



The European Union's Dilemma: Balancing Normative Power with Hard Power

Tajudeen Olajide AJAO

Ph.D. Candidate, Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University, Istanbul, Turkey

E-mail: hmtajud@gmail.com

<http://dx.doi.org/10.47814/ijssrr.v7i6.2093>

Abstract

This study examines the European Union's (EU) power through the theoretical framework of realism and liberalism, with focus on its external engagements and global influence. Realism emphasizes state-centricity and power dynamics, highlighting that state's standing is determined by economic and military capabilities. However, realist scholars struggle to explain the role of the EU in the international system due to its complex, non-state nature. Liberalism, on the other hand, emphasizes cooperation, interdependence, and the spread of norms and values. The EU's normative power is evident in its global promotion of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. However, challenges persist, such as inconsistencies in foreign policy and the EU's use of hard power, like economic sanctions and military operations. The EU's response to crises, such as the migration crisis and climate change, reveals a subtle approach that balances normative and hard power elements. While it is true that normative influence of EU as a supranational organization remains significant, contributing to the shaping of international norms and values, this work argues that its economic and military capabilities often overshadow its normative efforts.

Keywords: *European Union; Realism; Liberalism; Normative Power; Hard Power; International System*

Introduction

The European Union (EU) was established as a supranational political and economic union through elite consensus and neoliberal economic reforms in the aftermath of World War II as a way to advance peace, stability, and prosperity in Europe (Mudde, 2016: 27). The intergovernmental organization began in 1952 as European Coal and Steel Community eventually and metamorphosed into European Union in 1992 at the Maastricht Treaty to denote advance stage of integration. The European Union, which comprises 27 member states, has developed into a complex institution that plays a significant role in shaping global politics and economics.

As a major player on the world stage, the EU is guided by two overarching foreign policy principles: normative power and hard power. The EU's normative power is based on the idea that it promotes democracy, human rights, and the rule of law within its member states and the world at large. On the other hand, as a hard power, the EU utilizes its economic and military strength to pursue its interests and protect its security. Therefore, the EU's stance between normative power and hard power reflects its unique approach to global governance. Whereas the European Union strives to use its economic and military power to further its values and interests, it also acknowledges the importance of cooperation and multilateralism in addressing global issues. On this note, this study intends to examine and analyze the EU's foreign policy within the context of normative power and hard power.

Theoretical Approaches to Studying the EU's Power

This study will adopt realism and liberalism theoretical approaches to analyze the European Union's external engagements. Both theories provide different perspectives to study EU's power and influence in the international system. Hence, the approaches can help to explain various facets of the EU's approaches to global governance. Realists for instance, emphasize the importance of power in international relations and see states as the primary actors in the international system, with their actions stirred by the desire for security and power. Realists believe that economic and military might are the two main factors that determine a state's standing in the international arena. However, the role and influence of the EU as a key international actor, has proven difficult for realists to explain over time. Realists, who have traditionally pursued a state-centric approach to international relations, have persisted in maintaining a pessimistic view of the EU's ability to act as coherent actor in the international system (Mearsheimer, 1994 cited in Smith, 2015: 2). More so, realist thought has frequently been denigrated by academics in the field of European Studies in favour of more liberal or constructivist viewpoints (Smith, 2015: 2). Jørgensen & Jørgensen for example, contend that realism as a theory may not provide explanation for European foreign policy because; realists have never had a clear preference for the European integration process and its foreign policy. Instead, realists are more interested in state-centric analysis, balance of power considerations, and a preference for conflict over cooperation, as well as critiques of the limited utility of multilateral institutions and economic determinants (2020: 9). Thus, realist theory seems to have a number of flaws, including its pessimism, disregard for norms and institutions such as EU. Instead it focuses on states as the key players in the global system (Russett et al. 1990: 216). While realists emphasize that only the realities of power competition matter, they do not only downplay the importance of the institutions set up by EU they also ignore role of institutions and ideologies on the world stage (ibid.). In addition, Swisa (2012: 128) posits that whereas some believe that the EU is poised to become a major player in world politics, this poses a challenge to the realist position, which only accepts states as legitimate actors. However, in recent times, the development of the EU's foreign policy capabilities and its on-going international engagement as well as its future course in an emerging multipolar world have all received increased attention from both classical realist and neorealist scholars (Smith, 2015: 2). Realist scholars are becoming more aware of the importance, of the increasing EU's power and international engagement, as well as the potential implications for the larger international system, despite their continued scepticism regarding the EU's capacity to function as a cohesive and effective actor in the international system.

On the other hand, liberalism as a theory of international relations places a strong emphasis on interdependence and cooperation between states. According to liberals, states can achieve their objectives by cooperating to solve related issues. The Liberals believe that international institutions, international economic interdependence and the spread of global culture and norms can help in fostering interstate cooperation and advancing global stability (Rourke,2007:30). The spread of democracy and interdependence has been encouraging to liberals as well. They contend that both tend to reduce the likelihood of interstate conflict, and studies support this claim to be highly plausible (Kinsella & Russett, 2002 cited in Rourke, 2007: 30). Meanwhile, the proponents of liberalism argue that the power and

influence of the European Union can be analysed from a liberal standpoint, in terms of its capacity to foster cooperation between its member states, its contribution to the creation of international institutions, and its function in promoting global norms and values like democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. Nevertheless, the liberal emphasis on EU as a distinct promoter of norms and values has been criticized by some scholars. Helene Sjursen for instance, argued that the diffusion of norms and values is a trait that is found in all foreign policies, not just EU's foreign policy. Corroborating the argument of Cox et al. (2000) Sjursen posits that there is a longstanding tradition of viewing US foreign policy as having significant normative undertones, particularly, regarding human rights and democratic values. She submits that attempts to defend EU's foreign policy using norms frequently raise concerns about hypocrisy and ulterior motives (2006: 240).

Conceptualizing Normative Power and Hard Power

The terms "normative power" and "hard power" are two categories of power that are frequently used in international relations and diplomacy to describe an actor's capabilities. Normative power for instance, refers to the ability of a state or organization to shape the behaviours of other states by advancing its own norms, values, and standards through the provision of development aids and other kind of assistance, participation in international organizations and diplomatic initiatives and commitment to promoting human rights and the rule of law (Kenealy, et. al 2022). Normative power is frequently linked to soft power, which is the ability of an actor to influence other actors without using force or coercion but instead by attracting them and persuading them (Munin & Sitbon, 2021: 19; Rourke 2007: 234). Therefore, the rejection of totalitarian and state-centred doctrines of traditional approaches strengthens the concept of "normative power" that emerged within the liberal-idealistic paradigm (Diez & Manners, 2007 cited in Savorskaya).

On the other hand, hard Power may refer to the ability of a state to pursue its national interests in the international arena through the use of military force, economic sanctions, or other forms of coercion or intimidation (Wilson, 2008: 114). In contrast to normative power, hard power is based on the use of force or the threat of using force to influence the behaviour of other states. Hence, hard power is the most common image of power in international relations which involve the ability of an actor to make other actors do something or suffer the consequences of not cooperating (Rourke 2007: 234). Therefore, using military force which may involve direct military intervention, the use of troops or weapons, or the threat of using them—is possibly the most visible form of hard power. Economic sanctions, such as asset freezes or trade embargoes, can also be used as a form of hard power to pressure a state into changing its behaviour (Ibid.).

Whereas military might and economic strength are frequently thought of when discussing "hard power," hard power may also be exercised through the use of other forms of influence or coercion. For instance, a state may employ its diplomatic influence to isolate another state or to enlist support from other nations for its cause. Cyber-attacks or other asymmetric warfare tactics can also be employed as a form of hard power, by disrupting or obstructing another state's infrastructure or communication systems (Siedler, 2016: 27). Bilgin & Eliş (2008: 7) however, argue that the materialist bias of classical realism and the preference for economic methodology in neo-realism are the major reasons why hard power gained popularity in the traditional international relations.

EU and Normative Power

The normative power of EU refers to its ability as a supranational organization to influence the outcomes of international politics by promoting European norms and values such as democracy, human rights and the rule of law. As argued by Munin and Sitbon (2021: 19), the concept of normative power evolved as a result of the EU's increasing influence on the world stage following its establishment, which introduced a cognitive and sociological dimension to the traditional discourse on international relations.

Citing, Cardwell and Wessel (2020), Munin and Sitbon assert that the normative power of EU denotes its ability to spread its admirable norms and values and exercise its ideological influence (Ibid.).

Moreover, in response to realist Hedley Bull's criticism of the idea of "civil power" Ian Manners in 2002 describes the normative power of the European Union as its capacity to reshape the understanding of "norm" in the context of international relations. Manners argued that the traditional tenets of "civil" and "military" power became outmoded after the Cold War ended. He therefore, underlined the necessity to re-evaluate these concepts in light of the transformations that had taken place in world politics since the 1990s. According to Manners the "power" of the EU cannot be reduced to its economic or military prowess but must instead be expressed through its ideas, values, and conscience. He argues that instead of EU relying exclusively on traditional power politics, its influence is derives from its ability to shape and diffuse norms and values (Manners, 2002 cited in Savorskaya, 2015: 68). Manners argued further that the distinctive feature of Europe's normative power lies in its identity as a different political entity, distinct from earlier entities. This unique identity influences the EU to act in accordance with norms (2002: 240, 252. By exemplifying and promoting principle such as human rights, democracy, and sustainable development, the EU seeks to inspire others to adopt similar norms). Therefore, the EU's normative power stems from the legitimacy and attractiveness of its norms and values. The supranational institution currently possesses normative power and will likely continue to keep this position in the foreseeable future (ibid. 2008: 45).

By protecting and diffusing its norms and values within it member states and across its border, EU exhibits its normative influence. Most importantly, the EU's decision to end death penalty is often considered as a manifestation of its normative power and commitment to human rights. The European Union has consistently pushed for eradication of the death penalty on global scale (Manners, 2002: 245-8). It views the death penalty as a degrading method of punishment that violates people's rights to life and dignity. The EU's guiding principles, which include respect for human rights, democracy, and the rule of law, inform its opposition to the death penalty (European External Action Service 2022). Hence, as EU strives to spread its norms and values, it sets some stringent conditions for its membership application, it required candidate countries to abide by democratic principles and protect rule of law and human rights (European Parliament, 2022). In spite of EU's stringent conditions for membership application, the possibility of joining the supranational institution and the likely gains that may result from being a member of European Union motivated some countries in Eastern and Central Europe to implement significant political and economic reforms in order to conform to EU's norms and values. For instance, EU membership prospects have influenced political and economic reforms in countries such as Albania, Montenegro, Serbia and others (Bechev, 2007:195).

Besides, EU has made a concerted effort to advance democracy and human rights around the world. For example, the European Union has started human rights discussions with many countries, such as China, Iran, and Myanmar, to promote respect for fundamental rights. In the case of Myanmar, it engaged the country in a number of diplomatic initiatives, offered development aid, and imposed targeted sanctions to encourage democratic reforms and enhance the country's human rights conditions. EU's normative power in this situation stems from its commitment to promoting human rights as universal values (Thant, 2013; Bailes, 2016). In addition, the EU has taken the lead in combating climate change and advancing sustainable development on a global scale. Through the use of its normative power, the EU has encouraged the use of renewable energy sources, set aggressive targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and playing a key role in global climate negotiations like the Paris Agreement. Thus, the EU's commitment to climate action has encouraged other nations to initiate similar policies and advanced the global climate agenda (Gupta & Vegelin, 2016:7). Furthermore, the European Union's response to the migration and refugee crisis and its successful negotiation with Turkey over the crisis has indeed been a significant demonstration of its normative power. The aforementioned case studies suggest how the EU uses its normative power to further its interests in the international arena.

EU and the Use of Hard Power

While the EU does not possess a permanent armed forces like nation-states do or the capacity to project force in the same manner as traditional hard power actors do, it has taken steps to develop some hard power-related capabilities, particularly in the areas of security and defence. Here are some key elements related to the EU's hard power:

Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP): In order to address security issues and advance global peace and stability, the EU established the CSDP. It includes mechanisms for conducting military operations, preventing conflicts, and managing crises. The EU has carried out numerous civilian and military missions in regions such as Africa, the Balkans, and the Mediterranean. For instance, the EU's military operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina otherwise known as EUFOR, has served as a crucial case study for its involvement in the conflict area (Hardwick, 2011: 3). Following the 1992–1995 war, Bosnia and Herzegovina is the target of the CSDP military operation EUFOR Althea, which aims to preserve stability and peace. The operation, which was launched in 2004, is centred on assisting local authorities in the security sector by enhancing their capabilities and providing training and support. EUFOR Althea is evidence of the EU's commitment to peacekeeping military operations, post-conflict stabilization, and conflict prevention in the area (Eder, 2016). The ability of the EU to conduct military operations outside of its borders and contribute to global maritime security is also demonstrated by operation Atalanta, a CSDP naval mission that was launched in 2008 to combat piracy off the coast of Somalia in the Horn of Africa. The operation aims to protect vulnerable vessels, escort shipments of humanitarian aid, and prevent and stop piracy in the area (Helly, 2016).

Defence Cooperation and Capabilities Development: Also, in order to address security challenges more efficiently and effectively, the EU has been working to improve defence cooperation among member states. Efforts like Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) and the European Defence Fund are initiatives that seek to promote cooperative defence projects, build military capabilities and enhance interoperability among EU member states (Forcadell, 2019; Howorth, J. & Macaj, 2020).

Economic Sanctions: Economic sanctions are another form of "hard power" that the European Union has used in the pursuance of its foreign policy objectives. On several occasions EU has imposed sanctions on a number of countries, entities, or individuals to influence their behaviour, protect its own interests, or respond to specific actions deemed problematic. There were instances where the EU utilized economic sanctions on state actors such as Iran, Russia and Zimbabwe. A number of sanctions were put in place against Iran's nuclear program by the EU and other international actors to put pressure on it to address concerns about its nuclear activities (Nasr, 2016). These sanctions focused on trade in specific goods and services related to the nuclear industry as well as areas like oil exports, banking and finance, technology transfers, and trade in those areas (Ibid.). Also the EU's sanctions against Russia were in response to Russia's involvement in Eastern Ukrainian conflict and its occupation of Crimea in 2014 (Dreyer, 2018). The sanctions targeted specific sectors of the Russian economy which include the financial, energy, and defence industries. Targeted sanctions were also placed by the EU against individual and entities believed to be behind actions that threatened Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty. Travel bans, asset freezes, and limitations on giving money or other forms of support to those on the list are some of these measures (Ibid.).

Military-to-Military Cooperation: Through exchanges, joint exercises, and cooperation in fields like crisis response, maritime security, counterterrorism, and cyber-security, the EU fosters military-to-military cooperation with non-member states. These initiatives seek to advance regional security by fostering greater armed forces cooperation and trust between the EU and non-member states. In 2013 for example, EU initiated EUTM Mali military training mission to train and advise the Malian Armed Forces in their efforts to strengthen security, fight terrorism, and stabilize the country. The mission assists the

Malian government in building its capacity, with a focus on military education, human rights, and the rule of law. EUTM Mali exemplifies the EU's dedication to helping allies develop their defence capacities and foster stability (Coning, 2018). More so, in 2015, Operation Sophia, a campaign to dismantle networks of human smuggling and trafficking in the Mediterranean Sea, began. Although it was primarily a civilian mission, military resources were used, and non-member states were involved in military-to-military cooperation. Various EU member states' naval vessels and aircraft worked together with partners like Tunisia to conduct joint patrols, improve maritime situational awareness and exchange information (European External Action Service, 2015)

EU's foreign policy: Between Normative Power and Hard Power

The foreign policy of the European Union is a dynamic part of its overall governance framework which according to liberals is founded on the idea of normative power and guided by it. As argued by Manners normative power is based on the premise that the EU's influence in external relations does not derive from its military strength or economic resources. Instead, it stems from the significance of the ideas, norms, and values that fortify the European integration project (2002: 239). While internal affairs and economic integration have historically been the EU's main priorities, it has gradually evolved a more coordinated and assertive approach to international relations. Thus, EU actively collaborates with other nations and regional organizations to advance its norms and values. It does this through diplomatic channels, political discussions, providing aid for development, and cooperation frameworks. Whereas EU showcases its commitment to universal values as an integral component of its legitimacy and identity, it also understands that for these values to be effective, they must be supported by real action. Therefore, the EU's foreign policy approach usually involves striking a balance between normative power and hard power, in spite of the complex relationship between the two forms of power. For instance, The EU's response to the Ukrainian crisis in 2014 demonstrated a balance between EU's normative power and hard power. While the EU placed targeted economic sanctions against Russia to put pressure and influence on the country, it also emphasized diplomacy, mediation and support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. These strategies were combined in an effort to address the crisis while upholding EU principles (European Council, "EU restrictive measures in response to the crisis in Ukraine," 2021).

Similarly, the Joint Comprehensive Plan Action (JCPOA) designed to restrain Iran's nuclear program, was negotiated with significant input from the EU. The EU's emphasis on multilateralism, non-proliferation norms, and diplomacy made its normative power clear. The agreement, however, also called for the EU to use its hard power capabilities, such as imposing economic sanctions, to ensure compliance (European External Action Service, "The EU and the Iran Nuclear Deal," 2021). In another instance, the EU's commitment to combating climate change, promoting renewable energy, and lowering greenhouse gas emissions is a clear example of its normative power. Along with exerting normative influence, the EU has exercised its hard power by enacting regulations that must be followed, like the EU Emissions Trading System, to compel emission reductions (European Commission, "EU Climate Action," 2021) More so, the European Neighbourhood Policy of the EU combines normative power which emphasizes values such as human rights and rule of law, with hard power instruments like conditionality and financial assistance. The EU encourages its neighbours to implement reforms and comply with EU norms by offering financial aid and trade incentives (European Commission, "European Neighbourhood Policy," 2021).

While the European Union has shown a tendency over time to combine the use of normative power and hard power to further its interests in its foreign relations, the willingness and decisions of the member states have been major determinants on how well the supranational organization plays the role of a normative actor. Hence, the EU's normative influence is only made possible because it is protected by the traditional characteristics of power vis-à-vis the hard power. As proponents of neo-realism have argued normative influence instruments are not sufficient to resolve global issues; the classical attributes

of power are often needed to do so (Skolimowska 2015: 121). For example, in spite of EU's normative approach to global issues as being promoted by the liberals, EU at the request of the United Nations deployed military forces to quench the crisis that erupted during the 2006 Congo electioneering process (Vlassenroot and Arnould, 2006: 4). Moreover, EU's conduct in its external relations with its near neighbour can be considered as an area where the supranational organization is acting as a realist, rather than normative power. By including conditionality clauses on trade and the enlargement process for Eastern European countries, the EU enforces its own norms upon third countries through coercive tactics. This can be viewed as an approach of "milieu shaping," in which member states exploit the EU to enhance their own interests within the international arena (Skolimowska 2015: 121).. By utilizing their economic strength and employing a combination of incentives and penalties, the member states compel third countries to align themselves with them (Hyde-Price 2008: 31). The neo-realists have argued that because EU lacks the ability to persuade third states to adopt its normative model it often supports its offers with additional economic or military incentives. This approach therefore, assumes that the EU, as a major player in international relations, is inherently entangled with its member states. In this view, the EU is not a separate entity but rather a tool being used by the most influential member states to further their own interests on the world stage (Skolimowska 2015 :121). This implies that EU, does not behave as a "normative power" in its interactions with third countries particularly, it near abroad. Instead, it merely serves as a "civilizing power" when its most influential member states use it to impose the norms and values on post-Communist Eastern Europe (Hyde-Price 2006: 227).

Also, the response of EU to the migration crisis in 2015 exposed its limitations as a normative power. With member states frequently putting their national interests ahead of the protection of human rights and the needs of refugees, the EU struggled to come to an agreement on a coordinated response to the crisis. Hence, the EU's decision to externalize migration control to countries outside the EU and the shift of its member states from rescue missions to combating terrorism and migrant smuggling in the Mediterranean not only illustrates the lip service the intergovernmental organization pays to human rights protection but also raised concerns about its human rights records (Ceccorulli et al., 2021 cited in Diez, 2021: 10). Though the EU has made political and financial concessions to Turkey for the management of the migration crisis, the agreement does not prevent Turkish government from returning refugees and migrants to their home countries. The March 2016 EU-Turkey migration deal was actually designed to stop the influx of refugees and migrants into EU territory (Diez, 2021: 10). Whereas the European Union is more concerned that refugees and migrants do not make it to EU member states; there are documented instances of people being forced to return to Syria, often after experiences of abuse and detention. As reported by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, refugees have been forcibly returned to Syria under the guise of voluntary repatriation, in an effort to establish a designated "safe zone" within the Turkey territory (Migration Policy Institute, 2021).

In addition, the EU's collaboration on defence and security related issues with authoritarian regimes, such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt which have been indicted for human rights abuses and violations of rule of law, coupled with its military support to Israeli apartheid regime despite its increasing human rights violations in Gaza, undermines the EU's commitment to democracy, protection of human rights and the rule of law. European countries collectively stand as one of Israel's main suppliers of military systems and equipment, second only to the United States. In the last ten years, EU countries have licensed approximately €2 billion worth of military contracts to Israel, with over €600 million granted in 2012 alone. These contracts have included ammunition, weapon firing equipment, and components for military aircraft and vehicles. According to EU reports, European countries have refrained from sending arms or military systems to Palestine since 2002 (Centre Delas, 2014).

Likewise, the willingness of the European Union to engage in trade with China, in the face of its emphasis on human rights conditionality clauses appears to contradict its established norms. EU's action in this regard validates realist argument that, suggesting that EU engagements in external relations is

mainly to pursue its self-interest rather than upholding its norms and values (Hardwick, 2011: 2). Although Manners (2002: 248) contends that EU exhibits a clear move to spread human rights norms to China through dialogue, the uncertainty surrounding the situation and its bilateral relations with China allows for the criticism of the notion of normative power Europe (Ibid.). Thus, this ambiguity raises doubt about the impact of the supranational organization's efforts in spreading its norms to China.

Besides, the absence of meaningful sanctions in a multilateral institution like the EU, create a situation where member states are free to flout established norms without suffering any serious consequences (Sjursen 2006: 246). The populist leaders in some EU's member states openly flout the rule of law and expressly reject the liberal democratic institutions, as in the cases of Viktor Orban of Hungary and Lech Kaczynski of Poland, who are not only promoting illiberal democracy but also consolidate virtually unrestricted political power in their own hands. These instances and a number of others suggest how populism is increasingly becoming identical to authoritarianism and dictatorship in part of EU's territory (Bugarcic, 2019).

Also, the climate change debate is one of the major global issues that put to test the EU's claim to normative power. While EU has demonstrated its commitment to normative norms by reducing its carbon emissions, its economic interests in China have hindered its ability to exert significant pressure on the Chinese government to reduce the country's carbon emissions. A recent study conducted in the United States by the Rhodium Group, as reported by the BBC, reveals that China's greenhouse gas emissions exceed those of the entire industrialized world combined. China was the largest emitter of greenhouse gases in 2019, bringing up 27% of global greenhouse gas emissions, followed by the United States at 11% and India as the third-largest emitter. Emphasizing the warning of the scientists the report concludes that it will be difficult to avert disastrous climate change without an agreement between the United States and China (BBC News 2021, May 7). Similarly, Mohammed Chahim, a member of the European Parliament since 2019 and a rapporteur for the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism asserts that despite a decline in EU carbon emission, the region's carbon footprint continues to expand. Chahim asks, "Who do you think China is producing for?" Chahim (2019) submits that EU does not genuinely act as a normative power but rather pretending to be one (cited in Güler, 2019: 7). Whereas EU has been successful in maintaining peace within its own borders, it has directly or indirectly contributed to international crises, as evidenced by the carbon footprint debate (Güler 2019: 7).

Also, the EU's quest for normative power appears to have been undermined by the necessity of surviving in the global anarchy system. The supranational organization in recent years has made major efforts to strengthen its security and defence capabilities, in contrast to its claim of normative power. This include establishing initiatives such as the European Defence Fund and Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), which seek to strengthen defence cooperation among EU member states and make them available for EU military operations. These initiatives have been put into place with the objective of enhancing the EU's ability to address security issues, providing safety for EU citizens, and improving the efficiency of defence spending (European External Action Service, 2022).

Besides, the nuclear capability of some EU member states has positioned the European Union as the third largest nuclear power actor after United States and Russia. In accordance with NATO's nuclear sharing policy Germany, Italy, Belgium and Netherland host United States nuclear weapon (Jovetic and Roelen, 2018). Though the increasing military strength of EU was borne out of the need to provide security for Europe, it also serves EU's Economic interest. For example, the EU is the second-largest exporter of weaponry in the world, after the United States. According to a report by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), the EU member states accounted for 26% of global exports of conventional weapons from 2012 to 2016. Moreover, defence industries within the EU have actively sought to boost exports and venture into emerging Asian markets (Pejsova, 2018:7-8).

Furthermore, while as a ‘normative power’, it would be expected that European Union expands its efforts to maintain peace beyond its region; the EU’s inconsistent approach toward the Middle East conflict, especially the Israel-Palestine issue, appears to support the claim that a significant portion of the discussion on normative power in relation to the Union is not about an objective analysis of EU actions but rather centres on the construction of a collective European identity (Güler 2019: 7; Diez and Pace 2011: 223-4). Though Manners and similar scholars consider this as a successful implementation of the original concept of normative power, the construction of such an identity helps to conceal the EU’s acceptance of its own failure in both domestic affairs and international engagements. It also encourages practices that threaten the identity itself. Hence, the idea of EU’s identity as a normative power not only has problematic consequences it can also be counterproductive (Ibid.). In a nutshell, the idea of EU’s Normative Power is weak because it overestimates the ability of the European Union to shape the international norms. The EU’s economic might and military strength are the primary reasons for its international influence, rather than its normative power. Thus, EU’s reliance on economic and military capabilities which ultimately play major role in determining how international relations are shaped, limits its ability to set norms (Hyde-Price 2006: 223).

Conclusion

Since the creation of EU it has gone through various periods of developments, with its actorness and position in the international system being the most significant. Over time, the status of its power and position in international relations has generated debates among scholars. Moving from civilian power in the 1970s to military power in 1990s and then normative power in 2000s, the liberals and the like of Manners have attempted to present EU as a normative power that demonstrates its influence through the diffusion of European norms and values. The liberals have argued that the EU norms and value which include promotion of democratic values, protection of human rights and rule of law are practiced within EU territory and spread to third countries through diplomacy, persuasion, negotiation and compromise. However, I argue that EU’s conditionality clauses and imposition of sanctions on third states in order to influence their behaviours reveals that EU’s norms and values are not only executed by persuasion and negotiation, they are also backed with hard power. While EU’s normative power agenda has motivated the supranational organization to develop European norms and values, its hard power capabilities has allowed it to diffuse them to third countries as international norms and values.

Whereas the proponents of ‘normative power Europe’ tend to analyse EU’s influence on world stage within the context of non-material capabilities, this study reveals how EU utilizes its material capabilities such as economic instruments and military threat to protect its regional security and advance its interests in its external relations. More so, the lack of central authority in the global system that could curtail the excesses of both state and non-state actors has pushed many nation-states including international actor like EU to resolve to self-help; either through the acquisition of more powers and construction of alliances or collective security. Though the liberals have argued that EU reliance on soft power constitutes sources of its strength, the development of European common security and defence policy (ESDP) by EU invalidate the liberal’s argument. EU’s ESDP initiative and its subsequent coordination raised concern about EU’s normative power. Also the increase in volume of trade in arms of some EU member states and their engagement in military operations outside EU borders tend to hinder EU’s normative power agenda. Although the proponents of normative power Europe in sometimes attempt to separate EU foreign policy from that of its member states, I argue that EU as a supranational institution ought to have compelled its member states to abide by its norm and values. It is expected that EU as international actor that prides itself as a normative power would have made disarmament and prohibition of trading in military equipment as parts of the conditions of its membership application, just as its outlines democracy and the adherence to human rights as two of its stringent conditions of its

membership application. Hence, the pursuance of normative power Europe without adequate arrangement to halt military adventure of European powers may be an exercise in futility.

Furthermore, the EU's relations with authoritarian and Israeli apartheid regimes, in spite of their shoddy record on human rights and disregard for the rule of law, demonstrate that the EU only prioritizes the diffusion of norms and values when it serves its own strategic interests. This calls into doubt the ability of the EU to exercise normative power and its dedication to universal values.

References

- Bailes, A. J. K. (2016). "The European Union and Myanmar: From Isolation to Engagement" in Myanmar: State, Society, and Ethnicity, *Institute of Southeast Asian Studies*, 145-162.
- BBC News (2021, May 7). Report: China emissions exceed all developed nations combined. Retrieved on from <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-57018837>.
- Bechev, D. (2007). Constructing South East Europe: The Politics of Balkan Regional Cooperation, *Europe-Asia Studies*, 59 (2), 191-210.
- Bilgin, P. & Eliş, B. (2008) Hard Power, Soft Power: Toward a More Realistic Power Analysis, *Insight Turkey*, 10 (2), 5-20.
- Coning, C. (2018) Towards an Understanding of EU Military Capacity Building, *European Security*, 27(3), 335-351.
- Centre Delas (2014, July 22). "European Union Must End its Military Support for Israel". Retrieved from: <https://centredelas.org/actualitat/european-union-must-end-its-military-support-for-israel/?lang=en>.
- Diez, T. (2021). The EU in A Changing World Order: In Defence Of Normative Power 2.0, *Marmara Journal of European Studies*, 29 (1) .
- Diez, T. and Pace, M. (2011). "Normative Power Europe and Conflict Transformation", in Whitman, R., Normative Power Europe: Empirical and Theoretical Perspectives, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave, Ch. 11, pp. 210 – 225.
- Dreyer, J. (2018) EU Sanctions against Russia: Strategic Considerations and Economic Consequences, *Routledge*.
- Eder, K. (2016). EU Foreign and Security Policy in Bosnia and Herzegovina: From Policy Development to Implementation. *European Security*, 25 (3), 350-371.
- European Council (2021). EU restrictive measures in response to the crisis in Ukraine Retrieved on June 3 from <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/sanctions/restrictive-measures-against-russia-over-ukraine/history-restrictive-measures-against-russia-over-ukraine/>.
- European External Action Service (2015) "EU NAVFOR MED Operation Sophia". Retrieved from: https://eeas.europa.eu/topics/military-and-civilian-missions-and-operations/3086/eu-navfor-med-operation-sophia_en.
- European External Action Service (2022) "A Security and Defence Policy Fit for the Future" Retrieved from: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/permanent-structured-cooperation-pesco_en.

- European Parliament (1998) “Democracy and respect for human rights in the enlargement process of the European Union” Retrieved from: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/enlargement/briefings/20a2_en.htm .
- Forcadell, F. J. R. (2019). The Implementation of Permanent Structured Cooperation in the EU: Challenges and Perspectives. *European Security*, 28(1), 1-17.
- Güler, K. (2019) A critique of 'Normative Power Europe' Discourse in the Light of a Farewell Speech *Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*.
- Gupta, J., & Vegelin, C. (2016). “Contextualizing EU Climate Diplomacy: The EU” in International Climate Change Politics, *The International Spectator*, 51(3), 1-15.
- Hardwick, D. (2011) Is the EU a Normative Power? Retrieved on May 6, 2023 from <https://www.e-ir.info/2011/09/03/is-the-eu-a-normative-power>.
- Helly, D. (2016) Maritime Security and EU Policies in the Horn of Africa: Perspectives on Operation Atalanta, *European Security*, 25 (3), 332-349.
- Howorth, J. & Macaj, M. (2020) The European Defense Fund: Bringing Industrial Policy into the CSDP, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 58(1), 20-35.
- Jovetic, M. and Roelen, M. (2018) Snapshot: NATO Nuclear Sharing and the future of Nuclear Deterrence in Europe, *Hague Centre for Strategic Studies*, October 31.
- Jørgensen, K. E. & Jørgensen, F. A. E. (2020) Realist theories in search of realists: The failure in Europe to advance realist theory”, *International Relations*, 35 (1), 1-20.
- Kenealy, K. et al (2022) *The European Union: How does it work?* (Oxford): Oxford University Press.
- Manners, I. (2002) Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms? *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 40 (2), 235—258.
- Manners, I. (2006). Normative Power Europe reconsidered: beyond the crossroads, *Journal of European Public Policy*, 13 (2), 182-199.
- Manners, I. (2008). The Normative Ethics of the European Union, *International Affairs*, 84 (1), 46-60.
- Migration Policy Institute (April 2021). “The EU-Turkey Deal, Five Years On: A Frayed and Controversial but Enduring Blueprint” updated April 8, 2021. Retrieved from: <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/eu-turkey-deal-five-years-on>.
- Mudde, C. (2016). Europe's Populist Surge: A Long Time in the Making, *Foreign Affairs*, 95 (6), 25-30.
- Munin, N. & Sitbon, O. (2021). Between Normative Power and Soft Power: the Psagot case *Australian and New Zealand Journal of European Studies*, 13 (1), 18-33.
- Nasr, V. (2016) *Iran's Nuclear Program and EU Sanctions: A Case Study in EU Foreign Policy*. Routledge.
- Pejsova, E. (2018). ed. Guns, Engines and Turbines the EU’s Hard Power in Asia, *European Union Institute for Security Studies*.
- Rourke, J. T. (2007). *International Politics on World Stage*, (New York): McGraw-Hill, 23-30

- Savorskaya, E. (2015). The Concept of the European Union's normative power, *Baltic Region*, 7 (4), 66-76.
- Siedler, R. E. (2016). Hard Power in Cyberspace: CNA as a Political Means in N. Pissanidis, H. Rõigas, M. Veenendaal (Eds.), *2016 8th International Conference on Cyber Conflict Cyber Power*. Tallinn, Estonia. NATO CCD COE Publications, Tallinn.
- Sjursen, H. (2006). The EU as a 'normative' power: how can this be? Published online: *Journal of European Public Policy*, 235–251.
- Skolimowska, A. (2015). The European Union as a 'Normative Power' in International Relations: Theoretical and Empirical Challenges, *Yearbook of Polish European Studies*, 18, 111-31.
- Smith, N. R. (2015) The EU under a realist scope: Employing a neoclassical realist framework for the analysis of the EU's Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement offer to Ukraine, *International Relations*, 30 (1), 1-20.
- Swisa, M. (2011). Future Stability in the European Union: Realism, Constructivism, and Institutionalism, *Claremont-UC Undergraduate Research Conference on the European Union: Vol. 2011 (11)*, 125-134.
- Thant Myint-U. (2013). Where China and Europe Meet: Myanmar's Dilemma and the European Response. *European Council on Foreign Relations*.
- Vlassenroot, K. and Arnould, A. (2006). EU Policies in the Democratic Republic of Congo: Try and Fail? *Friedrich Ebert Stiftung*, 4.
- Wilson, E. J., (2008). Hard Power, Soft Power, Smart Power. *ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences*, Issue 616, 110-12.

Copyrights

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal.

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).