# How Successfully has the European Union Demonstrated Itself to be an Exporter of Liberal Norms and Values?

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*Abstract:* *The concept of Europe's Normative Power aimed to reconfigure the global order in alignment with the EU's principles of peace and stability. This principle necessitates the EU's steadfast commitment to its values and objectives, despite the intricate and ever-changing landscape of global politics. However, the practical application of EU Normative Power has often fallen short, particularly evident in its response to events like the Russia-Ukraine conflict. This essay proposes to analyze the EU's transmission of normative power through both political and economic lenses, employing empirical methodologies and considering theoretical frameworks such as Realism and Marxism. Additionally, the EU's attempt to solidify its image through initiatives like the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) has resulted in ambiguity and a shift towards a more securitized identity. Moreover, the EU's response to the Russia-Ukraine conflict, including its financing of non-normative military equipment, further undermines its claim to normative power.*

*Keywords:* *European Union, liberal norms and values, normative power, realism, marxism*

## 1. Introduction

The uprising trends of ideology diffusions, perspectives, and understanding of how the world works have been massively attained in the globalisation era and widely implemented in varied ways. The proliferation of international actors in international relations and liberalism results from globalisation. Thus, the empirical evidence that could be considered to this extent is the existence of the European Union (EU) as a regional organisation that applies specific legislation and represents member states of European countries. As we know in classical Realism perspective often mentioned, the main or centrality in international relations is the state and the implementation of power as the sophisticated element concerned to be the potential ground for emerging international structure (Williams, 2004). Nevertheless, to this extent, the understanding of the establishment of the EU has been rigged to utilising the liberalists' view, which it has employed to pursue the democratisation, free trade, and peace- building scheme – the importance of states' interests wrapped into collective policy under the EU. For clarity purposes, this essay is about understanding the EU's endeavours to obtain the label as a carrier of liberal values in the international world and the implication of the process and their characteristic for claiming the role of liberalism exporter. Why is it essential to be discussed? Because the ambiguity of the EU practices seemed to be vague and its objectives need to be analysed in-depth; therefore, the clarity of its role and functions could be utilised for defining the appropriate interactions between the EU and other international actors by using the evidence on how they reacted to several events and their policy-making process. Eventually, this essay's main argument will focus on how the EU's implementation of propagating the liberal approach extensively yet has not fully enclosed the entire specification on success criteria of spreading their Normative Power (NP). Therefore, this essay will firstly introduce the debates surrounding the topic, which is the perception that the EU has successfully exported the understanding of liberalism globally and that the EU has not mirrored the publicity of the normative power. Secondly, this paper will present the

main discussion of the personal judgment of this essay on the contradictions between the EU's notoriety and its practice in reality with a brief conversation about normative power beforehand, then will lead to an assumption that the EU has not been entirely in pursuit of achieving the success in the spread of its values. Finally, this paper will also present the actions of the EU in the Russia – Ukraine war regarding its attempts and moves towards the disputes as to the related evidence that might be fruitful support for the main argument above.

## 2.   The Implementation of Liberal or Normative Power in the EU Mechanism

This section will be about the debates on the implementation of Liberal or Normative Power in the EU mechanism. The EU is known as a regional organisation that practices the norms, and it has also been observed to conceptualise this approach in their working mechanism (Wagner, 2017). However, this insight has been contested by the time as it's reflected. These principles seemed to be demonstrated formally by showing the rationality of this organisation. Thus, the EU normative power has been assumed to be the appropriate notion to build peace and create a new world order. In addition to that, it has also been mentioned that the implementation of the normative power in the EU is only part of the self-branding process for reaching a particular goal in the political sphere (Lucarelli, 2006). There are two essential discussions currently in this essay, whether the EU's NP is successfully spread widely or not. Even though the debate around the EU NP mainly covers political dimensions and links to the clauses with the trade partners.

The paper proceeds with the general view of normative power in the international order. The central understanding is normative power, defined as a construction of the most ideal and less- harmful action; it is the practice of norms rather than physical form (Manners, 2009). Post Cold War era marked the world's expectations by utilising military power or civilian power to pursue the normative power that led to peace. The soft-power concept remains at the surface after the devastating effects of the Cold War and the rising terminology of peacebuilding. Thus, when it comes to the definition of the EU, EUNP is mainly based on the agreement in the Copenhagen Treaty regarding the promotion and protection of liberal democracy and multilateralism (Pace, 2007). Based on Churchill's speech in Congress of the Hague in 1948, the EU had established for peaceful regional stability; by that time, the EU had shaped its identity and not only focused on its territorial or within the EU neighbourhood issues but also aimed to be considered as an international actor with the bold agreement of Common Foreign and Security (CFSP) on Maastricht Treaty. Thus, the EU NP has known as well to practice a standard policy rather than a single policy; however, this practice is not simple as it seems because their foreign policy is wrapped and represented as a whole or one voice (Keukeleire & Tom, 2022). Based on my point of view, from this era, the EU has applied its normative power as the moment to shape the outward-looking, which is the world – it is assumed that the EU's interests shifted from focusing on building stability within European countries to an act of making world stability.

Additionally, it was developed and perfected by the Lisbon Treaty in 2009 and the new Strategic Framework on Human Rights and Democracy in 2012. The projection of the normative power in the EU has shown the fundamental process and bold gesture of the EU of its realisation of liberal ideas. It is also argued from a Realist perspective that the practice of the EU's NP is the strategy of the European Community to manage the balancing power process with the United States. On the other hand, Manners argues that exercising the NP also brings the perception of "more holistic, justifiable, and sustainable world politics" (Kavalski, 2017). The less-coercive political system should be in the practice of normative power because the dynamics of world order are entangled with their interests or dependency on each other. Especially for the EU as the only 'exclusive' organisation in the world that has the privileges, so then the practice of the NP alone could be identified on their standardisation of the EU preconditions membership, engagement to close partners, rewards and punishment, financial assistance, and several more (Pace, 2007).

## 3.   Discoursing European Union Success in Exporting Liberal Norms and Values

This section will focus on the writer's position on defining whether the EU has widely spread its value or failed the process. But to put it more simply, it will be discussed with the explanation from the debates. The essay will attempt to set out the success parameter to analyse the topic, divided into two parts: politically and economically. It has been argued that the EU is using its power for good but is also defined

as the strategy to accredit absolute dominance of the world. It could not be ignored that the EU has solely practised the normative power genuinely; it has been proved by its characteristics dictated by the treaties by its operational on foreign decision-making and policymaking (Daskalova, 2013). To better understand the EU's political outcome on normative power, the first political element will be presented by Romanova (2016); categorising the norms and values of the EU seemed to be unfair because the acknowledgment of justice itself could not be identified subjectively. To this extent, the EU has insisted on applying its norms to any cooperation procedure (Romanova, 2016). According to this thesis, the interpretation of spreading the values globally seemed to be incoherent with the fact that the ideal way to judge the rightness of state is not depending on what perspective they have chosen. From a Marxist perspective, the perfect way to form a constitutional ideology should be based on 'public needs'; however, class struggle and many other political elements will be playing as additional players and might have influenced the formation of its ideology.

Furthermore, the critical thing to point out is that the ideology has also been the 'engine' of the state to dictate, behave, rule, or generally function properly (Tambiyants, et al., 2017). Therefore, it is defined in Realist's view, exporting ideology is assumed to be an action to pursue their own goal and create a new political ecosystem across the globe; therefore, the EU itself could be acknowledged as a community to obtain power with a range of values to be their strategy on overall hegemony in globalisation era. Choosing the NP as the instrument to dominate the world seemed to be a 'polite' way rather than utilising military power because, technically, the current world order had suffered and experienced the post-war effects. The enlargement of international cooperation will form sustainable peace. Hence, these political interests have given the fact that the normative power is only an instrument for the EU – the realist view that Romanova mentioned in a specific part of her book was the implications between the EU's requirements and the condition of the upcoming partner. For example, the historical background of a particular state would have appeared differently and pursued a different ideology. The cultural sphere would be an additional element that could count as a limitation of framing a partnership framework with the EU. Another similar critique of the EU's NP is presented by Hyde-Price (2006); the tendency of the EU to apply a 'liberal' uniformity is not only used for the member-states yet also for their partners – it is leaning toward the assumption of shaping and dictating other's identity (Hyde-Price, 2006). Thus, it is strongly assumed that the probability for the EU to dominate the world by forming a collective regional organisation with NP as the tool would fragment another version of power. Logically, this massive power will conveniently achieve political and economic stability since they have grouped almost every European country.

Moreover, the empirical example that could bring to the table is the mandatory requirements that the EU has formed for states that consider having EU membership based on the Copenhagen Treaty of 1993. It contains three stages for gaining approval: to become a candidate for the membership, accession criteria, and satisfaction for both sides. These requirements involve sharing values on ideology and economic and environmental conditions (European Commission, n.d.). Nevertheless, practically in terms of implementation of the EU membership status is substantially one-sided approval – this means the EU has been taking the consent not only by the written rules but also by considering the invisible elements in a state.

The second political element is the ambiguity of the EU's role and capabilities at the international level. The actorness in the EU has already completed being categorised as an organisation, but in the concept of power conventionally as Realist would not reach the qualification since the absolute actor is a state, not a collective group of states. On the contrary, it has been argued by Čmakalová and Rolenc (2012) that the actorness identity of the EU has passed the assessment of the United Nations with the support of the Lisbon Treaty, enhanced the credibility of the EU as an actor in international affairs (Čmakalová & Rolenc, 2012). Thus, the institutions that have been formed are too varied. Hence the efficiency and authority that runs the EU's body constrain the policy-making and problem-solving process. It has been supported in a book by Keukeleire and Delreux that there are two different mechanisms in the EU foreign policy-making practice: the community method and the intergovernmental method. It has also stated that the EU is one framework with several institutions that will comprehensively cover the field (Keukeleire & Tom, 2022). From this point, it could be concluded that the conceptualisation in the EU methodologies and hierarchy are too rigid and about to create unsatisfying results for the union. This notion also defined that the EU would not be equivalent to other regional organisations since their power from member-states will influence the entire competitiveness between international organisations.

- European countries are always seen as advanced countries compared to decolonised countries or developed countries, which will affect the potency and discriminatory. The perception of the international organisation had lingered with the standpoint of Liberalism view, which is cooperation and peace; therefore, it could decrease the possibility of war or disputes (Oneal, John R.; Oneal, Fraces H.; Maoz, Zeev, 1996). Why is the actorness of the EU always very questionable? From my point of view, the clarity that the EU presented has changed the whole perception of the international organisation; as supported in a journal by Groen and Niemann, the actorness framework in international relations is based on a simple term of being actively participating in the international system (Groen & Niemann, 2013). However, this term could be argued by questioning how broad 'actively participating' means

- generally, participating in a forum or an event. Yet, the EU inferred to act differently and seemed to have 'special' authority. The empirical objective is how the EU is constructed with several treaties that have framed them as 'special' as today. The presence of the EU is biased by its structure, scope, institutions, and the hierarchy making them act and claim as a more superior or state-like organisation. Therefore, the EU's actorness is a necessary element to be confined because it could prevent the forthcoming inclination on international relations, especially it could dictate how the EU and other international actors have adequately functioned in their proportion. Two political elements mentioned above could be categorised as leaning notion toward the assumption that the EU has efficiently projected their NP based on their approach to partnerships building and their role superiority. Theoretically, these two significant elements would positively impact transferring the NP to the world. Nevertheless, it would be against and overlap with other states' principles – to create pleasing cooperation between states and the international community or organisation, sharing and aligning values will be required. The complexity of states' ideology in international relations sought to fail the transporting process from the EU to other countries – even though the exclusivity that the EU holds seemed to have massive power, the states' sovereignty has also been positioned on its highest level.

In addition, the economic elements will be discussed to give a clearer image of the EU's attempt to reach the succession of normative power distribution. Firstly, from a financial angle, the EU is the largest trade bloc globally and is considered the leading actor that dominates the world's trading sphere. According to the previous fact, the EU essentially has the 'doctrine' power and necessarily had to be partnered with the world's big markets like China, Russia, South Africa, the United States, and the United Kingdom (Keukeleire & Tom, 2022). Trade policies that the EU has been practising are the exclusive responsibility, not the member-states; it is validated in article 207 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU on trade policy (European Commission, n.d.). It is also assumed that the EU holds the essential power to control and cover trade in general for member-states. However, it could be argued that on the perception of anarchy in international relations – the conception of no higher or central authority in international relations will project the possibility of overlapping interests between member-states and the EU.

Furthermore, the transporting process of the EU NP could be less influential and would not meet the criteria of success. Another thing to point out is that the 'investment' practised by providing financial assistance for European countries seemed to be the EU mechanism to gain European stability and dependency on the non-member European countries to the EU. Thus, the liberal approach in the EU single market provides clarity to the EU projection on their economic system. As mentioned in a study by Parker and Rosamond (2013), the ambiguity of neoliberal culture in the EU has been linked to the cosmopolitanism – by it means, the distinctions between the implementation of liberalism in the EU have diffused and mixed with the perception of freedom 'guaranteed by' and 'from' government (Parker & Rosamond, 2013). These two approaches are assumed to have overlapped with each other – the paramount consideration in this section is whether the practice of NP is the new form of conventional foreign policy or not. Since the formation of the other different perspectives, the exercise of multilateralism in the EU might create tension produced by the uniformity rules in the EU. Even though the EU shifted to be an organisation with a more integrated and coherent system, this essay has suggested that the indicator of success for the EU on NP is the accuracy and certainty of the outcomes. Based on the discussion above, the main issue is that the EU seeks to focus on proposing the NP by applying NP's values as the core requirements of membership and partnership status. Yet, it seems unacceptable for several

countries to follow and become challenges for the EU to be consistent. Therefore, according to the discussion, the argument will be leaning toward the assumption of failing to transport the values internationally because the realisation of the outcome does not match the criteria.

To prove the point of the main argument, this section provides a few elements that may represent the inefficient transmission process of liberal values in the EU system by discussing its contribution to the Russia and Ukraine War. The aggression toward Ukraine has expanded the sanctions continuously. This essay focuses on two essential elements: the financial sanctions and the response of the EU towards the ongoing war. However, the argument of normative power is assumed to contradict the conception of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) and re-baptised to the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), which allows the member states to enhance the military integration within the EU Framework. Within this action, the EU has given a blurred image of its practice of normative power. As mentioned above, the EU's norms are based on peace, liberty, democracy, law, and human rights. Nevertheless, Realist objectives seen these norms could not be applied relatively since the features of being in a "peace" situation should be through the conflicts, and conflicts will remain and continue. The establishment of CSDP itself also raises another question "what is the reason behind this establishment while the EU has agreed and glorified the normative power?"

Additionally, the implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy agreed on in 2003; the EU has to form peace and stability in Eastern and Southern Neighbourhood. However, this notion would generate and raise concerns around the neighbourhood, such as the gap between the neighbour state and its rival. In this discussion, the disputes between Russia and Ukraine escalated in Crimea and parts of Donbas, which are internationally recognised as part of Ukraine's territory. Eventually, this escalation continued and took the idea of "liberation of Donbas" as Putin's goal in 2014 (Kirby, 2022). Nevertheless, this assumption has shifted, and in Russia-Ukraine War 2022, Putin aimed to avoid the attempt of Ukraine to join NATO.

Even though the Russian leader's rhetorical narrative seized the military invasion as a "special military operation", it could not be validated. According to the recent expansion of Russia to Ukraine on 24th February 2022, the mass death caused by President Vladimir Putin has attained the world's attention in a blink of an eye. The violation of the human rights and the UN Charter of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) – the document itself glorifies the importance of humankind's freedom in general, not only freedom of speech but also equal rights of men and women for a better standard of life (United Nation, n.d.). More importantly, the EU is not the only organisation that embraces liberal ideas but also follows the UN. For instance, international crimes such as genocides that could be identified in the Ukraine War should be reported and judged by the Security Council and the General Assembly. This invasion is not only perceived as a violation of human rights but also considered an attack that violates the state's territorial integrity and sovereignty. As mentioned on the UN's website, the UN Charter should be applied to every single member- states and aggressively against Russia's humanitarian aggression toward Ukraine. The implementation of the normative power in the UN has also been used in the EU similarly – the urgent establishment of sanctions by the Council of the European Union against Russia has initially started in 2014 in response to the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol and expanded in 2022 due to Ukraine War from coal ban, financial measures, transport, targeted export bans, extending import bans, excluding Russia from public contrast and European money, legal clarification and assets freezes to 217 individuals on the list (European Commission, 2022). In detail, from the escalations on the 23rd of February, the EU has rapidly acted to apply the sanctions, not only to Russia in large but also against Vladimir Putin and Sergey Lavrov and continued to thicken the sanctions by the time.

Furthermore, by the latest update from 13th April 2022, the Council has already agreed to change the Ukrainian currency to European. Following by evaluation of the study case above, it has been observed that the EU has claimed to promote normative power by constituting sustainable peace through the Neighbourhood Policy and banning and applying the sanctions over the Russia-Ukraine War. However, this notion of constructing peace and violation of human rights is also through the medium of ambiguity of the EU itself. For instance, the formulation of ESDP in the EU body and the counterattack against Russia by allocating the funds for military operations with €5 billion to Ukraine and utilising the "European Peace Facility" (Baume & Barigazzi, 2022). Through this aid, the EU implied the military scheme to confront Russia and support Ukraine seemed not to be mirroring the normative power that the EU embedded in its system.

The EU has implemented the process of transporting the idea of normative power or liberal ideas through the mandatory requirements of membership and partnership, the massive proportion of liberal

ideas in the aims and policies of the EU system. However, some other practical actions and rules potentially diffused the identity of the EU and leaned toward an assumption of the failing sphere of the exporting Europe Normative Power. This essay has demonstrated how compelling the fact that the EU has not reflected its norms in its practice and subjectively applied the normative power, only seeking to fulfil its interest in the political sphere and as an economic tool.

## 4.  Conclusion

The idea of Europe Normative Power was to reshape the world order to practice the common sense of peace and stability of the EU. This notion requires consistency of the EU by sticking to its value and its aims, yet the global politics is assumed to be stigmatised by its complexity and the dynamics. This means the perception of practising the EU NP was not entirely implemented and engaged with the current circumstances like the Russia-Ukraine war. In this essay, the succession of the EU transmitting its normative power could be examined through the political and economic lenses with a more empirical approach and presents the related approach like Realism and Marxism. In addition, the EU seemed to project its image with ambiguity and diffusion by constructing ESDP and shifting into a firmer securitised appearance of the EU. Furthermore, it is also supported by the EU response to the Russia- Ukraine War, the financing instrument on weapons that do not show the appearance of the Normative power.

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