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10 Reflecting on normative-power Europe

Thomas Diez and Ian Mannings

There is a widespread belief that the European Union (EU) is a novel kind of power not only in its own institutional set-up but also in its external relations. It is said to rely on civilian rather than military means and to pursue the spread of particular norms rather than self-interested geographical expansion or military superiority. In the 1970s, François Duchêne called it a 'civilian power' (1972: 43); in the early 2000s it was argued that the label 'normative power' would be better suited (Mannings 2000, 2002). Just as Duchêne's civilian power reflected the Cold War milieu of the 1970s, the normative-power approach signified a crystallisation of the EU in the post-Cold War era.

That the EU is a different type of international actor and represents a new kind of power in international politics is not much disputed. More controversial is why and in what way the EU is a 'normative power'. Robert Cooper (2003), for instance, has argued that the post-modern EU must engage in 'liberal imperialism' in dealing with what he identifies as the pre-modern world. In contrast, Robert Kagan (2003) argues that the difference between the foreign-policy values predominant in Europe and those in a more traditional power like the USA largely reflect different power capabilities. There is also some dispute about the consistency of EU behaviour: are there double standards in the application of norms in EU policies towards other parties? Do different EU actors (e.g., the European Commission, Parliament and Council, as well as different actors within these institutions) pursue different norms and interests? And is there an increasing militarisation of EU external relations? To address these questions, the normative-power approach has been recently used in studies of EU environmental policy by Simon Lightfoot and Jon Burchell (2004a, 2004b, 2005); the EU and global governance by Zaki Laïdi (2005a, 2005b); EU actorness by Charlotte Bretherton and John Vogler (2006); EU foreign policy by Helene Sjusren (2006); Euro-Mediterranean relations (Adler et al. 2006); Europe and its others (Diez 2004, 2005); or EU values and principles (Lucarelli and Mannings 2006).

While these questions and studies are important, this chapter is primarily interested in the discursive representation of the EU as a normative power.

Not only is the success of this representation a precondition for other actors to agree to the norms set out by the EU; it also constructs an identity of the EU against an image of others in the 'outside world'. This has important implications for the way EU policies treat those others and for the degree to which its adherence to its own norms is scrutinised within the EU. In that sense, the discourse of the EU as a normative power constructs a particular self of the EU (and it is perhaps the only form of identity the diverse set of actors within the EU can agree on), while it attempts to change others through the spread of particular norms. Pursuing this line of argument here will lead to the observation that the EU's normative power may not be a unique phenomenon, if it prioritises itself over others. The USA, for instance, has exemplified the concept of a normative power during parts of its history, but its historical fate also calls for a closer examination of different kinds of normative power. In this context, we argue that academic discussions about normative power, and political representations of the EU as a normative power, which are both part of the same discourse, need to adopt a greater degree of reflection and reflexivity. Rather than the propagation of particular 'European' norms, it is such reflection and reflexivity that constitute the EU as a normative power that is different from pure self-interested hegemony.

This chapter is the outcome of an ongoing discussion between the two authors over the past few years on the merits and problems of a normative power approach. The discussion emerges out of and evolves around two positions: One (Ian Manners), coming from a critical social-theory perspective that seeks to understand and change politics, advocates the normative-power approach (Manners and Whitman 2003; Manners 2007). The other (Thomas Diez), coming from a post-structural perspective that seeks to use discourse analysis in order to gain a greater understanding of politics, is critical of the normative-power approach (Diez 1999/2001; Diez 2005). Accordingly, the first has acted as a participant in constructing a normative power discourse that seeks to push the EU towards a certain identity, whereas the second has taken the role of an analyst of the success of this construction who wants any such exercise to be self-critical. The chapter follows the development of this discussion around three major points of disagreement – civilian and normative power; the USA as a normative power; and the power of normative power discourse (see Diez 2005). On the first two points (civilian power and the USA as a normative power), Thomas Diez came to agree that civilian power is not the same as normative power and that the USA is no longer a normative power in the same way as the EU. On the third point (the power of normative power discourse), Ian Manners came to agree that discursive representations of the EU as a normative power are important and should be analysed critically. Both authors are in agreement when concluding that reflection and reflexivity are crucial in a sustainable normative power 'Europe'.

In the next section of the chapter, we review the literature on the concept of normative power and relate it to the earlier literature on civilian power.

We argue that civilian power can be read as one specific kind of normative power, but that while many elements of François Duchêne's original 1970s 'idée force' remain, in the post-Cold War era, the EU has moved from civilian to normative power. In this section we will also briefly set out the differences between normative power and Nye's notion of 'soft power'. Next, a brief comparison with the United States of America allows us to reflect on the similarities and differences between historical instances of US normative power and more contemporary EU normative power. We then suggest that discourses of 'normative power Europe' are themselves a form of representational power that contributes towards particular EU identity constructions. This leads us to our concluding call for reflection and reflexivity.

What is normative power?

The introduction of the concept of normative power into the discussion of the EU's foreign policy involved a definition of EU power as neither military nor purely economic, but one that works through ideas, opinions and conscience. 'Normative power', in this reading, is a power that is able 'to shape conceptions of the "normal"' (Manners 2000: 32; 2002: 239). We can therefore identify such a normative power by the impact it has on what is considered appropriate behaviour by other actors. Three aspects of this definition need further elaboration.

First, the 'power' originally discussed by Manners (2002) is a particular kind of entity characterised by change rather than conserving the status quo, unlike 'great powers' or 'superpowers' (see Manners 2006a: 182–3). The notion of 'normative power' was introduced in part to get away from the question of whether the EU is an actor in international politics or not, which misses the point that the EU *is* influential, independent of its standing as an 'actor' in the realist sense. This discussion need not concern us for present purposes, yet it should be clear that 'normative power' denotes not only a specific kind of entity in international politics but also a specific aim, namely, the setting of standards. Thus, normative power, based on ideas and conscience, differs from relational power or structural power (see Lukes, this volume, p. 000; Strange 1996: 25–30). Moreover, normative power refers to particular means – it is not a power that primarily relies on military force but one in which influence is exerted by norms themselves rather than military arsenals or economic incentives.

Second, the normative-power argument has a critical social-theory ring to it in that it is interested in the political consequences of the social construction of the EU in world politics. It focuses on the power of norms to influence actors' identity and behaviour. To the extent that normative power is used as an analytical category to distinguish a particular kind of actor (such as the EU), it relies on the possibility of tracing empirically the impact of norms in contrast to other possible factors. However, as we will see, a lot of the discussion about 'normative-power Europe' does not really

examine the de-facto impact of EU policy (and therefore whether it *has* normative power) but focuses on whether it employs particular means (and therefore whether it *acts* as a normative power).

Third, this does not mean that normative power cannot go alongside other forms of power in international relations (IR), notably military and economic forms of power. Although normative power must be analytically irreducible to other forms of power if it is to make sense as a separate category, economic incentives or military capabilities may underpin normative power. For instance, research has shown that the EU is most likely to 'shape conceptions of the normal' (and therefore have greater normative power) in the context of EU membership candidacies, when perceived economic benefits of joining the EU can be assumed to be important factors for compliance with EU norms (Oguzlu 2002, 2003; Diez et al. 2006).

The original normative-power Europe argument used empirical evidence relying largely on one case study, leading some to wrongly suggest that the claim to normativity rests solely on human rights. It was pointed out that since the 1980s the EU has fought to abolish the death penalty worldwide and notes that within that context it was willing 'to impinge on state sovereignty', to intervene 'in support for individuals' and to pursue this course of action in 'the absence of obvious material gain' (Manners 2002: 252–3). Other examples of the normative power of the EU in this policy sector include the large budget now available within EU member states for the promotion of human rights (Youngs 2004: 422; K. Smith 2001: 186–8). It is also stressed that the EU is committed 'to placing *universal* norms and principles at the centre of its relations with its Member States [...] and the world' (Manners 2002: 241, emphasis added). Much is made in this respect of the explicit references to the European Convention of Human Rights and the United Nations Charter in the Treaty on European Union (TEU) (Manners 2002: 241). This normative engagement can be attributed to the founding principles of the Union (set out in Art. 6 TEU), including 'liberty', 'democracy', 'respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms', 'rule of law', as well as to the unique political set-up of the EU (which includes the idea of the 'pooling of sovereignty', the principle of subsidiarity and the transnational representation in the European Parliament) (Manners 2002: 243, 252–3). It was concluded that

because of its particular historical evolution, its hybrid polity, and its constitutional configuration, the EU has a normatively different basis for its relations with the world. [...] Not only is the EU constructed on a normative basis, but importantly [...] this predisposes it to act in a normative way in world politics

(Manners 2002: 252; also Wæver 1998).

Maybe most importantly, the concept of normative power contains an 'ontological', 'positivist' and 'normative' element and, thus, was found

to be quite attractive for the study of European foreign policy. All three elements fit into a larger, still ongoing debate in which the EU is conceptualised as a different type of actor in world politics, specific EU policies were shown to be different from those of great powers, and in which it has been argued that the EU *should* indeed be a different kind of power (Whitman 1998; Padoa-Schioppa 2004).

Differences between normative power and civilian power

The EU had been regarded as a 'civilian power' long before its labelling as a 'normative power'. The idea that Europe could become a different kind of entity that does not rely primarily on military but on civilian means was first explicitly formulated in the early 1970s by François Duchêne. He argued that, given that the people of Europe had largely formed 'amilitary' values, the stalemate of the Cold War had 'devalued purely military power', and Europe was far from a consensus on its own development as a military superpower between the two poles, the then European Community 'would have a chance to demonstrate the influence which can be wielded by a large political co-operative formed to exert essentially civilian forms of power' (Duchêne 1973: 19).

In more recent works on civilian power, Knut Kirste and Hanns Maull define a civilian power as a state 'whose conception of its foreign policy role and behaviour is bound to particular aims, values, principles, as well as forms of influence and instruments of power in the name of a civilisation of international relations' (Kirste and Maull 1996: 300). Similar to the concept of normative power, the notion of civilian power describes a particular kind of actor, relationships and means. The two concepts of normative and civilian power may thus seem to be very close to each other. Indeed, because a civilian power advocates and practises particular kinds of norms, above all the use of civilian means to achieve one's policy goals, civilian power can be read as one specific form of normative power.

However, over the past thirty-five years, a rich smorgasbord of varieties of civilian-power conceptualisations have been on offer, and all these readings are located within particular historical contexts. The first phase of civilian power writing was set within the period of détente and oil crisis where the structural context of the Cold War determined the EC's civilian power: 'the natural expectation is a shift away from the quasi-military confrontation of the cold war to civilian and political processes gradually increasing the interdependence of industrial societies with potentially complementary interests' (Duchêne 1971: 69). During this first phase Duchêne, Shonfield, Twitchett, and Sjöstedt all made important, although quite different, contributions to this Cold War-bound notion of civilian power (Shonfield 1973; Twitchett 1976; Sjöstedt 1977).

The second phase of civilian-power writing was set within the period of glasnost and the single market, when the structural context of the ending of

the Cold War redetermined the EC's civilian power. What is interesting about this second phase is that its authors were less certain about the value of civilian power and about what the concept actually stood for (Pijpers 1988; Tsakaloyannis 1989; Hill 1990; Laursen 1991; Lodge 1993). The third phase of civilian-power writing is set in the post-Cold War debates of the acquisition of military capabilities by the EU. What these writers share is both a concern and scepticism for the concept of civilian power (M. A. Smith 1998; Whitman 1998; Zielonka 1998; K. Smith 2000; Freres 2000; Stavridis 2001; Treacher 2004; Telò 2005). They are concerned that the movement away from civilian to military forms of power marks a lost opportunity for the EU to make distinctive contribution to the civilising of IR. They are also sceptical of the extent to which the EC ever was civilian and the EU ever will be military.

Some of the distinctions between normative power and civilian power are to be found in the discussion of the international identity of the EU (including civilian, military and normative power) from the late 1990s and early 2000s (Manners and Whitman 1998, 2003). The manifold and moving interpretations of civilian power converge around three central characteristics – ‘diplomatic cooperation to solve international problems’ (multilateralism); ‘centrality of economic power’ (non-military); and ‘legally-binding supra-national institutions’ (international law) (Manners 2000: 26; 2002: 236–7). From Duchêne to Twitchett to Sjöstadt to Maull, these three characteristics have been constitutive of civilian-power resources, objectives and strategies.

Clearly, Duchêne and his contemporaries were trying to capture a transmutation of military confrontation and war towards civilised politics and essentially civilian forms of influence (Duchêne 1971: 69; 1972: 43 and 47). No matter how much academic acrobatics is practised, the emphasis on civilian ends and means is not satisfied by the civilian control of military strategy, as some more recent commentators have suggested (K. Smith 2005). Thus, the normative-power approach encourages us to differentiate between the civilian nature of the EU prior to circa 1999 and the normative justification for use of military power when appropriate, for example, in humanitarian intervention. Similarly, most civilian-power formulations place an emphasis on the importance of being ‘long on economic power’ or ‘the concentration on nonmilitary, primarily economic, means’ (Duchêne 1973: 19; Maull 1990: 92). Civilian-power writings tend to place much importance on non-military or economic resources, objectives and strategies. It is clearly no accident that the objects of most civilian-power writing have been some of the wealthiest places in the world, namely, 1970s western Europe and 1990s Japan and Germany. As has been previously pointed out, the emphasis on material assets and physical power in civilian power approaches contrasts with the emphasis on the normative power of non-material exemplification found in the contagion of norms through imitation (*mimétisme*) and attraction (Manners 2000: 35; 2002: 238 and 244; Manners and Whitman 2003: 385 and 399).

In addition, civilian-power writings emphasise the communitarian nature of civilian resources, objectives and strategies, exercised primarily for the benefit of the owners. The communitarian aspect is compounded by the turn taken by Maull and others to apply civilian power to Germany and Japan (let alone the USA) in the service of 'national goals', 'national interest', and 'national values'. As discussed elsewhere, this has led the civilian-power concept to become far too related to the ontology of states, rather than to a 'style of action' or 'domestication' (Manners 2006a: 184). In contrast, the normative-power approach thesis emphasises the cosmopolitan nature of EU normative power, in particular through reference to norms and principles considered more universal because they are embedded in UN treaties and organs (Manners 2002: 241). Finally, civilian-power writings have come to accept Westphalian cultural emphasis on international society as the form and means of world politics. Even Duchêne (in contrast to Shonfield), whilst talking about the transformation of world politics, was actually reinforcing the status quo of IR with references to 'international twentieth-century society', 'a powerful co-operative' and 'international open society' (Duchêne 1971: 82; 1972: 47; 1973: 20). This acceptance of Westphalian cultururation, including the status quo of an international society between states, contrasts with the emphasis of the normative-power approach on transcending the 'normality' of world politics towards world society (Manners 2000: 32; 2002: 236 and 253).

It is also worth briefly setting out the differences between normative power and Joseph Nye's 'soft power', as these are sometimes mistakenly confused. As Nye acknowledges in his contribution to this volume (p. 000), he envisioned soft power as an empirical ('positive'/descriptive) rather than theoretical concept. Clearly, his advocacy of the concept must be located in the US debate over the relative merits of Democratic Party soft power vs. Republican Party hard power in the pursuit of US national interests and foreign policy (Manners 2006c). Nye generally discusses the 'soft power of a country' primarily in reference to the USA, sometimes in comparison with China. From this perspective, soft power is a resource or tool of national foreign policy to be chosen and wielded alongside hard power. He also acknowledges that as a foreign-policy tool, soft power 'can be wielded for both good and bad purposes' (p. 000). In contrast, normative power is an explicitly theoretical concept requiring an understanding of the social diffusion and normative practices. Similarly, normative power is not a foreign-policy tool to be wielded for national interests. As we shall discuss in the third section of this chapter, normative power is part of discursive practices that are both constitutive and always present. Finally, as Janice Bially Mattern discusses in her contribution to this volume, there is absolutely nothing soft about 'soft power' – the ability of capitalist cultural practices to disadvantage and shorten the lives of the poor across the world cannot be considered merely soft or attractive.

Differences between the EU and other powers

The concept of normative power in IR has largely been developed in relation to the EU, yet a historical perspective suggests that the notion of normative power may not be novel and unique to the EU. Throughout history, different actors can be seen as exercising normative power, ranging from the Vatican to the USA. Yet these actors differ from the EU in the extent to which the spread of universal norms plays a role as an aim as well as the means, and to what extent it is combined with or is dominated by military or other forms of power.

It is important to note that, in contrast to civilian power, normative power is *not* the opposite of military power. It is entirely conceivable that military force is used to back up the spread of normative values, partly because their successful diffusion implies the corresponding institutionalisation of normative values in order to be sustainable (Sjursen 2004: 122; Jünemann 2003: 40). Yet the more normative power builds on military force, the less it becomes distinguishable from traditional forms of power, because it no longer relies on the power of norms itself. Indeed, the imposition of norms through military force cannot be equated with changing the behaviour of other actors, which relies primarily on socialisation processes. Thus, in contrast to Nye's arguments about combining soft and hard power, normative power invariably diminishes in the presence of military force.

The USA is a particularly interesting case in this context, not least because some of the writing on normative power develops the concept *in contrast* to the USA. Yet is the USA not also a normative power? Confirming evidence would be the long-established assessment of US foreign policy as strongly influenced by the frontier myth and the notion of manifest destiny, resulting in the 'God-given duty to spread the dream and promise of America beyond its own shores' – a predisposition that, as Michael Cox notes, 'inevitably infused American foreign policy with a particularly moralistic and idealistic tone' (Cox 2003: 8–9). Leaving aside its rather more openly ruthless engagement in the Americas in accordance with the Monroe Doctrine, most of the USA's international engagement has had strong normative under-, if not over-tones. At no point has the USA's normative power been more visible than it was in the first part of the twentieth century, an era which had Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points as a cornerstone. And of course after the Second World War, when one could already see the dominance of military power and American hegemony in play (in the Western world at least), the USA helped create a series of international institutions that would civilise international politics (Menon et al. 2004: 7).

Even the invasion of Iraq, driven by a neo-conservative ideology, cannot easily be dismissed as mere power politics – it is driven by a particular worldview with strong ideas of how democracy should work within a particular liberal governmental frame. And in the 2002 National Security Strategy, the invocation of norms and the commitment to spreading those

norms, which are held to be universal, plays a central role (Berenskoetter, 2005: 75–6, 86; Rhodes 2003). Yet interests and norms cannot easily be separated (Cox 2003: 9). Building up institutions after the Second World War was a projection of American norms, but it also, intentionally or not, safeguarded US interests because those norms would spread a conception of life that would match that of the USA and build a ‘community of ideals, interests and purposes’ (Secretary of State Charles Hughes cited in Link 1988: 68). Undoubtedly, the impact of Eleanor and Franklin D. Roosevelt between 1941 (‘The Four Freedoms’) and 1948 (Universal Declaration of Human Rights) instilled the USA with a strong normative international presence. However, the series of international institutions created tended to reinforce, not transform, IR, in particular by sustaining the hegemony of the imperial powers in the UN Security Council and ensuring other UN organs reflected US power (for example, the IMF, IBRD and GATT).

Here the concept of American ‘exceptionalism’ is helpful in assessing its normative power. The concept of exceptionalism encourages us to judge whether a claim to normative power is based on cosmopolitan normative theory (‘we are all equal’) or not. Thus, a claim of exceptionalism located in communitarian self-understanding would seem to be one which cannot be shared with the rest of the world on an equal and just basis. But what if universal norms are being propagated in a normative project based not on exceptionalism but on ordinariness, as in the case of the EU? Undoubtedly, there are claims of ‘normative-power Europe’ that have been used by EU politicians in a communitarian attempt to legitimise the EU project to member states and citizens. Similarly, references to certain constitutive norms, such as social solidarity, sustainable development and good governance, may be desirable for the many, but not for those who profit from inequality, pollution and corruption. From a relativist perspective, it could be argued that all ‘particularist’ claims to normative power are relatively similar – from the American and French Revolutions to those of the Russian Revolution. It is the lack of exceptionalism, rather than the claim to being special, which characterises most of the normative claims in the EU – particularly those located in past European failures and crimes (such as colonialism, nationalism, world wars, the holocaust and inequality). Generally implicit in any EU claims to being ‘*sui generis*’ are built on humility for historical failures such as injustice, intolerance and inhumanity (see Fossum 2006). As we discuss in the next section, this historical context of reflexive humility and attempts to build non-hierarchical relationships contribute to normative power. The stark contrast between the EU and US claims to exceptionalism could not be clearer in discussions of the ‘God-given duty’ of the American dream, where the USA is ‘*the* land of the free and *the* home of the brave’ (see Lipset 1996).

Another difference between the EU and the USA, however, is that the USA has sought to project, and often impose, its own norms while (unlike the EU) refusing to bind itself to international treaties. Although it could be

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argued that the EU has been doing something similar in imposing its own norms on candidate states, they are acceding to membership of the Union, with all the eventual equality this implies (see Jileva 2004; Juncos 2005; Balfour 2006). Yet while the EU's formal commitment to international law should be highlighted (Manners 2002: 251), this can only be the characteristic of a *particular* kind of normative power, namely, one favouring multilateralism.

One could furthermore point to the fact that the EU or, rather, EU member states consider the use of force a last resort and, exceptions aside, are reluctant to militarily intervene on a global scale. However, during the first part of the twentieth century, the USA, like today's EU, was not at all eager to intervene in conflicts outside its own hemisphere. Like the EU, Wilson's aim was to spread peace throughout the world so that interventions would no longer be necessary. And, just like the EU, the idea was to do so not with military means but with binding normative commitments. Yet over time, the military back-up of this normative power came to be of ever-increasing importance. And even though US reluctance to entertain imperial ambitions should not be overestimated, the supplementation of norms with force was partly a response to calls for engagement that were coming from outside the USA (as the EU is facing calls for more military power now).

There is, however, one further aspect for judging between EU and US claims to normative power, which is expressed in Etienne Balibar's notion of Europe as a 'vanishing mediator'. Balibar takes Fredric Jameson's 'vanishing mediator' a step further by giving it the meaning of an EUtopia or myth, where the EU becomes the anti-systemic mediator – 'a *transitory* institution, force, community [{...}] that creates the conditions for a new society by rearranging the elements inherited from the very institution that has to be overcome' (Balibar 2003: 334). In contradistinction to the concept of exceptionalism as expressing a hierarchical power relationship, the extent to which the EU becomes a 'vanishing mediator' helps to judge the claim to normative power. If the successful exercise of normative power with reference to external points of international reference (such as the UN) leads to a wider acceptance of those norms, then the expectation would be that the EU would become less, not more, powerful. It would, in effect, increasingly vanish through its mediation. This is not to say that the EU, nor its member states, regions and localities, would vanish as institutions but that they would become less powerful as forces of change as they would become, quite simply, normal in the multilayered processes of post-national politics. As Kalypso Nicolaïdis puts it, the EU 'would preferably not refer to itself in terms of power at all, but as an intervener, a global partner, a "vanishing mediator"' (Nicolaïdis 2004: 117).

In contrast, in the case of the USA, the entanglement of normative and military power is underpinned, most evidently in the Bush Administration, by a secure belief in the universal validity of its own norms and a missionary

zeal to spread these norms to places marked as 'evil'. It is such a stance that legitimises the use of military force: were there doubts about the underlying norms, military force would not be considered legitimate. This indicates another dimension along which normative powers can be differentiated, and it is one that we will further explore below: the degree to which norms are subject to reflection both inside the EU and (in the way that the EU binds itself to international norms) in the context of the international society.

The power of the 'normative-power Europe' discourse

The two previous discussions of differences in the normative-power debate illustrate that 'normative power', as it has emerged in its application to the EU, is not an objective category. Instead, it is a practice of a specific discursive representation. From a discourse-analytical point of view, the most interesting question about normative power, therefore, is not whether Europe is a normative power or not but how it is constructed as one, paraphrasing Stefano Guzzini, what the use of the term 'normative power' does (see Guzzini, this volume, p. 000). This shifts the focus of the analysis from a discussion of normative power as an empirical phenomenon to a second-order analysis of the power inherent in the representation of 'normative power Europe'.

Kalypso Nicolaïdis and Robert Howse offer one road into this problematisation of the EU as a normative power. They consider the narrative of the EU as a civilian power, trying to export its model to other regions and even globally. To them, this involves the values of 'inclusion, participation, transparency, attentiveness to distributive effects, tolerance of diversity and of other levels of legitimate governance' (Nicolaïdis and Howse 2002: 782). In particular, they consider the EU's role as a model for the World Trade Organization (WTO), which they contrast with 'the negative external spillover of many of the EU's internal policies, from agriculture to standardization, competition or the movement of people' (Nicolaïdis and Howse 2002: 773). They conclude that

the EU that serves as the basis for such extrapolations to the world level is part analysis of existing realities, part prediction about their development, but also part utopia. [...] Ultimately, the EU would need to model itself on the utopia that it seeks to project on to the rest of the world.

(Nicolaïdis and Howse 2002: 783, 788)

However, Nicolaïdis and Howse do not address the point that the EU's projection of a 'utopia' is the construction of the EU as a better 'self' that is likely to prevent it from succeeding in 'modelling itself on this utopia'. In other words, the narrative of 'normative-power Europe' constructs the EU's identity as well as the identity of the EU's others. Unless a degree of

self-reflexivity is introduced into such debates and/or policies, EU actors will tend to disregard their own shortcomings (see Tonra 2003: 743–6). The lack of such reflexivity often stands out as a major weakness of normative power in the US case, as we shall now discuss.

Such a reading of the concept of ‘normative-power Europe’ takes its inspiration from post-structuralist work on self/other constructions in international politics. From this point of view, identities are seen always to require an other against which they are constructed; an other which they thus construct at the same time (see, for example Connolly 1991a; Neumann 1999; Walker 1993). A common strand in international politics, for instance, is the representation of the ‘sovereign domestic’ as peaceful and secure and the ‘world outside’ as anarchic and dangerous, a threat to the cosiness of the nation (Ashley 1988). Within this argument, the characteristics of the domestic sphere are presented as existing prior to the external threat, but, in fact, they are constructed in this very statement – there is no homogeneous and clearly delineated ‘inside’ to be defended against the ‘outside’, apart from a historically contextual representation of social relations infused with power and distinctions between ‘self’ and ‘other’. Foreign policy, from such an angle, is not the representation of the nation to others as a pre-given object but a construction of the nation in the very moment of representation (Campbell 1998).

The projection of American ideals, for instance, is at the same time the construction of these particular ideals and a particular American identity. Indeed, although David Campbell’s seminal study of US foreign policy and identity focuses on the construction of danger and identity, it also repeatedly refers to the notion of ‘civilising’ others through the projection of norms, a practice that at the same time ‘serve[s] to enframe, limit and domesticate a particular identity’ commensurate with the norms espoused – an identity which ‘incorporates, for example, the form of domestic order, the social relations of production, and the various subjectivities to which they give rise’ (Campbell 1998: 158). It is helpful to summarise some of the strategies of constructing ‘self’ and ‘other’ in international politics in order to trace them in articulations of normative power Europe:

- Representation of the other as an *existential threat* (‘securitisation’). This practice has been highlighted and analysed by the Copenhagen School of security studies (Buzan et al. 1998). In their work, issues are turned into a security threat through a speech act of securitisation, i.e., the representation of that issue as an existential threat, legitimising extraordinary measures (classically: war), but also constructing a particular subject as the threatened ‘referent object’ at the same time.
- Representation of the other as *inferior*. In this weaker version of ‘othering’, the self is simply constructed as superior to the other. In practices of Orientalism, for instance, the other becomes the exotic; as such the other is feted but, at the same time, looked down upon (Said 1979). To

the extent that the other is seen as undermining the standards of the self, this strategy approximates the first one.

- Representation of the other as *violating universal principles*. This is a stronger variation of the second strategy. Here, however, the standards of the self are not simply seen as superior but of universal validity, with the consequence that the other should be convinced or otherwise brought to accept the principles of the self (Ashley 1989).
- Representation of the other as *different*. This fourth strategy of othering differs from the previous three in that it does not place an obvious value-judgement on the other: the other is represented neither as inferior nor as a threat but merely as different. While this is not an innocent practice (it still imposes identities on others), it is preferable to the other three in that it reduces the possibility to legitimise harmful interference with the other (Linklater 2005a; Rumelili 2004).
- Representation of the other as *abject*. Julia Kristeva's Lacanian psychoanalytically based work has illustrated over the past three decades that the other is always part of the self – an abject foreigner which is part of our conscious and unconscious selves (Kristeva 1982: 4; 1991: 191–2; Kinnvall 2004: 753). Kristeva advocates recognising that 'the foreigner is within us' and 'by recognising *our* uncanny strangeness we shall neither suffer from it nor enjoy it from the outside' (Kristeva 1991: 191–2).

It is the latter two forms of othering that a normative-power Europe, as a more 'humble' power attempting to construct non-hierarchical relationships, would have to strive for. The recognition of the 'other within' demands from such a Europe that it recognises its own multiplicity and the failures within. The discourse of the historical other of Europe's past was a discourse that instilled such reflexivity within the self-representation of Europe (see Wæver 1996), but it is a discourse in decline (Diez 2004). There are, of course, tensions between the articulation of a normative-power Europe and the promotion of norms, on the one hand, and reflexivity, on the other. But these tensions do not constitute two poles that are impossible to bridge. Instead, they instil an ethos that strives towards the spreading of norms more through example than preaching; the acceptance and addressing of failure also within rather than its demonising; a dialogical orientation towards the other instead of simply trying to change it; and binding oneself to norms set by others. This ethos is in contrast to securitisation strategies advocated by Robert Cooper, who invokes the threats that the modern (and pre-modern) world present to the post-modern world of the EU (Cooper 2000). It is here that a core norm of 'sustainable peace' becomes clearer at the heart of normative-power Europe's ethos (see Manners 2006a; 2006b).

Furthermore, to say that the articulation of normative power is a discursive practice that constructs the EU's identity does not mean that this is

in itself a bad thing (for examples, see Lamy and Laïdi 2002; Ioakimidis 2003; Garton Ash 2004; Linklater 2005b). Any articulation of identity is infused with power. Discursive practice enables us to speak and make sense of the world, but we should always be reflective of the context in which we are engaging. Whether or not a particular identity construction is regarded as problematic depends on the context in which it is viewed – this is ultimately what politics is about. In the case of ‘normative-power Europe’, we suggest four political implications. First, the content of the norms is to be welcomed as they envision a world of more peaceful and just relations. Second, if those norms, however, are projected without self-reflection, the identity construction that they entail allows the continued violation of the norms within the EU. Third, such an unreflexive projection of norms and construction of European identity risks being undermined by military power. Fourth, we need to be critical of the way in which assumptions of a single EU ‘self’ are structured – it is too common to approach the EU as if it was *a* self which was capable of a strategy.

Thus, from the viewpoint of conventional work on identity, the notion of a difference engine reflects the attempts within the EU to engineer a single, essential, categorical identity which acts as a multiplier of differences between the EU and the world. However, critical-social theory encourages us to analyse the international identity of the EU as far more fluid, consisting of ongoing contestations of complex, multiple, relational identities. From this critical viewpoint the notion of a ‘difference engine’ is a means to analyse these ongoing contestations as part of the international identity of the EU which does not add up to a single, integrating whole.

(Manners and Whitman 2003: 397)

As the above quote from work on the ‘international identity’ of the EU illustrates, there is no *one* EU identity – the EU cannot be considered a ‘difference engine’ in the multiplication of a separate, single, essential, categorical, supranational EU self. It is the fluid, complex, multiple and relational aspects of the self–other contestations which define the EU as a normative power, rather than the other way round. This self-pluralism makes it very difficult to consistently crystallise either self or other. In our discussions of self–othering practices, we need to constantly reflect on the way in which these practices are *always* present as part of human social existence. These practices are always for someone and for some purpose – our task, as political scientists, is to ensure we are critical (in the sense of challenging the prevailing order of the world) of othering practices (see Cox 1981). If we accept that such practices are always present, then we need to reflect on how these may best escape essentialist interpretations.

Conclusion: reflection and reflexivity in a sustainable normative-power Europe

With the rise of social constructivism in IR, the role of norms in international politics has become a widely studied subject. European integration is often seen as a 'best case' for the application of social constructivism (Christiansen et al. 2001). This is largely because of the characteristics of the EU polity, such as 'the goal or finality of European integration, the competing ideas and discourses about European governance, and the normative implications of particular EU policies' (Diez and Wiener 2004: 10). Yet the nature of the EU's external relations also plays a crucial part in the Union's 'postmodern' features, insofar as it is seen as a new kind of 'normative power' (Ruggie 1993: 172). Thus, social constructivists, like other scholars, would focus their analysis of 'normative-power Europe' on the exact role that norms play in the formulation of a European foreign and external policy. We have argued in this chapter that this focus neglects an important aspect of the discourse on 'normative power Europe': its contribution to the construction of a European identity.

To summarise, we have put forward three specific claims: first, that the concept of 'normative power' is distinct from 'civilian power', although 'civilian power' can be read as a particular kind of 'normative power'. Second, the EU is not the first normative power, and the 'self'/other' practices constituting the 'normative-power Europe' discourse can be observed in other historical periods, notably in the practices of the USA in the inter-war and immediate post-war periods. Finally, the discourse on 'normative-power Europe' is an important practice of European identity construction, but one that needs to be seen as complex, multiple and relational.

The example of the USA is also where the lessons start. We have argued that normative and military power are not necessarily incompatible. The history of the USA illustrates this, but it also shows how military power can 'take over'. The development of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) needs to be set against the US example and assert the civilian features of European integration against an unreflective drive to increase military power (such as one driven by the demands of the European aerospace and armaments industry), even if this is linked to the spread of norms (Manners 2006a, 2006b). As we have tried to show, one of the differences between the USA–American and the EU–European discourses is that the latter still maintains a higher degree of reflexivity, although the attempts to project norms held to be universally valid beyond the EU runs a similar risk of articulating a much less reflexive position. The European Security Strategy offers perhaps a bit of relief in this respect. While it does locate the most challenging threats mainly outside Europe and engages in the reproduction of the image of Europe as a Europe of peace (European Union 2003: 7), it is also characterised by more regional and less global aspirations, by an emphasis on different and not only military means of influence

and a lack of ‘missionary spirit’ in comparison with the US National Security Strategy (Berenskoetter 2005: 76).

Nonetheless, for the study of ‘normative-power Europe’, the discussion of the power of the ‘normative-power Europe’ discourse (in the previous section) with respect to the example of the USA, has at least two implications. First, the difference between the EU as a civilian power and as a normative power should be analysed more carefully. Second, the discourse constructing ‘normative-power Europe’ should be analysed more systematically, particularly regarding forms of othering and the degree of reflexivity it entails. The original conceptualisation of normative power already provides a lead on this with reference to the EU’s self-binding to international law. As we have discussed here, the characteristic of reflexivity would be another distinguishing feature of a more normative-power Europe.

Reflexivity has a dual meaning in social science, involving both an understanding of the monitored character of social life and the need for reflexive research characterised by interpretation and reflection (Giddens 1984: 3; Alvesson and Sköldberg 2000: 5). This dual reading of reflexivity should be taken seriously when arguing that the normative-power argument has ‘a normative quality to it – that the EU should act to extent its norms into the international system’ (Manners 2002: 252). We understand that our social life has a monitored character to it involving social reflection and readjustment. In this respect, anyone arguing that the EU does ‘good’ in the world causes us to engage in socially contextual consideration and contestation of this argument. Yet we also understand that our research should constantly be interpreting the practices of others and reflecting on the impact of our work, as we have tried to do through our conversation presented here.

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