Europe and China in Africa: Security and Development Implications

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This paper represents the early stages of a new project that explores Sino-EU cooperation and competition on the African continent. Existing literature which explores China's growing influence in Africa has been characterised by an exclusive focus on China's policies vis-à-vis Africa, and has been frequently undergirded by a growing anxiety that Western influence is in danger of being undermined. This paper seeks to problematise these assumptions by exploring whether the EU and China, who both aspire to attain a 'responsible' identity in the international community, may cooperate in their respective development and security policies towards the African continent. The main focus of the paper is on how the EU has attempted to influence Chinese development aid policies towards Africa. In this paper, I argue that China's quest for recognition as a 'responsible great power' has made it susceptible to Western pressure to alter its 'irresponsible' aid policies. I explore the degree to which the EU has acted as a 'socialiser' in getting Beijing to accept and internalise international norms that govern developmental aid, as well as the limitations to the EU's influence. The paper also makes a contribution to its field by generating implications for understanding the moral authority the EU possesses in the Asia-Pacific region (usually seen as a sphere of American influence and strategic interest) and the 'target audience' for China's quest for recognition as a 'responsible great power'.