

Abstract

This Ph.D. thesis analyses three EU norm promotion endeavours in the field of security, human rights and education. In doing so, it compares implementation levels in three Central Asian countries (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan), which allows it to draw comparisons on norm adoption rates. The objective of this analysis is to identify the factors influencing norm adoption rates and test Levitsky and Way's linkage, leverage and organisational power model in the Central Asian context, which harbours a range of regime types.

By applying this model to the case of EU-Central Asian relations, this thesis contributes to the field of Central Asian and European Union Studies. Moreover, it sheds light on the forces behind norm adoption, thereby reflecting on the Europeanisation of countries beyond the direct neighbourhood. This is important as Levitsky and Way originally omitted Central Asia from their analysis and thus no data was available for a region which remains largely neglected by Western scholarship. This thesis has remedied this shortcoming by carrying out an in-depth analysis of the case studies in the framework of Levitsky and Way's model.

This thesis' findings support the main premise of Levitsky and Way's model but stress the importance of organisational power in the norm implementation process. It discovers that while norm adoption rates correlate with high linkage and leverage levels, these factors cannot account for the implementation of norms alone. Organisational power shapes the state's ability to carry out norm adoption processes and ultimately determines implementation rates.

Thus, in order to ensure greater norm adoption beyond the accession states, weak countries should be supported in the strengthening of their organisational power, provided that they have shown themselves to be of a liberal nature. This will allow to reap better norm adoption rates across a spectrum of norms. In contrast, the EU should focus on raising linkage rates with authoritarian regimes in order to pave the way for greater goodwill and openness to normative cooperation.