



The EU as a normative power?  
The case of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

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# Outline

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- Academic debates on EU as a normative power
  - Concepts clarification
  - Constructed nature of EU role as a global actor impedes EU action
  - Middle East conflict as a case study
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# Concepts used ... some clarifications

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- 'Normative'. In general, concerned with rules, standards, 'values, norms' of a social group
  - 3 type of norms: fundamental, organising principles, standardised procedures
  - Fundamental norms: citizenship, HR, fundamental freedoms, democracy, rule of law, non-intervention, sovereignty
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# Concepts used ... continued

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- Organising Principles: proportionality, accountability, transparency, flexibility, gender-mainstreaming, mutual recognition, international election monitoring
  - Standardised Procedures: qualified majority voting, unanimous decisions, proportional representation (Antje Wiener, 2007).
  - My preferred working definition of norms as fundamental rights of all social groups
  - Power: not centralized in the EU (its institutions, legal foundations etc)
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# Concepts used ... continued

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- Power as a necessary and inherent part of relations between EU member states and between EU member states and external actors (hence implies a continuous struggle ...)
  - Power in terms of relationships = fragmentation is politically explicit!
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# Role of EU as a global actor

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- Normative based international policy. Role/scope of the EU as an actor & presence on the global stage
  - Major differences of opinion between EU institutions and EU MS – hence are there any shared goals and common values within EU? ‘Ideal’ of shared and common goals & values
  - What construction of Europe is being projected to the South?
  - Ambiguity in projecting ‘shared’ norms and ‘common’ values ‘outwards’ from Europe to Arab-Mediterranean states
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# Role of EU as a global actor (Cont'd)

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- Projection of a model of cooperation & peace that should be emulated YET ENP highly focused on bilateral rather than cooperative intra-Mediterranean and inter Med-EU relations
  - Problem is not lack of instruments but how EU actors choose to use the instruments at hand. Which agents of change the EU excludes and which actors it includes
  - Across different policy sectors, there is an implicit understanding that economic development = prosperity = peace = stability
  - EU constructed 'normative' power empowers authoritarian regimes to suppress societal change and political reform! Non-state actors in the south remain unheard voices
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# Flaws in EU's normative orthodoxy

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- a nation in its 40th year under military occupation, produced a fair, free and transparent process which was confirmed as such by the EU's own mission
- EU reactions to the *Hamas* victory in the Jan 2006 Palestinian elections
- EU short-sightedness in its policy towards democracy promotion
- General dilemma EU policy faces: only relevant opposition forces in many EMP countries represent rather 'radical', religious-oriented positions
- the occupation itself is hardly ever described as a violation of democratic and human rights, despite Israeli schemes to create facts on the ground (the 'partition wall', settlements, etc) and prevent the emergence of a Palestinian state (Bennis 2000: 172)



# Paradoxes & Contradictions in constructed nature of EU as a NP

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- Constructed nature of EU NP gives rise to a number of dilemmas & challenges
  - Nature, purpose & underlying logic of regional integration in EMP?
  - Role of norms in IR?
  - The changing character of foreign policy/EU external relations
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# relations & normative power image

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- Gap between rhetoric and action. EU needs to pursue principles of democracy, HR, rule of law etc more vigorously YET unfavourable power distribution in EU-Med relations. Can EU impose its will on the Med? Can the EU 'discipline' the Med? Does process lack legitimacy (esp. if it is about imposing upon the will of others)?
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# Ambiguities in EU normative power image (Cont'd)

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- Can the EU pursue a tougher line as regards these principles when such an attempt is seen as the imposition of the very same principles (and an abuse of 'power')?
  - Would a tougher use of conditionality be more of an abuse?
  - Are these principles the EU pursues legitimate when they are not considered as 'common'?
  - Core challenge for external intervention – can the circle be squared?
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# A way out of the constructed nature of EUNP?

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- Positive rather than negative conditionality?
  - Separation of EU actions (community building) from Member State actions (tougher conditionality)? – Nicolaidis, Kalypso
  - Mutuality of influence as a way to make forcefulness more legitimate?
  - What should the conditions be about? Process vs substance?
  - Legitimacy of the goals pursued in the eyes of the majorities in Med societies - empowerment
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# EU at 50 – a midlife crisis?

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- The EU fails because it does not deal with the contradiction from pursuing two goals at the same time: a) the forging of its own identity through, amongst others, its southern sphere of influence (the Med) and b) strategic interests
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