

Garnet Research Statement

The EU as a normative catalyst: a comparative analysis of the EU influence on Member States domestic and foreign human rights policies

This research proposal puts to a test the hypothesis that the EU plays an important role not just in promoting international norms outside its borders, as it has been amply argued by the Normative Power Europe (NPE) approach, but also in shaping its Member States foreign policies according to such norms.

This assumption is tested by a comparative analysis of the EU internal (Section 1) and external (Section 2) human rights policies, which will provide the theoretical tools and qualitative indicators to frame the critical study of the EU and Member States policies towards China in the field of human rights (Section 3).

The comparative analysis finds its *raison d'être* in the fact that the EU influence on Member States domestic human rights policies has been amply studied by 'integrationist' as well as legal scholars of the European Union, while scholars of European foreign policy have paid little attention to the EU influence on Member States foreign policies in the field of human rights.

For these reasons this research project will review and critically discuss the main theories put forward to explain the constitutionalization of human rights in the EU and the latter influence on Member States internal policies. These theories will then be applied to the study of the EU influence on Member States foreign policies in the field of human rights and their validity will be assessed in order to develop an appropriate explanatory model.

The comparative analysis will also serve the purpose of highlighting the actors (states, institutions, European Court of Justice, national courts, non state actors etc...), motives (ideational and material), and mechanisms (treaties, conventions, jurisprudence, regulations and directives, petitions etc...) of influence between the EU and its Member States in order to compare and contrast the internal and external dimensions.

Eventually, the data gathered through a previous fieldwork in China and interviews to be carried out in Brussels with EU and Member States officials will provide the case study to apply the explanatory model developed in this research project and test the level of influence of the EU on Member States' policies towards China in the field of human rights.