An investigation into the European Union’s ‘normative power’ in Libya: To what extent have norms clashed with interests?

A historical discourse analysis of European policy towards Libya since Gaddafi - to the present day.
Abstract

The European Union is a complex entity and many have struggled to conceptualise its ‘actorness’ on the world stage. Given its limitations and capabilities as a non-state actor, the dominant conception of the Union seems to be that it can be best described as a ‘normative power’. This is because of the way that it has peacefully spread its influence through political, civilian and economic methods. However, this dissertation questions the extent that the Union is able to claim this title. The European Union’s ‘normative power’ as a democracy and human rights promoter is greatly challenged in countries such as Libya with authoritarian regimes and that are comparatively underdeveloped. Certain member states of the union have found themselves seeing Libya as a strategically important partner with respect to trade, oil and migration management. Therefore, it has been argued that the normative role of the EU is compromised when norms come into conflict with realist state interests. Such behavior has led to criticisms of inconsistency in the application of EU normative principles. At the time of the Arab Spring, the Libya Crisis was marked as a period of change whereby the EU could facilitate Libya in its democratic transition. It finally seemed like the opportunity had come for the EU to fulfil its normative role in the country. However, this dissertation argues that little has changed and the normative rhetoric was merely used as a ‘veil’ under which normal realist interests continued to be pursued by European member states. It does this by conducting a critical discourse analysis via the discourse historical approach outlined by Ruth Wodak. By mapping how member states interests were decontextualised from norms during Gaddafi’s Libya, then recontextualised following the Libya Crisis by notions of ‘democracy promotion’, it highlights the way in which normative values can be used instrumentally. Therefore, it concludes that at worst, the title ‘Normative Power Europe’ is a contradiction in itself and used for public legitimisation and self-rationalisation of member states geopolitical interests and economic gains.
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1.

Introduction

The title ‘Normative Power’ was coined by Ian Manners in 2002 and his article was voted as one of the top most important and essential academic pieces of work in the last ten years by the European Union Studies Association (Forsberg 2011: 1184). Although this description of the European Union seemed to effectively explain their foreign policy in many parts of the world, there are some disputes about the consistency of behaviour and double standards occurring in the application of policies towards certain countries. The prioritisation of strategic security over development aid in the Union’s response to the Libya Crisis is of particular significance when assessing their normative identity.

This dissertation will investigate the context and rhetoric of the European response to the crisis through a critical lens. It will start by defining the key terms of what it means to be a normative power and what issues have been brought up in the literature. Next, it will go on to map the historical context of the European Union’s relationship with Libya to demonstrate how the ‘normative role’ had been compromised during the Gaddafi regime in favour of realist state interests. Then it will compare this with the European Union’s public response to the Libya Crisis in the context of the Arab Spring. By looking at the discursive strategies and linguistic techniques used at the EU level and comparing them to the reality of events, it is hoped that the contradictions within the discourse and manipulative use of language will be revealed.
1.1 Methodology

The methodology used is a Critical Discourse Analysis. Discourse refers to communication which can be spoken, written or even applied to actions (Phillips and Jorgensen 2004: 12). This approach can most effectively facilitate a critical stance towards the EU’s relationship with Libya by investigating how EU relations with the Southern Mediterranean interact with key EU values and identity logics.

Fairclough’s universal framework quite clearly shows how discourse is used to create everyday practices and meanings (see figure 1.1) (Fairclough 1992: 72)

Figure 1.1

‘Critique’, ‘ideology’ and ‘power’ are constitutive of Critical Discourse Analysis as an approach.

The particular approach taken in this project is the ‘Discourse-Historical Approach’ and within this, the critical theory aspect is undertaken in the ways listed below:

1. ‘Text or discourse-immanent critique’ which aims to reveal inconsistencies, self-contradictions, paradoxes and dilemmas within text/discourse.
2. ‘Socio-diagnostic critique’ which focuses on demystifying the manipulative or persuasive character of discursive practices.

3. Future related ‘prospective critique’ which proposes how communication could be improved. (Reisigl and Wodak 2009: 88)

Ideology is seen as a one sided perspective of the world and serves as a means of establishing and reproducing unequal power relations by establishing ‘hegemonic identity narratives’. The key aim is therefore to decode the ideology of the European Union’s ‘normative’ identity. The power aspect is understood in the Weberian sense as the exertion of authority and the submission to authority as well as the technical control of things. Power is legitimised or de-legitimised in discourse and texts are taken as ‘sites of social struggle in that they manifest traces of differing ideological fights for hegemony’ (Reisigl and Wodak 2009: 89). As Fairclough (1989: 1) established, the fundamental aim of CDA is ‘to help increase consciousness of how language contributes to the domination of some people by others’. In particular, this project looks at how the European Union’s normative identity is used selectively to publically legitimise its actions and self-rationalise realist interests.

A Discourse Historical Analysis should seek to fulfil the following criteria outlined by Reisigl and Wodak (2009: 93).

1. Outline key themes or discourse topics

   □ Normative identity (In particular democracy promotion and human rights)

   □ Realist interests (Security- trade, oil, migration)

2. The use of discursive strategies to ask questions about the text such as; what perspective is shown? How is an action intensified? How are actions naturalised?
3. Identify the means used to realise these strategies such as; substitutions, deletion, metaphors, argumentation, naming, framing predications, intensification and legitimisations.

The Discourse-Historical Approach is interdisciplinary and follows the principles of triangulation due to the multifaceted nature of the issue in question:

![Diagram showing the relationship between Theory, Context, and Empirical Data]

Context is fundamental to this analysis as are the intertextual relationships of how texts link to the past and present. The process of re-contextualisation is observed when given elements are transferred to a new context and de-contextualisation when an element is taken out of a specific context. The inter-discursivity of discourse is also observed to show how discourse is open and hybrid so sub topics can be formed by people to alter meaning (Reisigl and Wodak 2009: 94). This can be applied to how it is manipulated to create images that do not fully coincide with reality, such as the EU as a democratiser in Libya.
Selection and preparation of research and data

Looking solely at the Union’s relationship with Libya decreases the sum of material to work through. This helped when sorting through to pick out the appropriate sources. The time span used spreads from the start of Gaddafi’s leadership to the current day. This historical element will set the context and allow for a response rich in meaning and implications. It enables the analysis to look at the re-contextualisation of democracy rhetoric used by the EU as a result of regime change in Libya. Libya as the case study for this project was chosen for several thought out reasons. Firstly, because it is a country that would never become part of the Union but holds a specific value to them with respect to oil security, migration security and trade. The empirical materials chosen to closely analyse how language has been used are primary sources collected from the European Union’s websites. Mixtures of Policy Agreements and Frameworks, Strategy Documents and statements released by the High Representative¹ have been used. The latter serves particular value in the discursive strategies and linguistic analysis element. The High Representative’s statements were intended to reach a wide audience which has important consequences with respect to identity construction and the European Union’s image on the world stage.

¹ The High Representative speaks on behalf of all 28 member states of the European Union. The High Representative was Catherine Ashton at the time of the Libya Crisis and was supposed to represent the unified voice of the EU.
2. Normative Power Europe: definitions and interpretations

The title Normative Power can be broken down into two parts to explain its significance in the European Union. The normative element comes from the creation of a set of norms and values specific to the European Union. These are easily found in a multitude of policy documents and also listed quite clearly in the values section of the European Union website as: ‘Human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and the respect for human rights’ (Europa 2015). Manners, who coined the term ‘Normative Power Europe’ explained how the EU promotes these principles through its actions and policies in its relationships with external parties through persuasion and attraction (2008a: 244) The power element has therefore been explained by the way in which these norms are diffused in the international system as Europeanisation occurs in the form of ideas, values and policies (De Zutter 2010: 1110).

The EU’s normative objectives are explicitly outlined in the treaty framework which states its commitment to the diffusion of EU norms in world politics. Article 5 of the Lisbon Treaty reads: “In its relations with the wider world, the Union shall uphold and promote its values and interests and contribute to the protection of its citizens. It shall contribute to peace, security, the sustainable development of the Earth, solidarity and mutual respect among peoples, free and fair trade, eradication of poverty and the protection of human rights, in particular the rights of the child, as well as the strict observance and the development of international law, including respect for the principles of the United Nations Charter” (Lisbon Treaty 2007, Article 3). Norms and standards are also explicitly present in several prior treaties, such as the Treaty of Rome (1957), the Treaty on European Union (1992), the Treaty of Amsterdam (1997) in addition
to other key texts such as the European Convention on Human Rights (1953) or the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (2000) and regional agreements.

This particular norms based policy can be understood as the EU trying to form a place for itself in global politics. Mayall (2005: 295-310) gives a historical explanation of the EU finding a role for itself in the world, in particular in past colonies; this is useful from a constructivist perspective as it fuses constructivist thought with rationalism. He explained how the new security situation following the end of the cold war changed the traditional way of thinking about foreign policy in Western Europe. The inter-linking nature of economic, political and security issues were becoming evident. This incentivized the Union to collaborate to find a new way that they could contribute to a ‘real’ foreign policy on the world stage. The observations that western values were on the rise in the 1990s led the EU pioneers picturing how they could use the Union’s capabilities as a democracy promoter and its economic power to promote global stability in the world. As Schirm (1998: 65) put it;

‘Because the European Union’s international ‘power’ is of an economic nature, and because European Union members do not agree on a common military security policy, a socioeconomic approach to Common Foreign Security Policy is the more appropriate option. Europe can focus on its specific strength as a civil power in order to promote ‘stability transfer’ as a preventative security policy.’

The most straight forward example of the Union’s normative power is when membership to the European Union is desired. This is because to be a considered candidate, countries are required to adopt the Copenhagen criteria as set out in Article 49 and Article 6 of the Treaty on the European Union. These establish the need for stable institutions guaranteeing democracy, the
rule of law, human rights and protection for minorities, a functioning market economy and acceptance of the community acquis. Once countries have fulfilled these criteria, they might be rewarded with membership to the union (Smith 2011: 299-303). As Manners noted, the norms have a clear historical context to them as part of the European project. Peace and liberty were the defining features of west European politics following the Second World War. By extension, the norms of democracy, rule of law and human rights became associated with the EU later when it was important to differentiate democratic western Europe from communist eastern Europe (Manners 2002: 243). However, for countries that do not have prospective membership it is more difficult to understand why they might be influenced to adopt such values. Therefore, the EU had to consider ways in which it could spread its normative values beyond the allure of EU membership.

Manners (2008b: 46) response was that the EU values in themselves have magnetic power as ‘the EU promotes a series or normative principles that are generally acknowledged with the United Nations as universally applicable’. Therefore, these principles have been argued by some to give the EU a comparative advantage to traditional military security in that the EU could use its ‘soft power’ to reshape the nature of the game in international relations (Reid 2005; McCormick 2006; Rifkin 2004).

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2 ‘The Community acquis is the body of common rights and obligations which bind all the Member States together within the European Union. It is constantly evolving and comprises: the content, principles and political objectives of the Treaties; the legislation adopted in application of the treaties and the case law of the Court of Justice; the declarations and resolutions adopted by the Union; measures relating to the common foreign and security policy; measures relating to justice and home affairs; international agreements concluded by the Community and those concluded by the Member States between themselves in the field of the Union's activities. Applicant countries have to accept the Community acquis before they can join the Union. Derogations from the acquis are granted only in exceptional circumstances and are limited in scope. To integrate into the European Union, applicant countries will have to transpose the acquis into their national legislation and implement it from the moment of their accession.’ (EUROPA, 2015)
The European Union has developed agreements with countries and regions in all continents of the world as well as gaining presence in international forums. It seeks to spread its influence through these relations. A partnership of particular importance is between the Union and its close neighbours; The European Neighbourhood Policy sets out steps towards democratisation in such countries as Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Syria and Tunisia (Maior and Matei 2005: 46). Despite being fused with the EU normative agenda, these relationships have become recognised to fundamentally be about security. The 2003 European Security Strategy states that ‘our task is to promote a ring of well governed countries to the East of the European Union and on the borders of the Mediterranean with whom we can enjoy close and cooperative relations’ (European Security Strategy 2003: 6). This process of value exportation is clearly linked to strategic interests as an attempt to ‘externalise the internal security’ of the EU. As EU External relations Commissioner Patten highlighted to achieve this it was necessary ‘to find new ways to export the stability, security and prosperity we have created within the enlarged Union’ (Patten 2003: 234). As a result, the EU set out to deepen relations with these countries in order to ensure their stability. This process involves economic assistance as well as the opening up domestic of markets (Stetter 2003: 156).

Similar benefits associated with membership are offered to these countries such as trade deals, possibilities to be in the internal market and financial aid. In return the neighbour countries must commit to strengthening the EU values. In addition, they must work with the EU on key foreign policy objectives such as counter terrorism, non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and managing illegal migration (Ferrero-Waldner 2006). Therefore, the fact that the EU’s foreign policy with these external countries is marked by conditionality has evoked a
critical response. This is because; contrary to Manners’ argument the normative power element appears to serve the EU first and foremost.

As a result of these increasingly strategic EU policies, many have pointed out the problem of lack of self-reflectivity of EU normative claims (Nicolaidis and Howse 2002; Diez 2005; Hyde Price 2006). They have focused on the power elements of how norms are actually in fact merely reflective of self-serving interests used to dominate and subjugate other competing ideas to maintain the hegemony of certain groups. Therefore, Diez (2005: 615) called for a ‘greater degree of reflexivity, both in academic discussion about normative power and in political representatives of the EU as a normative power’. Kubicek (2003: 7) relates such methods as using ‘carrots and sticks’ to influence states into adopting the desired policy. There are clear power elements here as ideologies compete against the ‘superior’ model of democracy. Civilising connotations have been noted as exporting European values is presented as an explicitly normative task in that they are deemed right in a teleological manner. As Diez (2005: 614) argues, this serves to establish a geopolitical moral hierarchy and superiority of the EU. It does this by constructing an EU identity ‘against the image of others in the world’. This decreases the shiny image of a normative actor.

Likewise, Hyde Price, critically reflected on the EU’s normative identity and argued that structural realism can better explain its development. He stated that it is used by member states to act as an ‘instrument of collective hegemony, shaping its external milieu through using power in a variety of forms: political partnership or ostracism; economic carrots and sticks; the promise of membership or the threat of exclusion. The EU acts as a ‘civilizing power’ only in the sense that it is used by its most powerful member states to impose their common values and norms’ (Hyde Price 2006: 227). Here, the emphasis is taken back to the state level as opposed to the
supranational level. This relates to Patten’s (2005: 15) argument that ‘there is no big EU foreign policy unless France, Britain and Germany are on side. This critique is useful to this project as it can explain how EU norms might be used instrumentally by member states in order to achieve realist goals. Therefore, self-reflection should be called upon to examine ‘the consistency between the internal and external planes’ of EU policy (Nicolaidis and Howse 2002: 789)

The aforementioned links to a similar but slightly different critique that heavily influences the hypothesis of this project; this critique looks for evidence of inconsistencies in norm projection. They argue that when the normative element of EU policy is ineffective it is compromised, as this project will demonstrate. Certainly, some case studies show that there is incoherence at times with regards to the EU’s action. It has been argued that when it comes to matters of security, energy, or trade, the EU easily sets its normative principles aside as states interests override normative principles (Martinez 2008; Dandashly 2014; Bialasiewicz, 2014; Bosse 2011, Lazarou, Gianniou and Tsourapas 2013; Tocci 2008)

The variation in EU democracy promotion is most effectively explained by the theory of realism. Realism can help reveal how European Union member states interests in a particular country effect the instruments they adopt to reflect the normative role. The more the norms clash with the interests, the weaker the instruments used to promote normative values will be (Young 2009; Seeberg 2009). Democracy promotion as a norm may be the ultimate objective on self-interested terms to create more stable relations and decrease security risks. It may also merely be a rhetorical ploy used to get more power (Morgenthau, Thompson and Clinton 2005). So, even if promoting democracy and human rights are genuine objectives, a realist perspective argues that they will remain at the bottom of state priorities and will only prevail when the act does not
threaten the state’s power 2) risk national security 3) affect economic interests (Mearsheimer 2001: 46; Hyde-Price 2009)
The European Dilemma in Gaddafi’s Libya

This section will look at the historical relationship between the EU and Libya. This hopes to show the limits of EU normative power in contexts which are not empathetic towards the EU norms and values.

To display how interests might also influence EU action, it will start with some illustrations of factors that the EU have deemed make Libya a strategic partner. Image 1.1 displays the flow of oil exports from Libya to Europe. Image 1.2 shows the import and export balance between the EU and Libya. Finally image 1.3 displays the migratory routes from Africa to Europe.

Image 1.1 (International Energy Agency)
Image 1.2 (European Commission 2013)

Image 1.3 (Frontex 2014)

EU Border Work in the Mediterranean
3.1 A Realist Hypothesis

Gaddafi’s Libya was regarded for decades as the ‘geopolitical outlaw of the Mediterranean’. His policy was founded on Arab Nationalism and Anti-Imperialism which meant that he believed that the Arab world should oppose the ex-colonial powers. It became a fundamental goal to deny the West of its attempts to subdue the Arab world and deny Libya of its own economic and social development independence (Niblock 2001; Ronen 2006). Gaddafi expelled Britain from its installed military base during its short occupation of Libya. He also nationalised the oil company that British Petroleum had built on Libyan soil and expelled more than 13,000 Italian settlers in the Day of Revenge against the former colonial power (Zoubir 2009). Libya also openly supported organisations that opposed the west and Gaddafi was said to be determined to develop weapons of mass destruction (Wright 1982: 28).

As a result of this, Europe’s relations with Libya were marked with tension during Gaddafi’s leadership and sanctions were imposed against Libya during the worst periods. However, it was stuck in a difficult position as Libya was not just a major threat to its security but it was also still a major energy exporter and commercial importer. For example, in the 1980s before sanctions were imposed, the EU accounted for 85 percent of all exports and 80 percent of Libyan imports (Joffe 2001: 75-92) and today the EU is still Libya’s most important trading partner (European Commission 2013). Furthermore, its geographical position also meant that strategically it was an important country with respect to the externalisation of European security which was being discussed increasingly between member states of the Union as a joint issue (Zoubir 2009: 403).
Between 1988-1989 a regime of economic liberalisation was launched in Libya as a result of the collapse of oil revenues. This damaged Libya’s attempts to isolate itself from the west in its revolutionary policy (IBID: 405). However, the accusations of Libyan involvement in the 1988 Lockerbie Pan Am Flight 103 incident\(^3\) and UTA flights resulted in harsher sanctions being imposed against the country and EU relations were virtually non-existent between 1992-1999 (Zoubir 2008: 267-277). Never the less, member states did not cut all ties and at the EU Level there was a consensus that the sanctions alone would not solve the problem. Therefore, they pushed for dialogue with the regime. Despite this, Libya was excluded in the Barcelona Process adopted at the Euro-Mediterranean Conference which was launched in 1995 to manage bilateral and regional relations and create political, economic and social partnerships with the Mediterranean region (Barcelona Declaration 1995). This can be explained to some extent to be a result of pressure from the EU’s transatlantic ally (Ronen 2008). It also represented a symbolic commitment of fulfilling their normative role by using the stick element to exclude Libya from the benefits of cooperation.

Despite the European Union utilising its normative policy via the sanctions, these did not last and Gaddafi did not change his authoritarian regime. The dilemma continued to trouble the Union that Libya was a key strategic partner for their Euro-Mediterranean interests and certain member states judged that they could not afford to alienate it any longer. As a result, Libyan authorities were invited to attend the Third Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Foreign Ministers in 1999 to start their implantation into formal discussions regarding trade and migration. During

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\(^3\) Pan Am Flight 103 (known as the Lockerbie Bombing incident) was a Pan Am transatlantic flight from Frankfurt Airport to Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County Airport via London Heathrow and New York JFK. The plane was destroyed by a terrorist bomb on Wednesday, 21 December 1988, killing all 243 passengers and 16 crew on board. The aircraft crashed onto residential areas of Lockerbie, Scotland, killing 11 more people on the ground.
this conference, it was agreed that Libya could join the Barcelona Process once United Nations sanctions were lifted and if Libya agreed to accept the conditions (Zoubir 2009: 406). Whilst it turned out that Gaddafi did not accept the conditions, he was still given observer status which effectively allowed him all of the benefits of the partnership without having to accept the conditions.

The European Union’s pursuit of internal security interests can partially explain why a U-turn was made in their policy towards Libya. The pressure from member states to outsource border controls meant that as Bosse (2011: 440) explained Gaddafi turned from a villain to one of the ‘new guardians of security in Europe’.

From this period onwards up until the Libya Uprising against Gaddafi, the EU’s normative power became secondary to their strategic interests. The normative discourse in the treaty framework concerning EU relations with external parties was merely words on a page. In terms of the implementation of norms and values, nothing was done to deter the authoritarian regime. In fact, the Council lifted the Arms Embargo which had been imposed on Libya since 1986 and cancelled the punitive measures that had been adopted in application of UN Security Council Resolutions 748(1992) and 883 (1993)\(^4\). To sum the relationship up, the autocratic regime was rescued so to speak as a result of strategic interests (Barrinha 2013: 207). In sum, the security relationship and economic opportunities were *de-contextualised* from the norms of

\(^4\) These involved denying Libyan aircraft to take off from, land in or overfly in signatories territory if it has taken off from Libyan territory. Called to cut diplomatic ties with Libya and for the freezing of Libyan funds or assets in signatories countries. However this did not apply to funds or other financial resources derived from the sale or supply of petroleum and petroleum products, natural gas and gas products and agricultural products. (UN Security Council 1992-93)
democracy promotion. Therefore, we can conclude that the normative power of the EU in Libya was quite powerless.

**Bilateral Relationships**

A major explanation for the EU’s normative power being put secondary during Gaddafi’s Libya is due to pressure from the European member states. The member states that have the most important relations with Libya are Italy, France, Britain and Germany. By reviewing the history of the relations between Libya and these partners, this can shed light on why EU foreign policy towards Libya took a more strategic path. The identified interests can also be linked to the patterns that we see in the current day.

**3.1 Libya’s relationship with Italy**

As discussed in the previous section, Italy was Libya’s former colonial power. Therefore, it can be argued that they have the most deeply embedded ties with Libya and furthermore, Italy relies on Libya for one-third of its natural gas. In the 1970s economic relations between Italy and Libya expanded considerably in the field of petro chemicals, energy weapons and multiple industrial sectors. Despite the revolutionary policy against the west and expelling Italians in the day of revenge, in contradiction Libya maintained economic relations with Italy and even bought shares in the Fiat car company. The economic relations therefore served the interests of both parties (Zoubir 2009: 403)
The Italian colonial rule in Libya was harsh and the regret of this has resulted in compensation agreements for the crimes they committed against the Libyans. In August 2008 a treaty of friendship was agreed to allow for cooperation between the two countries (Ronzitti 2009). This agreement comprised of Italian investment projects in Libya for the next 25 years. However, far from being purely altruistic these agreements were linked towards the Italian’s core strategic interests in Libya as the then Italian Prime Minister Berlusconi stated, its purpose was for ‘less illegal immigrants and more oil’ (Gazzini 2009). Italy has been the most vocal about its fears of illegal immigration crossing the Mediterranean and entering Italy. Libya is known as the ‘gateway to Europe’ from Africa and Italy is the preferred entry location. Gaddafi played on this fear on multiple occasions threatening that if he did not receive more money for border control ‘tomorrow Europe might no longer be European and even black as there are millions who want to come in’ (Squires 2010).

Therefore, Italy’s strategic interests in Libya can be argued as instrumental towards the increasingly inclusive policy with Libya. This may have undermined the normative power of the EU as Gaddafi was aware that it was a key partner for Italy. This meant that he could use European interests to make them compromise their normative values (Mezran and De Maio 2007: 439-451).

3.2 Libya’s relationship with France

The lowest point of France’s relationship with Libya was during the war in Chad which occurred between 1978-1987. During this conflict, France had supported the Chad side. However, the relationship normalised when Libya abandoned its nuclear weapon program and
when the Lockerbie bombing and UTA trials\(^5\) had ended. Domestic factors were therefore fundamental to France’s opposition to Gaddafi. Nevertheless, France was fast to develop bilateral relations following this and in 2004 President Chirac met Gaddafi for the first time since Libyan independence in 1951 (Leclercq, 2004). Following this meeting, agreements for military cooperation were agreed upon and Libya purchased weapons from France. The promise of economic liberalisation was deemed an opportunity too good to miss by the French who had been searching for new markets in that region since the Iraq war. Zoubir (2009: 413) highlighted how France counted on its arms industry exports to Libya to balance the deficit of its oil imports. On December 2007, Sarkozy signed a contract with Libya for ten billion euros (Lusher 2011). The domestic impact for France of this was that it would result in 30,000 guaranteed jobs for five years for the French people which can explain his economic and political interests. Nevertheless, Sarkozy was accused of ‘selling his soul’ and by passing human rights in order to benefit from trading with a dictator (Sciolino 2007)

### 3.3 Libya’s relationship with Britain

Britain alongside France occupied Libya following Italian Colonial rule in 1943 and until the country’s independence in 1951. During this time Britain had provided economic assistance to Libya in return for establishing a military base on Libyan soil (Ronen, 2006). However, during Gaddafi’s leadership the relationship was marked by troubles, in particular with respect to the Lockerbie bombing incident in 1988. Another incident was a series of bomb explosions in

\(^5\) On Tuesday, 19 September 1989 a bomb explosion caused UTA Flight 772 to break up over the Sahara Desert. All 156 passengers and 14 crew members died and Libyan Terrorists were accused.
London and Manchester in areas populated by Libyan exiles. Libya was accused of being responsible for these bombings (IBID: 273). These incidents resulted in diplomatic turmoil and Tripoli responded to the accusations made against Libya with a threat, ‘if Britain wants bad relations…she can have them, but it is her choice…It will not hurt the Libyan people to take their trade elsewhere’6. Diplomatically, Britain had completely opposed itself to Gaddafi and gave permission for America to use British bases for their attack against Tripoli and Benghazi on April 11th 1986. This can be argued to be a reflection of Britain’s ‘special relationship’ with the US during these years. They forcefully pushed through the UN Security Council Resolution 748 and banned air travel and arms sales to Libya until they handed in the Lockerbie bombing suspects (UN Security Council 1992). They also pushed through the UN Resolution 883 increasing sanctions on Libya from December 1st 1993. These involved a ban on the sales of oil equipment to Libya as well as the freezing of Libya’s overseas assets. However, it is important to note that Britain did not go as far as allowing a total freeze on Libyan oil exports, as it had its own significant interests in maintaining access to these.

A turning point was marked when the terrorist attack of September 11th against America was quickly condemned by Gaddafi who was looking to end his period of isolation. His immediate offer of humanitarian aid to the USA helped Britain to rebuild its relationship with Libya. Gaddafi repositioned himself as anti-terrorist and coordinated with the US and Britain in the global war against terror. He also handed in the Lockerbie Bombing suspects which as promised resulted in the sanctions being lifted (Zoubir 2009). Therefore, in 1999 under Tony Blair’s government, Libya and Britain developed fruitful economic relations and Blair had a good relationship with Gaddafi. Thus normative principles were set aside and when they were

6 Quoted from Jamahiriya International Report, 17th March 1984
previously applied it seems they were more for reputation purposes and to preserve the ‘special relationship’ with the US as opposed to a commitment to normative values (Layden 2007).

3.4 Libya’s relationship with Germany

Between 1971 and 1976 Germany acquired substantial shares in the chemicals and petrochemical sector in Libya. Libya has been a crucial exporter of oil for Germany and German corporations invested millions in Libya in the 1980s (Zoubir 2009). As a result, by 1997, Germany was recorded as Libya’s second most important trading partner (Dean 2003: 808).

This was surprising considering the particularly tense relationship when an attack at the Berlin nightclub ‘La Belle’ was made in 1986. The nightclub was a favourite for American soldiers and US President Reagan blamed Libya for the attack immediately but they were not proven guilty until 4 years later when intelligence had found the bombing had been planned in the Libyan embassy in East Berlin. 229 people were wounded including 79 Americans (Erlanger 2001). In 2003 Libya signed a compensation agreement to Germany and immediately after this the then chancellor Gerhard Schroder headed to Tripoli to launch additional economic collaboration between the two countries.

German corporations were heavily involved in infrastructure projects in Libya. Siemans for example, helped construct a huge water supply project which was the largest worldwide. German business exports to Libya increased by 23 percent in 2009 (Rippert 2011).
3.5 The compromise of the EU’s normative role

It is hoped that the inclusion of the aforementioned bilateral relationships has helped to explain how the realist interests of member states resulted in the normative principles being set aside. This as a result was reflected in the European Union policy. The 2011 Strategy Paper and National Indicative Programme set out areas of opportunity for the EU and Libya to work together and for Libya to receive further financial assistance. It prepared to formalise the already existing cooperation in the areas of migration and energy and also paved the way towards a potential Free Trade Area. Despite previous claims in treaties that the normative role was fundamental to the EU approach and did not allow for exceptional cases, the strategy paper unambiguously excluded projects on democracy or human rights from its agenda marked to start from 2011-2013. It stated that:

‘Mutual knowledge and trust need to be strengthened before (...) cooperation dealing with very sensitive issues, in particular in the governance area, can be envisaged. In the meantime, actions should be envisaged in sectors where there are clear and urgent priorities’ (Strategy Paper Libya and National Indicative Programme 2011-13: 15)

Therefore, from this section we can conclude that the geographical positioning of Libya as the ‘Gateway to Europe’, its oil resources and trade opportunities led to member states putting their own interests before the normative prescription of what it means to be a European in the EU’s identity logic. When normative instruments were used through previous sanctions against Gaddafi, they were done inconsistently because fundamentally the EU continued to rely on Libya for oil. Furthermore, the sanctions imposed were more related towards Gaddafi as a threat to
European interests as opposed to in opposition to his regime and there were no genuine attempts to challenge it.

The effect of restoring the relationship with Gaddafi and maintaining economic relations undermined the EU’s normative identity. This backs up claims that it is utopian to state the EU as a normative power can change the rules of the international system (Schneipers and Sicurelli 2007). As Martinez (2008:123) highlighted, it is next to impossible for the EU to implement its normative ideals in a state with such an authoritarian system and whereby they are dependent on its oil production. It is clear that the norms and interests clashed which as Youngs (2009) explains under the explanation of realism results in norms being compromised.
4.

The Revitalisation of Normative Rhetoric Since The Libya Crisis

4.1 The response to the crisis

The next part of this dissertation will evaluate ‘Normative Power Europe’ in the context of the ‘Arab Spring’ and the Libya Crisis. This will serve to see if the discourse and actions changed towards Libya with regime change. The Arab Spring events came as a surprise to the EU and the rest of the international community as protesters began to rise up against autocratic regimes in North Africa and for democracy. The European Union’s response to the events and their outcome has raised concern about the effectiveness of ‘Normative Power Europe’ and its policy. Furthermore, the legitimacy of policy directed towards advancing prosperity, stability and security and strengthening economic ties in the Middle East and Africa region has been questioned (Lazarou, Giannioi and Tsourapas 2013).

For a short time there was a renewed sense that the Libyan people would free themselves from their autocratic rules that had stalled the EU from fulfilling its desired normative role in these countries. With Gaddafi removed, it was the perfect opportunity for ‘Normative Power Europe’ to step up and seize the opportunity.

Certain member states showed their support for the Libyans by adopting the UN Security Council Resolution 1973 which authorised the international community ‘to take all necessary measures’ to protect civilians. From this, a no fly zone was approved by the UN and implemented and led by NATO including 10 European member states including France Britain and Italy (UN Security Council 2011). Due to an abstention from Germany the European Union was unable to lead the response under the Common Security and Defense Policy and was
criticised for incoherence. This served to highlight the internal divisions within the union concerning how best to respond to crisis. Catherine Ashton the High Representative of the European Union’s foreign policy had warned that a military response might destabilise the country causing greater problems and pushed for economic and diplomatic sanctions first. However, France and Britain in particular were clear about going forward with their own approach. This inability to agree is explained by Marchi Balossi-Restelli (2014) who gives a domestic level explanation of the response to the Libya crisis to explain why these states chose military action. France in particular, followed by Britain, was keen to show that they could lead the response. Different ideational beliefs concerning the use of force meant that a unified agreement amongst all European member states was unlikely to occur⁷.

Nevertheless, in terms of diplomatic opposition and sanctions the European Union as a unified whole showed disapproval of Gaddafi’s actions. Negotiations on an EU-Libya framework agreement and ongoing cooperation contracts with the country were suspended on the 22nd February 2011 (European Commission 2011c). On the 28th February, the EU imposed an arms embargo and targeted sanctions against Libya (Council of the EU 2011). They were also able to carry out post-conflict responses such as giving humanitarian aid (European Commission 2011).

An on the ground military mission, EUFOR Libya, in support of humanitarian assistant operations was agreed upon in the Council decision on 1st April 2011 with a view to

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⁷ The differing responses were largely due to different beliefs about the use of military measures in EU Foreign Policy. A Common Security and Defence Policy has been established, however, the EU has yet to conduct any high level missions and the scholarly literature suggests this will not happen any time soon. They mainly conduct on the ground assistance, police training, border control missions and conflict prevention. To see more on this the European Extern Action Service website is useful: http://www.eeas.europa.eu/security-defence/index_en.htm. Scholarly debates around the use of military force at the EU level revolve around identity arguments, the transatlantic relationship, the theory of inter-governmentalism and institutional capabilities.
underpinning the mandates of United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1970 and 1973 (2011), but was not called upon by the UN (Council of the EU 2011b). Two years later, on May 22nd 2013, the Council agreed on EUBAM Libya, a civilian border control mission under the Common Security and Defence Policy which sought to increase efforts in supporting the Libyan authorities in managing the security of the country’s borders (Council of the EU 2013).

4.2 Linguistic and discursive analysis

In comparison to the discourse before the crisis, at the EU rhetorical level, its relationship with Libya became re-contextualised by notions of their support for democracy which had previously been put into the background whilst security and economic matters were prioritised. However, it is important that the original strategic interests of member states did not disappear, rather they were presented under a ‘normative veil’. This is where the response at the EU level is a useful level of analysis as this is supposed to represent the consensus and unity of all European member states. Furthermore, EU level documents and statements serve as identity constructs and represent how the EU would like itself to appear to the outside world. It is interesting how this discourse draws on the normative elements as set out in the European Union treaties. A reason why it was emphasized could be due to the increased international pressure aimed towards the EU who was anticipated to ‘step up’ to the Libya problem.

After considering the rhetoric, we can compare it to the outcome of the Libyan-European relationship to evaluate the extent of which the language materialised into action. We can also ask how credible does the EU appear as an actor given its claims and contradictions. The table 1.4 below looks at how the EU presented itself.
Table 1.4-linguistic and discursive techniques. \(^8\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discourse</th>
<th>Linguistic Strategy/Discursive Device</th>
<th>Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EU post Arab Spring document: A Partnership for Democracy and Prosperity with The Southern Mediterranean (European Commission 2011b)</td>
<td>Negative conditionality.</td>
<td>Makes the EU seem more devoted to its normative principles with respect to its partner countries. This constructs the EU as a normative actor that would put moralistic values before realist interests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Where a partner country fails to observe the principles of democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, the union shall invite the country concerned to hold consultations...where consultation with the country concerned does not lead to a solution, acceptable to both parties, or if consultations are refused or in special case of urgency, the council may take appropriate measures...which may include full or partial suspension from union support’</td>
<td>Substitution of ‘the union’ deletes the fact that the union is made up of 28 independent nation states.</td>
<td>Presents the EU as a unified normative actor whereby this element comes before realist state interests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement by the spokesperson of EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on the deflection of the Libyan Ambassador to the EU (EU Press 2011)</td>
<td>Nomination.</td>
<td>Clearly positions itself as an ethical actor with standards of acceptable behaviour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Those at the top of the Gaddafi regime have a choice: Stay with Gaddafi and face rejection by their fellow citizens and the international community. Or support efforts to ensure that the hopes and expectations of the Libyan people are realised through democracy’</td>
<td>Predication.</td>
<td>Juxtaposes itself against those that do not respect its values which intensifies its normative identity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(IBID) ‘We want democracy and freedom as everyday life. We want to see it as you see it, as part of everyday life’</td>
<td>Deletes the fact that the EU relies on Libyan exports.</td>
<td>Hides the fact that Libya is a key strategic partner for the EU security and member states trade interests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ultimatum/Nomination.</td>
<td>Constructs a ‘them’ and ‘us’ picture. Those that are for Gaddafi are against democracy. If the Libyan people are pro-democracy they are now on the side of the EU.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frames</td>
<td>Legitimises the EU stance and makes them appear to be a credible actor.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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\(^8\) See Wodak, R. (2010) in the appendices for an elaboration on CDA analytical devices.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discourse</th>
<th>Linguistic Strategy/Discursive Device</th>
<th>Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statement by High Representative Catherine Ashton on the fall of Sirte and reports of the death of Colonel Gaddafi (EU Press 2011c)</td>
<td><strong>Intensification</strong> of ‘terrorised’ and ‘oppressed’</td>
<td>If you are not democratic you are oppressed. Democracy can save you from this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘The Libyan people can say with pride and confidence that they have shaken off a regime that terrorised and oppressed for more than 40 years. They can now look to the future’</td>
<td><strong>Hypothetical future.</strong></td>
<td>Makes the future look bright.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remarks by High Representative Catherine Ashton on the situation in Libya (EU Press 2011b)</td>
<td><strong>Naturalisation</strong> of the international economy as important.</td>
<td>Legitimises the EU’s interests in the Libyan economy and makes it seem necessary to remove sanctions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Of course the economy is a significant and important issue. One of the reasons for the convening of the Political and security committee was to begin to think about how we will move forward on the release of assets and the removal of sanctions as the security council judged that the situation have moved forward’</td>
<td><strong>Altruism/deletion</strong> The removal of sanctions is presented as altruistic decision. <strong>Deletes</strong> European interests in the Libyan economy and natural resources.</td>
<td>Presents the EU as acting selflessly to help the Libyan people. This serves to heighten the normative identity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written in the EUBAM border assistance mission profile (EUBAM 2013)</td>
<td><strong>Argumentation</strong> Two years following the crisis the EU wants to prove to the public that the EU has fulfilled its normative role</td>
<td>Presents the EU as committed to the normative role and as a credible actor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘...over the last two years the Union delivered on its commitment to continuously support the Libyan people in their transition process’</td>
<td><strong>Framing/ Perspectivisation</strong></td>
<td>Frames the EUBAM border control mission as part of this supportive approach to the Libyan transition to democracy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written in the EUBAM border assistance mission profile (EUBAM 2013)</td>
<td><strong>Nomination</strong> of EU as a coherent actor with clear beliefs/ approach.</td>
<td>Increases the credibility of the EU response and normative approach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The mission is described as ‘part of the European Union’s comprehensive approach, a strategy to support the Libyan post-conflict reconstruction’</td>
<td><strong>Subtly framing</strong> the EU’s perceived threat of illegal migration and security as specifically for the Libyans.</td>
<td>Justifies the border mission as the right thing to do as part of a coherent normative approach.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.3 Realist actor in ‘normative clothes’?

Although the EU discourse shows the EU saw a place for itself in the construction of a new democratic Libya, the build-up was short lived, and the result has been disappointing. Four years on from the crisis, Libya is not in the state of affairs the EU discourse of 2011 might have suggested it would be. Although the first free national elections in six decades were held in July 2012, tensions between Nationalist and Islamists have obstructed the creation of a stable democratic government. In 2014 the central government collapsed as a result of rivalry between militias that have now taken control of Libya (The Economist 2014).

Whilst the context was more than complicated as Gaub (2014) argues and it cannot be denied that the EU gave its support to the Libyan people to begin with, more could have been done to fulfil the normative role. It is true that the EU were the largest aid donors and they offered the most post conflict support, however this was not enough to stabilise the country and the level of support faded steadily. Ultimately their relationship with Libya is not much different to how it was before. The EU rhetoric may have changed, today the EU-Libya relations page on
the EU website still stating ‘EU policy aims at assisting Libya in its efforts to establish a
democratic, stable and prosperous State. This involves promoting democratic transition…’
(European External Action Service 2015). However, the situation in Libya says it all. As it will
be explained, the EU norms and member state interests have conflicted again and the desire for
security and geopolitical interests have been put first due to member state demands.

In terms of economic interests and oil dependence, the sanctions put on Libya before the
people overthrew Gaddafi were removed as soon as possible. Before the fighting had stopped,
the European Union prepared for deepened relations (Gaub 2014: 47; Dandashly 2014).
Furthermore, the wording of the regional and bilateral agreements have connotations that Libya’s
democratic transition was positioned as a new opportunity for the EU to benefit from deeper
economic relations. For example, in the renewed post Arab Spring document ‘A Partnership for
Democracy and Prosperity with The Southern Mediterranean’ (European Commission 2011b)
and the implementation of a European Neighbourhood Partnership Package towards the
transition to a ‘democratic and prosperous Libya’ (European Commission 2014). The way in
which democracy is associated with prosperity reveals the perceived benefits for the EU, in this
‘partnership’. This reveals more about the ultimate end goal of democracy promotion. The
Country Cooperation Profile is worded in a way that emphasises a hypothetical future. The
transition to democracy is framed as a path to prosperity before any real reflection on the
individual country context has been made. This has the effect of underplaying the security
context and overemphasising the simplicity of democratic transition and stabilisation. A crucial
factor remains that the EU is still Libya’s most important trading partner and trade relations have
not greatly changed from before the crisis (Revert back to figure 1.2)
The border control mission (EUBAM) was framed as an altruistic act and ‘part of the European Union’s comprehensive approach, a strategy to support the Libyan post-conflict reconstruction’ (EUBAM 2013). The way in which the mission is framed, hides the strategic element and replaces it with a description that better suits the EU’s normative image. Figure 1.5 below shows how illegal border crossing increased in 2011 as a result of the instability in Libya.

![Migration Levels to Europe from Libya](Image)

Figure 1.5, Migration Levels to Europe from Libya (Frontex, 2014)

Predictions expect that 2015 will produce much higher figures as a result of increased instability in Libya and the surrounding region. So far this year 35,000 migrants have arrived from North Africa and 1,600 are already feared to have died in their attempts. Recent tragic events such as the sinking of the long boat carrying 700 migrants trying to cross the Mediterranean from the Libyan coast have intensified the discourse relating to the border management issue. The humanitarian concerns of rescuing fleeing migrants are in conflict with member state realist interests. The cost and the will of the member states to effectively manage
this issue are not proving easy to balance (Adler 2015). For example, Britain amongst others are said to have made it clear they did not wish to participate in search and rescue missions as they had argued scaling back these missions would serve to deter migrants from making the crossing (Townsend 2015).

The EU Border Assistance Mission showed evidence as Bialasiewicz (2014: 843) states that the EU’s European neighbours are being used in ‘strategies of securitisation’ by offshoring the EU’s border work to the Mediterranean. However, the humanitarian role of the EU is now under more pressure as boats are still crossing and the UN has commented that these boat tragedies are harming the credibility of Europe as a normative actor that believes in human rights. For example, they accused the increased dominance of anti-immigrant discourse in far right political parties across Europe for leading to a decrease in political pressure to carry out search and rescue missions in the Mediterranean (United Nations Refugee Agency 2015).

As it has been established, migration has been a fundamental part of the EU-Libya relationship, it was seen as an even bigger issue during the crisis due to the instability of the region, and it remains a core priority today. News articles such as ‘Italy Warns of a New Wave of Immigrants to Europe’ stating "we know what to expect when the Libyan national system falls," have reflected the perceived threat of an unstable Libya. Metaphors relating to water give the image of an uncontrollable influx "A wave of 200,000 to 300,000 immigrants...It is a Biblical exodus. It's a problem that no Italian should underestimate.” (Spiegal International 2011) and ‘Surge in illegal migration after Libya threat to ‘flood’ EU’ have increased the perceived threat of this (Perry 2014).
So, it can be taken that the domestic situation in countries influences the level of EU support and the selection of instruments and policies chosen. The Libyan domestic political situation has not been conducive to democratic reforms which has limited the effectiveness of the EU’s normative role. It is for this reason, that Dandashly (2014) explains why most EU foreign policy in the Middle East and Northern Africa region focuses predominantly on security concerns. The 2008 report on the implementation of the European Security Strategy highlighted the threats that failed states in the Southern Neighbourhood pose to the EU:

‘State failure affects our security through crime, illegal immigration and most recently piracy. Terrorism and organised crime have evolved with new menace, including within our own societies. The Iranian nuclear programme has significantly advanced, representing a danger for stability in the region and for the whole non-proliferation system’ (Council of the European Union 2008). Threats from the external and within such as ISIS and radicalisation also effect the EU's policy with Arab states making it difficult to uphold norms.

The security discourse seems to sit uneasily against the discourse of democracy promotion. The comparison between the post Libya Crisis rhetoric towards democracy promotion, the treaty framework on normative values and this security strategy is that the latter on security seems a lot less idealist and somewhat more realist.
5.

Normative Power: A Contradictory Concept

As the case study has shown, ‘Normative Power Europe’ has displayed inconsistencies in its relationship with Libya which somewhat undermines the title. A better way to describe it is as an instrument used by member states to achieve public legitimation and self-rationalisation of policies. Manners’ normative power framework is not sufficiently critical of its own agenda and does not allow us to look at Europe’s external affairs through a critical lens. It merely takes the world as it is found, with the prevailing power relationships and institutions that govern the relationships and uses this as the framework for action. Cox (1981: 129) states that critical theory asks that we look beyond this framework as a given and seek to critically assess the framework itself by looking for contradictions and inconsistencies.

5.1 Self-rationalisation and public legitimation

So what purpose does the normative identity narrative serve? Firstly, it is critical that we interrogate into why liberal democracy got normative status in the first place. Manners believed that the European model was a good thing in itself because its values had been universally accepted by dominant global institutions and economic liberalisation and democratisation had brought about peaceful co-existence within Europe (Manners 2002). However, as the Libya case study has shown, the attempted transition to democracy did not bring about peace and stability and Europe has focused more on securing the latter rather than the former. As Pace (2009: 42) revealed then perhaps ‘it is not democracy in itself that is envisaged as the ultimate goal in the EU eyes, but as one of the means to another objective- stability and prosperity’. This reveals the normative element of EU policy to be bursting with paradoxes and contradictions. It also seems
to fit these case studies findings as it helps to explain why the Gaddafi regime was not challenged significantly before the uprising. It also makes sense as to why security issues are being prioritised over democratic transition now that Libya is particularly unstable.

As this study has shown the aid given to Libya can be explicitly linked to realist aims. Pace (2009: 42) would agree that the normative rhetoric is purely instrumental as she states that ‘the ultimate objective of these initiatives is securitising the EU’s own concerns about immigration, security and stability rather than the ‘transformation’ in the MENA (Middle East and North Africa Region.’ Therefore, the EU rhetoric during the Libya Crisis was manipulative and dishonest about member state interests. The normative prescription clashes with this. In the EU’s words as quoted in Pace’s article: ‘The EU doesn’t believe in imposing reform, but we do want to do all we can to support the region’s (MENA) own reforms quite simply because we believe that democracy, good governance, rule of law, and gender equality are essential for stability and prosperity. This has always been an objective of the Barcelona process and it is the cornerstone of the Neighbourhood Policy’ (Barcelona Declaration 1995). If realist interests really are more important than the normative element the EU would benefit from being more consistent in its communication about this as to not get trapped balancing their rhetoric between norms and interests. The contradictions actually serve to decrease its power as it undermines its credibility when they are realised. So the image that the EU projects of itself is not at all what it actually is, but of an ideal model- ‘a utopian normativity’. (Nicolaidis and Howse 2002: 789)

Langan’s (2012: 265) strong assertion that ‘Europe’s actual normative power is better understood as the capacity to veil and entrench policy agendas that further EU commercial and geopolitical interests under the guise of European values’ can be applied to this case study of Libya. This explains why the Border Assistance Mission (EUBAM) was established and why the
economy and trade were prioritised again during the Libya Crisis but presented differently by the EU given the fact that the international community expected them to react a way that reflected their norms. So it can be asserted that the projection of normative values does not reform policy agendas or seek to uncover unjust policies, rather as Langan (2012: 1) argues it ‘publically legitimises’ and ‘self-rationalise(s)’ self-interested policy.

Ultimately, reputation and identity are fundamental for EU altruistic acts such as aid and development assistance. By publicising these aspects of the EU’s policy its reputation is enhanced. This maintains the superiority of European values and this process can be argued to be an act of the west asserting its dominance (Collins 2013: 36). The EU therefore upholds its reputation as Seeberg (2009: 1) argues by acting as a ‘realist actor in normative clothes’. It pursues a realist agenda whilst publically proclaiming support for democracy promotion at the same time. As Pace (2007: 1060) highlights, the gap between the rhetoric and the situation on the ground in EU foreign policy is evidence of the clear attempt from the EU to construct itself as a normative actor. When the EU is not particularly successful at fulfilling its role as a promoter of democracy, this rhetoric merely serves to legitimise its policy and maintain this reputation.

The Union’s credibility on the world stage is that it appeals to hegemonic discourses such as neo-liberalism and democracy promotion. Therefore by appealing to these values, the EU is able to legitimise its policy. As Cox argues, theory is always for somebody and the theory of ‘Normative Power Europe’ is argued by some such as Damro (2012) to in fact be closer to ‘market power europe’. Whilst Manners maintained that the ethics of the EU’s normative power are located in its ability to normalise a more just cosmopolitan world’ (Manners 2008b: 67) he clearly missed out on a critical reflection of strategic capitalist motivations. Those that sympathise with the EU project are likely to find comfort in Manners’ explanation, however, to
accept a justification that is produced by a person that is sympathetic to the actor risks bypassing sufficient critique.

5.2 Norms vs interests and member state tensions

The normative role merely serves as a utopian self-representation to rationalise policies. However, the dilemma occurs when norms and interests majorly conflict between states. This is one reason why Hyde-Price’s realist critique of the EU states it might find itself becoming a ‘tragic actor’. This is because claiming to be a normative actor puts EU member states in an identity dilemma when their differing state interests come into conflict with differing conceptions of these norms. He explained that if the EU continues to assume a normative role, it will be left ‘as a weak and ineffective actor unable to further the shared interests of its member states, or it will indulge in quixotic moral crusades’ (Hyde Price 2008: 29).

Because the EU is an intergovernmental organisation- albeit a sophisticated one, in reality it has little control as to how the member states interpret a problem. This is because the decision making process remains intergovernmental which means that the chance of all European member states agreeing on foreign policy that isn’t in their best interests is unlikely. Tommel (2013: 36) explains how rather than post Arab Spring rhetoric merely being ‘new wine in old wine skin’ the decision making procedures and institutional set up of the EU prevent a fully-fledged normative role developing because ‘trade liberalisation and the transfer of the aquis communitaire’ are still the only predominant response all states tend to agree on. Unless all member states agree on normative values and these mesh with all different state interests, a realist perspective will state that ethics will always be a second priority order.
Zielonka (1998) elaborates on the institutional set up of the EU. He argued that the belief in a universal European foreign policy is misguided as member states will continue to assert their national interests first. In particular the big states such as Britain, France, Germany and Italy who show the greatest interest in Libya are likely to compete over ways to address the problems. Hoffman, (2005) in a book review of Reid’s book ‘The United States of Europe: The New Superpower and the End of American Supremacy’ critiques his normative European vision for the future. He argued that Reid pays insignificant attention to the economic and demographic factors that might in fact go beyond mere skepticism and undermine the whole European model.

European assertiveness in relation to the Libya problem is crumbing as a result of the competing paradigms of norms and interests. European member state leaders are becoming preoccupied with domestic concerns such as their economic situation following the economic crisis and managing austerity. The migration issue in Libya is a key example of European foreign policy clashing between European norms and member state interests. Whilst member states had agreed on the EUBAM border mission to help manage the borders, with this not proving effective at stopping the flow of people trying to cross the Mediterranean they are finding it more difficult to agree on who should contribute to rescue missions and if they should even be undertaken. This brings the EU’s human rights value into direct conflict with realist economic interests and political fears of increasing population figures. The fear is that less attractive narratives will start to form if EU institutions fail to achieve the desired results (Martinsen 2011)

5.3 The Changing nature of security

A final thought rests on how the changing nature of security has affected the credibility of normative power in Libya. Realism as a theory argues that security is one of states main
concerns which can explain why cooperation is more likely to occur if working together decreases the threats against member states. The increase of complex security threats means that the normative element of EU foreign policy is likely to remain compromised and therefore merely used for rhetorical identity construction purposes in relations with Libya. Even if promoting democracy and human rights are genuine objectives, they will remain second order concerns. In fact, even Manners himself noted that the changing security climate in particular radicalism and terrorism has decreased the possibility of a truly genuine normative power. He realised that the security challenge to the EU ‘is doubly challenging because these terrorist acts raise fundamental questions to the merits of the EU’s normative approach toward politics. In the face of such undifferentiating, non-negotiable new terrorism and the need for effective counter-terrorist strategy, what place is there for the niceties of normative principles such as democracy, human rights or good governance?’ (Manners 2007: 406) The very Achilles heel of normative power is that it assumes peace can be easily created in an anarchic system when states will be looking out for their own self-interest. Furthermore, whilst it is not an unachievable project as many cases show, ideas cannot be so easily exported so that those labelled ‘abnormal’ can be easily ‘normalised’ into a one size fits all model.
6.

Conclusion

Manners’ claim of a ‘Normative Power Europe’ falls into hard scepticism when tested by this dissertation’s case study. It would be expected that the normative power of the EU would be in its element during the Libya Crisis as the country showed a clear will to overthrow their dictator and create a new democratic future. This was the perfect opportunity for the EU to use its expertise and spread its influence. However, this study showed that this was not the case which greatly undermines the claims made by the EU that this is its role in global politics.

This study has presented two key findings from the research undertaken. Firstly, the normative roles of European member states were compromised in their relationship with Libya. Instead, core realist interests were prioritised such as economic gains and geopolitical interests such as oil dependency and managing Libya- EU migration. It has shown by presenting competing paradigms of discourse concerning EU norms and member state interest that whenever norms clash with interests the latter is prioritised. This also occurred in the response to the Libya Crisis as member states were unable to act in concert. It has also occurred in the insufficient implementation of normative policy such as democracy promotion and human rights. This is because ultimately instead of investing in these, member states have prioritised security and economics.

The second finding was that the normative identity of the union during the Arab Spring was only used instrumentally to secure the same realist interests. Therefore, this led to the conclusion that claiming to be a ‘normative’ actor is rife with contradictions. For instance, the study found that the core priorities since the Libya crisis have remained linked to realist interests
and the normative rhetoric analysed was actually used as a ‘normative veil’ to hide the union’s weaknesses. Its weaknesses which were the contextual environment and lack of member states dedication led it to the prioritising of stability which meant reverting back to the same realist goals. These findings implied that the EU’s efforts towards democratisations and support for human rights might not be entirely genuine but rather used for public legitimisation and self-rationalisation of geopolitical interests and economic gains.

These findings should not be taken as representative of all EU actions in external countries. Whilst the literature has found multiple examples of similar findings in different countries, there are also many cases where the EU has successfully spread its influence. However, the contexts of these countries tend to be more favourable to be influenced in the first place. Furthermore, norms and interests do not tend to clash as much. Never the less, this study should not be taken to be generic by any means and there are cases that prove otherwise e.g (Biondo 2015). The context of Libya makes it a good example of a case where EU normative policy is losing credibility. However, this dissertation was not intended to completely undermine the aid and support that the EU gave to Libya during the crisis nor condemn those who undertook the military response under the convention of the right to protect. Rather it hopes to have revealed the inconsistencies and contradictions of EU normative discourse across time and settings. This critical element hopes to reveal these with the intention of creating better communication to see how policy could be more transparent.

There are many different opportunities for further research relating to this topic and this has only touched the very tip of the iceberg. The findings could be further clarified by conducting interviews with foreign policy politicians from the four member states whose interests were assessed in this study. This could be effective at grasping a better understanding of
why normative values are compromised as surely it is not always such a black and white picture as this study has shown. It might also provide a better account of threat perceptions which would be useful for understanding how security concerns are affecting relationships with Libya. Another avenue could involve the hypothesis of this project being tested against the EU’s relationship with other countries. For example, other countries in the Middle East and Northern Africa Region to see if the same interests arise. By contrast, the case could be compared to a country where the EU has been said to have fulfilled its normative role in an idealist manner. This would help explain how the context of a country affects the balance of norms and interests.

The European Union’s relationship with Libya is under the spotlight in the media again at current. This seems to be increasing the pressure for the EU member states to fulfill their obligations towards the post conflict situation in Libya. Meetings are being held in particular to discuss the migration issue and although the normative rhetoric may be rising, it will be interesting to observe the outcome of EU level discussions.
APPENDICES

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