Road interactions between Serbia and China. Norms on equality and peace are the only one's present. Liberal norms are backsliding in Serbia, as we discussed before, and this is also visible in liberal norms weak presence in China-Serbia BRI interactions. We can hence not see any cases of liberal norm diffusion.

Equality Norms have a small presence in the agreement yet are said to be a central part of the countries relations, according to the framework agreement on production capacity development. Mostly, China position itself as a benefactor, not an equal, but there is a normative language of equality in one of the agreements. In the preamble of a framework agreement between China and Serbia on production capacity development, the agreement outlines that the agreement is going to be based on the principle equality. In the same document, they also agree on the principle of equal participation in their investment cooperation efforts.

Peace is the second liberal norm present. Peace is not discussed or brought up that much, but it has a place in the dealings between China and Serbia. In the Bilateral Cooperation Plan between Serbia and China under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative, the two parties state that they will adhere to the Silk Road Spirit of Peace and cooperation. This is the first norm that is presented in the document, showing its importance.

Sustainable Development.

Sustainable development norms have a central role in the interactions between China and Serbia.

Environmental Sustainable development is a complex norm concerning Serbia-China BRI relations. Looking at the original MoU between Serbia and China on the BRI, we cannot see any indications of environmentally sustainable development, but in the bilateral cooperation plan where the MoU is made into an actual plan, it is a large part of the agreement. While it is present in this document, it is not present in any other documents that are describing actual projects. However, it is worth noting that the document was released in 2019, while the other documents come from previous years. In the Bilateral Cooperation Plan between Serbia and China under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative, the norm of environmentally sustainable development is partly apparent, right beside the encouragement of the development of the fossil fuel industries. They are also to develop the fossil fuel and mineral extraction equipment to make them more environmentally friendly. This norm is very common and important in the China-Serbia BRI interactions, but only in the new 2019 action plan. Here we can see that either China or Serbia changed their focus to be more environmentally friendly.

Pollution from Chinese owned companies and investments have been significant polluters in Serbia. The Chinese companies have invested in coal power plants and made investments in making these coal power plants more sustainable, for Serbia to be able to fulfil EU's environmental requirements. One issue is though that even if there have been improvements made, such as creating filter systems, they have in the end not been used due to bureaucracy (D. Pavlicevic, Personal Communication, 12 February 2020).

Here we can see two micro-processes at play: firstly Persuasion due to the EU's norms on the environment being accepted and becoming more similar; secondly trying to achieve these, mimicking is accruing were China is trying to fulfil the environmental requirements Serbia needs to fulfil to be able to join the EU.

Taking the 2019 action plan in mind, as a document written in 2019, while all other documents were years older, we can see that there has been a change in attitude about sustainability brought through with time. It could either be through pressure from the EU, or that China has changed their attitude. Looking at the efforts of the EU since the original MoU between Serbia and China was signed, we can see that the EU has made significant efforts in helping Serbia be more sustainable (European Commission, 2018). It is hence more likely that this norm development originates from the EU, even if China has made developments in their sustainability efforts.

Economic Sustainable Development is present in the original MoU and the BRI cooperation plan. It is a noticeable norm but not one of the central norms that are present in the countries relations. In the Bilateral Cooperation Plan between Serbia and China under the framework of

the Belt and Road Initiative, the norm of sustainable economic cooperation is present as the countries agree that intergovernmental cooperation mechanisms should be created and improved to create a favourable cooperation climate for long-term and sustainable cooperation.

This is a norm that is more important and common in China-Serbia BRI interactions than in the BRI-PD but not by much. However, by qualitatively observing the differences, we can see that they are large enough to with certainty say that this is a case of norm diffusion. This norm is an example of mimicking as a result of social influencing. The BRI has been criticised for not being economically sustainable from many different actors, as discussed previously in this dissertation. To respond to this criticism, this dissertation argues, that China has taken a more severe position and started trying to follow some of the EU's norms on sustainable economic development.

Socially Sustainable Development is present to a rather small extent in the agreements between the two nations. It does not seem to be an important norm in Serbia – China BRI relations. In the Bilateral Cooperation Plan between Serbia and China under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative, the norm of socially sustainable development is also apparent. The countries agree that they should train their officials in among other things, social compliance. The two actors also recognize that improving workers skills, creating jobs and developing social security are important elements in improving people's well-being. It also creates favourable environments for enterprises. This norm is more visible in China-Serbia BRI relations than it is in the BRI-PD. This is again probably a result of the same micro-processes as the ones discussed in the previous norm.

Mutuality

Mutuality norms are also present among the two nations. Mutual respect and trust for each other are present. None of the mutuality norms is more present in China-Serbia interactions than what they are in the BRI-PD, meaning that there is probably no norm-diffusion taking place.

Mutual Respect is the most relevant norm in this category. It is an undertone in Serbia-China relations. In the preamble of a framework agreement between China and Serbia on production capacity development, the agreement outlines that the agreement is going to be based on the principle of mutual respect.

Mutual Trust is a minor norm in the documents, that is barely not discussed. In the original BRI MoU between China and Serbia, both countries agree that they should work to deepen mutual trust.

Fairtrade

Fairtrade norms are a strong aspect of China – Serbia BRI relations. Market economy norms being the strongest, while reciprocity also being rather strong while equity not being as prevalent.

Reciprocity is visible in Serbia – China BRI relations primarily through three different documents. It is not positioned as a central norm, but it is still apparent. In the 2017-2020 program of cooperation in the field of culture and art between Serbia and China, both countries agree on basing the organisation of festivals in each other's countries on the principle of

reciprocity. This norm is not an EU norm, but is non-existent in the BRI-PD, while it is common and fairly important in China-Serbia BRI relations. Hence, we cannot say that this is an EU norm that has affected China's BRI interactions with Serbia, and it is outside the scope of this study to identify where this norm originates.

Equity, on the other hand, is minor and not that visible in the nation's agreement signing. In the Bilateral Cooperation Plan between Serbia and China under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative, the norm of equity appears in the section discussing the importance of combating climate change. Both sides stress the principle of fairness, common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities as well as considering the different situations of different countries in climate change work globally. This norm is also not found in the BRI-PD and is not an EU norm while being uncommon and not that important in China-BRI interactions. Hence, we will not look into it further.

Market Economy and Open Market Norms are the most influential aspects of fair-trade norms. These are the norms that are commonly connected to capitalism and liberalised economies. This norm seems to have a central role in the agreement between the countries but still is also meet with the counter norm of planned economy/state-controlled norms that will be discussed further below. Meaning, both norms are highly present in different parts of the countries relations. In Article 2 of an MoU between the Serbian Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure and the Import-Export Bank of China, the two parties have determined that Serbia will determine the priority of projects at their discretion through taking into account the projects significance and feasibility. In the original BRI MoU between China and Serbia, both countries agree that they should work to open their markets for unimpeded trade. They should expand two-way trade flows and adopt international, market-oriented and professional approaches to their cooperation. Norm diffusion has likely not happened in this case due to these norms being more influential in the BRI-PD than what they are in China-Serbia BRI interactions.

Transparency is another norm that is lightly touched upon and not centred in the countries relations. In the Bilateral Cooperation Plan between Serbia and China under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative, we can see that transparency is lifted as a norm. The two parties state that they will adhere to the Silk Road Spirit of openness. This norm is equally important and common in the BRI-PD and China-Serbia BRI interactions, making it not a case of norm-diffusion.

Culture

Cultural norms are norms that are prevalent in the two countries interactions with each other. The norm is not in the spotlight but is still discussed. None of the cultural norms two are more visible in China-Serbia BRI interactions than what they are in the BRI-PD, meaning no norm diffusion has taken place.

The Preservation of Cultural Heritage is present in one document and do not seem to be that central in the cultural diversity norm. In the 2017-2020 program of cooperation in the field of culture and art between Serbia and China, both countries agree on having exchanges in the conservation of the intangible cultural heritage of each other's countries.

Cultural Diversity is more noticeable and can be found in a few different documents. In the 2017-2020 program of cooperation in the field of culture and art between Serbia and China, both countries agree on trying to create mutual understanding on cultures and artistic achievements.

Good Governance

Good governance is a norm that is very visible in many different agreements and takes a central role in the two countries dealings with each other.

Financial Security is a minor norm that can be found in the documents that still has relevance.

In the Bilateral Cooperation Plan between Serbia and China under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative, the norm of financial security is lifted as an objective both parties want to achieve. They want to improve the investment and financing environment. This norm is more important in China-Serbia BRI interactions than it is in the BRI-PD, but it is not an EU norm and hence outside our scope.

The Rule of Law Norm is present in a lot of the documents and is consistently a part of the two countries dealings with each other. In an agreement between the City of Nisha, the government of Serbia and the Xingyn Automotive lighting System Co LTD, the two parties outline that the investment discussed will be supported according to the Law on State Aid Control and other legal restrictions. This EU norm is none-existent in the BRI-PD while being very common and Important in China-Serbia BRI interactions. The presence of this norm is likely a result of norm diffusion, coming from the norms of the EU. In the Bilateral cooperation plan that came out in 2019, we can see that this norm is highlighted. This is again probably a result of the micro-process of Social Influencing as the EU has extensively focused on socialising Serbia into their norms on rule of law and this is a norm that Serbia has dedicated themselves to adapt (AFET, 2017, p.1, 19 -20). Combining this with EU's criticism of China concerning rule of law norms as having been discussed before, the social influencing micro-process becomes apparent.

Inclusiveness is another minor norm. It is mentioned as a spirit of the silk road, but only discussed once more after that. It is not evident in the more practical documents. The Bilateral Cooperation Plan between Serbia and China under the framework of the BRI, highlight the norm of inclusiveness. The two parties state that they will adhere to the Silk Road Spirit of inclusiveness. This EU norm is more influential in the BRI-PD than it is in China-Serbia BRI interactions, meaning norm diffusion has not taken place.

Accountability is the last norm in good governance. It is rather common and holds some importance. In the Bilateral Cooperation Plan between Serbia and China under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative, the norm of accountability is present. The countries agree that their enterprises should make independent decisions and be responsible for profits and losses at their own risks. It is also partly connected to the rule of law norm, being found in some of the same places. Serbia and China promise to uphold their already present international obligations, just like Italy and Latvia. Accountability is an EU norm that is not present in the BRI-PD, but that has a relatively strong presence in China-Serbia BRI interactions, indicating norm

diffusion. This is most likely a case of China mimicking the EU norms in Serbia as this is an EU norm that Serbia has adapted through different means (European Court of Auditors, 2014, p.40-45. State Audit Institution, 2012). It could also be a result of Social Influencing, due to the EU criticising China of not being accountable and conducting dept Trap diplomacy (Brattberg & Soula, 2018).

Government Control/planned Economy Practices

One of the most influential norms is the norms on government control or planned economy. A large part of the agreements has components of this. Meaning, the states are promising to intervene in the open market, not adhering to public procurement norms as well as giving companies preferential investment possibilities. The norms listed here are not a result of norm diffusion from the EU, as these norms are not a part of the EU. They contradict many of the EU's norms.

Preferential Investment Possibilities are a norm that is present and visible in the agreements. In the Bilateral Cooperation Plan between Serbia and China under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative, the norm of preferential investment possibilities is present. The Chinese side promises to support its enterprises to invest with priority in Serbia's industries, giving them comparative advantages, high-added values, and a good prospect. The two sides will also give priority to cooperation in equipment manufacturing. The same document also promises a favourable tax environment for cross-border trade and investment.

Government Involvement and Intervention in steering businesses is a more visible norm that is also more central in the two countries interactions with each other. In article 1 of the framework agreement between China and Serbia on production capacity development, the two parties agree on promoting cooperation in the field of production capacity of companies and financial institutions from both their countries.

Lack of Open Procurement is the last norm. The norm is visible, but not too much in focus. The counties bypass public procurement in their dealings with each other at times, prioritising, for example, Chinese companies and products. In the MoU between the Import-Export Bank of China and The Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure of the Republic of Serbia, we can see that Chinese contractors are getting prioritised when Serbia takes loans from the Chinese bank, going against market economy norms. In the MoU on the Hungarian-Serbian Railway Project, the parties agree that they will examine all possibilities to utilize Chinese railway technology and equipment in the project, showing a clear preference towards Chinese projects and undermining norms of open procurement.

Table 5 Serbia-China BRI Norms and Norm Diffusion.					
Norms	Serbia Commonality	Serbia Importance	BRI 2015 Commonality	BRI 2015 Importance	Norm Diffusion
EU-Liberal	Uncommon	Fairly Important	Uncommon	Fairly important	
EU-Peace	Uncommon	Fairly Important	Common	Important	No Norm Diffusion
EU-Equality	Uncommon	Not important	Uncommon	Fairly important	No Norm Diffusion
EU-Human Rights	Non-existent	Non-existent	None-existent	None-existent	No Norm Diffusion
EU-Cooperation	Common	Fairly Important	Very common	Important	
EU-Mutual Benefit	Very common	Important	Very common	Important	No Norm Diffusion
Common Development	Common	Important	Uncommon	Fairly important	Possibly Norm Diffusion
EU-Standardization Cooperation	Uncommon	Not important	Uncommon	Not important	No Norm Diffusion
EU-Sustainable Development	Very Common	Important	Common	Fairly important	
EU-Environmental	Very common	Important	Common	Fairly Important	Norm Diffusion
EU-Economic	Common	Fairly Important	Uncommon	Not important	Possibly Norm Diffusion
EU-Social	Uncommon	Not important	None-existent	None-existent	Norm Diffusion
EU-Fairtrade	Common	Fairly Important	Common	Important	
EU-Open Market Economy	Common	Fairly Important	Very common	Important	No Norm Diffusion
Equity	Uncommon	Not important	None-existent	None-existent	Norm Diffusion
EU-Transparency Norms	Uncommon	Not Important	Uncommon	Not important	No Norm Diffusion
Reciprocity	Common	Fairly important	None-existent	None-existent	Norm Diffusion
EU-Good Governance	Common	Fairly Important	Common	Fairly Important	
Financial Security	Uncommon	Fairly Important	Uncommon	Not important	Norm Diffusion
EU-Inclusive Norms	Uncommon	Not important	Common	Fairly Important	No Norm Diffusion
EU-Rule of Law	Very common	Important	None-existent	None-existent	Norm Diffusion
EU-Accountability	Common	Important	None-existent	None-existent	Norm Diffusion
EU-Cultural Norms	Common	Fairly Important	Common	Fairly important	
EU-Cultural Heritage Preservation	Uncommon	Not important	Uncommon	Not important	No Norm Diffusion
EU-Cultural Diversity	Common	Fairly Important	Common	Fairly important	No Norm Diffusion
Mutuality Norms	Uncommon	Not Important	Very common	Important	
Mutual Understanding Norm	Non-existent	Non-existent	Uncommon	Not important	No Norm Diffusion
Mutual Trust	Uncommon	Not important	Uncommon	Important	No Norm Diffusion
Mutual Respect	Uncommon	Not Important	Uncommon	Fairly important	No Norm Diffusion
EU-Mutual Recognition of Standards	Non-existent	Non-existent	Non-existent	Non-existent	No Norm Diffusion
EU-Economic Integration	Non-existent	Non-existent	Common	Fairly important	No Norm Diffusion
Gov Control/planned Economy	Common	Fairly Important	Uncommon	Not important	
Preferential Investment Possibl	Common	Fairly Important	Uncommon	Not important	Possibly Norm Diffusion
Government Intervention	Very Common	Important	Non-existent	Non-existent	Possibly Norm Diffusion
Lack of Open Procurement	Common	Fairly Important	Non-existent	Non-existent	Possibly Norm Diffusion

Table 5: Prepared by the author. Describing China-Serbia EU norm diffusion

6.3.2 Relevant Interview Input

Professor I. Ladjevav (Personal Communication, 24 February 2020) argues that China's actions in relations to the BRI are not influenced by the EU, due to Serbia not being obliged by internal EU legislation. This is something Professor D. Pavlicevic (Personal Communication, 12 February 2020) partly agrees with and he means China does not have to go through a transparent and open public procurement process that Serbia usually requires from other actors. The reason for this is that the Chinese government arranges the loans for the companies and negotiates their contracts. There is no bidding process or transparency. The process of reaching the agreements are not transparent. Hence, Serbia has become one of the major destinations for Chinese FDI in Europe. Different norms and different regulations do not apply to Chinese state actors like they are to other private actors (ibid). There are fewer restrictions on the projects due to Serbia not being a part of the EU. Serbia wants to use its flexibility to make it easier for themselves to get funding and projects done (ibid). Here we can see that while the BRI-PD has a robust open market economy norm, we cannot see that this norm is transferring over to China-Serbia relations. In practice then, China does not seem to follow these norms if the country does not force them too.

This disregard of EU norms has led to the EU, putting significant pressure on Serbia, to make them change their public procurement procedures towards China. The EU is demanding that Serbia makes these procedures more transparent and more open to foreign competition (ibid). Serbia is facing much pressure, but it is right now unclear if the pressure is having any effect (ibid). Looking at the 2019 Bilateral Cooperation plan between Serbia and China under the framework of the BRI, we can see that these norms are appearing more and more, which could be a result of the social influence (micro-process) of the EU influencing the agreements.

Professor D. Pavlicevic (ibid) also means that Serbia's primary strategic goal is to join the EU, meaning it has to accept and implement EU regulations, laws, and norms to be able to do so. They will have to act within these norms to further integrated into the EU. By so doing, they are convinced by the EU to follow EU norms, which in turn forces China to follow the same norms through a Persuasion micro-process.

Both Professor D. Pavlicevic (Personal Communication, 12 February 2020) and Professor I. Ladjevac (Personal Communication, 24 February 2020) argue that China adapts itself to the host country while following internal law norms. They both argue that China adapts their approach to the host countries legal and normative framework and that it is not within China's interest to upset governments (ibid). Professor D. Pavlicevic (Personal Communication, 12 February 2019) means that China wants to build long-lasting relations with the host countries so they can get more projects from the host government, so they want the host countries to be satisfied with their projects and interactions (ibid). China has promised that they will act within EU regulations and norms when acting in the EU. Outside of the EU, like in Serbia, China adapts itself to local government demands. Because of this, some norms and practices are taking place in Serbia-China relations that are different from the EU's norms (ibid). EU is imposing its norms and regulations on Serbia, which will in the future change the way Serbia can interactions with China. In the future, China must follow the EU's norms when dealing with Serbia, but right now they can work outside these norms for a while longer (D.

Pavlicevic, Personal Communication, 12 February 2020). From this perspective, norm diffusion from the EU to China only happens if the country China is working with has already accepted the norms of the EU and are still valuing and upholding them.

For Serbia to become an EU member, Serbia needs to adopt 17 chapters of the EU legislation. Candidate countries might hence follow or prefer to follow EU norms based on wanting to become an EU member (G, Stahl Personal Communication, 23 February 2020), meaning that their affiliation with the EU should affect the amount of EU norms they adapt.

Being inside or outside the EU is relevant, Dr G. Pugliese (Personal Communication 07 February 2020) argues. Smaller EU countries will be more careful to follow the EU's frameworks on trade agreements. China might also have more leverage on Serbia, as Serbia is outside of the EU and cannot protect itself behind EU norms or economic leverage that EU countries have. This makes it possible for China to exert its will to a greater extent than if Serbia was a full EU country. One example is the Budapest Railway project, where China is a co-funder. EU protested the project as the project was against the rules and standards of the EU (ibid).

It seems like the experts agree that EU membership gives countries leverage but less flexibility in negotiations with China, while not being in the EU gives the countries more flexibility but less leverage to use. If a country aims to join the EU, the countries need to adapt itself to the laws and norms of the EU, which can over time lead more EU norms being adhered to in China's interactions with them.

6.4 EU

This dissertation has interviewed some generalist EU-China experts to get some overall insight and perspectives on the BRI. These experts have been able to come with some valuable input about the EU at large as a case. While our focus is not on EU as a case, the information here will aid us in our understanding and analysis of our cases. For more insight, please take a look at Appendix 4.

6.4.1 Relevant Interview Input

The Swedish Expert (Personal Communication 11 February 2020) brings up something very much worth noting when discussing China and norms from a western perspective. China's definitions of different norms are different from what the EU defines them as. Their definitions of democracy and other liberal norms that are within the EU are defined differently by China than the way the EU defines them. While this dissertation has been unable to further dig deep into this topic, it is a valuable input to have in mind. With that said, if China is acting within the EU, China needs to follow and adapt to the EU's legal system and the norms that are within these laws. Laws on environmental, social, and economic sustainable development are examples of laws that need to be adapted in the BRI projects that are present in the EU (Swedish Expert, Personal Communication 11 February 2020). This dissertation argues that this is an example of China having to mimic the norms of the EU to be able to function inside the EU countries as a commercial actor minimally.

Professor G, Stahl (Personal Communication, 23 February 2020) means that if an EU country wants to have cooperation with Chinese partners, based on a political commitment, they still need to have an opening tendering procedure. Hence there is a difference whether a country is an EU member, or not as membership entails respecting the rules of the EU on public procurement.

MoU's must be read and interpreted as political commitments that can only be applied based on the current laws in the country. A country can create information campaigns and give access to some information that the Chinese actors can use, but they still must participate in open procurement procedures like any other actor (ibid). In the EU-China connectivity platform, experts are discussing different BRI projects that are to be done in the EU. The experts together decide if the infrastructure that the projects are aiming to work on needs to be upgraded. Even when this is decided, they still must work within the EU's rules. They cannot legally privilege Chinese companies (ibid). This is showing us that even if China manages to get political commitments from EU countries, Chinese companies are not allowed to be privileged according to EU norms and laws. Hence, China is forced to adapt their interactions with EU countries by following EU norms.

The tangible nature of general objectives and investments needs to be differentiated. Policy objectives are different from investment. In the rules of the EU for investments, there might be policy objectives that are the EU norms. Impact assessments for social and environmental impacts are examples of requirements that the EU have for projects, that also contain policy objectives. The BRI does not have an environmental impact assessment, but if Chinese actors want to participate in projects in the EU, they need to respect these norms (ibid).

Professor G, Stahl (Personal Communication, 23 February 2020) also discussed the normative impact the people-to-people exchange approach and the exchange of information has on China. In the EU-China Connectivity platform, Chinese experts and investors engaged together with EU experts in a training program where they were thought about EU rules and norms. The experts are doing studies together, to get knowledge and shared understanding for a joint investment project as well as building up a shared understanding of what economic decisions need to be based on. This dissertation argues that this is a clear example of how the Persuasion micro-process is used to socialise China into the EU's norms.

Professor G, Stahl (Personal Communication, 23 February 2020) argues that it is essential for the EU that China follows sustainability norms and have a green economic development. Common sustainable development is a goal of the EU. The EU is trying to make the BRI green, and while China still has a lot of non-green production and projects, China is an excellent partner in this endeavour as China is committed to making its civilization more ecological.

The only difference in how EU countries approach China in a legal sense is based in the country's implementation of the EU laws. The implementation might be different as there is sometimes more or less efficient bureaucracy in different countries of the EU. The types of interests China have with a country has been based on the different economic and geographic situations of the country. Investment in maritime infrastructure is more interesting in some areas more than others (ibid).

Our findings in this chapter indicate that a countries affiliation would play a significant role in how China can approach them. The EU seems to be trying to socialise China into becoming a more sustainable actor while upholding its norms. The laws of the EU do not allow China to go too far outside the norms of the EU ether as long as China is interacting with an EU country.

7. Discussion

In this section of this dissertation, we are going to discuss our findings and answer our research question and see if we can strengthen our hypothesis or if we need to discard it.

Our research question was: Are the internal norms of the EU affecting China's Belt and Road Initiative related interactions with European countries and if so, how does the level of affiliation to the EU affect the degree of norms noticed in the interactions?

Hypothesis: The EU's internal norms will be reflected differently in the language and deeds China use in their BRI interactions with our case countries depending on the affiliation of the country to the EU. A higher degree of affiliation should mean more EU norms in China's interactions with the country.

To do this, we first need to compare the countries to understand the relevance of the EU affiliation and study different factors that might weaken our hypothesis.

7.1 Country Comparison

7.1.1 Settings

First, we will compare the different settings the BRI agreements were signed.

Italy signed the BRI document under an EU-sceptic government that did not respect EU norms much. Italy first wanted to avoid signing the BRI MoU with China but ended up signing it to save the many commercial agreements that would have been cancelled if Italy did not. To avoid backlash from the EU, Italy made China mimic the EU's norms by including some of the EU's normative language. There have not been any major BRI projects concerning Italy, from what this dissertation can see, hence it is a bit hard to know how effective all the norms have been. This is partly due to the Sino-scepticism in the country and a change of government that has taken place. Italy still has an essential reliance on the EU, and many of its norms deeply integrated into their society and laws.

Latvia aim with joining the BRI was rooted in their ambitions to become a logistical hub and improve their economic relations with China and to bring new opportunities into the country. Latvia is more engaged in the 17+1 than they are in the BRI, and their participation in the BRI is more focused on trade, connectivity, infrastructure and people-to-people exchanges as well as private investments rather than the type of investments done in Serbia. There has not been any activity in relations to the BRI. Latvia holds steady in their relations with the EU and their compliance with EU laws. According to our interviews, this is also reflected in their BRI Interactions.

Serbia joined the BRI to closer their relations with China and to get more investments into the country. Serbia received many loans and investments through the BRI. Serbia has been heavily criticised for their interactions with China, due to the EU norms that Serbia is breaking in these interactions. Serbia's aim of joining the EU has made them adapt to a lot of the EU's norms, and we can see that in the 2019 documents, the newest document we have access to, the norms are more prevalent.

7.1.2 Differences Between the Cases – Norm Diffusion and Affiliation Relevance.

Looking at the overall commonality and importance EU norms in our case countries, we can see that in the case of Italy has the most norms present and overall, the norms have more importance. Serbia and Latvia have the same amount of importance in the norms while Serbia has a more significant number of norms present in their interactions with China.

China- Italy BRI interactions have five, Latvia BRI interactions have 3, and Serbia BRI interactions has four norms present that have resulted from EU norm diffusion. China- Italy BRI Interactions has 4, Latvia BRI interactions have one while Serbia BRI interactions have four other norms that are not clear cases of EU norm diffusion that we need to analyse to understand better.

Just by looking at these numbers, we can see that while Italy has the most norms present in their agreements and other documents, Serbia comes next and Latvia last. This would indicate that our hypothesis should be discarded, but taking into consideration the expert's input, it is not as simple as that.

Sustainable development is very much highlighted in the case of China-Italy BRI interactions and is probably a case of norm diffusion. While the norm was generally mentioned a lot, environmentally sustainable development was the dominant norm that was the most mentioned in the category. While we cannot from the documents alone say that this is a case of norm diffusion, we can see that the EU has been pushing China to adopt this norm, and Italy also has an interest in socialising China into adopting sustainability norms to be better able to compete with Chinese companies over contracts. While this norm is not as crucial in Latvia, it is very important in Serbia due to the 2019 bilateral cooperation plan while not present in any other documents. It seems like Serbia is trying to adapt itself to the EU's norms which have made it into the plan through persuasion.

Per our experts, due to Latvia's EU membership, sustainability norms and precautions still need to be taken, even if they are not discussed in the documents. Hence, while the norms are not present in the documents, they are present in reality. We acknowledge that China has itself adopted sustainable development as a norm in their policies since the 1990s, but argue that our findings show that they do not seem to push for these norms unless the host country does not promote these norms, as seen in Serbia where sustainable development only became a prominent norm in the interactions between the two countries after the EU put pressure on Serbia to adapt more sustainability norms and after Serbia became closer to the EU in 2019.

Rule of law is another EU norm that stands out. It is Very Common and Important in both Italy and Serbia while it is only Common and somewhat important in Latvia. All three cases are signs of norm diffusion, but Latvia is standing out for not having this norm in the same level as the others in the documents. Looking it at this norm in relation to other norms and the interviews with the experts, we can see that while Serbia has a high level of rule of law in their documents, they are also being criticised for not following open procurement and similar laws that are in Serbia, meaning that while this norm is respected on paper, it is not fully being respected in reality. Latvia, on the other hand, has a strong culture of following the rule of law, according to our experts. Hence, rule of law norms is outside these documents more definite than they are in

Serbia, but probably equal to what they are in Italy, as both countries are within the EU framework and have to obey EU norms on this matter.

Accountability norms is another norm diffusion that was done in the cases of Italy, Latvia, and Serbia. In Italy and Serbia, the norm has the same level of importance and commonality while the norm is less critical in Latvia. Serbia's norm has a broader focus on financial accountability than any of the other countries, which do not cover this at all. We can also see that the norm is not as crucial in Latvia, and this is probably caused by the same reasoning as the Rule of Law norm.

Cultural diversity norms are another norm that is a possible case of norm-diffusion in the cases of Italy and Latvia. Both countries focus on this norm. This could partly be a result of our data being skewed due to having many documents on the topic of culture. While the documents might be skewed, Latvia has actually in practice shown that they value this norm, and so has Italy. Hence, this is probably a case of norm diffusion in these two cases.

Human Rights are only brought up in a joint press release in the case of Italy, making it the only liberal norm diffusion that stands out. The existence of Human Rights norms in the agreements is probably a case of mimicking. Equality norms is another norm that only is strong enough in the case of Italy for it to be a case of norm diffusion possibly, but this is somewhat unclear. Transparency norms are uncommon but found in fairly important places in the case of Italy, making them another possible norm diffusion example that is not found in the two other cases. Cultural heritage preservation is another norm diffusion only present in the case of Italy. This norm is probably more likely to be present due to Italy's strong cultural heritage.

Mutual recognition of standards is a norm diffusion that is present in the case of Latvia. No other country has this norm noticeably present. Italy has agreements on the export of different products, but in these agreements, Italy is required to recognise the standards of China and not vice versa.

7.2 Socialisation and Micro-processes

Comparing the different norm diffusion micro-processes taking place in our three cases sheds light on the importance of EU affiliation and gives us insight in how EU norms are adapted differently in our cases and what causes these differences.

In the case of Italy, China is at times mimicking to avoid criticism while at times mimicking due to criticism from the EU. Mimicking is also a common micro-process affecting China, as China needs to mimic EU norms to be able to do any projects or trade in the EU, due to EU regulations which also contain these norms. Mimicking was used to handle the uncertain environment that would be created if Italy joined the BRI. At times, persuasion is also at play due to Italy and China agreeing on somethings. For example, it might be a norm that is present in the BRI, to begin with, but its importance is made higher when China is interacting with Italy. Persuasion is also relevant in China sharing Italy's views on the importance of the EU. Social influence is also a strong micro-process due to China being criticised heavily by the EU and wanting to avoid such criticism. Social influence might have, in turn, lead to both

persuasion and mimicking norm diffusion micro-processes in Italy. A lot of the normative language in the MoU is also a result of Italy first threatening not to sign the MoU, which in turn made the Chinese agree on adapting EU norms to calm the Italian sides worries. Hence, the social influence micro-process was central for some of the norms to come into play in the agreements.

In the case of Latvia, there are significantly fewer cases of norm diffusion micro-processes taking place than in the other case countries. Mimicking is a micro-process that has similar characteristics in Latvia as it has in Italy due to Latvia's EU membership. China needs to adapt its approach to the EU's norms to be able to act within Latvia. While Latvia joining the BRI has not been that controversial, the EU has heavily criticised China for their actions in the past. EU's past criticism might have caused them to adopt some EU norms to avoid criticism in the future. Persuasion is another micro-process that is minor. It is detectable in how China and Latvia seem to reach common ground on culture, but the existence of this micro-process is a bit unclear.

In the case of Serbia, we can see that many Persuasion micro-processes are at work as Serbia is trying to adapt itself to the EU, making China having to mimic some of the EU norms as Serbia becomes closer and closer to the EU. As this process takes place, Mimicking becomes noticeable as well, as China needs to adapt itself to Serbia's norms to operate in the country as well as to be able to perform the projects that at times are aimed at helping Serbia achieve the standards and norms of the EU. China is hence at times helping Serbia adapt to the norms of the EU.

Social influencing is also present in the case of Serbia, as the EU has been critical of both China's practices in Serbia, in the projects and investments they have done, and China's practices in other countries. Serbia has also been criticised by the EU, and it seems to have worked to get Serbia to adapt some of the EU's norms. It seems that the EU is indirectly socialising China by criticising and integrating Serbia into the EU, making China have to follow the norms through mimicking or pressuring China through social influencing.

It seems that the normative power of the EU is connected to how much the country in question accepts and adapt themselves to the norms of the EU. If the country is within the EU, then China needs to adapt itself to (mimic) the norms and laws of the EU if they want to participate in projects, invest or conduct any other kind of business. If a country is outside the EU but aims to get closer to the EU, they might adapt to the norms of the EU, but this is optional and might develop over time, as we have seen with Serbia. When it comes to the softer norms such as norms on liberalism, we can see that it is more up to the countries themselves as these norms are not as firmly anchored into laws and regulations. Here we can see that a countries affiliation to the EU and their attitude towards the EU is relevant.

7.2.1 EU Socialisation Methods.

Looking at how the EU is socialising China both indirectly and directly also gives us some insight into the normative power of the EU. We have found three methods that are being used regarding China's BRI interactions with our case countries.

Informational diffusion is one of the methods used by the EU directly and indirectly towards China. It is used when the different institutions and critical figures criticise the behaviour and actions of China, similar to the Social influence micro-process.

Transference diffusion happens when China is interacting with EU countries and wanting to have any transactions with them. To be able to operate in the EU (carrot), China needs to follow the norms of the EU. Otherwise, they will be excluded, like they are being in the cases of 5G where the EU do not believe China is following their norms due to allegations of espionage and surveillance. This is an example of the EU using sanctioning

A cultural filter can also be seen as the EU is slowly socialising Serbia into having a European EU identity. It works similarly to the persuasion micro-process. The EU is also using the BRI to socialise China through the EU-China connectivity platform where the EU is conducting training programs in EU norms and regulations. This is just another way that the EU has a normative influence on China through the BRI and similar attempts by China trying to be an actor in the European market. This is an example of a norm negotiation taking place.

7.3 Hypothesis and Research Question Answered

Does then the hypothesis hold? We have some mixed findings. In some ways, it does, while in other ways the hypothesis is not strengthened by our findings. By just looking at the documents, we get a skewed image influenced by both time and rhetoric, but when we combine our data and expert interviews as well as some second hand and third-hand sources, it seems like we partly can strengthen our hypothesis.

In Italy, we can see that the norms of the EU are very present. This is to a great extent due to the influence of the EU. There have not been any significant BRI deeds to date, but this is what we can argue based on the documents, interview, and other sources we have gathered. In Latvia, the BRI is not very active and the sources we have do not show, relative to our other cases, a lot of normative languages. Serbia has originally not shown a lot of normative languages. Looking at the documents that were published before 2019, we can say that the hypothesis is strengthened, but by including the document from 2019, there is more normative language in the case of Serbia, and our hypothesis is not strengthened.

Considering all our data and interviews, the EU's internal norms were reflected differently in China's interactions with our case countries depending on the kind of affiliation of the country to the EU. The same cannot be said about language, as the case of Serbia and Latvia shows. Latvia is more closely affiliated with the EU than Serbia is, but has less normative language. This can be explained with that the documents coming from Latvia being older than the documents coming from our other case countries, and the scope of Latvia and China's cooperation. Hence, only part of our hypothesis is strengthened and not the entirety of it.

Looking at our research question, we can say that yes, the internal norms of the EU are affecting China's Belt and Road Initiative related interactions with European countries. The level of affiliation to the EU seems to be rather crucial in the way that China interact with the countries. If the country is an EU country, China is Mimicking the norms of the EU to be allowed to

invest, participate in projects, and do other activities. China is persuaded to share some of the EU's norms. China is also exposed to the social influence of the EU or is trying to avoid criticism by adapting itself to the EU. The more a country is affiliated with the EU, the stronger is the incentive of following the norms of the EU as well.

This is both present in Italy, where an EU sceptic government still had to include EU norms in their agreements and press-releases regarding the BRI, and in Latvia who, while not have much normative language in their agreements, are strictly upholding the norms of the EU when dealing with China. The size of Latvia is also a factor to have in mind. While both Serbia and Italy are rather large countries geographically, Latvia it not, which could be an explanation of the type of agreements subsequent norms in the two countries interactions.

Looking at Serbia, this is even more apparent that EU affiliation affects the degree of norms in China's BRI interactions with a country. Looking at the agreements that were signed before 2019 and the 2019 Framework Agreement, we can see a clear difference in them that we can only explain with time, and we can also see that Serbia during this time has gotten closer to the EU through the accession process.

Differences are not only based on affiliation with the EU it seems, but also on dependency and the countries attitude towards the EU. Italy being EU sceptic but still reliant on the EU; Latvia being dependent on the EU and having a strict rule-based culture; Serbia trying to adapt to the EU while also trying to use their non-EU membership as an excuse to get benefits from their relations with China. It is also worth discussing the difference in our findings from the documents and the expert interviews. The documents are only reflecting the written agreements between the countries, while the expert can bring us more context and empirical knowledge on how the agreements ended up being implemented.

8. Conclusion

To conclude, the internal norms of the EU are contributing to shape the BRI. The level of affiliation to the EU matters. The more a country is affiliated with the EU, the more EU norms are present in China's BRI interactions with said country. This can change over time and be affected by the countries attitude towards- and dependency of the EU. While our hypothesis was partly not strengthened due to the language not reflecting these norms, we can explain the reason for it and still reach this conclusion. The deeds related to the BRI in these countries are reflecting the EU's norms depending on their affiliation with the EU. With that said, while we have to discard our hypothesis due to the degree of EU norms found in the language not being correlated with the degree of affiliation with the EU, we can still see a high relevance of EU affiliation when it comes to the overall norms present in China's interactions with our case countries.

In this dissertation, we have parted with the current research trend of looking at how the BRI is affecting European countries and instead started looking at how China's BRI interactions in Europe are affected by the norms of the EU. We explored the normative power of the EU and the relevance of affiliation to the EU. We used three case countries: Italy as a core EU country, Latvia as a relatively new EU country which is active in the 17+1, Serbia, as an aspiring EU country in the EU accession process. The dissertation made sure to explore what the norms of the EU are and establish different socialisation micro-processes that the EU is using, giving us the framework of analysis, we needed for this research. In retrospect, we can say that Latvia might not have been a good case due to their focus on the 17+1, their relative size and the time of their joining of the BRI, but they were one of the few countries in Europe who had any transparency regarding their interactions with China, and in the end, even if it was through much hard work, we managed to get some relevant insight through including them.

After that, we made extensive searches on government websites and similar open sources to get an overview of the documents present online and relevant documents missing. We then contacted all involved governments and their different ministries. Over a three-month long period, calls were made, and emails were sent to try to reach the right people to be able to get access to some of the documents that are not open to the public. After this period, we had enough documents to start our analysis. At the same time, we also contacted experts all over Europe to get more insights into the BRI. Few answered, but the experts who contributed with excellent insights into our cases and the EU. We then used qualitative content analysis, iterative sampling method, and an inductive coding method to analyse our data. While this method was a good one to use, it was a prolonged method. In retrospect, using more advanced content analysis digital tools to easier analyse our data would have been more efficient.

While doing the analysis, we identified the norms initially found in the 2015 BRI policy document, to be able to see what norms originally were in the BRI so we can know what norms are the result of norm diffusions. We made graphs over the different norms found in China's BRI interactions with our case countries, checked if they corresponded with EU norms and checked them towards the BRI-PD norms before and discussed them. This was a long ordeal which resulted in the approximately 53 pages appendix. This dissertation argues that the long appendix is necessary, and justifiable, to be transparent and ensure reproducibility as well as

simplify criticism. We then presented samples from our interviews and then compared the results of our qualitative content analysis, to get more depth and perspective on our research. This gave us a better, empirical understanding of our cases as well as some insights from experts who have been working with the topic of the BRI for a long time.

The interviews were a great resource in our research, and the extensive knowledge of the experts enriched our results extensively. A lack of Latvian researchers was a challenge, as we initially only found two experts on the topic, which one of them was out of their office while the other was busy. Through some extensive searching and networking, we found an EU-China expert knowledgeable on Latvia to interview.

The methodology was well suited, while the theories used could have been more deliberate. Combining the qualitative content analysis with expert interviews ended up being an excellent choice. Using the 2015 BRI policy document ended up not being optimal, and in retrospect, one should study other policy documents and speeches, but this was not entirely possible within the timeframe this research had. We acknowledge that the norms we presented are not clear cut, but also argue that is the nature of norms. We have shown the norms that the actors are emphasising through their documents and also discussed them through the results from our expert interviews.

Overall, finding information, experts, documents, and more was a significant challenge in this research. Much criticism can be given to the states involved with the BRI for not being more transparent. With that said, without the hard-working individuals in the ministries that agreed to help us, this research would not have been able to get such a good sample. One of the documents that helped the research was the 2019 Serbian BRI Framework Agreement that both gave us more in-depth insight and skewed our research a bit, which required a lot of thought and research to understand. Another issue we had in this research was the unwillingness of Chinese embassies and officials to answer our attempts to reach out to them. Having Chinese experts' perspective on the topic might have been helpful as well, but this was hindered by the Covid-19 virus outbreak due to it preventing the researchers return to China.

While there are many different uncertainties in our results, due to the BRI not yet leading to many projects in two of our case countries (Latvia and Italy), the possibility that China's internal norms have developed over time, we have managed to reach some conclusion and see some clear and logical patterns from the material we had.

This research has contributed to our better understanding of the BRI, China's integration into the global world order, EU as a normative power, and the different case countries normative relations with the EU. Most importantly, it has provided us with an insight that China's interactions with European countries are being influenced by the EU's internal norms. Other than that, we have used documents that have not been accessed by academics before to get deep insights into some of the inner workings of the BRI. Our findings have also shown that small actors indeed do have agency when they interact with larger actors and can have an influence on them.

Using documents as the primary source of analysis could make some question the value of this study. We would like to address this possible criticism as words in bilateral agreements are the

result of long deliberations between countries. In such deliberations, diplomats meet, exchange ideas, and have discussions. The diffusion of norms happens through these negotiations than shape the documents. They also occur through the meetings and dialogues that lead up to such documents being signed. The documents are a result of deliberations like these, and the language in them reflect the norms that both actors can minimally agree on. Regulations, agreements and MoU's founded in the norms of the actors developing them. We do however acknowledge that this is a limiting factor of our study, but we have tried to counter this issue by using expert interviews to give more empirical examples of the deeds behind the documents and resulting from the documents.

Micro-processes do not mean that the EU's norms will turn the BRI into a European enterprise, of course. We have to consider that there can be different degrees of socialisation. People, such as government officials and diplomats, agree on the specific wording of the documents that reflect their ideas. These ideas all reflect some kinds of norms. These people agree on having these words in the documents and do not object to having them in the document. We can from this understanding argue that the documents at least represent the shallowest form of socialisation. While we have not looked at the degree of norm diffusion in this thesis, we acknowledge that there should be further studies on this topic.

Our findings can also be generalised with other European countries interactions with China. The cases represent three different types of European countries. The norms present in these countries interactions with China should be determined partly by the same factors as we have identified in our cases. With that said, other factors can also have influenced our findings. The historical relations between the countries, world events, or other institutions could influence their interactions. Having this in mind, we still argue that our findings are generalisable, but we do encourage further research to be done on this topic when more documents and empirical events are available and from different approaches.

8.1 Recommendations and Alternative Theories

This dissertation would also like to highlight the alternative theory that the normative development we have found is a result of international norms developing over time, and a result of not norm diffusion from the EU. An extensive study on China's and the BRI's internal norms should hence be done, studying how these norms have developed over time and how they are influenced by different world events to be better able to understand what norms are initially from China and what norms are coming from other actors such as the EU in China's interactions with our case countries.

This dissertation would like to suggest that researchers interested in this topic further dig into this and try to analyse and understand how China is being affected by the normative power of the EU. Using other case countries and comparing non-European countries with European countries could be a way of clearing up uncertainties.

An interview-based study would also be interesting to conduct. Getting the perspectives of the different people involved in forming the BRI agreements, MoU, action plans and similar documents to be able to see how the process looks like and who contributed with what norms

and how the different socialisation processes between the diplomats and different decision-makers look like if they are present at all.

Studying the two-way socialisation process that is theorised to happen during socialisation would also be interesting as a way of understanding how the EU and China's interactions with each other end up influencing each other's normative outlook and the results of the interactions.

We also suggest that a proper academic database is made where everyone can access all the different BRI agreements, MoU, action plans, business agreements, and other documents. This would increase the transparency of the Initiative, calm some of the worries towards the BRI and simplify research which in turn can help make the BRI a sustainable initiative that can fulfil the goals China have with it.

9. Appendix

9.1 Appendix 1 – Coding

Coding has been done through the use of the themes and sub-themes presented below. The sub-themes are coded through finding keywords in our data that reflect the norm or through seeing the sub-theme reflected in actions described in the texts. One example of such an action would be agreeing on having cultural exchanges, which is an action promoting cultural diversity.

9.1.1 Main Themes and Sub-themes.

Theme 1 – Liberal Values

Description: Liberal values are values usually connected to liberalism. These values range from peaceful coexistence, liberty, democracy, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedom.

Sub-theme 1.1 – Peace

Description: Normative language that promotes peace and peaceful coexistence.

Keywords and Indicators: world peace, peace, peaceful, peaceful coexistence, Spirit of peace, peaceful development, promote peace in the region of the BRI, protecting the peace, partnership for peace, regional peace.

Sub-theme 1.2 – Equality

Description: A core value of democracy. Present the countries as equals.

Keywords and Indicators: Equality, Equal treatment, equal opportunity. Principle of equality, level playing field, re-balanced trade, share risk and benefits.

Sub-theme 1.3 – Human Rights

Description: Normative language that promotes Human rights norms in the countries interactions or promises to promote human rights together.

Keywords and Indicators: Protect Human rights, Human rights.

Theme 2 – Cooperation

Description: Language that describes cooperation norms between the two nations

Sub-themes 2.1 – Mutual Benefit

Description: Language that describes cooperation based on mutual benefit between the countries. When the outcome of an agreement is mutually profiting in both countries.

Keywords and Indicators: win-win cooperation, mutual benefits, beneficial to all, mutual learning, mutually beneficial cooperation, common prosperity, shared benefits, actions in the international space that promote each other's interests, equal benefit, mutual benefits.

Sub-theme 2.2 – Common Development

Description: Language that denotes common development. Actions that are meant to develop both countries together.

Keywords and Indicators: Common development, coordinated development and common progress, cooperation on training each other's professionals, joint research and development, common development through cooperation, mutual learning, sharing growth, common interest.

Sub-theme 2.3 – Standardization Cooperation

Description: cooperating on standardization, exchanging normative documents and information on national standards.

Keywords and Indicators: Together develop norms and standards, Standardisation, exchange information and experience, national standards, improve cooperation mechanisms, people exchange to increase standardization.

Theme 3 – Sustainable Development

Description: Language connected to sustainable development norms.

Sub-themes 3.1 – Environment

Description: Language connected to sustainable environmental development.

Keywords and Indicators: green, low-carbon, climate change, wind power, solar power, clean energy, renewable energy, ecological progress conserving eco-environment, protecting biodiversity, environmental, sustainable energy, promote green and low-carbon industry projects, Paris Accord, sustainable transport, environmentally friendly approach, low carbon and circular development, ecological and environmental protection, Agenda 2030, environmental protection, sustainable energy industry, reduce pollution, clean fossil fuel, energy efficiency, agreements on climate change fighting, green economy.

Sub-themes 3.2 – Economy

Description: Language connected to sustainable economic development.

Keywords and Indicators: Sustainable growth norms, financially sustainable, circular development, economically viable, Long-term, and sustainable cooperation, sustainable input, sustainable economic development, good corporate governance, a balanced framework of economic cooperation.

Sub-themes 3.3 – Society

Description: Language connected to sustainable societal development.

Keywords and Indicators: poverty reduction activities, living conditions, poverty-stricken areas, Sustainable Urbanisation, Agenda 2030, Socially sustainable investments, socially

sustainable development, Social compliance, workers skills, creating jobs, social security, social responsibility.

Theme 4 – Fairtrade

Description: Language showing a will to have fair trade conducts as well as transparency, open competition, equity, and reciprocity.

Sub-themes 4.1 – Open Market Economy

Description: Market economy norms found. Competition, doing projects based on economic viability while leaving it to the open market to conduct and form the projects.

Keywords and Indicators: opening-up, world's economic system, market operations, market rules, market allocate resources, letting enterprises act independently, unimpeded trade, remove investment and trade barriers, trade liberalisation, improve openness, investment cooperation, Investment, Defending open world economy, open world economy, combat protectionism, promote liberalisation, facilitation of trade and investment, oppose unilateralism and protectionism, promote free and open trade, open procurement, follow market principles, promoting cooperation while allowing actors to decide the content of the cooperation, Commercial and market-based principles, feasibility studies, market-oriented approaches, feasibility, feasibility study-based decisions, market decisions, independent decisions, responsible for their own profits and loses, market-based approach, market demand, equal opportunity, unimpeded trade, international and market-oriented as well as professional approach.

Sub-theme 4.2 - Equity

Description: Language that shows equity norms in the agreements. The countries agreeing that they are to dedicate the number of resources that their economies, budgets or such allows for. Participating in or contributing to different amounts depending on their capabilities.

Keywords and Indicators: Equity, the spirit of equity, considering the countries respective needs and assets, Financial resources available, within their capabilities, needs and possibilities, fairness, common but different responsibilities, different situation, different capabilities.

Sub-theme 4.3 – Transparency

Description: Normative language depicting norms regarding transparency in the financial and political systems and processes. Showing the dedication of the countries being transparent in their actions.

Keywords and Indicators: Openness, transparency, open framework, wide consultation.

Sub-theme 4.4 – Reciprocity

Description: Normative language that promotes a culture of reciprocity in the two countries interactions with each other.

Keywords and Indicators: Principle of reciprocity, Reciprocity.

Theme 5 – Good Governance

Description: Normative language that promotes good governance in the countries and the nations. Consensus oriented, Participatory, follows the rule of law, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive, responsive, transparent, accountable.

Sub-theme 5.1 – Financial Security.

Description: Language that promotes financial security as a norm in the countries. Making investments safer to conduct and improve the investment environment.

Keywords and Indicators: a sound business environment, investment protection agreements, lawful rights, interests of investors, improve the investment environment, investment safety, financial security, improve the financial environment, prevent crimes that can affect financial security, Favourable environment for economic and financial cooperation.

Sub-theme 5.2 – Inclusive

Description: A core value of democracy. A language that shows a will to include all aspects of a society or includes all people in a country.

Keywords and Indicators: Inclusive, cultural inclusiveness, welcomes participation, Inclusiveness, inclusive framework, encouraging people from all sectors to participate, Spirit of inclusiveness, inclusive economic cooperation, non-discriminatory, non-discriminatory financial interactions, open, inclusive growth.

Sub-theme 5.3 – Transparency

Description: Normative language depicting norms regarding transparency in the financial and political systems and processes.

Keywords and Indicators: Open, transparency, Spirit of Openness, open framework, transparent procurement, transparency promotion.

Sub-theme 5.4 – Rule of Law

Descriptions: Language that describes respect for the rule of law. That laws need to be respected in their dealings.

Keywords and Indicators: National laws, national legislations, international obligations, existing laws, international agreements, legal restrictions, domestic laws, EU regulations, observe application, compliance towards the local laws of the country, obligation, EU obligations, intellectual property rights, international standards, rule-based.

Sub-theme 5.5 – Consensus Oriented

Description: Consensus oriented decision-making is agreed upon as a norm in the country's interactions with each other.

Keywords and Indicators: joint declare, consensus-based, consensus-oriented.

Sub-theme 5.6 – Accountable

Description: Language that shows that the countries promote accountability norms in their interactions with each other. Taking responsibility for their actions and the subsequent results of these actions.

Keywords and Indicators: Responsible for their own risks, responsibility towards bilateral and multilateral cooperation is being upheld, Synergies fulfilling obligations. + Some of the same keywords and indicators as the rule of law norm.

Theme 6 - Cultural Norms

Description: Normative language that shows respect for each other's cultures and promotes cultural diversity.

Sub-theme 6.1 – Preservation of Cultural Heritage

Description: actions and language that show the importance of preserving cultural heritage.

Keywords and Indicators: Protect World Heritage sites, Cultural heritage, Conservation and enhancement of world heritage sites, protection of cultural heritage, hindering criminal activities regarding cultural goods, promote the return of cultural goods, exchanges and cooperation on cultural heritage, restoration of cultural heritage, exchange of expertise and cooperation in the field of restoration, protection and conservation of cultural heritage, museums, cultural values.

Sub-theme 6.2 – Cultural Diversity

Description: Actions and language where the countries promote the spread of each other's cultures in each other's countries to create a mutual understanding of cultures.

Keywords and Indicators: cultural exchanges, culture events, joint art production, tourism cooperation's, cultural cooperation's, media cooperation, explore and promote cultural heritage, promote cultural heritage sites, world heritage twinning project, tourism programs, language teaching, spreading cultural heritage, spreading knowledge, promote tourism, people-to-people cultural exchanges, acquaint each other with each other's culture, translating literature, cultural study, mutual understanding of cultural and artistic achievements, exchanges of artists, popular cultural understanding deepening.

Theme 7 – Mutuality

Description: Language and actions that show mutual respect, trust and understanding for each other.

Sub-theme 7.1 – Mutual Understanding

Description: Promoting mutual understanding between each other people and society.

Keywords and Indicators: mutual understanding, Common development of understanding,

Sub-theme 7.2 – Trust

Description: Mutual trust between the countries. Political mutual trust.

Keywords and Indicators: mutual trust, mutual political trust, Deepen mutual trust.

Sub-theme 7.3 – Respect

Description: Respecting the core interests and major concerns of each other when working with each other.

Keywords and Indicators: Respect, mutual respect, respectful of development path, Spirit of mutual respect, Principle of respect of core-interests, respect for core interests and major concerns.

Sub-theme 7.4 – Mutual Recognition of Standards.

Description: Mutually agreed-upon standards and respect for each other's standards of raw materials, products, services, and procedures.

Keywords and Indicators: Mutual recognition of regulations, mutual standards.

Sub-theme 7.5 – Economic Integration

Description: Integration into each other's economies and financial systems through the coordination of economic policies and strategies.

Keywords and Indicators: integration of markets, economic policy coordination, regional cooperation, economic integration, financial integration, coordinate economic development strategy.

Theme 8 - Government Control/Planned Economy Practices

Description: Language that shows government control over the projects and companies involved. Not promoting free and fair competition for contracts, instead of handing them out to their own companies or steering businesses.

Theme 8.1 – Preferential Investment Possibilities

Description: Prioritising one states enterprises investment into the country's own enterprises. Give comparative advantages and high-added values and similar measures.

Keywords and Indicators: Investment facilitation, intervene in financial institutions actions to give possibilities, competitive advantages, giving priority to cooperation, favourable, favourable tax environment.

Sub-theme 8.2 – Government Involvement and Intervention in Steering Businesses.

Description: Language that encourages governments to steer or encourage the nation's companies to do different activities.

Keywords and Indicators: Promote financial partnerships, promote and support investment, Two-way investment, mutually beneficial cooperation between companies, jointly developing integrated industry and services, encourage financial actions, giving another state better chances in projects, establishing new companies and innovation parks, government-sanctioned projects, promote projects, promote commercial cooperation, create cooperation between companies.

Sub-theme 8.3 – Lack of Open Procurement

Description: Actions that shows that contractors or manufacturers do not have to participate in open procurement, going against market economy norms.

Keywords and Indicators: prioritised, preferential, preferential buying, utilize one specific nations equipment and products or services.

9.2 Appendix 2 – Data Collection and Sampling Process.

Data was collected under a 3-month time. First through online searches on government websites similar sources, before contacting the ministries themselves. To reach some of the ministries, academics were contacted who had connections within the ministries, and who helped in establishing a connection. The Latvian government was contacted via email but did not get back to us. As the leading China-Latvia experts, Professor Berzina-Cerenkova who is doing similar research suggested that the documents we had found online were the only relevant in this research, this dissertation did not pursue the matter more. In the case of Serbia, we got in touch with the ministry of economics and ministry of culture, who both provided relevant documents that were not found online. The Italian ministries did, after a long conversation, provide the documents we requested. Italian professors and one journalist also gave great insights and assistance.

After the initial data-gathering process and discussion with academics and other experts, we could establish the sample. The sample was set to be more focused on critical documents where we could see normative language. The list of documents was slimmed down, and other documents were sought out. We then read all the documents, articles, and interviews we had, continued to slim down the sample while complimenting it with other sources. The data collection and sampling stopped when there was no more data to be found, and all the actors that could provide additional data had been contacted (a large number not responding).

The sample size ended up being large enough for the research to be concluded.

9.3 Appendix 3 Qualitative Content Analysis – Full Results.

Here are the full results of the analysis, excluding the theoretical sections that are found in the main body of text in this dissertation.

9.3.1 2015 Belt and Road Initiative Document

Document Used:

The document used to understand China's original BRI plan is: Vision and actions on jointly building Belt and Road – Vision and Actions on Jointly Building Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. Issued by the National Development and Reform Commission, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China, with State Council authorization. Published March 2015.

Norms Present

Looking at the original BRI document, we can see that there are a bunch of norms present. These can give us insight to which norms that are apparent in China's interactions with our case countries are more likely to come from China initially.

Liberal Norms

Liberal Norms are not that prominent the BRI. Few liberal norms appear, and peace seems to be the only relevant norm present.

Peace is brought up in a few different places; some of them mentioned below and seemed to be one of the more central norms of the initiative due to the weight it is given.

In the policy document, China claims that the BRI inject new positive energy into world peace. The initiative is claimed to lead to a more harmonious world where people can live in peace and prosperity.

China also expresses that they are willing to take on more responsibility and obligations within their capacities and make more significant contributions to world peace.

The BRI is to be in line with the Five Principles of Peaceful coexistence. The initiative is to seek common ground while shelving differences and drawing on each other's strengths for all countries to be able to co-exist in peace. The BRI is to be a common road towards peace and friendship.

Equality is framed as one of the five principles of peaceful coexistence but is not mentioned more than that in the document, making it not so common. It is an undertone of the document, giving it some importance.

Cooperation

Cooperation has once again one norm connected to it that is relevant, while having another minor norm that is not as present but is an undertone, giving it some importance.

Mutual benefit is a recurring norm throughout the entire document. It seems to be one of the guiding norms of the BRI. It is in many formative places of the document, giving it importance to the BRI.

The BRI is to be a win-win cooperation, built on mutual benefits for the parties, which is repeated throughout the text repeatedly. This seems to be an important norm in the policy document.

China writes that they want to build a regional economic cooperation architecture that is beneficial to all. Furthermore, China means that the BRI will contribute to mutual learning among the people of the BRI countries.

China also means that the BRI will help them to strengthen their mutually beneficial cooperation with countries all over the world.

Mutual benefit is also framed as one of the five principles of peaceful coexistence. The initiative is to accommodate the interests and concerns of all parties involved and seek common ground. Mutual benefit is pained as the goal of this.

Encouraging different countries to learn from each other, and flourish together is said to be one of the aspects of required for mutual benefit and common security.

Common Development Is only mentioned once but is an undertone of the document. It is rare, but of some importance to the initiative.

The initiative is to promote common development and prosperity.

Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is brought up in the policy document a few times. Mostly, environmental sustainability is discussed, and there is a complete lack of economic sustainability.

In the policy document, China writes that the BRI aims to realize balanced and sustainable development in the countries involved.

Environmentally Sustainable Development Norms are present in the document and rather prevalent. Yet, there is some contradiction in this norm, as they also discuss developing fossil fuel industries which are not so environmentally sustainable

In the policy document, we can also read that China encourages the promotion of green and low-carbon infrastructure construction and operation management where they are to take into full account the impact climate change has on construction. Wind power, solar power and other clean and renewable energy sources are to be developed together. In the same sentence, fossil fuel development is also propagated.

The BRI should also promote ecological progress in investment and trade according to the policy document. The countries are to cooperate in conserving eco-environment, protecting biodiversity and tackling climate change, and together make the BRI an environmentally friendly project.

Socially Sustainable Development is discussed about poverty. It is minor and not central in any way to the BRI, at least from the perspective of this document.

The document also outlines a will to increase exchanges and cooperations between NGO's in the BRI countries. The cooperations are to promote poverty reduction activities. They are to improve the production and living conditions for poverty-stricken areas in the BRI. This paper argues that poverty is a socially sustainable development due to poverty being a quality of life issue.

Fairtrade

There is only one fair-trade norm present in the 2015 document, but it has vast importance to the BRI, seen from the policy documents perspective.

Open and Market Economy Norms appear in different parts of the text and are given much importance.

In the policy paper, China promises to be committed to their opening-up policy, and to build a new pattern of all-round opening-up, and to integrate China deeper into the world's economic system. The BRI is to help China in this endeavour.

China also promises that the Initiative will follow market operations, abide by market rules, international norms and let the market allocate resources while letting enterprises act independently.

In the cooperation priorities of the policy documents, we can read that the countries should promote policies on unimpeded trade.

The countries are also to strive to improve their investment and trade facilitation as well as remove investment and trade barriers to contribute to a healthy business environment. China also wants to enhance trade liberalisation and facilitation among the countries.

China also encourages the parties to improve the openness of their service industries to the BRI member in order to accelerate the development of regional service industries. The actors are also to explore a new mode of investment cooperation.

China welcomes companies from other countries to also invest in China and encourages Chinese companies to invest in BRI countries.

China also promises to open up the Chinese economy further and strengthening interactions and cooperation among its different regions. This is again promised in other parts of the text.

Good Governance

Good governance is missing some of its key components but has a consistent presence in the policy document.

Financial Security is not given much space or importance in the agreement, but it is still present as a goal to achieve.

The policy document promotes a sound business environment to be shaped within the related regions and countries. The countries are also to eliminate investment barriers, push forward negotiations on bilateral investment protection agreements and double taxation avoidance agreements to protect the lawful rights and interests of investors.

Inclusive Norms can be found in some critical areas of the policy document, and while it is not too common, it has an importance to it.

China writes that they want to build a regional economic cooperation architecture that is inclusive. The BRI is to be inclusive and harmonious. The Chinese government also advocates inclusiveness in the initiative.

The Initiative is to build a community with shared interests, destiny, responsibility featuring cultural inclusiveness.

The development of the BRI is to be open and inclusive, and China welcomes the active participation of all countries, international and regional organisations into the BRI.

Transparency Norms Are a small norm that is not too visible. It is only mentioned a few times, and it is not given much importance either.

China writes that they want to build a regional economic cooperation architecture that is open, which this dissertation interpretive as an indication of transparency. The Chinese government also advocates openness in the initiative. The policy document also writes that the countries should lower non-tariff barriers and jointly improving the transparency of technical trade measures.

Culture Norms

Cultural norms are found in the sense that the BRI want to promote the spreading of different cultures among the nations. This is given some importance and is fairly common.

Preservation of Cultural Heritage is not discussed more than being mentioned once. Meaning, this norm had small importance to the BRI.

The policy document encourages the actors to jointly apply for and protect World Heritage sites. This is the only cultural heritage preservation action mentioned, and it is not well defined or discussed.

Cultural Diversity Norms are discussed to a greater extent. The policy document encourages cultural diversity along the BRI and gives it some importance.

In the policy document, China means that the BRI will promote cultural exchanges among the members of the initiative.

Enhancing cultural exchanges is also said to be one of the aspects required for mutual benefit and common security. Cultural exchanges are brought up a few different times. The countries are also to have culture years, different cultural festivals and fairs in each other's countries as well as producing art together. Tourism cooperations are also suggested.

The countries promise to enhance international exchanges and cooperation on culture and media and leverage the role of the internet and new media tools to promote a harmonious and friendly cultural environment and public opinion.

The countries are also to explore the history and cultural heritage of the BRI.

Mutuality Norms

Mutuality Norms are widely discussed, and some of them are given much importance.

Mutual Understanding Norms are present in the agreements to a small extent and are not displayed as too important outside the cultural sphere.

In the policy document, China writes that the BRI will contribute to mutual understanding for the people of the countries involved in the initiative. The initiative is to enhance mutual understanding to gain common development and prosperity and peace and friendship.

Trust is an important norm in some of the critical aspects of the BRI. It is not common, but where it appears, it takes a prominent role.

In the policy document, China writes that the BRI will contribute to mutual trust among the populations of the countries involved in the initiative. Mutual trust is again mentioned as a way to gain mutual peace and common development and prosperity.

The Initiative is to build a community with shared interests, destiny, responsibility featuring mutual political trust. Deepening political trust is said to be one of the aspects required for mutual benefit and common security. To implement the initiative, the countries are to enhance policy coordination. Enhanced mutual political trust is written as an important factor for this.

Respect is another norm that has not been mentioned much but has been mentioned in defining places.

China also means that the initiative will lead to people in the initiative countries respecting each other more. Mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity is argued to be one of the five principles of peaceful coexistence that the BRI want to achieve.

China writes that the initiative is to be respectful of the paths and modes of development that have been chosen by different countries.

Mutual Recognition of Standards is a norm that is rarely expressed and do not seem to have much relevance.

Mutual recognition of regulations, improved cooperation in the field of inspection and quarantine, certification and accreditation and standard measurement is also encouraged in the countries along the BRI by the policy document.

Economic Integration is a norm that is common and appears in relatively important parts of the document.

The BRI is said in the document to be embracing economic globalisation with deep integration of markets, economic policy coordination and in-depth regional cooperation of higher standards.

The Initiative is to build a community with shared interests, destiny, responsibility featuring economic integration.

In the cooperation priorities of the policy documents, we can read that the countries should promote policies on financial integration.

Countries along the BRI are encouraged to coordinate their economic development strategies and policies fully.

Government Control/planned Economy Practices

This is a norm with little mention and relevance in the 2015 policy document.

Preferential Investment Possibilities is the only component this norm has, and it is not a common, nor relevant aspect of the policy document.

Speeding up Investment facilitation by the involved governments in the BRI are encouraged in the BRI policy document.

9.3.2 Case Countries

Analysis of our cases and listing of the documents used in our analysis.

Italy

In the case of Italy, being the largest country of our cases, we have a large sample size 16 documents that we have analysed. They are a diverse selection, and the only type of agreement of relevance that was not found was agreements on education. It is unclear if there is any such agreement. The ministry of education of Italy has been reached out through different channels to but choose not to respond.

Documents Used:

1. Bonisoli, A., and Shugang, L. (2019). "Ministero per Beni e Le Attivita Culturali. Restituzione Di 796 Reperti Archeologici appartenenti Al Patrimoni Culturale Cinese." Rome.

Description: A resolution depicting Italy returning 796 cultural heritage objects to China.

2. Borgonzoni, L., and Yuzhu, L. (2019). Memorandum Di Intesa fra il Ministero per i Beni e le Attivita Culturali della Repubblica Italiana e l'Amministrazione Nazionale per il Patrimonio Culturale Cinese (NCHA) della Repubblica Popolare Cinese sul Progetto di Gemellaggi Volto alla Promozione, conservazione, conoscenza, valorizzazione e fruizione dei siti italiani e cinesi iscritti nelle Liste del Patrimonio Mondiale dell'Unesco." Rome.

Description: A document on twinning together Chinese and Italian world Heritage sites and cooperation on UNESCO world heritage preservation.

3. Comaschi, G. and Decong, Y. (2019). "Gemellaggio tra l'Associazione per il Patrimonio dei Paesaggi Vitivinicoli di Langhe-Roero e Monferrato e l'Associazione "Terrazzamenti del Riso di Honghe Hani" dello Yunnan volto alla promozione della conoscenza, valorizzazione e fruizione dei siti iscritti." Rome.

Description: Agreement on twinning the Langhe-Roero and Monferrato Wine Landscapes Association and the Yunnan" Rice Terraces of Honghe Hani world heritage sites. The agreement is aimed at promoting knowledge, enhancement and use of the registered sites.

4. Grillo, G., and Ruiyu, L. (2019a). "Protocol Between the Ministry of Health of the Italian Republic and the General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China on Health Requirements for Bovine Semen to be Exported from Italy to China." Rome.

Description: Protocol on Health Requirements for Bovine Semen export from Italy to China.

5. Grillo, G., and Ruiyu, L. (2019b). “Plan of Action on Health Cooperation Between the Ministry of Health of the Italian Republic and the National Health Commission of the People’s Republic of China Plan of Action for the years 2019-2021.” Rome

Description: An action plan for the two countries health cooperation.

6. Grillo, G., and Ruiyu, L. (2019c). “Protocol Between the Ministry of Health of the Italian Republic and the General Administration of Customs of the People’s Republic of China on Inspection, Quarantine and Veterinary Sanitary Requirements for Frozen Pork to be Exported from Italy to China.” Rome.

Description: Protocol on inspection, quarantine, and veterinary sanitary requirements for frozen pork to be exported from Italy to China.

7. Per il Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali della Repubblica Italiana., and Per l’Amministrazione per il Patrimonio Culturale della Repubblica Popolare di Cina. “Memorandum d’Intesa Tra il Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali della Repubblica Italiana e l’amministrazione Nazionale per il Patrimonio Culturale della Repubblica Popolare Cinese (NCHA) sulla prevenzione dei furti, degli scavi clandestini, importazione, esportazione, traffico e transito illecito di beni culturali e sulla promozione della loro restituzione.” Rome.

Description: An MoU on theft prevention, illegal excavation, import, export, traffic and transit illicit cultural property and the promotion of its return.

8. Sboarina, F. and Chengchao, M. (2019). “Patto di gemellaggio tra la Città di Verona e la Città di Hangzhou per la promozione della conoscenza, valorizzazione e fruizione dei rispettivi siti iscritti nelle Liste del Patrimonio Mondiale dell’Unesco.” Rome.

Description: The twinning agreement between the City of Verona and the City of Hangzhou for the promotion of knowledge, enhancement and use of the respective sites registered in the UNESCO World Heritage Lists.

9. Sequi, E. and Ruiyu, L. (2019). “Memorandum of Understanding Between the Ministry of Health of the Italian Republic and the General Administration of Customs of the People’s Republic of China on Cooperation in the Field of Frontier Health Quarantine.” Beijing.

Description: MoU on cooperation in the field of frontier Health Quarantine.

10. Speranza, R., and Xiaowei, M. (2019). “Implementation Programme of the Plan of Action for the Years 2019-2021 on Health Cooperation Between the Ministry of Health of the Italian Republic and the National Health Commission of the People’s Republic of China.” Rome.

Description: A implementation program of the action plan on health cooperation.

11. Repubblica Italiana., and Repubblica Popolare Cinese. (2019). “Comunicato Congiunto Tra La Repubblica Italiana E La Repubblica Popolare Cinese Sul Rafforzamento Del Partenariato Strategico Globale.” Rome.

Description: A press release released right before the original China-Italy BRI MoU was signed.

12. The Government of the Italian Republic., and The Government of the People’s Republic of China. (2019). “Memorandum of Understanding Between the Government of the Italian Republic and the Government of the People’s Republic of China on Cooperation Within the Framework of the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road Initiative.” Rome.

Description: The original China-Italy BRI MoU.

13. The Ministry of Agriculture, Food, Forestry and Tourism of the Italian Republic., and For the General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China. (2019). “Protocollo sui requisiti fitosanitari per l’esportazione di agrumi freschi dall’Italia alla Cina tra il Ministero delle Politiche Agricole, Alimentari, Forestali e del Turismo della Repubblica Italiana e l’Amministrazione Generale delle Dogane della Repubblica Popolare Cinese.” Rome.

Description: A protocol on the sanitary requirements for the export of fresh citrus fruits from Italy to China.

14. The Port System Authority of the Eastern Adriatic Sea., Ports of Trieste., and China Communications Construction Company. “Accordo Di Cooperazione Fra Autorita’ Di Sistema Portuale Del Mare Adriatico Orientale – Porti Di Trieste E Monfalcone E China Communications Construction Company.” Rome.

Description: A cooperation agreement between the three parties regarding the development of the Eastern Adriatic Sea ports.

15. Valditara, G., and Ruiyu, L. (2019). “Memorandum d’Intesa tra Il Ministero dell’Istruzione, Universita e Ricerca della Repubblica Italiana e Il Ministero della Scienza e Tecnologia della Repubblica Popolare Cinese sul Rafforzamento della Cooperazione sulla Scienza, Tecnologia e Innovazione.” Rome.

Description: MoU on strengthening cooperation on science, technology, and innovation.

16. Xinshou, Z., and Tria, G. (2019). “中华人民共和国政府和意大利共和国政府对所得消除双重征税和防止逃避税的协定.” Rome.

Description: An agreement on eliminating double taxation on income and the prevention of tax evasion.

Norms

Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is a significant norm in China-Italy BRI cooperation. Sustainability is brought up in many different documents as something that needs to be adhered to in investments, development and cooperations. It is something the parties want to advocate. Nevertheless, they do not always specify what type of sustainable development they want to achieve. Below are some examples of that.

In the MoU on world heritage twinning projects, the two parties agree that they should aim at identifying innovative fruition projects and carry them out according to the principle of sustainable development.

In a joint press release between Italy and China on the strengthening of their global strategic partnership, which was published right before signing the MoU on the BRI, the two countries say that their strategic partnership is aimed at contributing to sustainable development.

In the same press release, they also underline their desire to contribute to strengthening sustainable development, working on 2030 agenda and the Paris agreements. In it, the parties also further say that they want to strengthen the role of the UN in actions of promoting sustainable development.

In the core BRI MoU between Italy and China, the countries further discuss the need to promote sustainable development, in line with the Paris Accord on Climate change and line with 2030 Agenda.

In the core BRI MoU between Italy and China, the parties promise to work towards promoting sustainable development. In this document, there is an entire section dedicated to sustainable development.

In the twinning partnership agreement between the city of Verona and the City of Hangzhou, the two parties highlight the importance of sustainable development.

It is also apparent in the twinning agreement between the Langhe-Roero and Monferrato Wine Landscape association and the “Rice Terraces of Honghe Hani” Association of the Yunnan.

Sustainable Environmental Development is the most prevalent of sustainability norms. It is the one that has been the most clearly defined as well, and the parties put much importance to this norm.

In the joint press release between Italy and China on the strengthening of their global strategic partnership, the two countries also highlight their support of implementing the 2017-2020 Italy-China action Plan to further boost cooperation in the areas of Environmental and sustainable energy. The countries bring up environmentally sustainable development in a large section of the text, discussing cooperation, their commitment, and their will to promote green and low-carbon industry projects.

In the core BRI MoU between Italy and China, the parties highlight the importance of the Paris Accord on Climate change. They agree that their development of transports, logistics and infrastructure should include a shared vision about sustainable transport. The parties agree to work together in developing renewable energy and cooperate in sustainable transport solutions. They also agree on developing connectivity with an environmentally friendly approach, where they actively promote the global process towards a green, low carbon and circular development. The parties are to work on green development, ecological and environmental protection as well as climate change. They are also to help other countries together in this matter.

In the twinning agreement between the Langhe-Roero and Monferrato Wine Landscape association and the “Rice Terraces of Honghe Hani” Association of the Yunnan, the two actors

agree to promote some of the policies in Agenda 2030. The examples they bring out are more focused on environmental issues.

Sustainable Economic Development is only outright mentioned in one of the documents. It has a small impact and relevance on the countries BRI interactions.

In the core BRI MoU between Italy and China, the parties agree that their BRI interactions are to be guided by sustainable growth norms. The countries agree that they are to develop connectivity following a financially sustainable approach and have an approach of circular development. Investments are also supposed to be economically viable (sustainable). They are also to help other countries in this matter together.

Societal Sustainable Development is also a minor norm that is mentioned a few times. It does not seem to be the most prevalent norm.

In the joint press release between Italy and China on the strengthening of their global strategic partnership, the two countries also highlight their support of implementing the 2017-2020 Italy-China action Plan to further boost cooperation in the areas of sustainable urbanisation.

In the Core BRI MoU, the parties also agree on actively promoting the implementation of Agenda 2030 of sustainable development and work towards socially sustainable investments. They are also to help other countries in this matter.

Good Governance

Good governance norms are highly visible in the two nations agreements with each other. It is the largest norm present in our data and is almost found in all documents.

Financial Security is the smallest norm in this category of norms and is only really mentioned in one document.

In the original China-Italy BRI MoU, the two countries agree to communicate and coordinate on fiscal, financial, and structural reform policies to create a favourable environment for economic and financial cooperation.

The Rule of Law norm is highly relevant, on the other hand, and shows respect towards Italy's EU membership, and is present in almost all the agreements. The documents keep repeating this norm repeatedly, and it is central in their agreements.

In the agreement on eliminating double taxation and preventing tax evasion, the two countries agree that the agreement needs to be complete per the parties' tax laws.

In the MoU on world heritage twinning projects, the two parties agree that the MoU will be carried out per national and international laws, and for Italy, with the obligations deriving from Italy's membership of the EU.

In an MoU on cooperation in science, technology and innovation between Italy and China, the parties agree on different measures to protect intellectual property rights and base intellectual property rights on the two nations laws and international laws.

In the same agreement, the countries again agree that the MoU is to be implemented in compliance with both countries' legislation, international laws and for Italy, their obligations to the EU.

In a Protocol on inspection, quarantine and veterinary sanitary requirements for frozen pork to be exported from Italy to China, both countries have agreed that the production plants supervision will be done in compliance with the relevant laws and regulations of Italy and China on veterinary health and Public health. The export needs to be done following Chinese Food safety laws. Medication is to be used, under Chinese and Italian laws and regulations. Pathogenic agents are also not supposed to be present, per Chinese and Italian laws and regulations as well as international standards.

The protocol is agreed to be implemented per Italian and Chinese legislation and international laws. The obligations of Italy towards the EU will be respected as well.

The previously mentioned section is again repeated in a protocol on the export of Italian citrus fruits to China.

In the joint press release between Italy and China on the strengthening of their global strategic partnership, the two countries also agree on the importance of a rule-based multilateral trading system, that also needs to be strengthened.

In the same press release, the parties also agree on the need to encourage full intellectual property protection and highlights its importance in many different places in the press release.

In a plan of action on health cooperation 2019-2021, the two countries agree on supporting the public-private Sino-Italian Healthcare partnership per Italian and Chinese regulations and laws. Furthermore, the entire plan of action is to be according to the two countries laws and legislations, international law and per Italy's obligations towards the EU. The countries will cooperate based on the principle of protecting intellectual property rights.

Health care activities are to be carried out in line with the laws and regulations, on medical care and professions and other non-medical professions, of the host country.

In an MoU on preserving cultural heritage to fighting illicit trade and theft of cultural heritage items, both nations once again promise that the agreement should be according to their local laws as well as international laws while respecting Italy's obligations towards the EU.

In the core BRI MoU between Italy and China, the parties agree to work following their respective domestic laws and regulations, in consistence with their respective international obligations. Intellectual property rights are also brought up as something that needs to be respected within the countries BRI cooperation.

Finally, at the end of the core BRI MoU, the parties once again agree that their MoU will be interpreted following the legislations of the Parties as well as international laws, and for Italy, the obligations their have from their EU membership.

This final section is again repeated in a plan of action for implementing health cooperation in the years of 2019-2021 and again repeated in the Cooperation Agreement between Port System

Authority of Eastern Adriatic Sea – Port of Trieste and Monfalcone and China Communications Construction Company. The same paragraph is repeated in an MoU on cooperation in the field of frontier health quarantine and the in the twinning partnership agreement between the city of Verona and the City of Hangzhou.

Transparency is another minor norm, but that has some presence in the agreements.

In the joint press release between Italy and China on the strengthening of their global strategic partnership, the two countries also highlight the importance of transparency in a rule-based trading system of mutual benefit.

In the core BRI MoU between Italy and China, the parties agree that they want to strengthen cooperation and promote regional connectivity with an open framework beneficial to all.

In the same document, the two parties highlight the importance of transparent procurement procedures. In the BRI, the two parties promise that they will promote transparency in trade and industrial cooperation.

Inclusiveness is another common norm in the agreements. It is in core places for the agreements, making it fairly relevant.

In a joint press release between Italy and China on the strengthening of their global strategic partnership, the countries agree on defending an inclusive world economy. In the same press release, both countries say that they want a fair, non-discriminatory, open and inclusive multilateral rule-based trading system.

In the core BRI MoU between Italy and China, they agree that they want to strengthen cooperation and promote regional connectivity with an inclusive framework beneficial to all. In the MoU, the countries also agree to promote inclusive growth.

Regional connectivity will also be promoted, per the core MoU, through an inclusive framework. Transport and logistics should be inclusive.

In the Original BRI MoU between China and Italy, the two parties highlight the importance of non-discriminatory procurement procedures. In the BRI, the two parties promise that they will promote non-discriminatory trade and industrial cooperation.

Accountability Norms are a very common norm that is re-accruing. It is also important in the agreements.

In the core BRI MoU between Italy and China, the parties agree to explore synergies and make sure consistency and complementarity with existing bilateral and multilateral cooperation mechanisms and regional cooperation platforms.

More examples of these norms can be found in the rule of law norm, which is partly a part of this norm.

Liberalism

Liberal norms are common and seem to be somewhat relevant in the country's agreements with each other. There are specific liberal norms present, while many are not, which is a common theme among our entire dataset.

Equality Norms are noticeable in the agreements, both as a way they want to approach each other and in how they want to shape the global arena.

In an MoU on cooperation in science, technology and innovation between Italy and China, the countries agree to base their promotion and support of cooperation between Chinese and Italian research entities and institutions on the principle of equality.

In the joint press release between Italy and China on strengthening of their global strategic partnership, the two parties highlight the importance of having a level playing field and that they need to gradually rebalance their bilateral trade in its growth and increase mutual investment to strengthen economic cooperation, bilateral exchange as well as mutual investment between them.

In a plan of action on health cooperation 2019-2021, the two countries agree on making their cooperation be based on the principle of equality.

In the Original BRI MoU between China and Italy, the parties express a will to promote a level playing field.

Peace as a norm in international relations is present and highlighted as important for both parties. It is a minor norm in the number of mentions, but the two countries have put much importance to it.

In a joint press release between Italy and China on the strengthening of their global strategic partnership, which was published right before signing the MoU on the BRI, the two countries say that their strategic partnership is aimed at contributing to world peace.

In it, the parties also further say that they want to strengthen the role of the UN in actions of protecting the peace. In the same press release, the countries also agree on their commitment to deepening the Sino-European Partnership for peace.

In the core BRI MoU between Italy and China, the parties promise to work towards promoting regional peace.

Human Rights Norms in the international arena were slightly touched upon, and is not discussed in-depth, but is still relevant to bring up.

In a joint press release between Italy and China on the strengthening of their global strategic partnership, the countries write that they want to strengthen the role of the UN in actions to protect human rights.

Cooperation

The norm of cooperation is spread out and at times, strong among the nations. It is present in some core places, making it an important norm for China-Italy BRI interactions.

Mutual Beneficial Cooperation Norms are what gives the cooperation norm its importance. This norm is outlined as a goal for how the cooperations are to be done under the BRI.

In an MoU on cooperation in science, technology and innovation between Italy and China, the two countries agree that the principle of mutual benefit is a core part of their MoU. They further agree to base their promotion and support of the cooperation between Italian and Chinese research entities and institutes on mutual benefit.

In the joint press release between Italy and China on the strengthening of their global strategic partnership, the two countries also highlight their wish of a trading system based on mutually beneficial collaboration.

In a plan of action on health cooperation 2019-2021, both parties agree on making the cooperation partly about mutual benefit and result sharing.

In the core BRI MoU between Italy and China, the parties agree that their cooperation will be done in a mutually beneficial manner. It also says that they want to strengthen cooperation and promote regional connectivity with an open, inclusive and balanced framework beneficial to all. In the same document, a balanced framework beneficial to all is again suggested.

In the core BRI MoU between Italy and China, the parties agree to work towards mutually beneficial cooperation. They also agree on promoting substantive mutually beneficial cooperation in the field of trade and investment.

In an implementation program of the plan of actions for the 2019-2021 health cooperation, the parties agree that the implementation program is to be done under the principle of mutual benefit.

Common Development Norms are rather present among the documents but do not take up too much space. It is an uncommon norm in the sense that they rarely write it out to be a goal they want to achieve in their cooperation in the documents, from what we can see, but there is still an undertone of this norm in the way the actor's act.

In an MoU on cooperation in science, technology and innovation between Italy and China, the countries agree that they will support research related actors to conduct joint research and development.

In the Cooperation Agreement between Port System Authority of Eastern Adriatic Sea – Port of Trieste and Monfalcone and China Communications Construction Company, the two parties agree on establishing cooperative relationships to explore opportunities to support, in collaboration, the development of projects, investment and infrastructure management.

Standardization Cooperation Norm is another minor norm that is barely present in the agreements.

In an MoU on cooperation on frontier health quarantine, the two parties agree on together developing norms and standards on prevention and control of infectious diseases.

Culture

Cultural norms are a common set of norms in the dataset we have, which could partly be explained by the willingness of the ministry of culture and heritage to contribute with cultural documents that are not open to the public. Partly it can also be due to Italy's rich history, making this norm something that they put a high value on.

Preservation of Cultural Heritage is a common norm, appearing in many documents. It is given much value.

In the MoU on world heritage twinning projects, we can see that the countries agree on working together on conservation and enhancement of world heritage sites. These are two of the primary purposes of the agreement, making them rather central in this document.

In the joint press release between Italy and China on the strengthening of their global strategic partnership, the countries are satisfied with the development in activities regarding the protection of cultural heritage.

In the MoU on the prevention of theft, clandestine excavation, importation, the export of, traffic and transit of illicit cultural goods and the promotion of their return, we can see that the countries agree on preventing illicit trade, theft and so on of cultural heritage objects, and promise to preserve them through preventing such harmful actions.

We can also see norms of preserving cultural heritage In the twinning partnership agreement between the city of Verona and the City of Hangzhou and the twinning agreement between the Langhe-Roero and Monferrato Wine Landscape association and the "Rice Terraces of Honghe Hani" Association of the Yunnan. The two parties agree on different exchanges and cooperation with this purpose in mind.

Italy also returned 796 archaeological finds of importance to China's cultural heritage, which was apparent in a resolution.

Cultural Diversity is a norm noticeable through the countries accepting and distributing their cultures to each other. This is a norm that is prevalent among the two countries BRI interactions and has much relevance as much effort is put into exchanging personal, having joint projects and events.

In the MoU on world heritage twinning projects, the two countries agree on promoting each other's cultural heritage sites. These are two of the primary purposes of the agreement, making them rather central in this document.

The countries are to promote the twinning project through events and create programs to visit the World Heritage sites.

In the joint press release between Italy and China on the strengthening of their global strategic partnership, the countries expressed their satisfaction in the growing number of cultural

exchanges as well as in the people-to-people exchanges. The parties also agree on encouraging the teaching of each other languages in middle and high schools.

We can also see norms of spreading cultural heritage In the twinning partnership agreement between the city of Verona and the City of Hangzhou and the twinning agreement between the Langhe-Roero and Monferrato Wine Landscape association and the “Rice Terraces of Honghe Hani” Association of the Yunnan. This is apparent in joint activities to spread knowledge about the sites and promote tourism.

Fairtrade

Fairtrade norms are present in the two countries BRI agreements, and the ones that are present are highly important.

Norms on Equity is one of the fair-trade norms that have much importance to the countries BRI relationship as it is described as the spirit of the two countries bilateral relations. In an MoU on cooperation in science, technology and innovation between Italy and China, the two countries agree to conduct joint research activities and finance them jointly, within the limits of their ordinary budget.

In the core BRI MoU between Italy and China, the spirit of equity is highlighted as the spirit of their bilateral partnership.

In an implementation program of the plan of actions for the 2019-2021 health cooperation, the parties agree that the implementation program is to be implemented while considering the countries respective needs and assets.

Market Economy and Open Market Norms is another very relevant normative component in the two countries BRI interactions. It has an important norm in the agreement that is raised in both the press release and the original MoU with persuasive language.

In a joint press release between Italy and China on the strengthening of their global strategic partnership, the countries agree on defending an open world economy. The parties also say that they agreed on combating all forms of protectionism and to promote liberalisation and facilitation of trade and investment.

In the same press release, the countries also agree on widening and easing the market access of their respective countries.

In the Original BRI MoU between China and Italy, the two parties reaffirm their mutual commitment to open and free trade and investment. They want to work to counter excessive macroeconomic imbalances and to oppose unilateralism and protectionism. In their cooperation in the BRI, they will promote free and open trade and industrial cooperation, open procurement and follow market principles. Furthermore, the two parties highlight the importance of open, transparent, and non-discriminatory procurement procedures. The parties are also to work to expand the two-way investment and trade flow.

In an MoU on cooperation in science, technology and innovation between Italy and China, the two parties agree that they should base the activities of their joint laboratories on the

researcher's research proposals. The governments do not suggest any topics they should focus on.

Mutuality

Mutuality norms are present in the agreements between the two countries. While they are not mentioned a lot, they have some importance.

Mutual Respect as a norm is mentioned once in the agreements but in a core place

In the original BRI MoU between Italy and China, we can see that the countries agree to promote their bilateral partnership in the spirit of mutual respect. This is one of the core values of the agreement.

Mutual Trust Is mentioned in two documents, but do not seem to be central in the agreements.

In the press release on global strategic partnership, the two countries draw up mutual trust as a pillar in their cooperation.

In the core BRI MoU between Italy and China, the parties agree to work towards mutual trust.

Planned Economy and Government Control Norms

This is a small norm in the two countries interactions and is only mentioned once. It does not seem to have high importance to the two countries cooperation. It is a step away from market economy norms, in the sense that agreements encourage their financial actors to conduct business with each other's actors.

Government Intervention is the only aspect found in the different agreements that have been studied. It is minor, and not central for the two nations agreements.

The parties promise to encourage their financial institutions to engage in partnership with each other to support investments and financial cooperation together. These cooperations are to be done in bilateral and multilateral levels, as well as towards third countries within the BRI framework.

[Latvia](#)

Documents Used:

1. Government of the Republic of Latvia., and Government of the People's Republic of China. (2015). "Memorandum of Understanding Between the Government of the Republic of Latvia and the Government of the People's Republic of China on Cooperation Within the Framework of the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road Initiative." Riga.

Description: Original BRI MoU between China and Serbia. Outlines the cooperation between the countries.

2. Latvijas Republikas Kulturas ministrijas varda., and Kinas Tautas Republikas Kulturas ministrijas varda. (2015). "Latvijas Republikas Kulturas ministrijas un Kinas Tautas Republikas Kulturas ministrijas kulturas apmainas programma 2016–2020. Gadam." Riga.

Description: Agreement on Cultural Exchange Program for the years 2016-2020.

3. Latvijas Republikas Veselības Ministrijas Vārda., and Kinas Tautas Republikas Nacionālās Veselības un Ģimenes Planosanas Komisijas Vārda. (2017). “Latvijas Republikas Veselības Ministrijas un Kinas Tautas Republikas Nacionālās Veselības un Ģimenes Planosanas komisijas Ricības Plāns Par Sadarbību Veselības Joma 2017-2020. Gada.” Budapest.

Description: Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Health Care 2017-2020.

4. Selga, M., and Baosheng, C. (2017). “Agreement Between the Government of the Republic of Latvia and the Government of the People's Republic of China on Cooperations the Field of Education.” Beijing.

Description: Agreement between China and Latvia on a cooperating in Education.

5. Selga, M., and Zhigang, W. (2018). “Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Latvia and the Government of the People's Republic of China on Cooperation in the field of Science and Technology.” Beijing.

Description: Agreement between China and Latvia on cooperation in Science and technology.

6. Voldiņš, S., and Melbarde, D. (2017). Agreement Between the Government of the Republic of Latvia and the Government of the People’s Republic of China on Cooperation in the Field of Culture.” Riga.

Description: Agreement between China and Latvia on cooperation in the field of culture.

Norms

Liberal Values

Liberal values are not that common in the agreements, but when they appear, they are in critical places.

Peace Is not a common norm in the Latvia-China BRI agreements, but it appears in key places, giving it some importance

In the core BRI MoU between Latvia and China, the two parties agree that they will uphold the Silk Road spirit of peace. The two parties also agree on working together to deepen mutually beneficial cooperation to realize peaceful development. The balanced framework of economic cooperation suggested in the Original BRI MoU is to promote peace in the region of the BRI.

Equality is a rare norm. In the agreement, it can be found it is positioned as a critical principle in an agreement on cultural cooperation, and the two countries agree that they will base their cooperation and exchanges on the principle of equality.

Cooperation

Cooperation norms are some of the most common norms in the agreement and are important for the two nations cooperation on the BRI.

In the core BRI MoU between Latvia and China, the two parties agree that they will uphold the Silk Road spirit of cooperation. The two countries also agree that they expect countries along the BRI will step up their cooperation and deepening their all-round cooperation with countries for a myriad of reasons.

In the original BRI MoU, the countries agree on deepening their all-round cooperation with countries along the BRI on jointly establishing an open framework of economic cooperation.

Mutual Benefit Is one of the core themes China-Latvia BRI cooperations. It is both important and common in the agreements.

In the core BRI MoU between Latvia and China, the two parties agree that they will uphold the Silk Road spirit of mutual learning and win-win cooperation. The two parties also agree on working together to deepen mutually beneficial cooperation to get shared prosperity.

The balanced framework of economic cooperation suggested in the Original BRI MoU is to be beneficial to all.

The bilateral cooperation between Latvia and China are to be promoted on the principle of joint contribution and shared benefits. The countries are to adopt a vision of cooperation, development and win-win progress.

The parties are also to form synergies, give each other support and share experiences to complement and display each other's strengths in the different bilateral cooperation mechanism and multilateral mechanisms that both parties are a part of, as well as in regional cooperation platforms.

In the original BRI MoU, the countries agree to encourage two-way investment and various forms of mutually beneficial cooperation between their companies.

In an agreement on cultural cooperation, the two countries agree that they will base their cooperation and exchanges on the principle of mutual benefit. This is again repeated regarding education in an MoU on education cooperation.

In an action plan health cooperation 2017-2020, the Parties agree to promote mutually beneficial cooperation in the field of health and medicine between health, medical, scientific, research, educational and other organizations within the financial resources available and within their capabilities.

Common Development is less important and common the previously mentioned norms, but still holds some relevance.

In the original MoU between Latvia and China on the BRI, the two countries also agree on promoting coordinated development and common progress of the two countries economy society and environment.

The two parties also agree on working together within the BRI to realize their common goal of common development.

The two countries are to aim to strengthen transport cooperations, support Latvia in developing multimodal distribution and logistics platform.

In an agreement on cultural cooperation, the two countries agree that they will cooperate in training cultural and art professionals as well as heritage practitioners in specific areas.

Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is not that relevant in the two countries cooperations. The two countries have not discussed it much in their agreements, and two out of the three sustainability norms are missing.

Economic Sustainable Development is the only sustainable development norm present in the agreements between China and Latvia. It is minor and holds little importance. In the core BRI document between Latvia and China, the countries agree on translating their strengths into advantages for sustainable growth. The countries also agree on deepening their all-round cooperation with countries along the BRI on jointly establishing a balanced framework of economic cooperation.

Fairtrade

Fairtrade is another common, due to the many uncommon norms in it, and important norm that is apparent in the two nations BRI agreements.

Market Economy Norms have a minimal presence, but the parties agree that their different cooperation's and exchanges are to be done a though market-oriented approach, giving this norm some importance.

In the core MoU, both countries agree that they will discuss opening direct flights between Latvia and China. The discussion is to be done based on commercial and market-based principles and feasibility studies. The countries are to conduct their different cooperations and exchanges through market-oriented approaches.

Transparency Norms is another small norm that is not that relevant in the various agreements. It is vaguely mentioned a few times and only once outright stated as a goal.

In the core BRI MoU between Latvia and China, the two parties agree that they will uphold the Silk Road spirit of openness. Through the BRI, the countries are also to increase transparency.

In the original BRI MoU, the countries agree on deepening their all-round cooperation with countries along the BRI on jointly establishing an open framework of economic cooperation. In the same document, the bilateral cooperation between Latvia and China are to be promoted on the principle of wide consultation.

Equity is another norm with a little appearance in the agreements, but that is the basis of the Science and technology MoU.

In an action plan, health cooperation 2017-2020, the Parties agree to promote mutually beneficial cooperation in the field of health and medicine within the financial resources available and within their capabilities.

In an MoU on Science and technology, both countries agree that they need to take into consideration the needs and possibilities of the two countries. The entire agreement is based on this premise.

Reciprocity is a norm that has little spread and little importance outside science and technology MoU.

In an MoU on science and technology, the two parties agree on jointly funding research, development, and innovation projects in areas of common interest, following the principle of reciprocity.

Good governance

Good governance is a common norm with some importance to the country's agreements. It is well spread out in many different agreements and take up some important topics.

Financial Security is a minor norm in the agreement with small importance. In the original MoU, the countries agree to improve the investment environment and enhance the level of investment safety and facilitation.

Rule of Law Norms Are is common in the countries agreements and hold a fairly important role. Nevertheless, it is not found in the original BRI MoU between Latvia and China.

In a cultural agreement between the two parties, they agree that the activities in the agreements shall be undertaken in accordance with the two countries national laws and regulations as well as their international obligations.

In the education MoU between Latvia and China, the two countries agree that their national laws and regulations, as well as international obligations, need to be respected in all activities covered in the MoU.

In an agreement on science and technology, the countries agree to protect Intellectual property rights arising from cooperation through an agreement between the two countries, per their existing laws and regulations.

Inclusiveness Norms are present in the original MoU and is stated as a historical principle of the Silk Road that they want to uphold.

In the core BRI MoU between Latvia and China, the two parties agree that they will uphold the Silk Road spirit of inclusiveness. The countries also agree on deepening their all-round cooperation with countries along the BRI on jointly establishing an inclusive framework of economic cooperation. People's in all sectors of society are to be encouraged to participate in the BRI.

Cultural Norms

Cultural norms are strongly present in the BRI agreements between the countries. This could very well be due to our sample size, where two documents are culture related. Culture norms hold some importance in the agreements.

Preservation of Cultural Heritage as a norm is not a common norm, but it has a presence in the agreements worth noting. It does not seem to have much importance, as it is never mentioned entirely by itself.

In an agreement on cultural cooperation, the two countries agree that they will deepen cooperation between museums, archaeological research institutions and institutions involved in the protection and restoration of cultural heritage. The Parties shall encourage the exchange of experience and cooperation in the fields of restoration, protection and conservation of cultural heritage.

In an agreement on a cultural exchange program 2016-2020, both countries agree that they should exchange personal and information on the preservation of museums and cultural values.

Cultural Diversity norms are, on the other hand, have a high presence and have been given much importance. The countries agree that to share many aspects of their cultures with each other and promote cooperations.

In the core BRI MoU, we can see that the two parties are willing to cooperate in spreading each other's cultures through cooperations and people-to-people exchanges. In an agreement on cultural cooperation, the two countries agree that they have exchanges in a variety of different cultural fields.

In the agreement of a cultural exchange program 2016-2020, the two parties promise to acquaint each other with their cultural heritage and the achievements of contemporary culture. This is to be done by supporting the exchanges of information and personal within different cultural fields. A variety of exchanges is suggested, including performing artists and art exhibitions. The countries are also to explore the possibility of translating literature and do other literature cooperations.

In an agreement on education, both parties also agree on supporting each other's language and culture studies in their countries.

Mutuality

Mutuality norms not too common, but they do sometimes take up core places, giving them some relevance.

Mutual Understanding is not a common norm, nor that important in the two parties' agreements.

In the cultural exchange program 2016-2020 agreement, the two parties agree that their agreement will lead to their common development of the understanding between their both peoples.

Respect is not as a norm that regular in the agreements but has some importance when appearing.

The bilateral cooperation between Latvia and China that is mentioned in the core BRI MoU is to be promoted on the principle of respecting each other's core interests and major concerns.

In an agreement on cooperation in the field of education, the two parties shall base their cooperation on the principles of mutual respect and partnership, encourage and support different forms of cooperation in the field of education.

Mutual Recognition of Standards is another rare and not too important norm. The two countries will promote cooperation on mutual recognition of standards.

Government Control/planned Economy Practices

This norm is not that common in different agreements, but it takes up a large section of the original MoU. It is fairly important for their agreement as it shapes some critical components of it.

Government Involvement and Intervention in Steering Businesses norm is shaping a large part of the BRI interactions between these two countries. It is uncommon outside the original BRI MoU, but relevant and common in it.

In the original BRI MoU, the countries agree to encourage two-way investment and various forms of mutually beneficial cooperation between their companies. The countries also agree on discussing the feasibility of jointly developing integrated industrial assembling, e-commerce, and consulting service centres in Latvia for promotion and easier access to Chinese exports to the EU market. In a section on financial cooperation, the two parties also agree on encouraging their financial institutions to provide financing support and services for trade and investment cooperation. They will facilitate the participation of Chinese companies in financing private, governmental, and regional projects in the Nordics and Baltics region. They are to do this by expanding cooperation between their state-owned and commercial financial institutions. They are also to encourage their companies to carry out cooperations in high and new technology and innovation by establishing new companies and innovation parks.

In an MoU on Science and technology, both parties agree on encouraging their enterprises to launch cooperations in research, technological innovation, and product development together.

Serbia

Serbia has the most significant amount of data accessible. The Serbian ministries cooperated and gave access to many documents that were not accessible online. Twelve agreements, plans of action, and MoU's written between Serbia and China related to the BRI have been analysed.

Documents Used:

1. Beijing International Studies University., and Institute for Research of Cultural Development, Belgrade. (2016). "Memorandum of Understanding on the Cooperation of National Academic Institutes in Cultural Trade among China and the Institute of Research of Cultural Development." Belgrade.

Description: An MoU on cooperation between two different academic institutions.

2. Knezevic, G., Bulatovic., D., and Zhou, X. (2019). "Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Republic of Serbia, the City of Nish and the entity "Xingyu Automotive Lighting Systems Co LTD." Niš.

Description: An MoU on developing investment and industrial development from a Chinese automotive lighting system manufacturer in a Serbian city.

3. Mihajlovic, Z., Lixin, X., Najafov, F. (2019). “Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation for the realization of the Project: Belgrade Bypass Project Construction of the Highway E70/E75 and Freight Railway: Section Bubanj Potok-Pancevo (Section C).” Beijing.

Description: An MoU on the development of an infrastructure project.

4. Mihajlovic, Z., and Rougu, L. (2014). “Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation of The Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure of the Republic of Serbia and The Import-Export Bank of China” Belgrade.

Description: An MoU between Serbia’s ministry of construction, transport and infrastructure and the Chinese Import-Export Bank on strengthening cooperation on infrastructure projects.

5. Shaoshi, X., Szijjártó, P., and Zorana Mihajlović, Z. (2014). “Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation of the Hungarian-Serbian Railway Project between The National Development and Reform Commission of the People’s Republic of China and The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary and The Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure of the Republic of Serbia.” Belgrade.

Description: An MoU between Serbia, Hungary, and China on cooperation on developing a Railway project.

6. The Chinese Cultural Heritage Academy., and The Provincial Bureau of the Protection of Cultural Monuments Serbia. (2018). “Оквирни Споразум Између Кинеске Академије За Културно Наслеђе И Покрајинског Завода За Заштиту Споменика Културе – Петроварадин О Номинацији Историјског Места Бач Са Окружењем.” Belgrade.

Description: Agreement on cooperating in nominating Bac to become a World Heritage Site.

7. The Government of the Republic of Serbia., and the Government of the People’s Republic of China, (2015). “Memorandum of Understanding Between the Government of the Republic of Serbia and The Government of the People’s Republic of China on jointly promoting the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road Initiative.” Belgrade.

Description: Original BRI MoU between Serbia and China.

8. The Government of the Republic of Serbia., and the Government of the People’s Republic of China. (2019). “Bilateral Cooperation Plan between the Government of the Republic of Serbia and the Government of the People’s Republic of China under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative.” Belgrade.

Description: Action plan on how to implement the BRI MoU.

9. The Ministry of Culture and Information of the Republic of Serbia and the Ministry of Culture of the People’s Republic of China. (2017). “Програм Сарадње У Области Културе И Уметности Између Министарства Културе И Информисања Републике Србије И Министарства Културе Народне Републике Кине За Период 2017 – 2020. Године.” Belgrade.

Description: Culture and Art cooperation program for the period of 2017-2020.

10. The Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Serbia., and National Development and Reform Commission of the People’s Republic of China. (2016). “Framework Agreement

between The Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Serbia and the National Development and Reform Commission of the People's Republic of China In respect of Developing cooperation in the field of production capacities.” Belgrade.

Description: Framework agreement on developing cooperation in the field of production capacities.

11. The Ministry of Foreign and Internal Trade and Telecommunication (MTT) of the Republic of Serbia., and The Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT) of the People's Republic of China. (2013). “Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Foreign and Internal Trade and Telecommunication (MTT) of the Republic of Serbia and The Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT) of the People's Republic of China on Cooperation on Information and Communication Technologies.” Belgrade.

Description: MoU on Cooperation on Information and communication technologies.

12. Vujovic, D., and Ruogu, L. (2014). “Preferential Buyer Credit Loan Agreement on Phase II of the Package Project Kostolac-B Power Plant Project.” Belgrade.

Description: An agreement on preferential loan taking for a power-plant development project.

Norms

Cooperation

Mutual Benefits are one of the most central norms in China-Serbia cooperations. It is apparent in 5 documents and is a large part of two of the primary documents, the original MoU between Serbia and China and the bilateral cooperation plan between the two countries.

In the preamble of a framework agreement between China and Serbia on production capacity development, the agreement outlines that the agreement is going to be based on the principle of equal benefit.

In an MoU between the Ministry of Foreign and Internal Trade and Telecommunication of the Republic of Serbia and The Ministry of Industry and Information Technology of the People's Republic of China on cooperation on Information and Communication Technologies, the two parties being their agreement with devoting themselves to mutually beneficial cooperation in the field of ICT.

In the MoU on the cooperation of the Hungarian-Serbian Railway project between Serbia, China and Hungary, the parties agree that the project is to be carried out in the principle of win-win cooperation and mutual benefits.

In the Bilateral Cooperation Plan between Serbia and China under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative, the norm of mutual benefit through cooperation is mentioned as a goal to achieve. It is worded as a win-win cooperation.

In the original BRI MoU between China and Serbia, both countries agree that they should work towards the goal of bringing benefit to both countries' people. This is underlined in the document and is a re-accruing theme in the MoU.

Common Development norm is a central part of the two countries BRI interactions, based on it being described as the spirit of the Silk road and being apparent in different ways in many central documents.

In the Bilateral Cooperation Plan between Serbia and China under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative, the norm of common development is present. Mutual learning and benefit as well sharing growth are mentioned as spirits of the Silk Road, and principles to achieve.

Furthermore, the agreement also outlines that the two parties should promote projects that are in line with their common interests.

In the original BRI MoU between China and Serbia, both countries agree that they should work towards the goal of common development. This is repeated in a few places and seems central to the agreement.

The Norm on Standardization Cooperation has a rather small presence and importance.

In the Bilateral Cooperation Plan between Serbia and China under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative, the countries take it upon themselves to strengthen cooperation in the field of standardization. They will exchange experience, information, publication, normative documents, national standards, and technical regulations. They will improve cooperation mechanics, organise visits and joint learning.

Liberalism

Liberal norms are not strong in the Belt and Road interactions between Serbia and China. Norms on equality and peace are the only one present.

Equality Norms have a small presence in the agreement yet are said to be a central part of the countries relations, according to the framework agreement on production capacity development. Mostly, China position itself as a benefactor, not an equal, but there is a normative language of equality in one of the agreements.

In the preamble of a framework agreement between China and Serbia on production capacity development, the agreement outlines that the agreement is going to be based on the principle equality. In the same document, they also agree on the principle of equal participation in their investment cooperation efforts.

In the bilateral cooperation plan, the parties agree to share the risk and benefits of investments, indicating equality in this sector.

Peace Norms is the second liberal norm present. Peace is not discussed or brought up that much, but it has a place in the dealings between China and Serbia.

In the Bilateral Cooperation Plan between Serbia and China under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative, the two parties state that they will adhere to the Silk Road Spirit of Peace and cooperation. This is the first norm that is presented in the document, showing its importance.

In the original BRI MoU between China and Serbia, both countries agree that they should promote peace in their framework of economic cooperation.

Sustainable Development.

Sustainable development norms have a central role in the interactions between China and Serbia.

Environmentally Sustainable development is a complex norm concerning Serbia-China BRI relations. Looking at the original MoU between Serbia and China on the BRI, we cannot see any indications of environmentally sustainable development, but in the bilateral cooperation plan where the MoU is made into an actual plan, it is a large part of the agreement. While it is present in this document, it is not present in any other documents that are describing actual projects. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the document was released in 2019, while the other documents are older.

In the Bilateral Cooperation Plan between Serbia and China under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative, the norm of environmentally sustainable development is partly apparent, beside the development of fossil fuel industries. China encourages its enterprises to participate in the development of solar power and environmental protection industry in Serbia. In the same document, both parties agree on developing Serbia's energy industry and making it more sustainable. They are to expand the proportion of renewable energy and reduce pollution emissions while focusing their power sector cooperation on advancements of environmental protection and energy conservation for Serbia's existing thermal power plants, and on new construction of clean and efficient units.

They are also to develop the fossil fuel and mineral extraction equipment to make them more environmentally friendly.

Investments in Solar and wind energy will be made in Serbia, by Chinese companies, following the agreement mentioned before.

In large parts of the document, the parties agree to continue developing sustainable energy sources and energy efficiency improvements. Both parties also recognise the significance of environmental protection to social health and sustainable development. Both countries also agree on the importance of combating climate change and discuss international agreements and plans to combat it. They also express that they want to develop a green economy in Serbia.

Economic Sustainable Development is present in the original MoU and the BRI cooperation plan. It is a noticeable norm but not one of the central norms that are present in the countries relations.

In the Bilateral Cooperation Plan between Serbia and China under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative, the norm of sustainable economic cooperation is present as the countries agree that intergovernmental cooperation mechanisms should be created and improved to create a favourable cooperation climate for long-term and sustainable cooperation. The norm is again brought up in the same document, where it materialises through the countries promising to

provide a sustainable impetus for the economic development of the two countries. They have also clarified the importance of good corporate governance.

In the original BRI MoU between China and Serbia, both countries agree that they should work towards the goal of sustainable growth. The countries are to have a balanced framework of economic cooperation.

Socially Sustainable Development is present to a rather small extent in the agreements between the two nations. It does not seem to be an important norm in Serbia – China BRI relations.

In the Bilateral Cooperation Plan between Serbia and China under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative, the norm of socially sustainable development is also apparent. The countries agree that they should train their officials in among other things, social compliance. The two actors also recognize that improving workers skills, creating jobs and developing social security are important elements in improving people's well-being. It also creates favourable environments for enterprises.

The two parties have promised to attach great importance to social responsibility in their promotion of investments.

Mutuality

Mutuality norms are also present among the two nations. Mutual respect and trust for each other are present.

Mutual Respect is the most relevant norm in this category. It is an undertone in Serbia-China relations.

In the preamble of a framework agreement between China and Serbia on production capacity development, the agreement outlines that the agreement is going to be based on the principle of mutual respect.

In the Bilateral Cooperation Plan between Serbia and China under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative, the norm of respect is adhered to. The two sides promise to respect each other's core interests and major concerns.

In the original BRI MoU between China and Serbia, both countries agree that they should respect each other's core interests and major concerns.

Mutual Trust is a minor norm in the documents, that is barely not discussed.

In the original BRI MoU between China and Serbia, both countries agree that they should work to deepen mutual trust.

Fairtrade

Fairtrade norms are a strong aspect of China – Serbia BRI relations. Market economy norms being the strongest, while reciprocity also being rather strong while equity not being as prevalent.

Reciprocity is visible in Serbia – China BRI relations primarily through three different documents. It is not positioned as a central norm, but it is still apparent.

In the 2017-2020 program of cooperation in the field of culture and art between Serbia and China, both countries agree on basing the organisation of festivals in each other's countries on the principle of reciprocity. Later in the agreement, both countries agree on having direct collaboration and exchanges between writers and literary translators from the two countries based on a reciprocal basis.

In the ICT MoU between Serbia and China, the two parties agree on setting up joint ventures in the field of ICT based on reciprocity.

In the Bilateral Cooperation Plan between Serbia and China under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative, the norm of reciprocity is apparent in a section discussing political dialogues and interpersonal exchange between customs authorities.

Equity, on the other hand, is minor and not that apparent in the nation's agreement signing.

In the Bilateral Cooperation Plan between Serbia and China under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative, the norm of equity is apparent in the section discussing the importance of combating climate change. Both sides stress the principle of fairness, common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities as well as considering the different situations of different countries in climate change work globally.

Market Economy and Open Market Norms are the strongest aspects of fair-trade norms. These are the norms that are commonly connected to capitalism and liberalised economies. This norm seems to have a central role in the agreement between the countries but still is also met with the counter norm of planned economy/state-controlled norms that will be discussed further below. Meaning, both norms are highly present in different parts of the countries relations.

In Article 2 of an MoU between the Serbian Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure and the Import-Export Bank of China, the two parties have determined that Serbia will determine the priority of projects at their discretion through taking into account the projects significance and feasibility.

In the MoU on the Hungarian-Serbian Railway Project, we can see Market economy norms through how the parties agree on organising a feasibility study that would outline the feasibility of different decisions on upgrading and expanding the plan as well as to see the modality of cooperation.

In the Bilateral Cooperation Plan between Serbia and China under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative, Market economy norms are present in the form of the two parties agreeing on promoting cooperation projects based on the in-depth proof of demand and objective analysis of feasibility. Later-on in the text, the parties agree that they should observe market rules with government guidance. Following the principle of enterprises leading while decisions being made by the market. The countries also agree that their enterprises should make independent decisions and be responsible for profits and losses at their own risks, indicating Market economy norms.

In the same cooperation plan, both parties agree to strengthen the cooperation in agriculture trade by market-based approaches. They will also encourage their financial institutions to establish branches in each other's territories, according to market demand. Equal opportunity will also be given to the nation's enterprises as well as provide them with a fair competition environment. They will also get a favourable tax environment for cross-border trade and investment.

In the original BRI MoU between China and Serbia, both countries agree that they should work to open their markets for unimpeded trade. They should expand two-way trade flows and adopt international, market-oriented, and professional approaches to their cooperation.

Culture

Cultural norms are norms that are prevalent in the two countries interactions with each other. The norm is not in the spotlight but is still discussed.

The Preservation of Cultural Heritage is present in one document and do not seem to be that central in the cultural diversity norm.

In the 2017-2020 program of cooperation in the field of culture and art between Serbia and China, both countries agree on having exchanges in the conservation of the intangible cultural heritage of each other's countries.

Cultural Diversity is more apparent and can be found in a few different documents.

In the 2017-2020 program of cooperation in the field of culture and art between Serbia and China, both countries agree on trying to create mutual understanding for each other's cultures and artistic achievements.

In the same document, the parties also agree on conducting exchanges of artists to spread their cultures.

In the Bilateral Cooperation Plan between Serbia and China under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative, the countries agree to promote cooperation in language and academics. Teaching each other's languages in higher education institutes. The countries are also to deepen their populations cultural understanding of the other.

Good Governance

Good governance is a norm that is very visible in many different agreements and takes a central role in the two countries dealings with each other.

Financial Security is a minor norm apparent in the documents that still has relevance.

In the Bilateral Cooperation Plan between Serbia and China under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative, the norm of financial security is highlighted as an objective both parties want to achieve. They want to improve the investment and financing environment. The countries also agree on signing administrative agreements on bilateral social security, to bring benefits to enterprises working in each other's countries, making their markets easier to cooperate in. The countries are also to cooperate in the fight against commercial fraud and improve the investment climate and security.

In the original BRI MoU between China and Serbia, both countries agree on the need to improve the investment environment and improve the level of investment facilitation and safety.

The Rule of Law Norm is apparent in a lot of the documents and is consistently a part of the two countries dealings with each other.

In the first article of the framework agreement between China and Serbia on production capacity development, the parties agree to promote the cooperation in the field of production capacity of companies and financial institutions per national legislation and international agreements concluded by the countries.

In an agreement between the City of Nisha, the government of Serbia and the Xingyn Automotive lighting System Co LTD, the two parties outline that the investment discussed will be supported according to the Law on State Aid Control and other legal restrictions.

Rule of law norms are again apparent in the document, in many places and take up ample space. The investment is to be supported by the Serbian side within the laws of Serbia.

In an MoU between Beijing international studies university and the Institute for research of cultural development of Serbia, the two parties agree that the MoU is to be signed following the administrative rules and procedures governing each party.

In the ICT MoU between Serbia and China, the parties write that the agreement shall be implemented per relevant domestic laws of the parties.

The same is again repeated in the MoU on the cooperation of the Hungarian-Serbian Railway project between Serbia, China, and Hungary. The standards, laws and regulations of Serbia and Hungary need to be followed in the project.

In the Bilateral Cooperation Plan between Serbia and China under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative, the rule of law norm is present as the parties agree that both sides should observe market rules, international norms, and European regulations. In the same document, the rule of law norm keeps appearing in many variations.

In the original BRI MoU between China and Serbia, the norm of rule of law is apparent in that they agree to observe each other's applicable and effective laws and regulations.

Consensus Oriented Actions, Decision Making, or Language is a minor norm that is not discussed that much in the agreements, but due to the nature of the cooperations being based on mutual free will, they are all based on consensus. The actions within the two countries dealing with each other in relations to the BRI are consensus-based, even if it is not outright written.

In the MoU on the Hungarian-Serbian Railway Project, the parties agree that they will take joint decisions on the development of the plan, showing a norm for consensus-oriented decision-making

Transparency is another norm that is lightly touched upon and not centred in the countries relations.

In the Bilateral Cooperation Plan between Serbia and China under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative, we can see that transparency is lifted as a norm. The two parties state that they will adhere to the Silk Road Spirit of openness.

In the original BRI MoU between China and Serbia, both countries agree that they should work towards the goal of promoting an open (transparent) economic cooperation and development in the region.

Inclusiveness is another minor norm. It is mentioned as a spirit of the silk road, but only discussed once more after that. It is not apparent in the more practical documents.

In the Bilateral Cooperation Plan between Serbia and China under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative, the norm of inclusiveness is raised by the states. The two parties write that they will adhere to the Silk Road Spirit of inclusiveness.

In the original BRI MoU between China and Serbia, both countries agree that they should work towards the goal of promoting inclusive economic cooperation and development in the region.

Accountability is the last common norm that is important. This norm is partly found in the same places as the rule of law norm.

In the Bilateral Cooperation Plan between Serbia and China under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative, the norm of accountability is present. The countries agree that their enterprises should make independent decisions and be responsible for profits and losses at their own risks.

In many of the different documents, the countries also agree to still uphold their responsibilities in existing bilateral and multilateral cooperation mechanisms and regional cooperation platforms.

Government control/planned Economy Practices

One of the most influential norms is the norms on government control or planned economy. A large part of the agreements has components of this. Meaning, the states are promising to intervene in the open market, not adhering to public procurement norms as well as giving companies preferential investment possibilities.

Preferential Investment Possibilities are a norm that is present and visible in the agreements.

In Article 3 of the framework agreement between China and Serbia on production capacity development, the two countries agree on encouraging their financial institutions to provide financing, co-financing, guarantees and long-term insurance for bilateral cooperations in the field of production capacities.

In the Bilateral Cooperation Plan between Serbia and China under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative, the norm of preferential investment possibilities is present. The Chinese side promises to support its enterprises to invest with priority in Serbia's industries, giving them comparative advantages, high-added values, and a good prospect. The two sides will also give

priority to cooperations in equipment manufacturing. The same document also promises a favourable tax environment for cross-border trade and investment.

Government Involvement and Intervention in Steering Businesses is a more visible norm that is also more central in the countries' interactions with each other.

In article 1 of the framework agreement between China and Serbia on production capacity development, the two parties agree on promoting cooperation in the field of production capacity of companies and financial institutions from both their countries.

In article 5 of the same agreement, the two parties also agree on coordinating and promoting priority investment and cooperation projects. They also agree on initiating the establishment of business associations for economic cooperation development as well as supervising the projects being implemented efficiently. In the 2017-2020 program of cooperation in the field of culture and art between Serbia and China, the countries agree that they will create cooperations between publishing houses, associations, TV and radio institutions and companies.

In the Bilateral Cooperation Plan between Serbia and China under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative, the norm of government guidance is apparent when the two parties agree that the government should guide the enterprises. In the same document, the countries agree to encourage their businesses to deepen their cooperation in areas of fossil fuel processing. The Chinese companies are also encouraged to cooperate in the development of green technologies, ICT, food processing, textile and garment, home building materials, electronic and more. China encourages investments in Serbian free trade zones and more similar actions.

Lack of Open Procurement is the last norm. It is available but not too focused upon the norm. The countries bypass public procurement in their dealings with each other at times, prioritising, for example, Chinese companies and products.

In the MoU between the Import-Export Bank of China and The Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure of the Republic of Serbia, we can see that Chinese contractors are getting prioritised when Serbia takes loans from the Chinese bank, going against market economy norms.

In the MoU on the Hungarian-Serbian Railway Project, the parties agree that they will examine all possibilities to utilize Chinese railway technology and equipment in the project, showing a clear preference towards Chinese projects and undermining norms of open procurement.

9.4 Appendix 4 – Interview Questions and Interviews.

9.4.1 Questions

1. Do you think China's actions (agreement writing, official statements, project methodology, diplomacy, etc.) regarding the BRI towards the case country you picked are affected by the EU's internal norms and if so, how?
2. Are there any specific norms that are more prevalent in China's BRI interactions with the case country you picked? If so, which norms?

3. Do you think the internal norms of the European Union are respected by China, in their interactions with European countries, to different extents depending on the country's affiliation to the European Union? Meaning, will EU norms be respected differently depending on if countries are core EU countries like Italy or a relatively new EU country like Latvia or if they are a European non-EU country aiming to join the EU like Serbia?

9.4.2 Interviews

Italy

Interview with Dr Giulio Pugliese 2020-02-07

A lecturer at King's college and Italy- Asia-Pacific expert. Dr Pugliese is based in DC and has discussed the topic of the BRI with Italian diplomats.

Question 1.

Dr Pugliese argues that the Italian government pushed China to include normative language in the BRI documents. Language such as international norms and Asia Connectivity Strategy was included due to the Italian government's efforts, and China was receptive to these efforts. At the time, the Italian government was anti-EU. They were looking for other actors to cooperate with to lessen their reliance on the EU. They needed to triangulate their international relations with other states, such as China.

Italy knew that them joining the BRI would create a backlash, which is the reason that they used the normative language as a cover.

Dr Pugliese means that the Italian BRI MoU was the first MoU that had this kind of normative language while other MoUs were more China-specific.

Dr Pugliese further means that in 2019, China had a lot of pressure from both inside and outside regarding the BRI. In China, there was a lot of scepticism against the BRI, even from elite members of the Communist Party. Elite members thought that the BRI was a waste.

This helped Italy in its negotiations with China, making China scaling the BRI down in relation to Italy and abiding international good practice while Italy joining helped China as Italy became a symbol, and showed that the BRI is something that can be adapted and re-defined if it is needed.

Question 2.

Dr Pugliese further argues that China likes to deal with its BRI counterparts bilaterally. The difference with EU countries contra non-Eu countries is that they can use the EU Framework as a tool in negotiating with China.

Italy used the EU norms as a way to take cover and say no to China without causing damages to the two countries relations.

Dr Pugliese means that the BRI is a lot of symbolism. Joining the BRI through signing an MoU plays up these symbols and gives China recognition in the international space, while Chinese propaganda plays up both countries.

The EU wants China to become a responsible stakeholder in international politics, but the EU also prides itself in its attention to human rights.

This is something that Italy has kept quiet on, not criticising China on Hong Kong and similar issues, partly due to their interest in being a part of the BRI for the economic benefits. Joining the BRI hence entails some self-censorship where the actors will try to please China in the international space.

While the Human rights of China do not directly affect Italy, China's economic behaviour is something Italy cares more about due to it affecting the national interests of Italy. Hence this is something that was focused on. If the standard of the BRI rises, western companies might get the contracts that fulfil sustainability (financial/quality, environmental and social).

Promoting these norms will profit Italy financially, and this is hence one of the reasons they did so in the MoU.

Question 3.

Dr Pugliese means that there is a difference in if you are a part of the EU or if you are outside the EU. Smaller EU countries will be cautious about following the EU's frameworks on trade agreements.

China might have more leverage on Serbia as Serbia is outside the EU and cannot adequately protect itself behind EU norms. Serbia does not have the same economic leverage that EU countries have, which can make it possible for China to exert its will more.

One example of how Serbia is different in the case of the Budapest Railway, where China is a co-funder. The EU was against the project as it did not follow the rules and standards of the EU.

Interview with an Italian Professor 20/02/2020

Another Italy-China expert was interviewed over email due to them being very busy. They asked to have their answers anonymised. The professor is highly accredited and has worked with East Asia issues for a long time.

Question 1.

Yes, they are affected. It is due to the nature of the agreement Italy signed with China. As you know, it was very controversial and, in its final version, the impact has been reduced. I mean the "exception" of Italy signed the MoU (the only G7 country) must have been lowered because of the tension it caused. So, a strong call to the EU's internal norms was, in a sense, obliged. Italy could not do otherwise. Still, it is to be seen if those norms will be fully respected and, more importantly, if the MoU will have any result.

Question 2.

No, there are no specific norms. Maybe the "elasticity" of such norm could be seen, but not in the case of Italy which has with China (and within the EU) a weak negotiation power

Question 3.

Yes, they will be respected at different levels (like the one you highlighted). This is due to two main factors: the pragmatism of China (and its ability to play its cards at different tables) and the division of the EU

Interview with Italian Journalist Ms Giulia Pompili 13/02/2020

Pompili is an Italian journalist working with China questions and is seen as an expert on China-Italy relations and China-Italy BRI interactions. She has contributed to this research with an in-depth background to Italy joining the BRI and some of its developments.

Question 1.

Ms Pompili means that when the MoU was signed, the government was EU sceptic and sceptical on EU norms. The government wanted to build bilateral relations outside of the EU.

Italy started to negotiate about the MoU in 2017, which was before the populist government came to power.

The BRI negotiations were sped up due to pressure from the Leagues and Luigi Di Maio, the now former leader of the Five-Star Movement willingness. Michele Geraci undersecretary of the ministry of economic development and Mr Di Maio sped up the BRI negotiations during the import-export fair in Shanghai. During the meeting, Di Maio and Geraci promised Chinese officials that Italy would join the BRI. When they got back from the expo, the League started being more critical towards the BRI.

March 2019, the date that Italy joined the BRI had already been decided for a state visit for when the MoU and other agreements were going to be signed. Domestic worries appeared about Italy being the first G7 country to join and worries from the Trump administration. Italy said they would not be able to sign the MoU, due to it being too big. This led to China threatening to cancel the state visit, which made Italy decide that they would sign the MoU. If the government would not sign and the state visit would be cancelled, other agreements would be cancelled as well, which is something Italy wanted to avoid.

Italy decided that they would sign the MoU, but that it would have a clear commercial profile and open the doors for other EU countries to join the BRI.

The government tried to calm Italian sceptics and the U.S. by fixing the language to make it more friendly.

During the negotiations, the press was not allowed to participate, undermining transparency norms. The two parties only published the MoU after it was signed.

The president of Italy promised that all strategic sector would not be affected, but this was not held. Telecommunication was included in the agreement, as well as infrastructure.

Italy was not putting forward many demands in the negotiations. The Chinese side dictated the terms, and it was their text. Italy only added the last part where they agree that all decisions that Italy make must be decided within the framework of the EU.

Ms Pompili means that If one read the agreement, everything is profiting the Chinese side while Italian national interests are not apparent.

Italy is the only country that let the minister of economic development sign the MoU. The MoU was discussed in Italian propaganda as a commercial agreement.

Salvini started to push a lot of propaganda against China. He wanted to skip all the official events with China. Salvini started to blame China for Human Rights issues, commercial issues, and trade without common rules.

The League changed their mind on China and the BRI. A considerable delegation from Italy went to Taiwan, and the League used their social network to make the visit public.

The League also raised the Hong Kong issues, but all this was not a result of EU norms, instead of a result of U.S. influence. The League wanted to get closer to the Trump administration.

Question 2

Ms Pompili means that there are no norms that are noticeably more prevalent and that nothing concrete has happened after the signature was done. There have not been any EU norms violated, either.

The only controversial issue is the cooperation on space issues. Italy must build a part of the Chinese space station, which goes against the U.S. will. The technology that Italy has and is to contribute to the space station is from NATO and EU space agency. It is forbidden in norms to do, such as technology exchange. Italy stopped this agreement, meaning Italy do not have to build that part of the space station anymore.

None of the BRI projects has been done yet, in Italy. After the MoU was signed, The U.S. and the E.U. asked Italy to approve a law on limiting foreign direct investment. Golden power-law it is called, and the EU wants Italy to approve it. The government can control foreign direct investment into the strategic infrastructure. This law was approved without the Italian vote. Italy has been asked to adapt the law on a country level, which Italy did. The law was approved.

Ms Pompili means that Italian ports are safe from Chinese investments, as China does not need these ports. The agreements on these were just an advertising campaign from China's side. China understands that Italy is too complicated for them to use the same method as they used in Greece. They cannot use the same method as the ministry of infrastructure is very powerful in local ports.

The MOU was not negotiated by all the stakeholders in Italy. The League, which is the most powerful public opinion party, started an anti-Chinese propaganda campaign, where they

promoted the golden power laws. When this law is enforced, it will influence the next decisions on Chinese Foreign direct investment.

Before the signing of the MoU, Italy discussed with China about China's predatory attitude. The league recognised after signing the MoU that there would be an issue for their alliance with the U.S.

Ms Pompili means that 5G and Human Rights issues are discussed by the leading parties. The discussion is not a deep one; rather, it is a populist one. This resistance against China is not influenced by the EU, as both parties are EU-sceptic, but rather more about the League's admiration for the Trump administration,

Question 3

China foreign policy is wise enough to have different approaches in every country. The project is already weakening, not so strong. China understood that Italy is the sick Child of the EU at the moment of the MoU signing, which made China push for the signing of MoU. A stronger EU foreign policy is the only parachute Italy has.

Serbia

Interview with Dr Dragan Pavlicevic - 12-02-2020

The first Serbian expert that was interviewed was Professor Dragan Pavlicevic, a China – EU relations expert from Serbia.

He teaches at Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University and has done a lot of research on China's international relations.

Question 1.

Professor Pavlicevic means that Serbia usually has to approach projects through transparency. Projects need to go through public procurement - be transparent, bided on, submit interest for, make a case for the project, and so on.

With China, this is not the case. Chinese companies do not have to go through public procurement, as the Chinese government arranges the loans for the companies and fix contracts for the companies. There is no bidding process or transparency. The process of reaching the agreements are not transparent. Hence, Serbia has become one of the major destinations for Chinese FDI in Europe.

Different norms and different regulations do not apply to Chinese state actors like they are to other private actors.

This has led to the EU, putting much pressure on Serbia, to make Serbia change their public procurement procedures towards China. The EU is demanding that Serbia makes these procedures more transparent and more open to foreign competition.

Professor Pavlicevic means that Serbia is facing much pressure, but that it is unclear if the pressure is having any effect.

The Professor further means that China is worried about the discourse on China being a corrupting force in the societies and economies they invest in. China wants to be seen as a responsible actor in the international arena.

China has promised that they will act within EU regulations and norms when acting in the EU.

Professor Pavlicevic also means that Serbia's primary strategic goal is to join the EU, meaning it has to accept and implement EU regulations, laws and norms to be able to do so. They will have to act within these more and more, the closer they get to the EU.

Professor Pavlicevic means that Serbia is experiencing democratic backsliding, where they are moving away from some liberal norms. Serbia is controlling the media, making changes in their high court, having weaker checks and balances, but this has nothing to do with their interactions with China.

Professor Pavlicevic means that China does not care about liberal norms. China's focus lays on Economic exchange and investments, but some of the joint projects China and Serbia are doing might contribute to the backsliding. Serbia is provided with the smart city and digitalisation technologies, giving the data of Serbian citizens to the Serbian government, so that they can control their people like China does.

Pollution from Chinese owned companies and investments have also been seen as significant polluters. The Chinese companies have invested in coal power plants and made investments in making these coal power plants more sustainable, for Serbia to be able to fulfil EU's environmental requirements. One issue is though that even if there have been improvements made, such as creating filter systems, they have in the end not been put to use due to bureaucracy.

Professor Pavlicevic means that it is up to local governments to decide which norms that China has to follow when working in their countries. China does not want to get entangled into projects that are pushing something on a country that they do not want.

China wants to build long-lasting relations with the host countries so they can get more projects from the host government, so they want the host countries to be satisfied with their projects and interactions.

Question 2.

Many projects in Serbia have been done through the state to state interactions. Infrastructure projects have been done through direct negotiations, instead of following the open tender norms. There are fewer restrictions on the projects due to Serbia not being a part of the EU.

Serbia wants to use its flexibility to make it easier for themselves to get funding and projects done.

Question 3.

Some norms and practices are taking place in Serbia – China relations that are different from those that are required by the EU.

EU is imposing its norms and regulations on Serbia, which will in the future prevent Serbia's interactions with China in the way they previously have interacted.

In the future, China must follow the EU's norms when dealing with Serbia, but right now, they can work outside these norms for a while longer.

4. From Italian Professor Pugliese:

when China gave money for the Budapest railway, EU was against it as it would not follow the rules and standards of the EU. Is Serbia trying to comply with EU standards after criticism?

Both Hungary and Serbia have agreed with China on a state to the state level. EU pressed both countries to use the open tender process. Hungary did it this way, but Serbia did not do it. They kept to their agreements with China. The railway is a Serbian project that is funded by Russian and Chinese loans, meaning the EU has less influence over it.

Interview with Dr Ivona Ladjevac – 24/02/2020

Dr Ivona Ladjevac is the Head of Belt and Road Centre at the Institute of International Politics and Economics in Belgrade

The Dr was not able to participate in an oral interview but answered the questions over email.

Question 1.

Although one of the four main Serbian foreign policy goals are accession to the EU, Serbia still is not obliged by internal EU legislation.

That is the most obvious in the foreign policy area considering that Serbia, unlike the EU itself, has high-quality relations not only with China but with Russia too. Despite the EU officials' disagreements Serbia nourishes special connections with given countries and chose to participate in their initiatives. When (it) comes to China, it is (the) Belt and Road, while speaking of Russia it is Eurasian Economic Union.

Question 2.

Since establishing diplomatic relations between two respective countries, that happened about 70 years ago, their relations firstly were built on the international law norms, based on mutual respect for each party and principles of peaceful coexistence.

Guiding line in recent relations remained the same, but with introducing BRI, their relations went even further, meaning that each interaction is dedicated to mutual interests and achieving mutual benefits.

Each of the agreements concluded to realize projects designed within BRI are set along with positive norms and respect the spirit of the law.

Question 3.

China is known as a country that fully respects its international obligations and thus respects the set of international law norms. In cases of dealing with a particular country, China always acts within the legal framework of that respective country. It is not China's manner to make frauds or to play deceiving games. Of course, different countries have different legal systems, and that is what determines the content of relations between China and the given country, but it is always within a set legal framework.

Latvia

In the case of Latvia, there are very few experts present. One of the experts have been away from the office and not responding to our email. Two experts have been willing to participate.

Interview with Dr Una Aleksandra Berzina-Cerenkova - 29/01/2020

Dr Berzina-Cerenkova is one of the few Latvia-China experts in existence. She is the Head of the New Silk Road programme at the Latvian Institute of International Affairs. Her answers were submitted over email.

Question 1.

The agreements contain less Chinese normative discourse than in non-EU cases.

Question 2.

“Shared future for mankind” on the Chinese side. EU norms, such as “level playing field” are also entering the interactions, propagated by the Latvian side.

Question 3.

I believe that the role of the internal EU norms are most visibly respected differently along the EU/non-EU divide, but some differences in China's approach to what it perceives as “CEE” (although strictly speaking the Baltics are not CEE) and non-CEE countries (like Italy) is different, with more respect towards EU normative discourse in the latter case. We will see how it will be in the Greek case.

Interview with EU-China Expert on Latvia - 02/03/2020

This expert stressed their anonymity, and hence we will not discuss any details of who they are. They are an expert in China-EU relations and have studied and worked with the BRI.

The China-EU expert means that Latvia is more active in the 17+1, then they are in the BRI. While Latvia's focus lay on the 17+1 more, Latvia still participates in the BRI Forum and have some agreements concerning the initiative.

Latvia joined the BRI to improve their economic relations with China and bring new opportunities into the country.

In Latvia, the BRI is mostly focused on trade, connectivity, infrastructure, people-to-people exchanges and private investment over classical infrastructure investment projects like the ones in Serbia. Latvia is also strengthening other types of cooperation than financial ones, such as cooperation on cultural and people to people exchanges

There is a comparatively strong Chinese-Latvian cultural exchange going on through the framework of the BRI. Both countries are teaching each other's languages at higher institutions while Latvia also has the only China culture centre in the region.

Joining the BRI has given Latvia a growth in China's activity in the country. Increased small scale trade, improved economic relations as well as large scale trade. The BRI has also given the countries more significant opportunities for the countries to talk, conduct exports, people-to-people exchanges. Compared to other Baltic states, Latvia do not have as many Chinese projects present in the country.

While China is expanding its presence in Latvia, Latvia is still following all the EU's norms. Public tender is present in Latvia as well as other EU norms, even if the language does not have a strong presence.

One example the EU-China expert rose is the Rail Baltic project. It has a few hundred open tender procedures ongoing, and a lot of Chinese companies are interested in the project. Chinese companies have the same rights as all other companies. They are not given any preferential treatment and are following the EU's norms that are adapted. Latvia's internal regulations of how things are done.

The expert also highlights what they call the Latvian mentality on rules and regulations. Latvia is really compliant with the rules and regulations of the EU. Strictly following rules and regulations is something that is rooted in Latvian political or bureaucratic culture. This is a culture related to the German political or bureaucratic culture.

Latvia values their EU membership, meaning they want to stay within the frameworks, regulations and norms of the EU, the expert means.

EU-China Experts

Some EU-China experts were also contacted to get a better overview of EU-China relations related to the BRI.

Interview with Swedish EU-China Expert - 11/02/2020 Swedish

A Swedish EU-China expert who has chosen to remain anonymous with their interview answers. The Expert is a professor and has a history of working in China together with top Chinese universities.

The Swedish expert means that the EU has tried to effect China 3-4 years ago through its Strategic partnership. In the strategic partnership, the EU has tried to effect China through its norms on democracy and Human Rights. The BRI is rather a normative tool for China. It is a tool to spread China's normative power the expert means.

The BRI is a competitor to the EU's normative power, and the expert does not think that the EU can affect China through the BRI. EU is trying to defend against the BRI's normative influence through the EU-Asia connectivity strategy.

Constellations such as the 17+1 and the BRI are challenges to the normative power of the EU. The EU countries that are a part of these constellations have been distancing themselves from the norms of the EU. The EU knows that the BRI has a political and normative undertone, but they are not sure if this is a bad thing for the EU, or if it also could be a good thing.

China is using the BRI to get political support in the International system. EU member countries that are a part of the BRI are helping China in their international relations, in for example blocking EU's protests of China's behaviour in the South China Sea conflict and stopping the EU from acting as a normative power.

With that said, If China is acting within the EU, China needs to follow the EU's legal system and the norms that are within these laws. China needs to adapt to these laws.

Laws on Environmental, social, and economic sustainability need to be adapted.

China does not buy into the notion that the EU is a normative power. Instead, they just see the EU as a power. China has previously, ten years ago, tried to get the EU to support their notion of creating a multi-polar world, with the EU as one of the world poles.

The Swedish expert also raises that China's take on different norms are different from what we define them as. Their definitions of democracy and other liberal norms that are within the EU are defined differently by China than the way the EU defines them.

The Swedish expert also raises that the EU has this year made stricter rules, for who is allowed to join the EU. They are preventing the foreign relations tactics that countries like Serbia are using. Countries like Serbia can no longer play both sides, such as wanting to join the EU while receiving Chinese and Russian contributions (European Commission, 2020).

Another factor that the Swedish expert raise is that when China uses Chinese workers. These workers are not following the host countries laws, such as many Chinese projects in African countries. Environmental norms might have been adapted towards the EU norms, but the expert was not sure if they had actually materialised outside of agreements.

The expert did raise that China is looking to adopt some of the EU's norms of medical and social care. The expert also raised that infrastructure investments are not for free. China wants something in return, and this could be the exchanges of experience, technology, and culture.

Interview with Professor Gerhard Stahl – 23/02/2020

Professor at the Peking University HSBC Business School in Shenzhen in China and a former EU official: Secretary-General of the Committee of the regions of the European Union. He has a background in the national economy.

Professor Stahl was asked early before the BRI was started to participate in some export meetings in Shanghai, where he was to share his experience in the EU. He has followed the BRI from the start.

Professor Stahl means that the initiative has developed over time. At first, it looked far less ambitious and was more focused to link up China to neighbouring countries. Now it has become a catchword for the external dimensions of Chinese initiatives. It is a fairly broad concept.

Among the broad titles of the BRI, one also has concrete projects and activities related to investment projects and development projects, some of which are related to EU countries.

Professor Stahl means that if an EU country wants to have cooperation with Chinese partners, based on the political commitment, one still needs to have an opening tendering procedure if one is to have infrastructure projects or other such agreements.

Competition policies are an essential issue. If you agree in an MoU to give benefits to the Chinese government /companies, this is a typical issue for states. Legislations on environmental issues must be respected as well. There is a difference whether you are an EU member, or not. If you are an EU member, you need to respect the rules of the EU on public procurement and other EU norms.

Professor Stahl also mentioned Serbia's EU negotiations. Serbia needs to adopt 17 chapters of the EU legislation for Serbia to become a member of the EU. Candidate countries might hence follow or prepper to follow EU norms based on wanting to become an EU country.

MoU's must be read and interpreted as political commitments that can only be applied based on the current laws in the country. You can make information campaigns and give access to

some information that, for example, the Chinese actors can use, but they still must participate in procedures like anyone else.

In the EU-China connectivity platform, some experts discuss the different BRI projects. The experts need to decide together that the infrastructure that the projects are aiming to work on needs to be upgraded. Even when this is decided, they still must work within the EU's rules. They cannot legally privilege Chinese companies.

The Hungarian and Italian government signed MoU to show their distance from EU.

If you compare the economic figures, you can see that the EU countries that China works with are still respecting the legal framework and having a market economy mindset about how they get funding.

Italy was a late starter in their cooperation with China relative to other EU countries. Italy wanted to increase their internal mobility by giving Chinese companies a higher profile. In the context of the EU, we cannot make bilateral agreements that promise concrete quantitative objectives about purchases of goods and investments.

Professor Stahl means that a few different EU member states have joined the BRI, but that all they have joined for different reasons. Italy signed for internal policy. The new government that might be a bit less focused on the China issue, but before they wanted to mobilise Chinese public agreements between Italian companies.

Professor Stahl means that the precise nature of general objectives and investment needs to be differentiated. Policy objectives are different from investment.

In the rules of the EU for investments, there might be policy objectives that are the EU norms. Impact assessments for social and environmental impacts are examples of requirements that the EU have for projects, that also contain policy objectives.

BRI does not have an environmental impact assessment, but if China or Chinese actors want to participate in projects in the EU, they need to respect these norms.

Professor Stahl also discussed the normative impact the people-to-people exchange approach and the exchange of information has on China. In the EU-China Connectivity platform, Chinese experts and investors engaged together with EU experts in a training program where they were thought about EU rules and norms. In this platform, there is an exchange of information, which is building up a common understanding between the EU and China. The experts are doing studies together, to get knowledge and common understanding for a common investment project and building up a shared understanding of what economic decisions need to be based on.

Two areas are essential for the EU: Reciprocity in the treatment of EU companies taking part in the BRI financing and how EU financing is handled in projects that use BRI financing as well.

Professor Stahl means that it is essential for the EU that China follows sustainability norms and have a green economic development. Common sustainable development is a goal of the EU.

EU is trying to make the BRI green, and China is a good partner in this, but China has a lot of non-green production and projects as well. Nevertheless, China is committed to making its civilization more ecological.

Serbia is not an EU member state and has its laws. Professor Stahl does not know the laws of Serbia, but he means that they are probably different from the EU framework, but that Serbia is a candidate country to joining the EU. They must show that they can respect the essential EU legislation if they want to become a member of the EU.

In the process of joining the EU, they need to show that they can adapt to the EU's framework and norms.

Professor Stahl means that differences can only be explained by economic and geographic explanations. Not the rules of the game.

Latvia almost being a metropolitan area, not much of a country, can have a bit of flexibility for investments. Latvia can get quicker investment agreements than Italy, that is a larger country with a more complex bureaucracy.

The only difference in how EU countries approach China in a legal sense is based in the country's implementation of the EU laws. The implementation might be different as there is sometimes more or less efficient bureaucracy in different countries of the EU. The differences are mainly in bureaucracy and administrative implementations. The types of interests China have been based on the different economic and geographic situations of the country. Investment in maritime infrastructure is more interesting in some areas

10. Sources

- [1] AFET. (2017). “Serbia’s cooperation with China, the European Union, Russia and the United States of America.” Retrieved 12/03/2020 from <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/133504/Serbia%20cooperation%20with%20China,%20the%20EU,%20Russia%20and%20the%20USA.pdf>
- [2] Allison, L. (2015). “The EU, ASEAN and Interregionalism - Regionalism Support and Norm Diffusion between the EU and ASEAN.” Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke. DOI: 10.1057/9781137494801
- [3] Allison-Reumann, L. (2017). “The Norm-Diffusion Capacity of ASEAN: Evidence and Challenges.” *Pacific Focus*, 32(1). DOI:10.1111/pafo.12089
- [4] BBC. (2014). “EU enlargement: The next seven.” Retrieved 04/10/2019 from <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-11283616>
- [5] Beijing International Studies University., and Institute for Research of Cultural Development, Belgrade. (2016). “Memorandum of Understanding on the Cooperation of National Academic Institutes in Cultural Trade among China and the Institute of Research of Cultural Development.” Belgrade.
- [6] Bialasiewicz, L., Giaccaria, P., Jones, A., and Minca, C. (2012). “Re-scaling ‘Europe: EU macro-regional fantasies in the Mediterranean.” DOI: 10.1177/0969776412463372
- [7] Bird, J., Lebrand, M., and Venables, A. (2019). “The Belt and Road Initiative Reshaping Economic Geography in Central Asia?” Retrieved 17/09/2019 from <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/836301554729486900/pdf/The-Belt-and-Road-Initiative-Reshaping-Economic-Geography-in-Central-Asia.pdf>
- [8] Björkdahl, A. (2013). “Ideas and Norms in Swedish Peace Policy.” *Swiss Political Science Review*, 19(3).
- [9] Brattberg, E., & Soula, E. (2018): “Europe’s Emerging Approach to China’s Belt and Road Initiative.” Retrieved 07/03/2020 from <https://carnegieendowment.org/2018/10/19/europe-s-emerging-approach-to-china-s-belt-and-road-initiative-pub-77536>
- [10] Bonisoli, A., and Shugang, L. (2019). “Ministero per Beni e Le Attivita Culturali. Restituzione Di 796 Reperti Archeologici appartenenti Al Patrimoni Culturale Cinese.” Rome.
- [11] Borgonzoni, L., and Yuzhu, L. (2019). Memorandum Di Intesa fra il Ministero per i Beni e le Attivita Culturali della Repubblica Italiana e l’Amministrazione Nazionale per il Patrimonio Culturale Cinese (NCHA) della Repubblica Popolare Cinese sul Progetto di Gemellaggi Volto alla Promozione, conservazione, conoscenza, valorizzazione e fruizione dei siti italiani e cinesi iscritti nelle Liste del Patrimonio Mondiale dell’Unesco.” Rome.
- [12] Bovis, C. (2012). “Public procurement in the Eu: Jurisprudence and conceptual directions.” *Common Market Law Review* 49(1).
- [13] Björkdahl, A. (2012). “Towards a Reflexive Study of Norms, Norm Diffusion and Identity (Re)construction: The Transformative Power of the Eu in the Western Balkans.” *Canterbury Law Review*, 18
- [14] Björkdahl, A., Chaban, N., Leslie, J., and Masselot, A. (2015). “Importing EU Norms – 2015_Conceptual Framework and Empirical Findings.” DOI: 10.1007/978-3-319-13740-7.

- [15] Brajshori, M. (2019). "A road map for the Kosovo-Serbia dialogue." Retrieved 04/10/2019 from <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/a-road-map-for-the-kosovo-serbia-dialogue/>
- [16] Braniff, M. (2011). "Integrating the Balkans: Conflict Resolution and the Impact of EU Expansion." I.B. Tauris, London.
- [17] Brown, K. (2017). "China's Geopolitical Aims: The Curious Case of the 16-Plus-1". Retrieved 17/09/2019 from <https://thediplomat.com/2017/05/chinas-geopolitical-aims-the-curious-case-of-the-16-plus-1/>
- [18] Bonde, J. (2014). "The EU Treaties - The Readable Version with Notes and Alphabetical Index." Retrieved 17/09/2019 from <http://en.euabc.com/upload/lisbon12616.pdf>
- [19] Börzel, A. T., & Lebanidze, B. (2017). "The transformative power of Europe" beyond enlargement: the EU's performance in promoting democracy in its neighbourhood." *East European Politics*, 33:1, 17-35
- [20] Casarini, N. (2015). "Is Europe to Benefit from China's Belt and Road Initiative?" Retrieved 17/09/2019 from <https://www.iai.it/sites/default/files/iaiw1540.pdf>
- [21] Chatzky, A., and McBride, J. (2019). "China's Massive Belt and Road Initiative." Retrieved 17/09/2019 from <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/chinas-massive-belt-and-road-initiative>
- [22] Checkel, T. J. (1999). "Norms, Institutions, and National Identity in Contemporary Europe." *International Studies Quarterly*, 43(1). Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2600966>
- [23] Checkel, T. J. (2005). "International Institutions and Socialization in Europe: Introduction and Framework." *International Organization*, 59(4).
- [24] CIA World Factbook. (2019). "Italy". Retrieved 03/10/2019 from <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/it.html>
- [25] Comaschi, G. and Decong, Y. (2019). "Gemellaggio tra l'Associazione per il Patrimonio dei Paesaggi Vitivinicoli di Langhe-Roero e Monferrato e l'Associazione "Terrazzamenti del Riso di Honghe Hani" dello Yunnan volto alla promozione della conoscenza, valorizzazione e fruizione dei siti iscritti." Rome.
- [26] Corre, L. P., and Vuksanovic, V. (2019). "Serbia: China's Open Door to the Balkans." Retrieved 04/04/2020 from <https://thediplomat.com/2019/01/serbia-chinas-open-door-to-the-balkans/>
- [27] Ciurtin, H. (2019). "The "16+1" Becomes the "17+1": Greece Joins China's Dwindling Cooperation Framework in Central and Eastern Europe." *China Brief*, 19(10).
- [28] Diez, T. (2013). "Normative power as hegemony." *Cooperation and Conflict*, 48(2). Doi: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0010836713485387>
- [29] Dimitrijević, D. (2017). "Chinese Investments in Serbia—A Joint Pledge for the Future of the New Silk Road." *Baltic Journal of European Studies*, 7(1).
- [30] Ding, Q. (2017). "Latvia pursues new cooperation opportunities with B&R Initiative." Retrieved 02/03/2020 from <http://english.cctv.com/2017/05/17/ARTI50eDwdEXPwpc9PM1fqqP170517.shtml>

- [31] Drisko, J. (2013). "Constructivist research in social work". In R. Fortune, W. Reid, & R. Miller (Eds.), *Qualitative research in social work* (2nd ed., pp. 81–106). New York: Columbia University Press.
- [32] Drisko, J., and Maschi, T. (2015). "Content Analysis." Oxford University Press, New York. DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780190215491.001.0001
- [33] Ericsson, J. (2019). "Building a Railway to Europe: Consequences of Chinese Investment to Serbia's EU-Association Process." (Master Thesis). Lund: Lund University. Retrieved from <http://lup.lub.lu.se/luur/download?func=downloadFile&recordOid=8975873&fileOid=8976118>
- [34] EU. (n.d). "Goals and values of the EU" Retrieved 17/09/2019 from https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/eu-in-brief_en
- [35] EU. (2019). "Countries." Retrieved 17/09/2019 from https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/countries_en
- [36] European Commission. (2016). "Steps towards joining" Retrieved 02/10/2019 from https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/policy/steps-towards-joining_en
- [37] European Commission. (2018). "Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA II) 2014-2020. EU Support for the Environmental Sector." Retrieved 08/03/2020 from https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/2017-040499.05-eu_support_to_the_environment_sector.pdf
- [38] European Commission. (2020). "Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, Enhancing the accession process - A credible EU perspective for the Western Balkans." Retrieved 29/02/20 from https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/enlargement-methodology_en.pdf
- [39] European Council. (2018). "EU trade policy". Retrieved 17/09/2014 from <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/trade-policy/>
- [40] European Court of Auditors. (2014). "EU Pre-accession Assistance to Serbia." Retrieved 12/03/2020 from https://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/SR14_19/QJAB14019ENN.pdf
- [41] European Parliament., The Council., the European Economic and Social Committee., The Committee of the Regions., and The European Investment Bank. (2018). "Connecting Europe and Asia – Building blocks for an EU Strategy." Retrieved 06/10/2019 from https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/joint_communication_-_connecting_europe_and_asia_-_building_blocks_for_an_eu_strategy_2018-09-19.pdf
- [42] Gaens, B. (2018). "Europe's Connectivity Strategy and the Challenge of China. Rivalry, Reciprocity, or Both?" FIIA Comment, 22. Retrieved 09/10/2019 from <https://www.fiaa.fi/en/publication/europes-connectivity-strategy-and-the-challenge-of-china?read>
- [43] Ghossein, T., Hoekman, B., and Shingal, A. (2018). "Public Procurement in the Belt and Road Initiative." Retrieved 04/03/2020 from <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/143241544213097139/pdf/132786-MTI-Discussion-Paper-10-Final.pdf>

- [44] Geraci, M. (2019). "Italy will secure its place on the new Silk Road." Retrieved 04/04/2020 from <https://www.ft.com/content/137cbab8-4b21-11e9-bde6-79eaea5acb64>
- [45] Government of the Republic of Latvia., and Government of the People's Republic of China. (2015). "Memorandum of Understanding Between the Government of the Republic of Latvia and the Government of the People's Republic of China on Cooperation Within the Framework of the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road Initiative." Riga.
- [46] Graca, Z. P. (2019). "Let's Talk about the Swiss Approach to the European Union." Retrieved 03/10/2019 from <https://intpolicydigest.org/2019/04/15/let-s-talk-about-the-swiss-approach-to-the-european-union/>
- [47] Greenhill, B. (2010). "The Company You Keep: International Socialization and the Diffusion of Human Rights Norms." *International Studies Quarterly*, 54.
- [48] Grillo, G., and Ruiyu, L. (2019a). "Protocol Between the Ministry of Health of the Italian Republic and the General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China on Health Requirements for Bovine Semen to be Exported from Italy to China." Rome.
- [49] Grillo, G., and Ruiyu, L. (2019b). "Plan of Action on Health Cooperation Between the Ministry of Health of the Italian Republic and the National Health Commission of the People's Republic of China Plan of Action for the Years 2019-2021." Rome
- [50] Grillo, G., and Ruiyu, L. (2019c). "Protocol Between the Ministry of Health of the Italian Republic and the General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China on Inspection, Quarantine and Veterinary Sanitary Requirements for Frozen Pork to Be Exported from Italy to China." Rome.
- [51] Jepperson, R., Wendt, A., and Katzenstein, P. (1996). "Norms, Identity and Culture in National Security". in Katzenstein, ed., *The Culture of National Security*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- [52] Johnston, I. A. (2008). "Social States - China in International Institutions, 1980-2000" Princeton University Press: New Jersey.
- [53] Johnston, M. (2019). "How the Bretton Woods System Changed the World". Retrieved 17/09/2019 <https://www.investopedia.com/articles/forex/122215/bretton-woods-system-how-it-changed-world.asp>
- [54] Information Office of the State Council: The People's Republic of China. (2011). "China's Peaceful Development." Retrieved 04/03/2020 from http://english.www.gov.cn/archive/white_paper/2014/09/09/content_281474986284646.htm
- [55] Ingebritsen, C. (2002). "Norm Entrepreneurs - Scandinavia's Role in World Politics." *Cooperation and Conflict*, 37(1).
- [56] Italian Republic, and the People's Republic of China. (2019). "Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation Within the Framework of the Silk Road Economic Belt and Road And the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road Initiative." Retrieved 04/10/2019 from http://www.governo.it/sites/governo.it/files/Memorandum_Italia-Cina_EN.pdf
- [57] Kavalski, E. (2019). "China's "16+1" Is Dead? Long Live the "17+1."". Retrieved 17/09/2019 from <https://thediplomat.com/2019/03/chinas-161-is-dead-long-live-the-171/>

- [58] Knezevic, G., Bulatovic., D., and Zhou, X. (2019). “Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Republic of Serbia, the City of Nish and the entity “Xingyu Automotive Lighting Systems Co LTD.” Niš.
- [59] Kols, H. (2017). “China’s Belt and Road Initiative from Latvia’s perspective.” Retrieved 14/11/2019 from https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/opinion/2017beltandroad/2017-05/31/content_29562231.htm
- [60] Kopinski, D., Polus, A., & Taylor, I. (2012). “China’s Rise in Africa – Perspectives on a Developing Connection.” Oxon, Routledge.
- [61] Kronsell, A. (2002). “Can Small States Influence EU Norms?: Insights From Sweden's Participation in the Field of Environmental Politics.” *Scandinavian Studies*, 74(3).
- [62] Kynge, J., and Peel, M. (2017). “Brussels rattled as China reaches out to eastern Europe.” Retrieved 08/03/2020 from <https://www.ft.com/content/16abfb2a-cf9b-11e7-9dbb-291a884dd8c6>
- [63] Latvijas Republikas Kulturas ministrijas varda., and Kinas Tautas Republikas Kulturas ministrijas varda. (2015). ”Latvijas Republikas Kulturas ministrijas un Kinas Tautas Republikas Kulturas ministrijas kulturas apmainas programma 2016-2020. Gadam.” Riga.
- [64] Latvijas Republikas Veselibas Ministrijas Varda., and Kinas Tautas Republikas Nacionalas Veselibas un Gimenes Planosanas Komisijas Varda. (2017). “Latvijas Republikas Veselibas Ministrijas un Kinas Tautas Republikas Nacionalas Veselibas un Gimenes Planosanas komisijas Ricibas Plans Par Sadarbibu Vasselibas Joma 2017-2020. Gada.” Budapest.
- [65] Lau, S. (2019). “Italy may be ready to open up four ports to Chinese investment under ‘Belt and Road Initiative’.” Retrieved 03/10/2019 from <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3002305/italy-may-be-ready-open-four-ports-chinese-investment-under>
- [66] Lee, A. (2018). “Can Chinese state firms compete fairly? Beijing claims ‘competitive neutrality’.” Retrieved 04/03/2020 from <https://www.scmp.com/economy/china-economy/article/2168676/can-chinese-state-firms-compete-fairly-beijing-claims>
- [67] Lewis, J. (2011). “EU Policy on the Iraq War and its Aftermath: The Breakdown and Revival of Consensus-based Decision-making.” In (Ed) Thomas, C., D. (2011). “Making EU Foreign Policy National Preferences, European Norms and Common Policies” DOI: 10.1057/9780230307360.
- [68] Li, D., and Han, M. (2019). “China’s Belt and Road Is Getting a Reboot. Here’s Why” Retrieved 17/09/2019 from <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-08-14/china-s-belt-and-road-is-getting-a-reboot-here-s-why-quicktake>
- [69] Liangyu. (2018). “Xi meets Latvian president.” Retrieved 01/10/2019 from http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-09/18/c_137477015.htm
- [70] Lilyanova, V. (2018). “Montenegro – a lead candidate for EU accession.” Retrieved 21/05/2020 from <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/EPRS/EPRS-AaG-628238-Montenegro-lead-candidate-for-EU-accession-FINAL.pdf>
- [71] Manners, I. (2002). “Normative Power Europe: A contradiction in terms?” *JCMS*, 2.

- [72] McBride, J. (2019). "How Does the European Union Work?" Retrieved 01/03/2020 from <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/how-does-european-union-work>
- [73] Mihajlovic, Z., Lixin, X., Najafov, F. (2019). "Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation for the realization of the Project: Belgrade Bypass Project Construction of the Highway E70/E75 and Freight Railway: Section Bubanj Potok-Pancevo (Section C)." Beijing.
- [74] Mihajlovic, Z., and Rougu, L. (2014). "Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation of the Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure of the Republic of Serbia and the Import-Export Bank of China" Belgrade.
- [75] Ministry of Foreign Affairs., & Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China. (2015). "Action plan on the Belt and Road Initiative". Retrieved 17/09/2019 http://english.www.gov.cn/archive/publications/2015/03/30/content_281475080249035.htm
- [76] Mitovic, D. (2019). "Six Years of '16+1' Framework of Cooperation – in Between EU, Expectations and Limitations." *Global Economic Observer*, 7(1).
- [77] Mulder, J. (2019). "(Re) Conceptualising a Social Market Economy for the EU Internal Market." *Utrecht Law Review*, 15(2). DOI: <http://doi.org/10.18352/ulr.508>
- [78] National Development and Reform Commission the People's Republic of China. (2015). "Vision and Actions on Jointly Building Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road." Retrieved 02/10/2019 from http://en.ndrc.gov.cn/newsrelease/201503/t20150330_669367.html
- [79] Ohashi, H. (2019). "The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in the context of China's opening-up policy" *East Asia Studies*, 7(2). DOI: 10.1080/24761028.2018.1564615
- [80] Park, S. (2006). "Theorizing Norm Diffusion Within International Organizations" Retrieved 17/09/2019 from link.springer.com/article/10.1057%2Fpalgrave.ip.8800149
- [81] Park, S. (2014). "Socialisation and the Liberal Order." *International Politics*, 51(3).
- [82] Panizza, R. (2019). "The Treaty of Lisbon." Retrieved 17/09/2019 from <http://europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/5/the-treaty-of-lisbon>
- [83] Panizza, R. (2019a). "Transparency, integrity and accountability in the EU institutions." Retrieved 01/10/2019 from [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2019/608873/IPOL_BRI\(2019\)608873_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2019/608873/IPOL_BRI(2019)608873_EN.pdf)
- [84] Peel, M., and Brunsten, J. (2019). "Brussels ramps up criticism of China's investment strategy in EU." Retrieved 07/03/2020 from <https://www.ft.com/content/0693f57c-44d3-11e9-b168-96a37d002cd3>
- [85] Peel, M. and Hornby, L. (2019). "China pledges open Belt and Road but west is split on project." Retrieved 06/10/2019 from <https://www.ft.com/content/b10359ce-669f-11e9-9adc-98bf1d35a056>
- [86] Pei, M. (2019). "Will China let Belt and Road die quietly? Xi's global investment program faces domestic criticism amid economic and fiscal worries." Retrieved 04/04/2020 from <https://asia.nikkei.com/Opinion/Will-China-let-Belt-and-Road-die-quietly>

- [87] Pendrakowska, P. (2017). "Belt and Road Initiative and "16+1" Challenges for Poland and CEEC." Retrieved 14/11/2019 from <https://www.iim.ftn.uns.ac.rs/is17/papers/91.pdf>
- [88] Per il Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali della Repubblica Italiana., and Per l'Amministrazione per il Patrimonio Culturale della Repubblica Popolare di Cina. "Memorandum d'Intesa Tra il Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali della Repubblica Italiana e l'amministrazione Nazionale per il Patrimonio Culturale della Repubblica Popolare Cinese (NCHA) sulla prevenzione dei furti, degli scavi clandestini, importazione, esportazione, traffico e transito illecito di beni culturali e sulla promozione della loro restituzione." Rome.
- [89] Pisonero- Hernandez, A., and Smerilli, A. (2020). "Commission welcomes the green light to opening of accession talks with Albania and North Macedonia." Retrieved 21/05/2020 from https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_20_519
- [90] Poggetti, L. (2019). "Italy's BRI blunder." Retrieved 04/04/2020 from <https://www.ejinsight.com/eji/article/id/2088609/20190322-italys-bri-blunder>
- [91] Pu, X. (2012). "Socialisation as a Two-way Process: Emerging Powers and the Diffusion of International Norms." *The Chinese Journal of International Politics*, 5(4). DOI: doi.org/10.1093/cjip/pos017
- [92] Repubblica Italiana., and Repubblica Popolare Cinese. (2019). "Comunicato Congiunto Tra La Repubblica Italiana E La Repubblica Popolare Cinese Sul Rafforzamento Del Partenariato Strategico Globale." Rome.
- [93] Republic of Latvia & People's Republic of China. (2019). "Memorandum of Understanding Between the Government of the Republic of Latvia and the Government of the People's Republic of China on Cooperation Within the Framework of The Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road Initiative." Retrieved 01/10/2019 from http://tap.mk.gov.lv/doc/2016_11/AM_MoU_EN_20161024.2386.docx
- [94] Ring, J. (2014). "The diffusion of norms in the international system" Retrieved 17/09/2019 from <https://ir.uiowa.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=5425&context=etd>
- [95] Rizzi, C. (2018). "Relations between China and Italy: The Development of Diplomatic Ties and the Impact of the B&R Initiative and a Brief Overview on the EU and Italian Rules Regulating Public Works." Retrieved 02/10/2019 from https://www.worldscientific.com/doi/abs/10.1142/9789813239548_0008
- [96] Savorskaya, E. (2015). "The Concept of the European Union's Normative Power." *Baltic region*, 4(26). DOI: 10.5922/2079-8555-2015-4-5
- [97] Sboarina, F. and Chengchao, M. (2019). "Patto di gemellaggio tra la Città di Verona e la Città di Hangzhou per la promozione della conoscenza, valorizzazione e fruizione dei rispettivi siti iscritti nelle Liste del Patrimonio Mondiale dell'Unesco." Rome.
- [98] Sefcovic, M. (2019). "Speech by European Vice-President Maros Sefcovic at the 2nd Belt & Road Forum on 26 April 2019." Retrieved 01/10/2019 from https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/china/61569/speech-european-vice-president-maros-sefcovic-2nd-belt-road-forum-26-april-2019_en

- [99] Selga, M., and Baosheng, C. (2017). “Agreement Between the Government of the Republic of Latvia and the Government of the People's Republic of China on Cooperations the Field of Education.” Beijing.
- [100] Selga, M., and Zhigang, W. (2018). “Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Latvia and the Government of the People's Republic of China on Cooperation in the field of Science and Technology.” Beijing.
- [101] Sequi, E. and Ruiyu, L. (2019). “Memorandum of Understanding Between The Ministry of Health of the Italian Republic and the General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China on Cooperation in the Field of Frontier Health Quarantine.” Beijing.
- [102] Shaoshi, X., Szijjártó, P., and Zorana Mihajlović, Z. (2014). “Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation of the Hungarian-Serbian Railway Project between the National Development and Reform Commission of the People's Republic of China and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary and the Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure of the Republic of Serbia.” Belgrade.
- [103] Sjursen, H. (2006). “The EU as a ‘Normative’ Power: How can this be?.” *Journal of European Public Policy*, 13(2). DOI: 10.1080/13501760500451667
- [104] Skolimowska, A. (2015). “The European Union as a ‘Normative Power’ in International Relations. Theoretical and Empirical Challenges.” *Yearbook of Polish European Studies*, 18.
- [105] Smith, M. J., and Loon, F. (2019). “Xi Goes to Rome: Course-Correction for China's Belt and Road Initiative?” Retrieved 04/04/2020 from <https://thediplomat.com/2019/05/xi-goes-to-rome-course-correction-for-chinas-belt-and-road-initiative/>
- [106] Speranza, R., and Xiaowei, M. (2019). “Implementation Programme of the Plan of Action for the Years 2019-2021 on Health Cooperation Between the Ministry of Health of the Italian Republic and the National Health Commission of the People's Republic of China.” Rome.
- [107] Stan, L. (2010). “Content analysis.” In Mills, A. J. Durepos, G. and Wiebe, E. (Eds.), *Encyclopaedia of case study research*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications. DOI: 10.4135/9781412957397.n85
- [108] State Audit Institution. (2012). “The Importance of Financial Accountability of the Serbian Authorities.” Retrieved 13/03/2020 from <https://www.dri.rs/media/The-Importance-of-Financial-Accountability-of-the-Serbian-Authorities.n-79.212.html>
- [109] Stephens, T. (2019). “Swiss president defends controversial Chinese project” Retrieved 17/09/2019 from <https://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/belt-and-road-initiative-ueli-maurer-china-xi-jinping/44922120>
- [110] Surk, B. (2017). “As China Moves In, Serbia Reaps Benefits, With Strings Attached.” Retrieved 04/10/2019 from <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/09/world/europe/china-serbia-european-union.html>
- [111] Swiss Director of European Affairs. (2019). “Switzerland European Policy – Overview.” Retrieved 17/09/2019 from <https://www.eda.admin.ch/dea/en/home/europapolitik/ueberblick.html>

[112] The Chinese Cultural Heritage Academy., and The Provincial Bureau of the Protection of Cultural Monuments Serbia. (2018). “Оквирни Споразум Између Кинеске Академије За Културно Наслеђе И Покрајинског Завода За Заштиту Споменика Културе – Петроварадин О Номинацији Историјског Места Бач Са Окружењем.” Belgrade.

[113] The European Commission. (2016). “Steps towards joining.” Retrieved 14/03/2020 from https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/policy/steps-towards-joining_en

[114] The Government of the Italian Republic., and The Government of the People’s Republic of China. (2019). “Memorandum of Understanding Between the Government of the Italian Republic and the Government of the People’s Republic of China on Cooperation Within the Framework of the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road Initiative.” Rome.

[115] The Government of the Republic of Serbia., and the Government of the People’s Republic of China, (2015). “Memorandum of Understanding Between the Government of the Republic of Serbia and The Government of the People’s Republic of China on jointly promoting the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road Initiative.” Belgrade.

[116] The Government of the Republic of Serbia., and the Government of the People’s Republic of China. (2019). “Bilateral Cooperation Plan between the Government of the Republic of Serbia and the Government of the People’s Republic of China under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative.” Belgrade.

[117] The Ministry of Agriculture, Food, Forestry and Tourism of the Italian Republic., and For the General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China. (2019). “Protocollo sui requisiti fitosanitari per l’exportazione di agrumi freschi dall’Italia alla Cina tra il Ministero delle Politiche Agricole, Alimentari, Forestali e del Turismo della Repubblica Italiana e l’Amministrazione Generale delle Dogane della Repubblica Popolare Cinese.” Rome.

[118] The Ministry of Culture and Information of the Republic of Serbia and the Ministry of Culture of the People’s Republic of China. (2017). “Програм Сарадње У Области Културе И Уметности Између Министарства Културе И Информисања Републике Србије И Министарства Културе Народне Републике Кине За Период 2017 – 2020. Године.” Belgrade

[119] The Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Serbia., and National Development and Reform Commission of the People’s Republic of China. (2016). “Framework Agreement between The Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Serbia and the National Development and Reform Commission of the People’s Republic of China In respect of Developing cooperation in the field of production capacities.” Belgrade

[120] The Ministry of Foreign and Internal Trade and Telecommunication (MTT) of the Republic of Serbia., and The Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT) of the People’s Republic of China. (2013). “Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Foreign and Internal Trade and Telecommunication (MTT) of the Republic of Serbia and The Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT) of the People’s Republic of China on Cooperation on Information and Communication Technologies.” Belgrade.

[121] The Port System Authority of the Eastern Adriatic Sea., Ports of Trieste., and China Communications Construction Company. “Accordo Di Cooperazione Fra Autorita’ Di Sistema Portuale Del Mare Adriatico Orientale – Porti Di Trieste E Monfalcone E China Communications Construction Company.” Rome.

- [122] Toussaint, E. (2011). "Core vs Periphery in the EU." Retrieved 02/10/2019 from <http://www.cadtm.org/Core-vs-Periphery-in-the-EU>
- [123] Valditara, G., and Ruiyu, L. (2019). "Memorandum d'Intesa tra Il Ministero dell'Istruzione, Universita e Ricerca della Repubblica Italiana e Il Ministero della Scienza e Tecnologia della Repubblica Popolare Cinese sul Rafforzamento della Cooperazione sulla Scienza, Tecnologia e Innovazione." Rome.
- [124] Van Esch, F. and de Jong, E. (2019). "National culture trumps EU socialization: the European central bankers' views of the euro crisis." *Journal of European Public Policy*, 26(2). DOI: 10.1080/13501763.2017.1391862
- [125] Vangeli, A. (2017). "China's Engagement with the Sixteen Countries of Central, East and Southeast Europe under the Belt and Road Initiative." *China & World Economy*, 25(5). DOI:10.1111/cwe.12216
- [126] Vujovic, D., and Ruogu, L. (2014). "Preferential Buyer Credit Loan Agreement on Phase II of the Package Project Kostolac-B Power Plant Project." Belgrade.
- [127] Voldiņš, S., and Melbarde, D. (2017). "Agreement Between the Government of the Republic of Latvia and the Government of the People's Republic of China on Cooperation in the Field of Culture." Riga.
- [128] Wendt, A. (1992). "Anarchy is what States Make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics." *International Organization*, 46(2).
- [129] Wendt, A. (1999). "Social theory of international politics." Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [130] Wiener, A. (2004). "Contested Compliance: Interventions on the Normative Structure of World Politics." *European Journal of International Relations*, 10(2).
- [131] Xinshou, Z., and Tria, G. (2019). "中华人民共和国政府和意大利共和国政府对所得消除双重征税和防止逃避税的协定." Rome.
- [132] Yongqi, H., and Qing Yun, W. (2016). "Latvia becomes first to link with Belt and Road Initiative in Baltic Sea area." Retrieved 01/03/2020 from https://europe.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2016-11/04/content_27280715.htm
- [133] Zeng, J. (2017). "Does Europe Matter? The Role of Europe in Chinese Narratives of "One Belt One Road" and "New Type of Great Power Relations." *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, 55(5). DOI:10.1111/jcms.12535
- [134] Zhao, M. (2016). "The Belt and Road Initiative and its Implications for China-Europe Relations." *The International Spectator*, 51(4). DOI:10.1080/03932729.2016.1235819
- [135] Zuokui, L. (2016). "Europe and the "Belt and Road" Initiative: Responses and Risks." Retrieved 02/03/2020 from <http://ies.cass.cn/english/wp/201707/P020170719588711365580.pdf>

11. Acknowledgements

The journey which for now ends with this dissertation has been long and hard. A large variety of academics and professionals have contributed to me accomplishing this achievement. Only some of them have directly impacted this dissertation itself, whom I will thank in this section of the dissertation, while others, who have given me the skills, inspiration, and energy to finish writing my dissertation, I would like to sincerely thank now. You are too many to be listed here.

I wish to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor Professor Andreas Ghiselli for being my guide during this challenging year of academic exploration. When I have been lost, you have shown me in the right direction. You shed light over the theoretical glasses and methodological tools I needed to approach this topic in a meaningful way while challenging me to become a better scholar. You punctured holes in my misconceptions, and through your criticism and feedback, I managed to make this dissertation into what it is today. When you could not assist me, you instead showed me the way to others that could, which I am grateful for. I cannot thank you enough for giving me your patience, friendliness, experience, and knowledge when I needed it.

While my supervisor might not always have known about my thematic subject, his friend and colleague Professor Anastas Vangeli, among other things, helped me get a better understanding of the countries in Central and Eastern Europe. His feedback and advice were precious to my work and understanding of the topic of this thesis. I wish to express my sincerest gratitude for the help you provided me.

I wish to also express my gratitude to Dr. Jessica Giandomenico, who through her advice and insight, helped me better understand methodological and structural issues regarding the thesis. Our discussions helped me better understand my methods and the dissertation writing process. Thank you for your support and for being a source of inspiration.

I would also like to thank Professor Wu Chengqiu, Professor Zuo Cai, Professor Wang Zhengxu, Professor Qingjie Zeng, Professor Zhao Jianzhi, Professor Bo Yan, and Professor Adrian Hyde-Price for reviewing my dissertation and for the subsequent criticism and feedback. You helped elevate the quality of my research by casting new eyes on it when mine were tired.

To write this dissertation, I have needed a lot of insight and data which I would have been unable to procure on my own. A large group of people have taken some time out of their busy schedules and helped me with this, for which I am grateful.

I am grateful for the insight into the reasoning and interests of Italy that Dr. Giulio Pugliese provided me. The knowledge and insight he acquired through conversations with Italian officials and his research and passed on to me through our interview, has greatly assisted some of the conclusions I have reached in this research. For this, I am very grateful.

I wish to show my gratitude to Ms. Giulia Pompili for the in-depth empirical understanding she provided me during our interview. She gave me insights and analysis that would otherwise have been hard for me to get due to language barriers and lack of experience in Italian politics.

I would also like to express my deepest gratitude to Professor Dragan Pavlicevic for our intriguing interview and Dr. Ivona Ladjevac for answering my questions. You have both given me great insight into the perspective of the Serbian government, strategies, and local conditions. Your knowledge and experience assisted me in understanding the interactions between Serbia,

China, and the EU. Your perspective gave depth to my data and helped me find new angles to look at the topic.

As one of the leading (and very few) experts on Latvia-China relations, the input and advice from Dr. Una Bērziņa-Čerenkova were also precious to my study. I whole-heartedly appreciate the great advice you provided me and the insight you gave me, resulting in a lot of saved time and greater insight into Latvia.

Talking with experts outside your field can be very valuable, and my conversation with Professor Gerhard Stahl proved this. I wish to express my deepest gratitude to Professor Stahl for the economic and legal insight you gave me concerning EU laws, practices, and regulations. Your perspective increased the quality of my dissertation.

If you have read the dissertation, you have noticed some interviewees have chosen to be anonymous for various reasons. I would like to pay my special regards to these people and thank them for entrusting me with your insights and inputs despite the sensitivity of some topics. Your help and contribution have been greatly appreciated as it has given unique insights and analysis.

Some government officials also took time to provide me with some valuable data which otherwise would not have been accessible to me.

State Secretary Milun Trivunac was of great help and provided me with documents concerning Serbia for which I am very grateful.

Ms. Jelena Bratonožić from the Department for International Relations and European Integration of Serbia gave me access to some of the key documents in this study. Without their help, I would not have been able to get an insight into how time might have changed the normative focus.

Ms. Francesca Riccio from the ministry of culture and tourism of Italy also has my gratitude for providing me with the cultural documents I had long sought after. They provided me with good empirical insight.

While some were unable to provide me with assistance themselves, they referred me to other people. I would especially like to thank Mr. Ardian Hackaj for giving me good references in Serbia, and Dr. Nicola Casarini providing me with good recommendations and contact information to some of the Italian experts I interviewed.

Program Manager of the Nordic Centre Magnus Jorem also gave good advice during the initial phases of the thesis writing for which I am grateful. The Nordic Centre was an oasis of calm and familiarity in the busy city of Shanghai. Having such a place to study at was greatly appreciated.

I would also like to recognize the invaluable administrative and procedural assistance that especially Mr. Dong Jili from Fudan University provided me during the dissertation writing process. I am also grateful towards Ms. Karin Andersson from the University of Gothenburg for her assistance.

I would like to express my appreciation to my friend and mentor/boss Hanna Linderstål for always being an inspiration. Your energy and passion have energized me when I felt excused.

The ideas we discuss gave me a future to look forward to, to get past the hard challenges that came with the dissertation.

Finally, I am forever grateful and, in your debt, my dear mother, Manijeh Abbasi, who has always supported me throughout all my endeavours and dreams. Your strength has always been an inspiration. Your everlasting love and support have been a pillar of strength in my life and throughout the writing of this dissertation. To my stepfather Hamid Zarghampour I am also forever grateful for the support you have shown me and effort you put into trying to help me. Discussing ideas and issues together with you is always something that inspires and engages me. Your assistance in the initial phases of this dissertation was of great help, and I am very thankful for your assistance.

Finally, without the support from my partner Veronika Österberg, I would never have been able to work as hard and tireless as I did. Her support kept me going day in and day out. Her love and care, even from afar, gave me happiness and motivation. For this, I am forever grateful and hope to give you the same joy, love, and support whenever you need it in life.

12. Declaration of Originality and Licensing Agreement

论文独创性声明

本论文是我个人在导师指导下进行的研究工作及取得的研究成果。论文中除了特别加以标注和致谢的地方外，不包含其他人或其它机构已经发表或撰写过的研究成果。其他同志对本研究的启发和所做的贡献均已在论文中作了明确的声明并表示了谢意。

作者签名: Saman Nazari 日期: 06/06/2020

论文使用授权声明

本人完全了解复旦大学有关保留、使用学位论文的规定，即：学校有权保留送交论文的复印件，允许论文被查阅和借阅；学校可以公布论文的全部或部分内容，可以采用影印、缩印或其它复制手段保存论文。保密的论文在解密后遵守此规定。

作者签名: Saman Nazari 导师签名: Andriy 日期: 06/06/2020