

Chapter 10

Does the EU act as Normative Power?

Editors' Introduction

For centuries, states were the main actors on the global stage. International organisations and supranational institutions such as the EU were seen as little else but instruments in the hands of powerful governments and their constituents. Thus, it is not surprising that few commentators cared to think about the EU as global actor during the early decades of European integration. Events in the early 1990s changed all this. The end of the Cold War removed the umbrella of bipolar superpower rivalry under which the Europeans were able to hide. The Maastricht treaty institutionalised a common foreign and security policy as part of the EU, and the bloody break-up of Yugoslavia brought home the need for common approaches to many pressing international issues which were beyond the problem-solving capacity of single member states. In more and more areas, ranging from foreign trade to development aid, environmental diplomacy, human rights policy, financial regulation, energy issues, and so on, the European Union became an international actor on its own right (Bretherton and Vogler, 2006). Debates in the 1970s and 1980s on whether the EU should be seen as an independent actor on the world stage petered out. Now the focus is on the issue of what kind of an actor the EU is. Does it act increasingly like a traditional state with similar means and ends or does it constitute something entirely new?

*Already after the first attempts of the Europeans to coordinate their foreign policies in the quite inefficient EPC (European Political Cooperation) framework, some authors speculated that the then European Communities would not only become a new type of actor but that it would behave in a different way, namely as a so-called civilian power (Duchêne, 1972; Bull, 1982). Civilian powers were expected to put an emphasis on non-military means in their international behaviour, to prefer multilateral diplomacy to traditional power politics, and to try to promote democratic values. The reaction of the United States to 9/11, in particular the Iraq War which was opposed by many EU members, seemed to emphasize this distinction. While the US and other great powers mostly relied on hard power to pursue their goals, the EU seemed to concentrate on a different kind of power: soft power (Nye, 2002). A comparison of the National Security Strategy 2002, issued by the Bush administration, and the European Security Strategy of 2003 (ESS, 2003), underlined this. In 2002, Ian J. Manners, a British scholar now working in Denmark, published an article in the *Journal of Common Market Studies* in which he claimed that the EU was indeed distinctively different in its*

international policies. He called the EU a 'normative power': not only its means, but, above all, its ends were shaped by normative concerns. Manners argued that, given that the very existence of the Union was based on multilateral understandings, on shared values and on the rejection of traditional great power diplomacy, it derived its external actions from the same principles. His article has become one of the most widely quoted pieces in research on European integration, not least because the Iraq War seemed to confirm its arguments. Since then the debate has continued on whether the EU really behaves differently in the international arena. The controversy about 'Normative Power Europe' feeds into wider debates on the 'nature' of the EU and other international organisations as international actors and on the relevance of norms, perceptions and 'roles' in international relations.

Daniela Sicurelli from the University of Trento (Italy) backs the view that the EU should be seen as a normative power, and that such an interpretation can lead to a better understanding of how the EU acts in the global arena. Mark Pollack challenges this notion and thinks that the EU is not different from traditional state actors, as it employs material and ideational power resources to further its goals and often acts rather hypocritically. The debate illustrates not only different ways of seeing the EU as global power, but also different methods of analysing this question: while Pollack's analysis is an example of a rationalist account, Sicurelli shows how a reflexive approach, which sees the interests of actors not as reflections of their capabilities and constraints but as derived from their idea-based interpretations of reality, can enrich our understanding of the EU. These two chapters are also of huge relevance to the external dimension of various EU policies, such as agriculture (Chapter 9), enlargement (Chapter 11), and security (Chapter 12). The issue of normative power is also a core part of the identity debate (Chapter 5) and the controversy about the future of the transatlantic partnership (Chapter 15).

10.1 The EU is a Normative Power in World Politics

Daniela Sicurelli

Even though it lacks many traditional foreign policy instruments, the EU is an influential actor in multiple fields of international politics, such as trade and environmental negotiations, peacebuilding and democracy promotion. More specifically, it stands out for its ability to promote principles, practices, and regulatory standards – in other words, *norms* – beyond its borders. By introducing the concept of Normative Power Europe, Manners (2002) has

captured this role played by the EU in international relations. According to this argument, the EU differs from states guided by traditional power politics because its foreign policy decisions are primarily shaped by ideational motivations. In its external relations, the EU ultimately aims at promoting its constitutive values and principles internationally. In order to socialize other players to the norms on which it is constructed, it uses soft power tools, such as providing a successful example as cooperative economic and security region, promoting the attractiveness of its market, and being a major provider of development and humanitarian aid. By exporting its body of laws and norms beyond its borders, the EU ultimately contributes to shaping what is 'normal' in international relations.

This suggestive representation of the EU has sparked a lively debate among international relations scholars, and inspired numerous theoretical and empirical works (see e.g. Whitman, 2011, Björkdahl *et al.* 2015; Neuman 2018; Poletti and Sicurelli 2018). In this chapter I claim that the commitment and ability to promote its constitutive norms internationally even if material interests would suggest otherwise is indeed a distinctive feature of the EU as an international actor. In the first part I provide evidence in support of the argument that European foreign policy can be understood as the result of the principles and values enshrined by EU law and that it exhibits a preference for soft power instruments; in the second part, I test the normative impact of European foreign policy and discuss the different pathways through which the EU projects its norms.

The constitutive norms of the EU and its sources of power

The EU aims to emerge as a normative leader at the global level, in contrast to other powers, notably the US. To this purpose, it engages in the promotion of those principles that represent the very foundations of the EU polity, namely economic liberalism, multilateralism (understood as strong support for international law), universality of human rights, liberal democracy, solidarity and sustainable development (Lucarelli and Manners 2006; Rosamond 2013). When, in a UN Security Council meeting of May 2017, the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini, discussed the difference between the EU and the US as international players, she emphasized that the Union was built on diplomacy, cooperation, development and human rights in sharp contrast to the "America first" slogan driving the US foreign policy under Donald Trump's presidency (United Nations 2017).

According to Tocci (2008, 21), a normative foreign policy is mainly based on international law. Even though international law is not immune to international power

politics, it “represents the most universal and universalisable normative boundary within which to assess foreign policy”. According to this representation, while the EU is not the only actor that pursues a normative foreign policy, it can reasonably claim to be the major promoter of multilateralism and international law, since its member states have ratified more UN treaties and conventions than any other major international player, such as the United States, China and Russia.

This importance of ideational motivations in shaping the EU’s foreign policy, however, does not imply that it acts against the interests of its members and institutions. The separation of norms and interests in European external relations is impossible. By exporting its fundamental norms, for instance, the EU aims at legitimizing itself in the eyes of its international partners as more than the sum of its parts (Manners 2002).

The EU’s attempt to export norms through its external relations is evident across different policy areas, including trade, agriculture, neighborhood and foreign and security policies. Always a major sponsor of multilateral trade agreements, the EU has also emerged since the 1990s as a norm promoter in negotiations on preferential trade agreements with single states and regional organizations such as MERCOSUR and the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN). Each of the preferential trade agreements that the EU has promoted and concluded since the mid-1990s includes human rights clauses and a sustainable development chapter which calls on its trade partners to ratify and enforce international environmental and labour law. Owing to its principled foreign policy, the EU has emerged as a normative power in contrast to other trade negotiators, which mainly act according to traditional realist considerations. The Lisbon Treaty has further reinforced the normative voice of the EU in its international relations by empowering the European Parliament (EP) in trade policy-making (Feliu and Serra 2015). Due to the presence of many parties which strongly promote human rights and environmental concerns, the EP has always criticized EU trade policies as too narrowly focused on commercial aspects. In a sensitive sector for developing countries such as fisheries, for instance, the EP has successfully channeled pressures of environmental and development NGOs towards a reform of EU fishery policy based on social and ecological responsibility considerations (Zimmermann 2017).

As Pollack argues in chapter 10.2, the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) has historically attracted protests of developing countries and NGOs that emphasized the protectionist implications of subsidies to European farmers. As a reaction to this criticism, though, the EU adopted major reforms of the CAP in 2003 and 2013. In doing so, the EU has abandoned the practice of subsidizing production, and opted, instead, for support for

sustainable farming. The greening of the CAP has also had implications for the role of the EU as a norm promoter internationally. In order to reaffirm its commitment to sustainable development, the EU has engaged in the promotion of its stringent criteria of sustainable farming in the negotiations with its trade partners (Poletti and Sicurelli 2016¹; Osiemo 2016²).

Neighborhood policy is another field in which the EU exercises its efforts of democracy and human rights promotion. The Union is well equipped to contribute to democratization processes beyond its borders because its members are liberal democracies and its institutions are built upon principles of democratic governance such as transparency, participation and accountability (Lavenex and Schimmelfennig 2011). As the former High Representative for EU foreign policy, Catherine Ashton, commented in reaction to the Arab Spring in 2011, the EU has a moral imperative to intervene in support of democratic social movements. She explained that, since the EU is “a union of democracies”, “we have a democratic calling” in that context (Ashton 2011). For this purpose, the EU mobilized over €4 billion financial resources for 2011-2013 under the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument and established the so-called SPRING programme (Support to Partnership, Reform and Inclusive Growth) to provide additional financial support to countries showing commitment to, and progress in, democratic reforms.

The founding norms of the EU also shape its foreign and security policy actions. In this respect, Mogherini remarked in 2016 that the EU aims to address an “increasing demand for a principled global security provider, for a superpower that believes in multilateralism and cooperation” (Euractiv 2016). At the time of writing, the EU is involved in 16 civilian and 6 military security operations, mostly in Africa and Southeast Europe. EU security operations aim at establishing the rule of law, policing unstable areas, monitoring borders, reforming the security sector of the countries concerned and building up their capacity for democratic governance. Although it prioritizes civilian tools of conflict management, the EU has also developed military capabilities. The possibility to implement military operations does not *per se* harm the potential of the EU to act as a norm promoter internationally (Björkdahl 2011). Privileging civilian and normative forms of power, in fact, helps ensure that any parallel use of material incentives and coercive instruments of power is “utilized in a more justifiable way” (Manners 2012: 194). For this reason, all the military operations of the EU are

¹ Poletti, Arlo, and Daniela Sicurelli. "The European Union, preferential trade agreements, and the international regulation of sustainable biofuels." *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 54.2 (2016): 249-266.

² Osiemo, O. (2016). *Food safety standards in international trade: The case of the EU and the COMESA*. Taylor & Francis.

supported either by parallel civilian security mission or by financial instruments dedicated to development cooperation and democracy promotion.

Critics have pointed at the lack of coordination between the EU and member states policies in a key sector for European security, namely arms export. According to Hansen and Marsh (2015³), for instance, the EU member states' arms export to Libya prior to the Civil War violated EU export control measures. Even in this case, though, the European Parliament has played a normative role with the resolution of 14 November 2018 calling for coordination of the EU member states arm export policies in accordance to the principles enshrined in art. 21 of the Treaty of the EU, namely democracy and the rule of law and the preservation of peace, the prevention of conflicts and the strengthening of international security⁴. As a response, the European Council updated the EU norms on arms export in 2019, reaffirming the need for a principled foreign and security policy and providing the legal basis for strengthening the control of member states' export of military technology and equipment (European Council, 2019⁵).

The normative impact of the EU

Under favourable conditions, the EU has been able to persuade other actors to endorse its rules and standards. First, the EU has achieved tangible results in its attempt to export its model of regional economic and security integration at global level. Its experience of integration has influenced parallel processes in other regions including the African Union, the Southern African Development Community, ASEAN, and MERCOSUR by activating socialization and emulation dynamics (Lenz 2013). As they travel to other regions, EU norms of regional integration have been filtered and adjusted to the local contexts (*Björkdahl et al. 2015*). In fact, the local political culture and history of their members affect how those organizations endorse and reframe EU norms. An example of this process of norm localization is provided by the building of ASEAN as a regional security organization. The South East Asian region has modelled its security institutions on the norm of “common security” developed in the EU in the early 1990s and reframed it as “cooperative security”. This concept emphasizes the need to foster consensual decision-making processes among

³ Hansen ST and Marsh NJ (2015) Normative power and organized hypocrisy: European Union member states' arms export to Libya. *European Security* 24(2): 264–286.

⁴ European Parliament resolution of 14 November 2018 on arms exports: implementation of Common Position 2008/944/CFSP (2018/2157(INI)).

⁵ European Council 2019, Control of arms export: Council adopts conclusions, new decision updating the EU's common rules and a revised user's guide, Press release, 16 September.

ASEAN member states while preserving national sovereignty in the field of security (Acharya 2004). This example shows that the effectiveness of EU norm diffusion is conditional upon the extent to which those norms fit locally established norms (*Björkdahl et al. 2015*).

Second, the EU is distinguished by its ability to export regulatory standards through trade agreements such as, for instance, food safety requirements and environmental and labour standards. The effectiveness of the EU as a normative leader through trade depends not only upon material factors, such as the size of its market, but also upon its ability to establish transgovernmental networks of bureaucratic actors, experts and civil society organizations (Lavenex 2014). These networks help socialize its trade partners to EU norms and add legitimacy to EU-sponsored rules and standards. During the negotiations for a trade agreement between the EU, Colombia and Peru (2012) for instance, a pre-existing network of European and Latin American trade unions supported the effort of the EU to promote stringent labour standards in the trade agreement (Poletti and Sicurelli 2018). Moreover, after the conclusion of the trade negotiations, the existing ties between European and Latin American civil society and experts facilitated the implementation of the agreement in the context of the committee on trade and sustainable development established by the agreement.

Third, as shown by the case of the reform process in Tunisia after the Arab Spring, when the EU finds a permeable local context, it can prove successful as a promoter of democratic institutions. As opposed to other international players, including the US, the EU has devoted considerable resources to supporting Tunisia's transition to democracy. It implemented an observatory mission to monitor the first post-revolution elections held by the country on 23 October 2011 and increased its financial support to civil society under the SPRING program. Tunisia is today one of the main beneficiaries of the European program to support civil society beyond its borders. In contrast to other countries of the region, pro-democratic forces coexisted in Tunisia with a moderate Islamist government which was able to respond to the EU's conditionality and financial assistance. As a result, the EU played an auxiliary role to domestic forces aiming to democratize the country (Börzel et al., 2015). The European programs of democracy promotion and development cooperation in Tunisia have attracted large support in the country. As Tunisian Foreign Minister Khemaïes Jhinaoui claimed in 2017, many in the Tunisian political elite consider the EU as its main political and economic partner, instead of its Arab peers (Chief and Kausch 2018). This case demonstrates that where the EU finds receptive political elites, it can make a meaningful contribution to supporting democratization processes.

A fourth condition for impact of the EU in shaping international norms is external perception of the EU as a credible and legitimate leader. Despite the changing structure of international relations, and especially the emergence of China as a major player, in global environmental negotiations the EU has maintained its reputation as a promoter of multilateralism over the last two decades. In the context of the Paris negotiations, the EU proved able to obtain a deal that largely reflects its policy objectives (Oberthür and Groen, 2018). The decision of the Trump administration to withdraw from the agreement in June 2017, once again, has reinforced the image of the EU as a sponsor of environmental multilateralism in contrast to the US.

Although the norms promoted by the EU are widely considered legitimate, the EU is often criticized for the patronizing undertones of its discourse, for the use of coercive foreign policy tools such as conditionalities, and for the lack of coherence in its foreign policy decisions (Lucarelli 2014). Yet, ironically, resistance to EU norms may end up enhancing its norm-setting power. Opposition against the EU's assertive methods of norm promotion is a confirmation of its visibility as an actor. The latter, in turn, is a precondition for the EU to exert its influence internationally. As Gordon and Pardo argue: "Without resistance the EU's normative agenda may withdraw into the shadows and lose its potency" (2015: 417). In 2013, for instance, the Israeli government openly rejected 'Guidelines' published by the European Commission (2013) on the allocation of grants, prizes and financial instruments funded by the EU to Israeli government and private entities. The Guidelines state that EU institutions cannot fund Israeli companies, public bodies and institutions that operate within Israeli settlements and reassert the existence of the Green Line (referring to pre-1967 borders). Israel's rejection of the Guidelines *de facto* contributed to make the issue of the Green Line newsworthy both among Israeli and international media, thereby empowering the European normative stance in the domestic debate in Israel as well as internationally.

Finally, under the conditions of wide contestation of international norms, the lack of coherence and the ambiguity of EU foreign policies may paradoxically underpin, instead of harming, its transformational potential. In the case of intervention in Libya in 2011, the EU failed to reach a common position for the application of the principle of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) in the Security Council resolution. Nonetheless, it collectively affirmed its satisfaction with the UN resolution approving airstrikes in Libya in Council Decision 2011/2010/CFSP. Military intervention by a NATO-led coalition in Libya attracted wide criticism for overstressing the mandate of the United Nations from protection of civilians to

regime change. In this context, while acting ambiguously, the EU has reinforced the legitimacy of the principle, which remains today a widely accepted principle (Ahrens 2018).

Conclusion

The EU has emerged as a norm driven actor in the international relations, and has built its image as leader in the promotion of multilateralism and international cooperation in contrast to the US. The preconditions for the EU to play the role of normative power worldwide include the visibility of its foreign policy actions and the representation of EU-sponsored principles and standards as legitimate among its international partners. Furthermore, the degree to which European foreign policy decisions fit with local norms, the permeability of recipient countries to new norms, and the presence of transnational networks of experts and bureaucrats upholding its principles and standards, are facilitating conditions for the emergence of the EU as a normative leader. By increasing the powers of the European Parliament in foreign policy-making and by strengthening the image of the EU as a unitary actor and its presence on the ground throughout the European External Action Service, the Lisbon Treaty has further increased the opportunities for the EU to project its normative power at global level.

10.2 Living in a Material World: A Critique of 'Normative Power Europe'

Mark A. Pollack

There is, in contemporary literature on European Union foreign policy, a widely expressed view that the EU today constitutes a 'normative power'. As first articulated by Ian Manners (2002) in an extraordinarily influential article, the idea of 'normative power Europe' (NPE) combines two fundamental claims.

The first of these claims is about the EU's 'normative difference', the notion that the EU, by virtue of its history, its nature as a hybrid polity, and its political and legal framework, is *constituted* by a commitment to certain constitutional norms that determine its international identity (Manners 2002: 241). Reading through a series of historic declarations, policies and treaties, Manners identifies five core norms (peace, liberty, democracy, the rule of law, and human rights) and four minor norms (social solidarity, anti-discrimination, sustainable development, and good governance) which together constitute the EU's normative identity (Manners 2002: 242). These are not simply universal or Western norms; rather, 'the EU is

normatively different to other polities with its commitment to universal rights and principles' (Manners 2002: 241). Indeed, 'in my formulation the central component of normative power Europe is that it exists as being different to pre-existing political forms, and that this particular difference pre-disposes it to act in a normative way' (Manners 2002: 242). Since then, a huge number of studies has picked up this theme, repeatedly pointing to the EU's purported normative uniqueness, almost invariably in comparison to a self-interested or realist United States with no discernible values or scruples.

Manners's second claim is about the nature of the EU's 'normative power'. After reviewing traditional views of Europe as a 'civilian power' wielding material economic resources, and contemporary views of European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) wielding military power, Manners suggests that these views need to be augmented by a consideration of Europe's normative power – a 'power of opinion', '*idée force*', or the ability to shape conceptions of 'normal' in world affairs (Manners 2002: 239). While not rejecting entirely the significance of material economic and political power, Manners argues that, 'the ability to define what passes for "normal" in world politics is, ultimately, the greatest power of all' (Manners 2002: 253).

In the language of rational-choice theories such as intergovernmentalism, institutionalism and realism, NPE proposes a new and novel explanation of both the *preferences* and the *power* of the European Union in world affairs – the former generated by constitutive norms and the latter driven primarily by symbolic and ideational processes rather than by material resources.

There is something very – forgive the term – powerful in this formulation. There can be little doubt that, with respect to human rights, the death penalty, multilateralism and the rule of law, European leaders see and present themselves as driven by sincere normative convictions in their interactions with the rest of the world. As Manners rightly pointed out, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to explain EU policies on an issue like the death penalty through any appeal to the material interests of the member states. The notion of the EU as a normative power has precipitated a series of books, articles and edited volumes in recent years (see e.g. Lucarelli and Manners, 2006; Aggestam 2008; Laïdi 2008; Tocci, 2008; Whitman, ed., 2011; Rosamond 2013; Zielonka 2013). Beyond the academy, NPE has penetrated the thinking of EU practitioners, who increasingly present themselves as uniquely normative actors on the world stage. Whether this influence is due to the accuracy of its claims, or the heroic light in which it paints the EU and its leaders, however, remains an open question.

In fact, recent events in world politics, and contemporary scholarship by students of EU foreign policy, have begun to question the rather flattering depiction of the Union as an inherently normative power, pure in motivation and non-coercive in its behavior. Across a range of issue-areas frequently considered to be ‘normative’ in character, much scholarship suggests that material interests, and material power resources, are at least as significant in European foreign policy as normative ones. The image of the EU as a purely normative actor, I argue, is an ideal type – one that illuminates certain, perhaps more admirable, features of the EU as a global actor, but one that should not be confused with a realistic portrayal of what the EU is and does in world affairs.

Preferences

With respect to preferences, a growing body of scholarship challenges, or at least lends nuance to, Manners’s portrayal of the EU as an actor uniquely driven by normative considerations. Manners, in his original statement, simply accepts at face value the various declarations, policies and treaties that spell out the EU’s core normative principles. And his illustrative case study of the EU’s global campaign against the death penalty emerges as an ‘easy’ case – one in which no EU member state appeared to have a discernible material interest that might cut against or undermine the Union’s collective normative commitment.

By contrast, other scholarship suggests either that material interests may underlie the EU’s normative declarations (thus masking the EU’s hidden motives), or that EU normative and material concerns may intermingle in determining EU preferences (the notion of ‘mixed motives’), or alternatively that material interests may cut across and undermine the EU’s public normative stance (hence generating charges of hypocrisy; see e.g. Aggestam 2008: 7).

Claims that the EU’s normative preferences are in fact a mask for its hidden material interests are commonplace among the Union’s conservative critics, who question the source and the sincerity of the EU’s commitment to multilateralism and the rule of international law. Robert Kagan, for example, has famously suggested that the EU’s embrace of such principles actually reflects an effort to compensate for Europe’s military weakness and tie down a hegemonic United States (Kagan 2002). Others, like Jack Goldsmith and Eric Posner, suggest that the EU’s commitment to the rule of law and multilateralism is insincere, as witnessed by the Union’s willingness to violate international law where doing so will serve its material interests (Goldsmith and Posner 2009). Such accounts serve a useful purpose in questioning the purity of the EU’s motives, but they almost certainly go too far in reducing the EU’s normative beliefs to hidden material preferences.

More convincing, in this context, are other studies that demonstrate mixed motives and hypocrisy in the EU's 'normative' foreign policies. In their study of the EU's environmental diplomacy, for example, R. Daniel Kelemen and David Vogel (2009) suggest that, while the EU's global environmental leadership is consistent with EU norms such as multilateralism and sustainable development, a pure NPE approach pays inadequate attention to the role of economic interests. In their alternative, 'regulatory politics' approach, the EU has sought to export or upload its high environmental standards, not simply out of normative concern for the global environment, but at least in part in an effort to level the economic playing field vis-à-vis states with more lax economic standards. Indeed, the EU's environmental diplomacy is just one part of a broader Commission initiative to 'promot[e] European standards internationally through international organization and bilateral agreements', which, the Commission argues, 'works to the advantage of those already geared up to meet those standards' (European Commission quoted in Pollack and Shaffer 2009: 129). Hence, the EU's vaunted success in exporting its domestic regulations may represent the Union's material as well as its normative interests.

We can also find mixed motives in other cases, where the EU's normative declarations can and sometimes do come into conflict with the material interests of EU member governments and their constituents. In the area of arms trading, for example, the EU's members expressed a genuine normative concern for preventing armed conflicts, which helped lead to the establishment of an EU code of conduct for arms trading with third countries. Yet, the large material interests of arms exporters in the various EU member states have resulted in provisions that are often politically rather than legally binding, and sufficiently vague as to impose few significant restrictions on such sales (Webber 2010). Similarly in the human rights realm, the EU has been inconsistent in its insistence on observance of human rights, treading more softly in its criticisms of economically or strategically important states like Russia and China (Smith 2001). Perhaps the most obvious case of EU hypocrisy, in which economic interests trump normative declarations, is the area of trade policy. Here, notwithstanding admirable, normatively motivated efforts like the 'Everything but Arms' initiative, the Union's defence of the protectionist Common Agricultural Policy stands as a significant global impediment to economic development in the world's poorest nations, and perhaps the greatest single obstacle to further trade liberalization (Oxfam 2003).

Mixed normative and material motives can also be found in the area of climate change, where the EU has committed itself (unlike Trump's America) to the Paris agreement,

and beyond that to an extraordinarily ambitious program of greenhouse gas emissions reductions that must surely stand as Exhibit A in any contemporary normative power story (Scheipers and Sicurelli 2008). Even here, however, we find EU member states divided by traditional, material divisions over energy use, with countries like Hungary and the Czech Republic demanding EU support for nuclear energy and with Poland (which gets approximately 80 per cent of its electricity from coal) holding out for guarantees of dramatic new funding from a new Just Transition Fund in return for their agreement to the plan (Brundsen 2019; Morgan 2019). Thus, in December 2019, when the EU member states agreed to the target of climate neutrality by 2050, Poland demurred, asking for further funding guarantees before committing itself (BBC 2019; Harlan 2019). The EU will certainly remain a global leader on climate change, to its credit, yet the positions of European member states are clearly influenced by the brute material fact of their domestic energy resources, with Poland standing in as the European counterpart to coal-reliant West Virginia. In this sense, as in others, the EU is not a uniquely normative actor, but an actor with complex and mixed motives, like others.

Power

Even if one concedes that the EU's foreign policy is motivated exclusively by normative ends, there remains the question whether the means or sources of EU power are normative, material, or – as seems likely – some combination of the two. To his credit, Manners did not argue that EU power arose *solely* through ideational processes – and indeed the experience of EU foreign policy in a range of areas has revealed the limits of normative power and the importance of material economic and, in rare cases, military power to promote the EU's values and interests in the world.

Take, for example, the case of EU enlargement, which is often seen as a triumph of the EU's normative power spreading democracy and free markets to the post-Soviet republics of Central and Eastern Europe. In fact, however, careful studies of the EU enlargement have demonstrated that, while some of the effects might be partially attributable to learning from the EU's normative example, on balance “the external incentives provided by the EU can largely account for the impact of the EU on candidate countries” (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier 2005: 210-11; see also Vachudova 2005, Zürn and Checkel 2005). By contrast, in other post-Soviet states like Russia, Ukraine and Belarus, and to some extent also in Turkey, the EU's normative example, without the material promise of membership, has not been enough to prevent a backward slide into authoritarianism. Indeed, the gradual slide of Victor

Orban's Hungary towards a 'illiberal democracy' demonstrates the limits of the EU's normative power to propel and sustain political change, even within its own borders (Kelemen and Orenstein 2016).

A second case, namely the EU and global human rights, similarly points to the importance of material pressure and economic conditionality in securing implementation of human rights norms in third countries. In the United Nations system, for example, the EU has been a consistent and impassioned advocate of human rights worldwide, but has few material incentives to offer other states, relying primarily on its normative example – and here we find the EU's consistently pro-human rights position losing ground to authoritarian defenders of national sovereignty like Russia and China who regularly defeat EU proposals on issue after issue in the UN Human Rights Council (Gowan and Brandtner 2008). By contrast, the EU has been found to have much greater influence on human rights practices when it explicitly links human rights performance to the material benefit of trade access to EU markets (Hafner-Burton 2009).

The limits of the EU's normative power, and the significance of its material power, are arguably most evident in European countries' controversial but ultimately successful military intervention in Libya, which succeeded in removing Col. Muammar Quaddafi from power after four decades of authoritarian rule. Indeed, the Libyan case illustrates both the kernel of truth in, and the limits of, the NPE thesis. One could, with Manners, make a strong case that normative concerns about human rights and democracy were foremost in the minds of European leaders. Yet those leaders were sharply divided about the use of military force, with Britain and France taking the lead in a NATO military operation while Germany opposed the use of force and abstained from the UN Security Council resolution authorizing the operation. In this case, the EU's normative preferences and power were *not* inherent in its nature but were rather deeply contested, and the means by which the Union effected change in Libya was not primarily normative but military – with the leading role played by the traditional, realist American Other.

The Libyan intervention, and other cases of purported EU normative power, also serve to underline another point, namely that the Union's supposedly inherent values are in fact deeply contested in practice among its member states. Two other examples of a divided and tentative EU shall suffice to illustrate the point. First, when Russia intervened militarily in eastern Ukraine, and later annexed Crimea by force in 2014, the Union's collective response was debated internally, and some members' demands for a vigorous, principled response were watered down by states concerned about their material dependence on Russia for energy

(Forbrig 2015). Second, and even more starkly, the EU was sharply divided over the response to the wave of Syrian and other asylum seekers in Europe in 2015, with some member states (most notably Germany) demonstrating an outpouring of generosity and welcome, while others (with Hungary, once again, at the forefront) responded with anti-immigrant rhetoric and policies (Kelemen 2015). Reflecting these mixed motives and contested values, the EU went on to negotiate a highly controversial, and deeply illiberal, immigration deal with authoritarian Turkey, shoring up that regime in return for a Turkish promise to seal its borders and cut off the flow of asylum seekers to an exhausted and increasingly hostile Union (Greene and Kelemen 2016).

In sum, surveying the EU's enlargement, human rights, security, and migration policies in recent years, it is hard not to conclude that the EU foreign-policy practitioners have drunk the NPE Kool-Aid, believing that the force of the EU's normative example really could change the world, uncoupled from the EU's material sources of bargaining leverage. That view has served the EU poorly in the human rights realm, and condemned the Union to near-irrelevance at the Copenhagen climate-change negotiations in December 2009, where the final agreement on the 'Copenhagen Accords' was negotiated by the US, China, India, Brazil and South Africa without EU participation (Groen and Niemann 2013). Even the breakthrough Paris agreement on climate change, reached with great fanfare in December 2015, testified to the limits of the EU's normative power, with the final agreement embracing a bottom-up, non-binding approach that owed more to US and Chinese interests and influence than to the European vision (Davenport 2015; Robinson 2015).

Conclusion

'Normative Power Europe' is a Platonic ideal. Taken as a statement of fact, it whitewashes EU foreign policy, ignores the paternalistic and neocolonial undertones of that policy (Staeger 2016), and presents the United States as a grotesquely realist Other. A careful and systematic reading of the EU's role in world affairs, however, suggests a far more mixed and nuanced story than the heroic image of 'Normative Power Europe.' For those who believe in human rights, democracy, and the rule of law, there is little question that the contemporary EU and its member states have been, on balance, a force for good in the world. However, if we want to understand and use that force for good in the future, we would be better served to jettison the idealistic and heroic image of the EU as a purely normative actor, and instead understand the complex mix of material and normative preferences and power that make the EU an

admirable, but also a flawed, inconsistent and sometimes failed advocate of its values on the global stage.

Fortunately, after an initial period of uncritical celebration of the EU’s ‘normative difference’, the scholarly study of EU foreign policy has entered a second stage, in which scholars seek to understand the conditions under which the EU asserts normative leadership, and the conditions under which other members of the international community do, or do not, accept that leadership. Understood not as an ideal type but as a falsifiable research program, ‘Normative Power Europe’ holds the promise, not of uncritically lionizing the EU and its positive influence in the world, but of holding the Union to account for its foreign policy, and of understanding the conditions under which and the ways in which the EU does, or does not, project its values into a troubled world.

Unfortunately, such a research program must also face up to the fact that the EU’s liberal values are increasingly contested and under threat *within* the Union as well as without. In an age of far-right as well as far-left populism, fundamental European values such as human rights, democracy, and the rule of law are threatened, most notably by the ‘illiberal democracy’ of Victor Orban as well as the Law and Justice government in Poland, which have successfully moved to undermine democracy, freedom of expression, and the rule of law within their borders (Meunier and Vachudova 2018). This rise of illiberalism at the heart of Europe, and the toleration of that illiberalism from EU institutions and member states, thus poses a double threat to Normative Power Europe. At the level of preferences, it raises the question whether the EU will be able to reach consensus on the definition and projection of the Union’s core values, while at the level of power it provides reason to question whether a divided Union that tolerates illiberalism within its own borders can continue to serve as a normative example to the rest of the world.

Summary of main points:

The EU acts as Normative Power (Sicurelli)	The EU is a Normal Power (Pollack)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EU is a different actor on the world stage due to its history and specific way of policy-making • The EU has a decided preference for soft power instruments and usually 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EU represents its interest just as any other power in the world • Internally and externally, it departs from its ideals frequently

acts on the basis of values

- The EU is a main promoter of multilateralism and international cooperation
 - Material interests are at least as significant as normative aspects
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