

## European Union, normative power and ethical foreign policy

Manners, Ian

*Published in:*  
Rethinking Ethical Foreign Policy

*Publication date:*  
2006

*Document Version*  
Early version, also known as pre-print

*Citation for published version (APA):*  
Manners, I. (2006). European Union, normative power and ethical foreign policy. In D. Chandler, & V. Heins (Eds.), *Rethinking Ethical Foreign Policy: Pitfalls, possibilities and paradoxes* (pp. 116-136). Routledge.  
[http://www.diis.dk/graphics/\\_Staff/ima/Ian%20Manners%20-%20European%20Union%20Normative%20Power%20and%20Ethical%20Foreign%20Policy%20-%20Chandler%20and%20Heins%202007.pdf](http://www.diis.dk/graphics/_Staff/ima/Ian%20Manners%20-%20European%20Union%20Normative%20Power%20and%20Ethical%20Foreign%20Policy%20-%20Chandler%20and%20Heins%202007.pdf)

### General rights

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain.
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal.

### Take down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact [rucforsk@kb.dk](mailto:rucforsk@kb.dk) providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

## 6 European Union, normative power and ethical foreign policy<sup>1</sup>

*Ian Manners*

### Introduction

All studies and theories of the European Union (EU) in world politics are normative. By this I mean, echoing Cochran (1999: 1), that all those engaged in the study of the EU in world politics cannot avoid normative assumptions regarding evidence, interpretation and significance in their research. In this chapter I will interrogate what I mean when I argue that the EU represents a normative power in world politics, if all other studies are also normative. I will thus explicate my understanding of what it means to be 'normative' in the context of rethinking ethical foreign policy.

In 2000 I chose the term 'normative' with care, hence a brief discussion of terminology is in order. Based upon my research into symbolic and normative discourses and practices within the EC/EU during the 1990s, I used the phrase 'normative power' as a response to the relative absence of normative theorizing and to promote normative approaches to the EU (Manners, 2000). As I have discussed elsewhere, I saw the 'normative' power of the EU as being distinct from the pre-existing European ideal types of 'civilian' vs. 'military' power (Manners, 2002: 236–8; Manners, 2006a: 186; Manners and Whitman, 2003: 387–91). Similarly, I sought to escape 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. The term 'moral' struck me as too closely related to 'extraterrestrial' (i.e. celestial) scripted codes, as Bill McSweeney suggested (McSweeney, 1998). Having witnessed the disagreements over the term 'ethical' to describe the foreign policy of the New Labour government after May 1997, it seemed to me inaccurate to describe the EU as an 'ethical' power given the procedural rather than absolutist nature of European integration (see

*EU, normative power and ethical foreign policy* 117

Frost, 1999 and 2001; Herring, 1999 and 2002; Williams, 2002). This distinction between the procedural notion of a normative heading and the more absolutist nature of ethical policy runs through this chapter.

In just four points I am going to explain what I mean by being normative in the context of rethinking ethical foreign policy. First I will ask what is normative, i.e. what do we mean by normative? And what does the EU normative power literature say about being normative? Here, I will suggest that the search for a meaning, or public philosophy, in the EU has overlooked the contributions of scholars who have already provided us with EU political theory. I shall then proceed by looking at two differing approaches to this EU political theory which I have termed classical and critical political theory. Within classical political theory I will focus on the tripartite differentiation of EU politics first put forward in the 1970s to distinguish between intergovernmental cooperation, supranational community, and transnational processes. Then I will turn to more critical theories with a particular focus on the contributions of post-structural theory. Finally, I shall conclude by returning to my preference for a normative heading over claims of an ethical policy, shaped by the differing approaches of classical and critical political theory.

**What is normative?**

‘Normative’ is the adjective derived from the noun ‘norm’, which signifies either the average or usual level of attainment or performance for an individual or a group; or and more usually in philosophical discussion, a standard, rule, principle used to judge or direct human conduct as something to be complied with.

(Honderich, 1995: 626)

[N]ormative IR theory takes as its subject matter the criteria of ethical judgement in world politics and seeks shared principles for extended moral inclusion and social reconstruction in international practice.

(Cochran, 1999: 2)

What do we mean by normative in the study of world politics? Following my opening discussion, surely all studies of the EU in world politics are normative, thus rendering my use of the term obscuring, if not obsolete? Drawing on Honderich and Cochran above, I would suggest that normative means to affirm how things

118 *Ian Manners*

should be; to judge or direct human conduct; and to seek inclusion and reconstruction in international practice (see the discussion in Walker, 1994). For me, the reasons for using the term normative is not so much about the aims or means of study, but about academic honesty. When I say 'normative', I mean that I want to change things – human conduct and international practice – I do not accept either the way world politics is, or theories that seek to maintain the status quo. The way in which we seek to change or retain things permeates all the sciences (natural, social and humanistic) by shaping our fields of interest, adherence to theory, selection of data and interpretation of results. And I think we should be honest about this. As Heins and Chandler suggest in the introduction to this volume, claims of ethical foreign policy often raise questions about the genuineness of foreign policy, and the narcissism of self-regarding 'rescuer' mentality. In this context I believe it crucial to argue that 'normative' does not mean the same as 'ethical' but is part of being honest about why and how foreign policy is conducted. Thus, for me, being normative in the study of the EU in world politics is about being honest about the advocacy for, and analysis of, foreign policy.

As I shall explore in the rest of this chapter, when I say that the EU has normative power in world politics, I mean that its existence, its commitments and its actions all, in some way, challenge the status quo of world politics. And I believe that these should be, and are, conducted in a more honest way than most actors in world politics. Obviously these types of arguments are both controversial and contradictory – how can the EU be both 'normative' (i.e. not forceful) and 'powerful' (i.e. forceful)? How can the EU both change world politics by diffusion (i.e. the absence of assertion) and by action (i.e. by assertion)? And, finally, how can I argue both that the EU *is* normative and *should be* normative? With these questions in mind, I will explore the *normative* power of the EU in world politics in this chapter by turning to the contribution of the literature on being normative.

A number of scholars are increasingly asking similar questions about the normative power of the EU in a diverse range of policy areas from regional relations through the environment to global governance. For example, scholars have used the normative power approach in the area of relations with near neighbours (Adler and Crawford, 2004; Panebianco and Rossi, 2004; Juncos, 2005; Forsberg and Herd, 2005; Del Sarto and Schumacher, 2005; Kelley, 2006; Balfour, 2006). Similarly, in the area of EU environmental policy Simon Lightfoot and Jon Burchell (2004a, 2004b, 2005), John

*EU, normative power and ethical foreign policy* 119

Vogler (2005), Paul Harris (2005), Anthony Zito (2005) and Susan Baker (2006) have all engaged with the question of whether EU policy reflects a commitment to sustainable development. Zaki Laïdi has argued that EU normative power is the central component of taking seriously a European approach to global governance (Lamy and Laïdi, 2002; Laïdi, 2005a). Beyond specific policy studies, Kalypso Nicolaïdis (2004), Thomas Diez (2004 and 2005), Andrew Linklater (2005), Helene Sjursen (2006b), Federica Bicchì (2006), Sibylle Scheipers and Daniela Sicurelli (2006), have all engaged directly with the question of what is normative about the EU. These studies are now beginning to result in book-length volumes engaging with normative questions in the study of the EU in world politics (see Laïdi, 2005b; Bretherton and Vogler, 2006; Sjursen, 2006a; Adler *et al.*, 2006; Lucarelli and Manners, 2006).

Of greater interest here is the scholarship that attempts to interrogate what exactly is, or could be, normative about the EU in world politics. Here we see five arguments made for why the EU might be normative: 'self-binding'; 'vanishing mediator', 'deliberation'; 'reflexivity'; and 'inclusion'. Helene Sjursen and Thomas Diez have both argued that it is the EU's *self-binding* through law that makes it normative. Sjursen suggests that the 'EU's strong emphasis on international law and multilateralism' gives us 'an indicator of what a "normative" power might be' (Sjursen, 2006b: 245). Similarly, Diez has suggested that the EU's 'formal commitment to international law' involving a 'self-binding' to international norms is a distinguishing feature of being normative (Diez, 2005). This self-binding is reflected in the highest levels of ratified cosmopolitan international law in the world (Manners, 2006b: 28–31).

The longer-term effects of this self-binding through international law give rise to the argument made by Nicolaïdis that 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). 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; Jameson, 1988). If the longer-term self-binding of the EU to international law occurs, 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

120 *Ian Manners*

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 multi-layered processes of post-national politics.

Sjursen and Erik Oddvar Eriksen have set out a different path to a more normative EU, based on the ideas of *deliberation* found in Jürgen Habermas's theory of communicative action. Sjursen suggests that 'rights-based normative justifications' should inform EU policy, rather than communitarian cultural identity (Sjursen, 2002: 502, 508). Such rights-based normative justifications might include the EU's commitment to placing universal norms and principles at the centre of its relations with its member states and the world. For Sjursen

*Rights* refer to a set of principles that are mutually recognised. In other words, policy would be legitimized with reference to principles that, all things considered, can be recognised as 'just' by all parties, irrespective of their particular interests, perceptions of the 'good life', or cultural identity.

(Sjursen, 2002: 495)

Sjursen and Eriksen argue that deliberation in the EU provides a 'process of reason-giving' which is 'communicatively rational' in helping 'form a sphere in which deliberation about foreign policy takes place' and contributes to the 'formation of *communicative power*' in the international arena (Sjursen, 2006b: 244; Eriksen, 2006: 263–4).

In a similar, but different vein, a number of scholars contend that a normative EU should be one characterized by *reflexivity*, in particular by thinking about the ways in which the EU is constructed through its engagements with its 'others'. Diez has led the way in arguing that 'self-reflexivity' ensures that any temporal other, i.e. Europe's past, is potentially more normative than geographical othering vis-à-vis non-European states (Diez, 2004). He goes on to call for 'a greater degree of reflexivity', both in the academic discussion about normative power, and in the political representations of the EU as a normative power . . . that would make 'normative power Europe' stand out (Diez, 2005). For Diez reflexivity in different forms of othering, such as constructing the other as existential threat, inferior, violating universal principles, or different, reduces the possibility of legitimizing harm (Diez, 2005: 628–9). By contrast, Sibylle Scheipers and Daniela Sicurelli argue that 'the EU is able to fulfil its role as a normative power in a successful and credible way even if

*EU, normative power and ethical foreign policy* 121

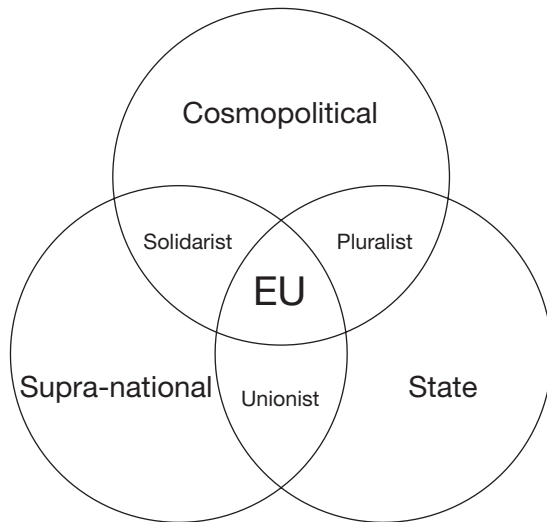
it falls short of possessing a reflexive dimension' (Scheipers and Sicurelli, 2006). Through their analysis of the EU's policies towards the Kyoto Protocol and the International Criminal Court, Scheipers and Sicurelli emphasize the creation of a 'credible utopia' irrespective of reflexivity over questions of consistency or utopian goals.

In an interesting and potentially very constructive innovation, Federica Bicchi suggests 'limiting the category "normative power" to cases in which the EU's stance has been shown to be intentionally inclusive' (Bicchi, 2006: 287). Bicchi contrasts a normative EU, characterized by inclusivity and reflexivity, with a 'civilizing' and Eurocentric EU. By *inclusivity* Bicchi means the extent to which external actors affected by EU policies are permitted a role in that policy-making. In addition, 'reflexivity' means the EU capacity of critical analysis, reflection and adaptation of an external policy according to the effects of that policy on the 'target area' (Bicchi, 2006: 288). Bicchi is thus advocating a cosmopolitan interpretation of normative power Europe, in contrast to a communitarian interpretation of civilizing power Europe which is Eurocentric and unreflexive.

All of these five contributions regarding self-binding, vanishing mediator, deliberation, reflexivity and inclusion suggest that we are witnessing the beginnings of a stimulating debate over what is normative about the EU in world politics. In order to make wider sense of these contributions and the debate over normative power, I will now try to set out two different approaches to EU political theory which I call classical and critical.

**Classical political theories**

Classical political theories can be drawn from the liberal/communitarian debate in political theory and the cosmopolitan/communitarian debate in normative International Relations (IR) theory (see Cochran, 1999). The distinction in the case of EU political theory is the innovation of a three-sided debate over the appropriate political community that EU policies in the world should seek to serve. Here, I will draw on three political perspectives suggested thirty years ago for studying European integration – states, supranational organizations and cosmopolitical formations. Located in her understanding of the processes shaping the 'growing economic and technological interdependence of the world' in the 1970s, the tripartite framework of Carole Webb distinguished between intergovernmental cooperation, supranational community, and transnational [cosmopolitical]



*Figure 6.1* Classical political theories

Source: Manners (2006b: 40).

processes (Webb, 1977: 22). I will briefly consider these three political processes, and their emergence in the 1970s, in order to connect them to debates within classical political theory. Although the normative debates over EU external actions emerged during the 1990s, the 1970s is an important place to locate the three differing political processes because of the introduction of European Political Cooperation in 1970. The tripartite distinction between state, supranational and cosmopolitical processes can be illustrated as in Figure 6.1.

These three political processes can be traced back to classical political theory as formulated by Kant and Hegel. Cosmopolitan theory, grounded in the work of Kant, argues that humanity as a whole, or the rights of the individual within humanity, should provide the basis for political action (Brown, 1992: 23–51; Linklater, 1998; Held, 1996; Cochran, 1999: 21–51). Cosmopolitan political theory, as interpreted through the work of Rawls (1971), suggests that the EU's external actions will be shaped by concerns for humanity as a whole, or individual human rights. Here we can see the relationship between cosmopolitan political theory and transnational-cosmopolitical processes as developed by Webb and Strange (see below). By contrast, communitarian theory, grounded in the work



*EU, normative power and ethical foreign policy* 123

of philosophers such as Hegel, argues that political communities are, and should be, providing the basis for political action (Brown, 1992: 52–81; Frost, 1986 and 1996; Cochran, 1999: 52–77). Communitarian political theory, as interpreted through the work of Walzer (1983), suggests that the EU's external actions will be shaped by the concerns of European political communities. In this respect communitarian theory makes two suggestions regarding the EU's external actions, one supranational, and the other intergovernmental. First, supranational communitarian theory suggests that the EU's external actions will be shaped by the concerns of the EU as a whole (the 'European community'). Second, intergovernmental communitarian theory suggests that the EU's external actions will be shaped by consensus-seeking among the governments of the member state communities.

*State political theory*

Writing throughout the 1970s, Helen Wallace did more than any other European scholar to highlight the importance of understanding of national governments in the study of the Communities (Wallace, 1971, 1973, 1977; Wallace and Edwards, 1976). Drawing on Wallace's work towards the end of the 1970s, Webb maintained that intergovernmental relations continued to be important determinants of European international relations (Webb, 1977). Developed beyond an explanation of European integration, we can see that the state perspective is an important way of theorizing the EU's external actions in world politics. Intergovernmental/state communitarian theory works from the basis that the most appropriate political communities for EU policies to serve are those of the constituent member states. Clearly this leaves open the question of how these diverse communities aggregate their political identities and concerns through EU policy-making. Two obvious positions on how best to project the political concerns of states to the global level are those of working through the union (I term 'unionist') or beyond the union, similar to the 'pluralist' approach of the English School of IR theory (see Peter Lawler's (2005) discussion of 'classical internationalism' and Knud Erik Jørgensen's (2006) discussion of 'pluralist conceptions').

*Supranational political theory*

Writing in the 1950s and 1960s, Miriam Camps stressed the importance of understanding a 'European Community' that was a 'living

124 *Ian Manners*

experiment in creating new relationships among states and between peoples' (Camps, 1971: 678; see also Camps, 1964, 1965, 1966, 1968). Towards the end of the 1970s, reflecting on two decades of the 'community method', Webb suggested that supranational organization was 'thought to constitute the European Communities' distinctiveness in international politics (Webb, 1977: 14). Looking outside of European integration theory, it can be suggested that the idea of supranational community is an increasingly important way of theorizing the EU's external actions in world politics. In contrast to state political theory, supranational communitarian theory argues that the most appropriate political community for EU policies to serve is that of 'Europe' as a whole. Similar to state communitarian theory, the question of what a 'European community' is, and how this community mobilizes and shapes EU policy is left open. Two differing positions on how best to take the political concerns of the supranational community to the global level, are those of working with constituent member states ('unionist'), or engaging directly with the institutions of global governance and global society, similar to the 'solidarist' approach of the English School of IR theory (see Diez and Whitman (2002) on the intertwining of the EU and world society and Jørgensen's (2006) discussion of 'solidarist conceptions').

*Cosmopolitical theory*

Again, as early as 1971, Susan Strange asserted that accelerating transnational processes in the form of the international economic relations were 'out-distancing and out-growing the rather more static and rigid international political system' (Strange, 1971: 305). Strange led the way in advocating the importance of understanding economic interdependence and interaction in international politics, including in the 'new multistate community' of the EEC (Strange, 1971: 311; also Cooper, 1968). Strange's later work emphasized the 'extreme case' of the EU as an example of a shift of authority away from the state, as well as the importance of European societies rather than only firms in transnational competition (Strange, 1996: 171–9; 1998: 111–12). Webb's innovation in 1977 was to suggest that the interdependences and intensive networks created by the formation of the EC reflected transnational processes in the wider international system (Webb, 1977: 22). Moving away from mainstream European integration theory, Strange and Webb's transnational processes were increasingly important from the 1970s onwards, with 'rapidly

*EU, normative power and ethical foreign policy* 125

increasing opportunities for global communication, transportation, movement of finance and persons' contributing to the emergence of cosmopolitical formations such as 'global civil society' (Webb, 1977: 305; Kaldor, 2003; Lamy, 2004). Distinct from state and supranational communitarian theories, cosmopolitical theory argues that the most appropriate political community for EU policies to serve is humanity itself. Again, the question of *how* humanity is best served through EU external actions is left open. Two contrasting positions on how best to serve the cosmopolitical community can be seen in the distinction between the efforts of the supranational community (such as 'solidarism' through inter-regionalism) and the society of states (such as 'pluralism' through intergovernmental organizations).

**Critical political theories**

Such a 'Europe' partially consisting of Nietzsche's 'good Europeans' would be one that (i) avoids nationalist and racist interpretations of existence; (ii) that refuses to fix the deeper meaning of the European idea and thus also remains open to those who currently remain outside the borders of the European Union; (iii) that would not seek to impose its freedom on others, but would equally not shy away from exemplifying this commitment to a deep experience of freedom; and (iv) that seeks to address the problem of the increasing globalization of the 'last man' through combating the refusal to cultivate, within existence, an important reflective depth.

(Elbe, 2003: 121)

As the quote from Stefan Elbe's study of Europe from a Nietzschean perspective illustrates, postmodern political theory has much to say about the EU as a normative power. Friedrich Nietzsche, Jean Baudrillard, Jacques Derrida and Julia Kristeva have all made important contributions to the question of the EU and normative theory (see Manners, 2006c). What Elbe's summation of Nietzsche's normative observations tells us is that postmodern theory has some interesting comments about what makes the EU normative, including ambiguous interpretations of existence; refusing articulations of an overarching idea of Europe; provoking and promoting a deep experience of freedom; and encouraging Europeanization through the emergence of 'good Europeans' who are capable of free and reflective thought (Elbe, 2003: 109–21). Elbe's reading of Nietzsche resonates with the work of Baudrillard, Derrida and Kristeva, who all argue for understanding and activating EU 'différance' (to defer/to differ; see Derrida, 1982).

126 *Ian Manners*

As Baudrillard observed in his exegesis of ‘America’ in 1988, ‘[f]or the European, even today, America represents something akin to exile, a phantasy of emigration and, therefore, a form of interiorization of his or her culture’ (Baudrillard, 1988: 75). As Baudrillard was later to reflect, both America and Europe (‘always with a serious delay in terms of modernity’) are victims of globalization which produces Europe as ‘a kind of by-product, a derived product of globalization’ (Sassatelli, 2002: 523). Baudrillard sees the EU as being in ‘a completely schizophrenic situation, something that exists in a kind of hyperspace, hyperreality’ because it has been created in ‘virtual terms’, somewhere between ‘European technocracy’, national ‘reduction of singularities’ and the destruction of ‘the universal as idea’ by the global (Sassatelli, 2002: 523–4). What I interpret Baudrillard to mean is that institutional Europe, the EU, needs to overcome the schizophrenia of European technocracy built on the feudal Europe of national singularities, in order to resist the destruction of the universal as idea by ‘the global’ (Sassatelli, 2002: 524). From a normative perspective, Baudrillard is fairly lucid in arguing that the EU runs the risk of developing into a ‘transnational pseudo-federation’ which re-particularizes culture, conscience and identity. By contrast, he appears to suggest that the EU should normatively pursue ‘the universal as idea’, including human rights and autonomy against ‘the global’, ‘commercial manipulation’, and particularities such as racism and religious, ethnic, linguistic nationalism.

Derrida’s European heading is similar to Baudrillard’s in that he seeks to navigate the EU in another direction – towards a respect for difference and for the universal:

it is necessary to make ourselves the guardians of an idea of Europe, *but* of a Europe that consists precisely in not closing itself off in its own identity and in advancing itself in an exemplary way toward what it is not, toward the other heading or the heading of the other, indeed . . . toward the other *of* heading, which would be the beyond of this modern tradition, another border structure, another shore.

(Derrida, 1992: 29)

Derrida’s argument, together with those on hospitality, cosmopolitanism and forgiveness (see Derrida and Dufourmantelle, 2000; Derrida, 2001) is that Europeans and the EU have a responsibility toward memory which must manifest itself as a cosmopolitan

*EU, normative power and ethical foreign policy* 127

response towards others (see Borradori, 2003: 169–72). Derrida argues that ‘what is proper for Europe would be . . . to advance itself as a heading for the universal essence of humanity’ (Derrida, 1992: 48) which involves nine duties on the way to the ‘*other shore of another heading*’ (Derrida, 1992: 76–89):

- 1 ‘the *duty* to respond to the call of European memory, to recall what has been promised under the name of Europe’;
- 2 ‘this *duty* also dictates opening Europe . . . onto that which is not, never was, and never will be Europe’;
- 3 ‘the *same duty* also dictates welcoming foreigners in order not only to integrate them but to recognize and accept their alterity’;
- 4 ‘the *same duty* dictates *criticizing* a totalitarian dogmatism [communism] . . . [and] a religion of capitalism’;
- 5 ‘the *same duty* dictates cultivating the virtue of such as *critique, of the critical idea, the critical tradition*’;
- 6 ‘the *same duty* dictates assuming the European, and *uniquely* European, heritage of an idea of democracy’;
- 7 ‘the *same duty* dictates respecting differences, . . . but also the universality of formal law, . . . opposition to racism, nationalism, and xenophobia’;
- 8 ‘the *same duty* demands tolerating and respecting all that is not placed under the authority of reason’;
- 9 ‘this *same duty* surely calls for responsibility, for the responsibility to think, speak, and act in compliance with this double contradictory imperative’.

Finally, Kristeva psychoanalyses the practices of strangeness, subject and abject in her discussions of European integration and European community (see Kristeva, 1982, 1991, 1998 and 2000). Trained by Jacques Lacan, Kristeva uses psychoanalysis to understand ‘the creation of self as an internal psychological process’ in which ‘the other exists in our minds through imagination even when he or she is not physically present’ (Kinnvall, 2004: 753). Kristeva advocates recognizing 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). For Kristeva ‘the ethics of psychoanalysis implies a politics: it would involve a cosmopolitanism of a new sort that, cutting across governments, economies, and markets, might work for a mankind whose solidarity is founded on the consciousness of its unconscious’ (Kristeva, 1991:

128 *Ian Manners*

192). Kristeva uses this understanding to argue for the coordination and reconciliation of strangeness and difference within a multinational EU:

We already have so many difficulties – but also so many advantages – coexisting in this multinational (and not supranational) country that Europe has become – even though it is made up of nations whose cultures have been close, religions similar, and economies interdependent for centuries!

(Kristeva, 1991: 194)

We are on our way towards building a European community, in spite of all the difficulties that we cannot ignore. In this often chaotic European assembly, . . . we try to promote a ‘type of society’ which is not exclusively that of ‘liberalism’, . . . Our insistence on this ‘cultural difference’ is . . . due to the fact that we have a different vision of freedom, one which privileges individual singularity over the economic and the scientific

(Kristeva, 1998: 328–9)

[W]e Europeans are encountering a major challenge involving the values of civilisation, values that, for better or worse, we have succeeded in establishing and that will or will not be transmitted to the societies that come after us. For the economic-political differences refer not only to visions of society but, more precisely and in the last resort for me as a psychoanalyst, to very different conceptions of the *human person* or *subject*.

(Kristeva, 2000: 115)

Taking Nietzsche, Baudrillard, Derrida and Kristeva together encourages us to make some observations on the normative implications of postmodern political ethics. First, it seems clear that postmodern scholars believe in the idea of universality (Baudrillard’s ‘universal as idea’; Derrida’s ‘universal essence of humanity’) but are unequivocal in arguing that this is an open heading rather than a closed reality. For normative power Europe this observation seems nicely summed up by the ambiguity of the European project as a ‘journey to an unknown destination’ (Shonfield, 1973). In this manner it is normatively important that the finality of the EU is never fixed in time, space or our imaginations. Certainly the ambiguous nature of the EU’s normative power seems to fulfil this open heading – is

*EU, normative power and ethical foreign policy* 129

normative power Europe instrumental or ideological? Is it an actor or a structure? Is it a union of citizens or states? Is the Constitution for Europe the first or final constitution?

Second, reflecting this understanding of ambiguity in the direction of universality, postmodern scholars share a commitment to an ambiguous interpretation of existence found in *différance*. This recognition of difference, alterity, foreignness and strangeness involves a cosmopolitan duty towards all, as well as opposing racism, nationalism, xenophobia and discrimination in all forms. For normative power Europe this observation seems to be captured by the idea of being ‘united in diversity’; more so if this recognition of diversity involves a commitment to ‘combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation’ (Article 13 of the EC Treaty).

Third, following the first two observations, postmodern scholars refuse to articulate an overarching idea of Europe while ensuring that the responsibility of memory of what has been promised under the name of Europe. Taken together with the previous observation, Kristeva’s notion of the foreigner within us reminds us that all Europe and its history is a product of the world – we are the foreigner within ourselves. For normative power Europe this observation emphasizes that the idea of Europe and its values are a continuing and contested process. As Romano Prodi’s Reflection Group on ‘The Spiritual and Cultural Dimension of Europe’ made clear:

There is no essence of Europe, no fixed list of European values. There is no ‘finality’ to the process of European integration. Europe is a project of the future. With every decision, not only its zone of peace, its institutions, its political, economic and social order, but also its very identity and self-determination are opened for questioning and debate.

(Biedenkopf *et al.*, 2004: 12)

Fourth, and reflecting the ambiguity, difference and contestation of the previous observation, postmodern scholars argue for the exemplification, but not imposition, of freedom, democracy, human rights, rule of law, equality and solidarity. Nietzsche and Kristeva’s ‘deep experience of freedom’; Derrida’s ‘idea of democracy’ and ‘international law’; Baudrillard’s ‘universal value of human rights’; Nietzsche, Baudrillard and Derrida’s equality and anti-discrimination; and Kristeva’s ‘vision of society’ characterized by social solidarity, are all to be exemplified in normative power Europe.

130 *Ian Manners*

Fifth, postmodern scholars all argue that if the EU is to be the embodiment of anything at all, then it should be the cultivation of 'reflective depth' (Elbe) and 'critical tradition' (Derrida). For normative power Europe this observation is possibly the most challenging of all, particularly as the combination of different national social-scientific fields, public spheres, languages and media, has made common communication and reflection so difficult across the EU. The EU's attempt to achieve a 'European Research Area' (ERA) through the use of Framework Programme funding has exacerbated rather than resolved the problem of fragmented socio-scientific public spheres. Those programmes that are funded and networked in a pan-European sense inevitably represent extremely uncritical and low common-denominator areas of consensus. The achievement of critical reflective depth will remain the Achilles heel of normative development of the EU.

Last, there is no last. If postmodern scholarship teaches us anything at all, it is that there is no closure, finality or completeness to normative theory. The works and scholarship of Nietzsche, Baudrillard, Derrida and Kristeva are just the beginning of our understanding and interpretation of postmodern political ethics. This observation is crucial for ensuring that the study and reflection on what is normative about the EU's normative power continues ad infinitum.

### **Conclusion: normative heading over ethical policy**

Rethinking ethical foreign policy involves questioning the genuine extension of political community beyond the territorial state, as well as asking why foreign power projection has often become a less robust and poorly thought-out endeavour. By invoking the idea of EU normative power, I have attempted in this chapter to argue that being 'normative' in world politics involves constantly asking what do we mean by claims of being 'normative'? Whose political community is served by such claims? And how might we be critical of such claims of normativity?

As I have discussed, an increasing number of scholars across Europe (and beyond) are discussing what is normative about the EU in world politics. While this debate has yet to include far more people, we have seen discussions surrounding the anti-Iraq war movement, the European Social Forum, and the anti-Constitutional Treaty movements regarding these questions. It is worth noting that these debates can sometimes degenerate into a culturalist anti-Americanism instead of reflecting critically on the manifold crises



*EU, normative power and ethical foreign policy* 131

of world politics (see the discussion in Heins, 2005). Importantly, arguments such as ‘self-binding’, ‘vanishing mediator’, ‘deliberation’, ‘reflexivity’, and ‘inclusion’ provide us with some means of judging normative power outside of the values systems of particular political communities.

My consideration of the three political communities of member states, supranational Europe and cosmopolitical world society, illustrated that EU normative power is located within a three-sided debate over appropriate political community, rather than any clear-cut ethical justification. Any normative power should be one that encourages such an open debate, rather than closure. Hence my preference in rethinking ethical foreign policy, at least in the case of the EU, is for a normative heading which encourages reflective depth in a critical tradition, over any illusory claims of ethical policy. Rethinking ethical foreign policy, at least in the case of the EU, should be located in normative discussions about policy-making and analytical honesty.

**Note**

- 1 I am very grateful to Lisbeth Aggestam, Charlotte Bretherton, Thomas Diez, Tim Dunne, Henrik Larsen, Simon Lightfoot, Janne Haaland Matlary, Hanna Ojanen, Magnus Reitberger, Stephan Stetter, John Volger, Antje Wiener, and the editors for their helpful comments on earlier versions of this chapter.

**References**

- Adler, E. and Crawford, B. (2004) *Normative Power: The European Practice of Region Building and the Case of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership*, Working Paper AY0404, Institute of European Studies, University of California, Berkeley.
- Adler, E., Crawford, B., Bicci, F. and Del Sarto, R. (eds) (2006) *The Convergence of Civilizations? Constructing a Mediterranean Region*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Baker, S. (2006) ‘Environmental Values and Climate Change Policy: Contrasting the European Union and the United States’ in S. Lucarelli and I. Manners (eds), *Values and Principles in European Union Foreign Policy*, London: Routledge.
- Balfour, R. (2006) ‘Principles of Democracy and Human Rights: A Review of the European Union’s Strategies towards its Neighbours’ in S. Lucarelli and I. Manners (eds), *Values and Principles in European Union Foreign Policy*, London: Routledge.

132 *Ian Manners*

- Balibar, E. (2003) 'Europe: Vanishing Mediator', *Constellations* 10(3): 312–38.
- Baudrillard, J. (1988) *America*, London: Verso.
- Bicchi, F. (2006) "'Our Size Fits All": Normative Power Europe and the Mediterranean' in H. Sjursen (ed.), Special Issue: What Kind of Power? European Foreign Policy in Perspective, *Journal of European Public Policy* 13(6): 286–303.
- Biedenkopf, K., Geremek, B. and Michalski, K. (2004) *The Spiritual and Cultural Dimension of Europe: Concluding Remarks*, Reflection Group initiated by the President of the European Commission and Coordinated by the Institute for Human Services, Vienna/Brussels.
- Borradori, G. (2003) *Philosophy in a Time of Terror: Dialogues with Jürgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Bretherton, C. and Vogler, J. (2006) *The European Union as a Global Actor*, 2nd edn, London: Routledge.
- Brown, C. (1992) *International Relations Theory: New Normative Approaches*, London: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Camps, M. (1964) *Britain and European Community, 1955–63*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Camps, M. (1965) *What Kind of Europe? The Community since De Gaulle's Veto*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Camps, M. (1966) *European Unification in the Sixties: From the Veto to the Crisis*, New York: McGraw-Hill/Council on Foreign Relations.
- Camps, M. (1968) 'Is "Europe" Obsolete?', *International Affairs* 44(3): 434–45.
- Camps, M. (1971) 'European Unification in the Seventies', *International Affairs* 47(4): 71–8.
- Cochran, M. (1999) *Normative Theory in International Relations: A Pragmatic Approach*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cooper, R. (1968) *The Economics of Interdependence: Economic Policy in the Atlantic Community*, New York: McGraw-Hill/Council on Foreign Relations.
- Del Sarto, R. and Schumacher, T. (2005) 'From EMP to ENP: What's at Stake with the European Neighbourhood Policy towards the Southern Mediterranean?', *European Foreign Affairs Review* 10: 17–38.
- Derrida, J. (1982) 'Différance' in J. Derrida (ed.), *Margins of Philosophy*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Derrida, J. (1992) 'The Other Heading: Memories, Responses, and Responsibilities' in J. Derrida, *The Other Heading: Reflections on Today's Europe*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Derrida, J. (2001) *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*, London: Routledge.
- Derrida, J. and Dufourmantelle, A. (2000) *On Hospitality*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Diez, T. (2004) 'Europe's Others and the Return of Geopolitics', *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 17(2): 319–35.

*EU, normative power and ethical foreign policy* 133

- Diez, T. (2005) 'Constructing the Self and Changing Others: Reconsidering "Normative Power Europe"', *Millennium* 33(3): 613–36.
- Diez, T. and Whitman, R. (2002) 'Analysing European Integration: Reflection on the English School – Scenarios for an Encounter', *Journal of Common Market Studies* 40(1): 43–67.
- Elbe, S. (2003) *Europe: a Nietzschean Perspective*, London: Routledge.
- Eriksen, E.O. (2006) 'The EU: A Cosmopolitan Polity?' *Journal of European Public Policy* 13(2): 252–69.
- Forsberg, T. and Herd, G. (2005) 'The EU, Human Rights, and the Russo-Chechen Conflict', *Political Science Quarterly* 120(3): 455–78.
- Frost, M. (1986) *Towards a Normative Theory of International Relations*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Frost, M. (1996) *Ethics in International Relations: A Constitutive Theory*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Frost, M. (1999) 'Putting the World to Rights: Britain's Ethical Foreign Policy', *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 12(2): 80–9.
- Frost, M. (2001) 'The Ethics of Humanitarian Intervention: Protecting Civilians to Make Democratic Citizenship Possible' in K. Smith and M. Light (eds), *Ethics and Foreign Policy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Harris, P. (2005) 'The European Union and Environmental Change: Sharing the Burdens of Global Warming', paper prepared for the 2005 Berlin Conference on the Human Dimensions of Global Environmental Change International Organizations and Global Environmental Governance, Potsdam, 2–3 December.
- Heins, V. (2005) 'Orientalising America? Continental Intellectuals and the Search for Europe's Identity', *Millennium* 34(2): 433–48.
- Held, D. (1996) *Models of Democracy*, 2nd edn, Cambridge: Polity.
- Herring, E. (1999) 'Response to Mervyn Frost: The Systematic Violation of Ethical Norms in British Foreign Policy', *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 12(2): 90–2.
- Herring, E. (2002) 'Between Iraq and a Hard Place: A Critique of the British Government's Narrative on UN Economic Sanctions', *Review of International Studies* 28(1): 39–56.
- Honderich, T. (ed.) (1995) *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Jameson, F. (1988) 'The Vanishing Mediator; or Max Weber as Storyteller', in *The Ideologies of Theory*, Vol. 2, Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Jørgensen, K.E. (2006) 'Theoretical Perspectives on the Role of Values, Images and Principles in Foreign Policy' in S. Lucarelli and I. Manners (eds), *Values and Principles in European Union Foreign Policy*, London: Routledge.
- Juncos, A. (2005) 'The EU's Post-Conflict Intervention in Bosnia and Herzegovina: (re)Integrating the Balkans and/or (re)Inventing the EU?', *Southeast European Politics* 6(2): 88–108.

134 *Ian Manners*

- Kaldor, M. (2003) *Global Civil Society: An Answer to War*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Kelley, J. (2006) 'New Wine in Old Wineskins: Promoting Political Reforms through the new European Neighbourhood Policy', *Journal of Common Market Studies* 44(1): 29–55.
- Kinnvall, C. (2004) 'Globalization and Religious Nationalism: Self, Identity, and the Search for Ontological Self', *Political Psychology* 25(5): 741–67.
- Kristeva, J. (1982) *Powers of Horror: An Essay in Abjection*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Kristeva, J. (1991) *Strangers to Ourselves*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Kristeva, J. (1998) 'Europhilia, Europhobia', *Constellations* 5(3): 321–32.
- Kristeva, J. (2000) *Crisis of the European Subject*, New York: Other Press.
- Laïdi, Z. (2005a) 'Peut-on prendre la puissance européenne au sérieux?', *Cahier européen* no. 05. Available at: [http://www.portedeurope.org/IMG/pdf/Cahier\\_europeen\\_ZAKILAIDI.pdf](http://www.portedeurope.org/IMG/pdf/Cahier_europeen_ZAKILAIDI.pdf).
- Laïdi, Z. (2005b) *La norme sans la force: L'énigme de la puissance européenne*, Paris: Presses de Sciences Po.
- Lamy, P. (2004) 'Europe and the Future of Economic Governance', *Journal of Common Market Studies* 42(1): 5–21.
- Lamy, P. and Laïdi, Z. (2002) 'A European Approach to Global Governance', *Progressive Politics* 1(1): 56–63.
- Lawler, P. (2005) 'The Good State: In Praise of 'Classical' Internationalism', *Review of International Studies* 31: 427–49.
- Lightfoot, S. and Burchell, J. (2004a) 'Green Hope or Greenwash? The Actions of the European Union at the World Summit on Sustainable Development', *Global Environmental Change* 14(4): 337–44.
- Lightfoot, S. and Burchell, J. (2004b) 'Leading the Way? The European Union and the WSSD', *European Environment* 14(6): 331–41.
- Lightfoot, S. and Burchell, J. (2005) 'The European Union and the World Summit on Sustainable Development: Normative Power Europe in Action?', *Journal of Common Market Studies* 43(1): 75–95.
- Linklater, A. (1998) *The Transformation of Political Community*, Cambridge: Polity.
- Linklater, A. (2005) 'A European Civilising Process?' in C. Hill and M. Smith (eds), *International Relations and the European Union*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lucarelli, S. and Manners, I. (eds) (2006) *Values and Principles in European Union Foreign Policy*, London: Routledge.
- McSweeney, B. (1998) *Moral Issues in International Affairs: Problems of European Integration*, Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Manners, I. (2000) *Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?*, Copenhagen Peace Research Institute, Working Paper 38. Available at: [http://www.diis.dk/graphics/COPRI\\_publications/COPRI\\_publications/publications/38-2000.doc](http://www.diis.dk/graphics/COPRI_publications/COPRI_publications/publications/38-2000.doc).

*EU, normative power and ethical foreign policy* 135

- Manners, I. (2002) 'Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?', *Journal of Common Market Studies* 40(2): 235–58.
- Manners, I. (2006a) 'Normative Power Europe Reconsidered: Beyond the Crossroads' in H. Sjursen (ed.), Special Issue: What Kind of Power? European Foreign Policy in Perspective, *Journal of European Public Policy* 13(6): 182–99.
- Manners, I. (2006b) 'The Constitutive Nature of Values, Images and Principles in the European Union' in S. Lucarelli and I. Manners (eds), *Values and Principles in European Union Foreign Policy*, London: Routledge.
- Manners, I. (2006c) 'Another Europe is Possible: Critical Perspectives on European Union Politics' in K.E. Jørgensen, M. Pollack and B. Rosamond (eds), *Handbook of European Union Politics*, London: Sage.
- Manners, I. and Whitman, R. (2003) 'The "Difference Engine": Constructing and Representing the International Identity of the European Union', *Journal of European Public Policy* 10(3): 380–404.
- Nicolaïdis, K. (2004) 'The Power of the Superpowerless' in T. Lindberg (ed.), *Beyond Paradise and Power: Europeans, Americans and the Future of a Troubled Partnership*, London: Routledge.
- Panebianco, S. and Rossi, R. (2004) *EU Attempts to Export Norms of Good Governance to the Mediterranean and Western Balkan Countries*, Jean Monnet Working Papers No. 53, Jean Monnet Centre EuroMed, Department of Political Studies, University of Catania.
- Rawls, J. (1971) *A Theory of Justice*, London: Belknap Press.
- Sassatelli, M. (2002) 'An Interview with Jean Baudrillard: Europe, Globalization and the Destiny of Culture', *European Journal of Social Theory* 5(4): 521–30.
- Scheipers, S. and Sicurelli, D. (2006) 'Normative Power Europe: A Credible Utopia', *Journal of Common Market Studies*. Forthcoming.
- Shonfield, A. (1973) *Europe: Journey to an Unknown Destination*, London: Allen Lane.
- Sjursen, H. (2002) 'Why Expand? The Question of Legitimacy and Justification in the EU's Enlargement Policy', *Journal of Common Market Studies* 40(3): 491–513.
- Sjursen, H. (ed.) (2006a) Special Issue: What Kind of Power? European Foreign Policy in Perspective, *Journal of European Public Policy* 13(6).
- Sjursen, H. (2006b) 'The European Union as a "Normative" Power: How Can This Be?', Special Issue: What Kind of Power? European Foreign Policy in Perspective, *Journal of European Public Policy* 13(6): 235–51.
- Strange, S. (1971) 'International Economic and International Relations: A Case of Mutual Neglect', *International Affairs* 46(2): 304–15.
- Strange, S. (1996) *The Retreat of the State: The Diffusion of Power in the World Economy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Strange, S. (1998) 'Who are EU? Ambiguities on the Concept of Competitiveness', *Journal of Common Market Studies* 36(1): 101–14.

136 *Ian Manners*

- Vogler, J. (2005) 'The European Contribution to Global Environmental Governance', *International Affairs* 81(4): 835–50.
- Walker, R.B.J. (1994) 'Norms in a Teacup: Surveying the "New Normative Approaches"', *Mershon International Studies Review* 38(2): 265–70.
- Wallace, H. (1971) 'The Impact of the European Communities on National Policy-making', *Government and Opposition* 6: 520–38.
- Wallace, H. (1973) *National Governments and the European Communities*, London: Chatham House/Political and Economic Planning.
- Wallace, H. (1977) 'National Bulls in the Community China Shop: The Role of National Governments in Community Policy-making' in H. Wallace, W. Wallace and C. Webb (eds), *Policy-making in the European Communities*, Chichester: Wiley.
- Wallace, H. and Edwards, G. (1976) 'European Community: The Evolving Role of the Presidency of the Council', *International Affairs* 52(4): 535–50.
- Walzer, M. (1983) *Spheres of Justice*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Webb, C. (1977) 'Introduction: Variations on a Theoretical Theme' in H. Wallace, W. Wallace and C. Webb (eds), *Policy-making in the European Communities*, Chichester: Wiley.
- Williams, P. (2002) 'The Rise and Fall of the "Ethical Dimension": Presentation and Practice in New Labour's Foreign Policy', *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 15(1): 53–63.
- Zito, A. (2005) 'The European Union as an Environmental Leader in a Global Environment', *Globalizations* 2(3): 363–75.