The European Union: Power and Ethical Goals

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Discussion over the place of the European Union and its ancestor organisations within the world has long been a topic of discussion and academic study. More specifically the power that the EU holds (or does not hold) has been a subject of intense debate.

The particular theory of "Ethical Power Europe" (EPE) is one that has emerged relatively recently as an evolution of the characterisation of the power that the European Union wields, however importantly this characterisation of European power differs significantly from more traditional approaches. Traditional Interpretations of Civilian Power Europe (CPE) and Normative Power Europe (NPE) and also ideas over the development of more traditional-realist "Hard Power" have focused primarily upon the definition of the "means" of power employed, where the concept of "Ethical Power Europe" differs is that there is a shift in focus from the almost singular consideration of the mechanisms of European power to the consideration of both the "end's" and "means" in combination. This, in part, is likely a scholarly reaction to the implementation of, and moves towards, the creation of European military forces (or at least forces earmarked as for the use of the European Union) which challenge the civilian power tradition. This Paper plans to explore this concept of "Ethical Power Europe" more closely, being that this idea represents a relatively new approach, it is important to explore whether there is any true reflection of this concept .

In order to understand how the EU employs its available means of power, and to further interpret this into whether or not this power is intended or utilised towards ethical goals, it is important to create a sound framework of judgement upon "ethics" and "the good" that the EU is or is not achieving through the application of its power. While on the surface it may seem logical to conclude that the achievement of some, any, benefit to third parties from the application of power might be enough to deem it "Ethical"[1], this essay will judge the performance of the EU in achieving "Ethical" goals from a so called "Kantian" or "duty based" logic of ethics.

"Good intentions Count. The morality of an action is not determined by its consequences, only by the intentions behind it. Morality is objective: it's not a matter of taste or culture, but applies equally to all rational beings."[2]

This approach has been utilised for two key reasons, firstly it is the opinion of the author that the Kantian concept of ethical conduct constitutes a far sounder approach to the understanding of and conduct of morality and the execution of "moral" actions, namely by setting the notion that "the good" exists as a motivating factor in and for itself. Secondly the remaining reason for choosing the Kantian school of ethical philosophy as the basis for forming a judgement over the ethical conduct of the EU, and for understanding the employment of its means of power is based on the rhetoric and discourse of the EU itself. In a number of publications and policy papers the EU has characterised itself as "a force for good", for example Javier Solana, EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy stated in a policy dossier in 2007 both that Europe should become a "peace-builder" in the world, and strive to "act as a credible force for good". Solana also summed up the paper by Quoting a particularly pertinent (for the purposes of this essay) statement: "philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau got it right in his toweringly influential work "The Social Contract", in which he wrote: 'The strongest is never strong enough to be always the master, unless he transforms strength into right and obedience into *duty* [my emphasis]'", clearly then the EU sees its ethical role in the world as being defined by inherent loyalty and achievement of "the good" bout by a "global social contract" and "duty".[3]

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In order then to approach the question, "How does the EU make use of its available means of Power in order to achieve "Ethical" goals?" It is necessary to understand the forms of power that the EU wields. As has already been stated the idea of "Ethical Power Europe" is one of many "theories" of European power to have been envisaged, however as has already been shown this conception of the European Union's power differs in its approach and understanding. As such it is still possible to utilise traditional theories of European power in order to understand the implications that their use has had upon EPE. For example, where in the past critiques of the different schools of thought on the basis of European power have utilised the existence of any form of power, existing and employed outside of a particular "other" theory's parameters, as evidence of the flaws and disproof of that "other" theory. This essay however plans to utilise these existing academic frameworks of understanding of European power in order to come to a concise understanding of whether the European Union exists as an "Ethical" power.

These areas of "Power" are: Normative and Rhetorical Power; Civilian Power; Hard/Realist Power. For the aims of this essay however the focus will be drawn upon Civilian and Military means of power, with particular reference the European Security and Defence Policy, where there is much crossover. Ideas of "Normative Power Europe" (NPE) envisage a very different form of influence exerted by the European Union to those put forwards by the "civilian" and "military" power debates. The concept of normative power, suggests that the EU exercises a significant role in international affairs, and in particular through the influence of other actors just through the mere fact of being. Whilst there is a considerable literature behind this view, it will remain largely unexplored in this essay for a variety of reasons. Firstly it is difficult to prove, with any State or actor who has been "influenced" having to admit that they did so out of a desire to emulate the EU, Secondly the scope of any exploration of the ethics of normative power would require in depth studies of issues such as the ethics of identity and identity creation against a specified "other", which normative power has a significant part in the formation of. Finally where we are considering here the active and deliberate engagement of power "How does the EU *make use* of its available means of Power", normative power by definition is largely a passive form of power, the moment its ideals and goals are actively sought, it ceases to be influence by the creation of diplomatic and moral norms and starts to become more akin to civilian or military power.

Civilian Power

The debate over civilian power and "Civilian Power Europe" (CPE) has been one which has a long history, commonly attributed to the work of Françious Duchêne the debate over Civilian Power Europe "has dominated the debate on Europe's role in the world for several decades"[4]. The definition of civilian power however is harder to acquire, Duchêne's notion of civilian power is vague and loosely defined[5] which some assert has contributed to its proliferation and popularity amongst European Union academic's and policy-makers[6]. Duchêne broadly defines civilian power as power characterised by emphasis upon "low politics, non-state actors, ideational influences, international interdependence"[7]. On the surface this would appear to be one of the more hopeful areas of European performance in achieving Ethical goals, primarily for the fact that "much of this debate about the choice of instruments in foreign policy is framed in terms of civilian power being seen as 'good' and hard military power, equated with coercion, 'bad'"[8], however it is clear that civilian power to can be coercive[9], whether indirectly or through deliberate state coercion Coercive diplomacy utilises ideas that exist between the employment of force for a desired end and discussion between states, it entails threats in order to impose a course of action upon an adversary or external body[10]. What policies would it therefore be prudent to consider when understanding this Civilian power and its ethical standpoint, what examples should be considered then of the EU employing Civilian power in order to achieve "Ethical Goals"?

In terms of External relations, perhaps the biggest areas of exercised "Civilian Power" are EU trade and aid polices and EU Civilian missions undertaken as part of the European Security and Defence Policy.

Stelios Stavridis highlights one of the key criteria of civilian power policy that must be met in order for it to conform to the standards of ethics. Namely he quotes Duchêne stating that the EU must promote the "diffusion of civilian and democratic standards', promoting values such as "equality, justice and tolerance" alongside the interests of the poor abroad[11], however clearly the EU violates this last and key statement, through its agricultural and trade policies.

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The EU systematically has protected self-interest over fostering the greater "good". The Australian Trade Minister Mark Vaile has pointed out, "a typical cow in the EU receives a subsidy of $2.20 a day—more than what 1.2 billion of the world's poorest people live on each day."[12] It has also been suggested by the international Herald Tribune that should the EU act to reform the CAP along ethical grounds it is likely that over 140 million people could be taken out of poverty.[13] Clearly not only does this violate the principles of Kant's Ethics on the grounds that policies are pursued based on the self-interest of the EU in protecting internal agricultural and other sectors, but also it violates almost to the letter one of his examples of duty; wherein he describes a person, who "is in prosperity", but sees that others have to contend "with great wretchedness" and that they could help them. They consider turning away "not wish[ing] to contribute anything to his welfare or to his assistance in dis-tress!" but that the said individual recognises this would be a violation of his moral duty, clearly the European Union acts contrary to ethical principles here.

Civilian undertakings as part of the European Security and Defence Policy, must also be considered,

Hard/Realist Power

 It is important to understand the means of hard power at Europe's disposal and how they have been employed in order to reach ethical goals. The focus of this obviously falls on the European Security and Defence Policy and the military missions undertaken under this banner. Debates over a European need for hard power to rival or compliment the United States have long been around, perhaps most famously since Hedley Bull's critique of Civilian Power Europe was published, an article in which Bull calls upon Europe to raise defence spending, develop a European nuclear capability and to locate itself between the power of the United States and Soviet Union[14]. Clearly such ideas reflected traditional modes of thinking, approaching power from the capabilities (means) rather than intentions (ends) side of the equation. Hard power is still very much a significant aspect for the understanding of Europe as an Ethical Power, "Concepts of EPE encompass both civilian *and* military power [my emphasis]"[15].

In recent Years the European Union has made some use of its military power, the European Union has embarked upon no less than 6 fully "Military Operations" and 3 civilian/military operations under the framework of the European Security and Defence Policy[16]

Of these, one of the largest, and likely the most significant was, "Operation ARTEMIS", to the Democratic Republic of Congo. Under Operation ARTEMIS the European Union deployed "approximately 1400 [troops], with just under half at the force headquarters in Entebbe", under a French "framework", in order to secure the town of Bunia whilst the UN made the necessary arrangements and plans for a reinforcement of the existing UN force deployment[17]. Operation ARTEMIS has been widely held as a model operation, demonstrating not only the ability of the European Union to act with the use of Military force, but for it to do so in a manner that was ostensibly "Ethical". EU forces were deployed and managed to secure peace long enough to be relieved by UN forces who took their place of promoting peace and stability in the region. However by analysing some of the aspects of the operation it is clear that significant other motives also applied to the European Union, and that these significantly detract from the picture presented. Firstly it is important to consider the handover of operations from IEMF (Interim Emergency Multinational Force) to the UN at the end of Operation ARTEMIS. A UN report on the operation made the following recommendations:

"*Recommendation 9: Future arrangements should ensure that mandate coverage for the force presence explicitly extends to the withdrawal of all elements of the multinational force, until the last man or woman leaves. There should be no doubt as to the applicability of the mandate to residual elements of the multinational force even beyond the end date of the deployment.*

Recommendation 10: In future scenarios involving the deployment of an IEMF alongside a UN peacekeeping operation, there should be a clear understanding that if IEMF participants refuse to be re-hatted, at least some if not all of the IEMF's enabling assets will be left behind in order to ensure that the mission does not lose credibility. "[18]

These recommendations would suggest that whilst the IEMF was a successful deployment and made use of "enabling assets" which gave them a significant advantage and credibility amongst the local population (the report directly praises the employment of Special Forces, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Aircraft and Intelligence Operations)[19]. That the EU force had issues with the loan or transferral of these assets, even on a temporary basis, to the UN. They also suggest that the EU was not willing to contribute any of the "in theatre" forces towards the longer term UN mission which was aimed at building long term peace and stability. When this fact is combined with assertions made by Ulriksen and Bono, namely that EU military operations on the whole have only taken place because the US government "has been reluctant to get involved Militarily in Africa" and that EU intervention is conditioned by US strategy[20], essentially that the European Union is taking on missions in to demonstrate its own power and worth. A case can be made that "the pattern of missions has been driven by self-centred motives (competition with NATO, testing of capabilities) as much as the calculus of humanitarian impact[21].

Inaction

It is also hugely important to consider where the EU has not taken action or has taken only limited action upon an issue. This too can be hugely illuminating as to the moral and ethical character of European policy, Whilst the question may be "How does the European Union make use of its existing means of power in order to achieve ethical goals?", situations where the EU has elected *not* to use its power are highly indicative of what the truly motivating factors behind the EU are, whether "Ethical Power Europe" truly exists at all or whether the discourse of "Ethics" within European foreign and security policy is either deceptive or misleading.

Two angles must be considered of "policy not taken" in order to analyse the ethical intent of European power, firstly situations where Europe had the capacity to act but did not must be examined. This is on the basis of another of Kant's scenarios;

"A third finds in himself a talent which with the help of some culture might make him a useful man in many respects. But he finds himself in comfortable circumstances and prefers to indulge in pleasure rather than to take pains in enlarging and improving his happy natural capacities. He asks, however, whether his maxim of neglect of his natural gifts, besides agree-ing with his inclination to indulgence, agrees also with what is called duty. He sees then that a system of nature could indeed subsist with such a universal law although men (like the South Sea islanders) should let their talents rest and resolve to devote their lives merely to idleness, amusement, and propagation of their species — in a word, to enjoyment; but he cannot possibly will that this should be a universal law of nature, or be implanted in us as such by a natural instinct. For, as a rational being, he necessarily wills that his faculties be developed, since they serve him and have been given him, for all sorts of possible purposes."[22]

Where Europe has had this capacity to act (within a wider ethical framework) but has not acted or has acted in a manner which is contrary to "the good" must clearly be shown as examples of non-Ethical Power Europe. Clearly here Darfur stands out as most critical example, Despite continuing calls for action and the characterisation of the on-going crisis as "Genocide" by some, the EU has only deployed supporting rear echelon assets to the AU[23] and not taken a stronger stance, even in a small area with its supposedly rapidly deployable troops or through civilian measures.

Secondly we must consider situations where Europe has not necessarily possessed the requisite mechanisms of influence or power in order to achieve "the good" in a given situation, but never the less has done little to actually attempt to pursue "the good" or as Kant defines it:

"Kant tells us, provided we have good intentions, it doesn't matter from a moral point of view if a 'niggardly endowment of a step motherly nature' prevents us achieving what we set out to do,"[24]

Perhaps one of the best examples of policy in which the EU lacked both the means of coercion (where coercion is not limited to force but power more generally) and the will to act with sufficient power is the issue of torture and human

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rights abuse, particularly with regards to the conduct of or enabling of torture by EU member states with regards to the preservation of National Security. Although it is clear that there has been opposition to the idea of torture as a tool of counter-terrorism, for example the European Union Institute for Security Studies[25] recently published an article on "The EU, Torture, Secrets and the Truth" which states that "Experience has taught European states the importance of avoiding shortcuts in counter-terrorism, reflecting the fundamental imperative of maintaining the highest standard of human rights compliance in dealing with the hardest cases"[26],

Relations with china characterise how the EU has failed to take an ethical stand on the issue externally and how the EU has failed to engage in "ethical" policies regardless of the chances of success for these policies.

"it is equally clear that willing Chinese participation in the total war on terror has had a negative effect on the EU's specific dialogue on human rights as part of its 'positive engagement' policy. In particular, Chinese repression of Uighurs in Xinjiang has been framed in terms of the total war on terror since September 2001; although EU attempts to lift the June 1989 arms embargo on China in November 2004 appear equally problematic"[27]

The EU has engaged in a policy of "positive engagement" since 1995 with China, a policy where criticism and relations with China (PRC) are improved in an effort to spread ethical goals via normative means, However as a recent Human Rights Watch report clearly shows, Human Rights abuse in China is a continuing issue, the Human Rights Watch report on "Black Jails"[28] for instance demonstrates that action taken by China to curb Human Rights abuses is minimal and, given that the report states that "Chinese legal scholars and academics who have researched black jails say that their emergence since 2003 constitutes one of the most serious and widespread uses of extra-legal detention in China's recent history"[29], clearly the lack of a strong EU stance on this issue, even though the power it could bear may be limited reflects a failure of "Ethics" and "Ethical Goals"

Conclusions

Clearly then this essay proves that not only does Europe fail to consistently employ its available means of power in an "Ethical Fashion" but it challenges the notion of an "Ethical Power Europe" existing. It has been demonstrated the EU is finding it hugely difficult as an institution to act in a truly ethical foundation, devoid of self-interest as a primary motivator, even the consistent location of the "External Relations" policy of the EU in a framework of "Security" (CFSP, EDSP, ESS) suggests that it is the Security of the EU that is always the primary motivating factor rather than the ethical goals of the policy. This reminds us of Kant's proverbial shopkeeper who only keeps his pricing consistent in order to maintain his customer loyalty.

However though this essay has shown that the EU does not consistently act in a manner which holds up to scrutiny as "Ethical" it is still clear that as a power, and more importantly as a power of global influence, the EU acts in a manner that is more often beneficial to those on the receiving end of its actions than traditional powers and hegemons have, especially those that have historically grown out of Europe. The real challenge that faces the EU's foreign policy now is either the total reform of EU foreign policy alone more deontological lines, or more likely the rephrasing of the Foreign Policy discourse to a more honest and less extrovertly "Kantian" perspective. It should also be noted as a final point that if analysed under a different microscope, particularly that of Consequentialist Utilitarianism, then Europe does achieve an "Ethical" foreign policy, the lack of a pure Kantian motive should not negate the fact that some good has come out of EU polices, the question of whether the EU is ethical needs in the future to be rephrased and instead we should ask: "what is the balance sheet of damage to benefit caused by the external power of the EU, how does this reflect the experience of other "Global Powers"?

[1] Such an approach can be characterised as belonging to the "Consequentialist Utilitarian" philosophy of ethics.

[2] Warburton, N. "Immanuel Kant Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals". In: *Philosophy: the classics* (London: Routledge: 2001) p.139-146 – p.139

[3] 'Countering Globalisations Dark Side', *Europes World,* policy dossier,

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http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/CMS_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/articles/96791.pdf, accessed 20 March 2010 It is also important to state that the EU in its statements upon foreign policy has held a constant discourse of upholding and striving for "the good" as an imperative of European Power and as a goal in itself see: Council of the European Union (2003) *A Secure Europe in a Better World: European Security Strategy* (Brussels)

[4] Can get easy ref

[5] Orbie, Jan "Civilian Power Europe: review of the original and current debates", *Cooperation and Conflict*, Vol. 41 No.1 (2006) p.124

[6] Bruckhardt, C.W. "*Why is there a public debate about the idea of a 'Civilian Power Europe'?* (2004) Quoted in: Orbie, Jan "Civilian Power Europe: review of the original and current debates", *Cooperation and Conflict*, Vol. 41 No.1 (2006) – p.124

[7] Orbie, Jan "Civilian Power Europe: review of the original and current debates", *Cooperation and Conflict*, Vol. 41 No.1 (2006) p.124

[8]Aggestam, Lisbeth 'Introduction: Ethical Power Europe?' *International Affairs* Vol. 84, no. 1 (2008), p.9

[9] Aggestam, Lisbeth 'Introduction: Ethical Power Europe?' *International Affairs* Vol. 84, no. 1 (2008), p.9

[10] Evans, Graham, and Jeffrey Newnham. *Dictionary of international relations.* London: Penguin Reference, 1998.

[11] Stavridis, Stelios. "Failing to act like a "Civilian Power": The European Union's policy towards Cyprus and Turkey' *Studia Diplomatica* Vol. 54 p. 75-102 also quoted in Orbie, Jan "Civilian Power Europe: review of the original and current debates", *Cooperation and Conflict*, Vol. 41 No.1 (2006).

[12] Hyde-Price, Adrian "A 'tragic actor'? A realist perspective

on 'ethical power Europe'" *International Affairs* Vol. 84, no. 1 (2008), p.33

[13] Hyde-Price, Adrian "A 'tragic actor'? A realist perspective

on 'ethical power Europe'" *International Affairs* Vol. 84, no. 1 (2008), p.33

[14] Bull, Hedley. "Civilian Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?" *Journal of Common Market Studies,* Vol.21, No. 1(1982) p.149-170

[15] Aggestam, Lisbeth 'Introduction: Ethical Power Europe?' *International Affairs* Vol. 84, no. 1

(2008), p.2

[16] Council of the European Union "Overview of missions and operations of the European Union Feb 2010" (image) available at http://www.consilium.europa.eu/showPage.aspx?id=268&lang=EN (Last Accessed 21 March 2010)

[17] United Nations: Peacekeeping Best Practices Unit. *Operation ARTEMIS :Lessons of the Interim Emergency Multinational Force.* United Nations, 2004. p.12

[18] United Nations: Peacekeeping Best Practices Unit. *Operation ARTEMIS :Lessons of the Interim Emergency Multinational Force.* United Nations, 2004 p.21

[19] United Nations: Peacekeeping Best Practices Unit. *Operation ARTEMIS :Lessons of the Interim Emergency Multinational Force.* United Nations, 2004 p.13-14

[20] Ulriksen, Stale & Bono, Giovanna "Conclusion: Economic and Diplomatic Tools vs Military Might", *International Peacekeeping,* Vol. 11 No.3 (2004) p.563

[21] Bailes, Alyson J. K. "The EU and a 'better world': what role for the European Security and Defence Policy?" *International Affairs* Vol. 84, no. 1 (2008), p.119

[22] Kant, Immanuel *The Metaphysic of Morals* (2008,MSAC Philosophy Group, Walnut) p.44

[23] , Alyson J. K. "The EU and a 'better world': what role for the European Security and Defence Policy?" *International Affairs* Vol. 84, no. 1 (2008), p.118

[24] Warburton, N. Immanuel Kant Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals. In: *Philosophy: the classics* (London: Routledge: 2001) p.140

[25] The EUISS characterises itsel as "a Paris-based agency of the European Union, operating under the EU's … Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). Its goals are to find a common security culture for the EU, to help develop and project the CFSP, and to enrich Europe's strategic debate." http://www.iss.europa.eu/about-us

[26] Domínguez-Redondo, Elvira *The EU, Torture, Secrets and Dealing with the truth* (Paris, EUISS, 2009) p.1

[27] Manners, Ian "European Union 'Normative Power' and the Security Challenge", *European Security*, Vol. 15 , No.4 (2006), p. 405-421

[28] Although "Black Jails" are not linked to the prosecution of the War on Terror, they are indicative of the state of Human Rights within the PRC and of how the strategic policies taken by the EU and its member states in light of their support for the US and its use of liaison with China

to combat "Islamic Extremism".

[29] Human Rights Watch"An Alleyway in Hell" China's Abusive "Black Jails"(2009) accessed at: http://www.hrw.org/en/reports/2009/11/12/alleyway-hell-0 (last accessed 21 March 2010)

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