

European Union's evolving international identity

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Plan of the lecture

- 1. Changing identity of the EU in the international relations**
- 2. EU's self-perception and its image among selected external countries**



Changing identity of the EU in the international relations

Identity issue and the EU's international role characteristics

Constructivism (A. Wendt, 'Collective Identity Formation and the International State', *The American Political Science Review*, vol. 88, no. 2, 1994, p. 385)

- identity is developed, supported and changed in the process of interactions among actors of the international relations – in this sense it is socially constructed;
- identities also have variable and fluxional nature depending on the character of participants of international relations in specific time and place;
- identity is regarded as a product of social and political actions. It is used to highlight the process and the interactive nature of the development of the collective understanding;
- identity is a 'contingent product' of social and political action, and second, it is understood as a ground or basis for further action

We can distinguish six qualities for the Constructivist usage of the term (A. von Busekist, 'Uses and Misuses of the Concept of Identity', Security Dialogue, vol. 35, no. 1, 2004, p. 82):

- identity is constructed and therefore is dependent on agents that construct it;
- identity is a dynamic concept and is consequently dependent on the social context and the agents;
- identity rests on a 'tradition' in which it has a particular legitimacy of its own, and therefore it has a particular relation to history;
- identity sustains a close relation to the system of political values in which it takes place;
- identity is based on drawing borders producing in-group and out-group biases.

EU as the normative power

- Ian Manners defines Normative Power as the way 'the EU is able to spread its core norms and values beyond its own borders'; 'ability to shape conceptions of 'normal' in IR';
- EU as a promoter of „core norms“: peace, liberty, democracy, rule of law, human rights;
- Other norms: social solidarity, anti-discrimination, sustainable development, good governance.

<i>Founding Principles</i>	<i>Tasks and Objectives</i>	<i>Stable Institutions</i>	<i>Fundamental Rights</i>
Liberty	Social solidarity	Guarantee of democracy	Dignity
Democracy	Anti-discrimination	Rule of law	Freedoms
Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms	Sustainable development	Human rights	Equality
Rule of law		Protection of minorities	Solidarity
			Citizenship
			Justice
Treaty base – set out in art. 6 of the TEU	Treaty base – set out in arts. 2 of TEC and TEU, arts. 6 and 13 of TEC	Copenhagen criteria – set out in the conclusions of the June 1993 European Council	Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union

Source: I. Manners, *Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?*, „JCMS” 2002 nr 40, s. 243.

The normative power of the EU lies in exporting the systems of norms through:

- **spontaneous diffusion** – the European Union's norms are naturally diffused in the third states without the EU's engagement or activity;
- **the use of communication strategies** – the informational activity of the EU;
- **procedural activities** – the institutionalisation of relations with the EU;
- **transference** of mutual benefits in the relations of the European Union with third states;
- **the presence** of the EU in the third states;
- **cultural diffusion** and the process of learning European norms by third states

Normative Power in the EU studies is controversial analytical tool:

- methodological gaps (e.g. ignores the category of material European interests);
- lack of consistency between normative rhetoric and *de facto* actions of the EU;
- incomplete (focuses on the single aspect of European power);
- difficult to reach an objective truth about reality – rather is supporting an idealistic and subjective vision of the EU's role and identity.

- lack of precision in the assumption that the special and exceptional character of the EU in international relations actually somehow predisposes it to play a special and norm-imposing role in international relations
- insufficiency of the normative approach to the identity of the European Union in international relations is the progressive militarisation of the European project, which is being gradually introduced alongside other reforms in the Treaties

EU's self-perception and its image among selected external countries

The purpose of the survey was to show the perception of the European Union's identity in international relations by 'Others' (third countries' political elites, civil society, think-tanks etc.) and the meaning of the third parties' discourse on the European Union's (EU's) identity in international relations, especially for the narration on its identity in international relations.

Hypothesis:

- It is assumed that the European Union – since its beginning, in 1993, under the Maastricht Treaty provisions – has developed its identity and role in international relations as a normative actor. Scholars have described this phenomenon by using the concept of the normative power (Normative Power Europe, NPE), a concept developed by Ian Manners in 2002.
- it is assumed that the way in which EU constructs her own identity takes under consideration others' image of herself. In other words, the main assumption of the survey is that discourse on EU's identity in third countries/parties should share an idea on normative character of the European Union in international relations.

The research questions:

- What is the content of the dominant discourse on EU's identity among the European elites?;
- what is the content of the public discourse on EU's identity in the third countries?;
- is the declared and up to date discourse on the European Union identity in the international relations as a normative actor reflected among political elites, public opinion, and civil society in third countries?;
- does it change in time/under what circumstances?;
- could it have a possible impact on a way in which EU changes its discourse on international identity?

- Methodologically contributors refer to a discourse analysis. It works on official documents, media analysis, speech acts, think-tanks analysis, elite interviews and archival research.

The aim of this study will be to analyze the perception of the European Union in selected countries/regions of the world.

The perception will be defined here as:

- discursive shaping of the European Union's image (statements by representatives of political elites, EU image in local media, think tanks, civil society);
- articulating expectations of its role in the region (similarly, in statements by representatives of political elites, the EU image in local media, think tanks, civil society);
- perception of the normative identity of the EU in international relations – whether third countries recognize this role, whether they consider it an expected element of European identity in international relations or rather articulate another narrative of the EU.

- Having conducted empirical analyses, in the form of case studies, we could observe that the definition of the European Union's identity in international relations as a normative actor has failed to gain common acceptance among participants of international relations.

There might be several reasons for this, namely:

- the history of Europe's involvement in the world – its colonial past and imperial experience is a huge obstacle in building an image of a credible normative and altruistic actor, especially in Africa and Latin America. Here the EU is perceived rather as a protectionist and paternalistic actor with limited interest in local issues;
- the lack of a strong universal identifier as a consequence of incomplete, fragmented and impotent foreign policy;
- problems in communicating the European Union's international offer in the political issues (the case of India and lack of knowledge of the European Union specificity). Insufficient efforts in building the post-colonial image of Europe in this region;

- too bureaucratic and administrative approach to relations with third countries, which hinders the recognition of diversity, the significance of the geopolitical and historical factor in relations with the European Union (the case of the Western Balkan countries);
- the lack of interest regarding the EaP countries' perceptions of the EU is rooted in the assumption that they are not influential enough in the EU policymaking and have little impact on political developments;
- some actors do not share the vision of the European Union as a normative actor, considering the content related to the EU as hostile to their own identity – the case of the Russian Federation;

- the political model offered by the European Union within its normative identity is not exceptional when compared to other entities which also refer to universal norms in the international space. This mainly concerns the so-called liberal democracies and international institutions, such as: the USA, Japan or the UN;
- there are entities which accept the normative identity of the European Union (e.g. Ukraine) for purely pragmatic reasons (expecting to be offered membership) rather than out of their conviction concerning the rightness of the European norms and values;
- the picture of the European Union as a normative actor, built by the European political elites, seems too ideal or even utopian. This, in turn, gives rise to a presumption that the concept of a normative power in reality constitutes a certain type of a meta-narrative, utopia, or a form of ideological measure relating to the identity of the European Union in international relations, the defects of which are easily revealed in the face of international crises such as wars and other conflicts;

- the international space contains competitors to the normative and even economic offer of the European Union (American, Russian and Chinese political and economic rivalry), which accounts for the fact that the European Union, as a non-state entity, having much smaller means of international influence, naturally cannot stand this competition and becomes less attractive for such states.