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Normative Power

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Virtual Special Issue

Normative Power

Guest editor:

Ian Manners, Roskilde University, member of JEPP editorial board

The social sciences have many different understandings of 'normative power', but in European Union (EU) studies normative power has three particular meanings. The first meaning of normative power is its emphasis on normative theory, that is, how we judge and justify truth claims in social science. The second meaning of normative power is as a form of power that is ideational rather than material or physical. The third meaning of normative power is as a characterisation of an ideal type of international actor.

Empirical studies of normative forms of power have analysed both the causal and constitutive effects of EU relations with the world in areas ranging from inter-regional relations, through traditional diplomacy, to environmental politics. Research areas of particular interest include the study of the interplay between physical, material and normative forms of power, as well as the constitutive role of normative reflexivity in the EU's international identity through its global engagements.

The normative power approach is emerging as a holistic research programme with the potential to cross both policy and disciplinary boundaries in the study of the EU's status in, and relations with, the rest of the world. Within this research programme, the greatest challenges involve analysing both the causal and constitutive effects of EU principles, actions and impact in world politics.

Since the first article on the EU's international identity in 2003, JEPP has published more highly cited articles on the EU's normative power than any other academic journal, including a special issue on "What Kind of Power?" in 2006. As the leading journal in the debate, this special issue brings together seven normative power articles published in JEPP since the 2006 special issue, together with Ian Manners' 'Normative power Europe reconsidered' article.

These articles illustrate the way in which JEPP serves as a central point of reference for normative power research and debate in a wide variety of public policy areas. Included in this research and debate are questions regarding how best to analyse and understand EU international leadership, small state strategy, interregional relations, international compliance, and the management of globalisation, concluding with an ontological and methodological appraisal of the normative power research programme. This special issue will be of interest to public policy researchers, analysts, lecturers and students in their search for an understanding of the EU's normative power in world politics

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Ian Manners

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Orfeo Fioretos

Forthcoming: Normative Power Spotting: An ontological and methodological appraisal

Elisabeth De Zutter