((D)(e-))Valuation of the EU's "Moral Power" in the European Neighbourhood (Policy) (ENP)

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ABSTRACT

Driven by the New Cold War between Russia and the West since 2014, this article draws on moral theory hinging on the conceptual framework of 'moral power' theoretically proceeding from 'civilian'/'normative'/'ethical' 'power Europe'. These are applied to the European Neighbourhood (Policy) (ENP) as a prime test case composed of atomised case studies on a geographic terrain characterised by political, security, economic, etc. turmoil.

Ontologically, the article bridges neorealism, constructivism, and critical theory to explain the latest developments in the EU's political neighbourhood. Epistemologically, it relies on the outside/in, bottom-up, inbound/outbound trajectories to grasp the local dynamics, regional interplay and the global context. Methodologically, it carries out qualitative discourse and quantitative content-analysis transcending from the 'pragmatic' and 'narrative' turns to interpretivism.

This article a) demonstrates the theoretical convalescence from the 'normative power Europe' (NPE) to 'moral power' deconstructing NPE's core and minor norms and b) anatomises the ENP through the

seven 'parameters' of 'morality', namely, consequentialism, coherence, consistency, balance between values and interests, normative steadiness, inclusiveness and external legitimacy, and the relevant type of 'power', i.e. 'potential', 'actual', and 'actualised'. Thereby it 'constructs' a pyramid compartmentalising the EU's norms in line with purported objective morality, relative ethics and subjective normativity. Ultimately, beyond realpolitik, the article shows depletion of the NPE, which induces (de-)valuation of the EU's 'moral power' through 'normative digressions' – corrosion, derogation, deviation, perversion, erosion, conversion, subversion in tandem with 'moral distortions' – morally utilitarian, unmoral, anti-moral, amoral, immoral, non-moral, and moralist.

Key words: Moral power; international relations; European Union; European Neighbourhood Policy; New Cold War.

((D)(e-))Valuación del "poder moral" de la UE en la (política) europea de vecindad (ENP)

RESUMEN

Inspirado en la Nueva Guerra Fría entre Rusia y Occidente desde 2014, este artículo se basa en la teoría moral que gira en torno al marco conceptual del "poder moral" que procede teóricamente del poder "civil"/"normativo/"ética" europeo. Este se aplica a la (Política) Europea de Vecindad (ENP) como un caso de prueba principal compuesto de estudios de casos atomizados en un terreno geográfico caracterizado por la agitación política, de seguridad y económica.

Ontológicamente, el artículo une el neorrealismo, el constructivismo y la teoría crítica para explicar los últimos acontecimientos en la vecindad política de la UE. Epistemológicamente, se basa en las trayectorias exterior/interior, ascendente, entrante/saliente para captar la dinámica local, la interacción regional y el contexto global. Metodológicamente, lleva a cabo un discurso cualitativo y un análisis de contenido cuantitativo que trasciende los giros "pragmáticos" y "narrativos" hacia el interpretativismo.

Este artículo a) demuestra la transición teórica del "poder normativo de Europa" (NPE) al "poder moral" que deconstruye las normas centrales y secundarias de la NPE y b) anatomiza la ENP a través de los siete "parámetros" de la "moralidad", a saber, consecuencialismo, coherencia, consistencia, equilibrio entre valores e intereses, estabilidad normativa, inclusión y legitimidad externa, y el tipo relevante de "poder", es decir, "potencial", "real" y "actualizado". De este modo, "construye" una pirámide que compartimenta las normas de la UE de acuerdo con una supuesta moralidad objetiva, una ética relativa y una normatividad subjetiva. En última instancia, más allá de la *realpolitik*, el artículo muestra el agotamiento de la ENP, que induce la (de)

valuación del "poder moral" de la UE a través de "digresiones normativas": corrosión, derogación, desviación, perversión, erosión, conversión, subversión en conjunto con "distorsiones morales": moralmente utilitarias, inmorales, antimorales, amorales, inmorales, no morales y moralistas.

Palabras clave: poder moral; relaciones internacionales; Unión Europea; Política Europea de Vecindad; nueva Guerra Fría.

INTRODUCTION

The latest global/regional developments in the politically constructed neighbourhood of the European Union (EU) through the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) urge acknowledgment of the inadequacy of the existing conceptual/theoretical frameworks to explain them[1]. Whereas the 'civilian' (Duchene, 1973) and 'market' (Damro, 2012) 'power Europe' concepts described the Union as a polity in specific temporal periods, i.e. in the post-oil crisis and the peak of liberalisation of trade, respectively,

'normative' (Manners, 2002) and 'ethical' (Aggestam, 2008) 'power' elicited 'wishful thinking' aggrandising the EU's prospective policy as a 'potion' for the world. The subsequently devised 'moral power' framework was meant to provide "an objective and neutralized formula" (Vasilyan, 2020, p. 10) to explain the policy of any foreign actor in any policy sphere and towards any geographic area in any timeframe (Vasilyan, 2013). However, lately, the 'reality' struck via depletion of the EU's 'normative power' and ethical apathy in the eastern and southern neighbourhoods[2]. This two-pronged tendency has compelled to draw on moral theory by delving into the Union's 'moral power' through ((d)(e-)) valuation[3].

Bypassing arguments about epistemological rationalism confounded with ontological 'realism', trespassing the 'post-normative' and 'pragmatic turn' of the EU, and surpassing the 'narrative turn' (Muller, 2019), e.g. with 'connotational meanings from outside' in the political neighbourhood (Vasilyan, 2007), this article will transcend to the 'interpretive turn' (Heinelt

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[1]   Devised in 2004 the ENP covers countries on the EU's eastern side (Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova and the South Caucasian countries–Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia) and southern side–Maghreb (Algeria, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia, excluding Mauritania) and Mashreq (Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria), as well as Israel and Occupied Palestinian Territory, peripheries. It intended to foster stability, security and prosperity through technical and financial assistance.

[2]   Derived from economics, depletion semantically alludes to the 'capital monetisation' of 'normative power' signifying a materially driven and/or instrumentalised shift to *realpolitik* not in the conventional realist sense, but in the refurbished mode of obtrusiveness of interests in the normative rhetoric and/or volte-face of values in the pragmatic foreign policy practice.

[3]   Recourse to moral theory via ((d)(e-)) valuation modulates EU's 'moral power'. The latter entails evaluation through scrupulous analysis to determine the valuation of the policy on the part of the transmitter and recipients or de-valuation thereof by either of them.

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& Münch, 2018). It will trace the (d)evolution of the EU's policy towards its neighbourhood in the interval ranging from February 2014 – Russia's annexation of Crimea–to February 2022 – the war in Ukraine. This timeframe reflects the New Cold War between the allegedly revisionist West through the expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty OrganiSation (NATO) since the 1990s and the allegedly resurgent Russia. Accompanied by direct rivalry (in the form of mutual sanctions between the US/EU and Russia, eviction of Russia from the G8, etc.) and indirect proxy wars (in Syria, Libya, etc.) (Vasilyan, 2018), the tension escalated into the accumulation of 100,000 Russian troops on the border with Ukraine and the US summoning 8,500 troops on alert. With Russia seeking security guarantees from NATO and assurance of non-deployment of (nuclear) weapons, notwithstanding the extension of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) until 2026, 'mutually assured destruction' modified into 'stability' had been called to become 'mutually assured security' to minimise if not eradicate the risks of a nuclear war (Smith, 2021).

In 2016, a European Defence Action Plan was pushed for the 'development of a strong defence technological and industrial base' and in 2017 the European Defence Fund was created (Besch, 2019). The pretext being the potential disruption of the 'balance of power' in the international system held by equilibrium. The undulation of the latter has led to mutual 'reputational' skirmishes between the West and

Russia (Crescenzi, 2018). Simultaneously, 'absolute gains' yielded to 'relative gains' (Powell, 1991). If during the Cold War containment gave in to détente by relaxing the US-Soviet Union relations and the latter–to (nuclear) deterrence, since the onset of the New Cold War hybrid deterrence has been called for. Hybrid wars conducted with the help of disinformation, cyber-attacks, hiring of insurgents, unmanned aerial drones (in Syria, Libya and Nagorno-Karabakh), arms export, including dual-use technology (with the EU member-states being second to the US in terms of supply) have 'muddied' (trust in) international/Western norms, *inter alia*, in the EU's neighbourhood.

'Moral power' highlights the objectively *bona fide* prevalence of virtue over vice in tune with the pertinent type of power in contrast to the relative 'ethical power' and subjective 'normative power' (Vasilyan, 2020). Morality extrapolates the 'binary conception of good and/or bad, ethics–a conception of right and/or wrong, and normativity–of appropriate and/or inappropriate' (Vasilyan, 2020) Aspiring to 'speak truth to power' (Smith, 2003), ontologically, under the umbrella of moral theory the article will show the powerlessness of 'normative power', which is no longer 'able to shape conceptions of normal' (Manners, 2002, p. 239). Whereas the semantic normative form and ethical iteration have been retained in the ENP, notwithstanding the New Cold War, the moral content has undergone alteration. This is due to the modified insinuations of values due to the developments on the ground and

ramifications of alter-norms as a 'boomerang effect'.

Oppenheim (1991, pp. 49, 61) classified overt window dressing as "amoral", and covert hypocrisy as "immoral" (pp. 50, 70); when the ultimate intended goal of an actor's normative conduct is that an interest in such a policy is considered "morally utilitarian" (p. 54), and behaviour, which unintentionally leads to generation of a value is "nonmoral" (p. 62). According to Bell (2020) moralism indicates turning a 'blind eye' to others and selective imposition of values. Herewith, linguistically deriving from the German and French languages, respectively, this research adds 'unmoral' as dis-concerned with morality, and 'anti-moral' – as countering morality as potentially applicable to the case study.

This article argues that the latest developments in the EU's policy towards its neighbourhood can be conceptually captured by retrieving distortions of morality extant in moral theory, rather than by reverting to (neo-)realism evoking *realpolitik*. Whereas the latter has a constrained prism in that due to anarchy in the international system states have to resort to power or security maximisation for their survival, moral theory is more capacious in terms of its ontological grasp. Moreover, it allows epistemologically bridging positivist observation with interpretivism, and methodologically combining qualitative discourse and quantitative content analysis.

As normative depletion, while causing ethical deficit, has led to gradual normative impoverishment of the EU's policy

compelling ((d)(e-)) valuation of EU's 'moral power', this article will be divided into two segments. It will, firstly, showcase the theoretical convalescence from the 'normative power' to 'moral power' by constructing a missing pyramid subsequently applied to the case study. Secondly, it will display normative digressions per parameter of morality streamed through 'moral power', which have undergone moral distortions conveyed by the 'actual' power, as layered below.

THEORETICAL CONVALESCENCE FROM 'CIVILIAN'/'NORMATIVE'/'ETHICAL'/'MARKET' 'POWER EUROPE' TO 'MORAL POWER'

Conceiving of 'the EU as a 'civilian power' or 'market power' within the 'drawer' of neoliberalism whereby interdependence through the mobility of 'four freedoms' ensures cooperation, 'normative power'—within liberalism bound by the 'democratic peace' and 'ethical power'— 'on the borderline between liberalism and constructivism' whereby norms are ushered by identity (Vasilyan, 2020), *a priori* (neo-)liberalism is deficient due to its intrinsic normative rigidity. While the liberal(ist) credo of 'normative power' was broken down into 'neoliberal' *logos* (Parker & Rosamond, 2013), 'liberal' *pathos* (Rosamond, 2013) and *ethos* (Wagner, 2017), these seemed to be 'marketing' labels. Beyond misuse of norms as a pretext to access material resources and concealing national interest marking an inclination "to masquerade under the mantle

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of moral principle" (Kennan, 1985, p. 211), (neo-)liberalism could not account for normative duality, dichotomies, contestation. With the disinclination to political/economic/defense cooperation the 'missionary' (Kavalski, 2013) postulation of the 'normative power' ran into a deadlock and its 'ideal' paradigm (Forsberg, 2011) appeared in a gridlock.

Even if the 'normative power' preserved Gramscian 'hegemony' as *gnosis* (Diez, 2013), it is the flip-side equivalent of the neo-realist 'hegemonic stability theory' in *praxis* (Gilpin, 1989). The scholarly/policy efforts to contradict these theoretical/conceptual, political/empirical hegemonies in international relations/affairs, respectively, gave birth to alternative 'radical' voices. Said's (1978) Orientalism critically lamented the imperialist vision of the retarded East by the West. Inoguchi (2014) attempted to reconcile non-compatible theories to explain Japan's foreign policy. These works, however, did not escape from the 'cage' of the extant paradigms with which tautologically the 'fight was fought', and were, thus, unable to replace the *locus* of hegemony and reverse the subject-object relationship into a subject-subject one to engender *poiesis*.

Unlike the 'EUlogising' 'civilian', 'normative', 'ethical', market' 'power Europe', 'moral power' not only taps on the mentioned adjectives but also, most importantly, on the concept of 'power' as the gist of the 'political' and 'international' affairs. Comprising three types of power, namely, 'potential', 'actual', and 'actualised', and seven parameters of morality – 'consequentialism', 'coherence', 'consistency', 'balance between values and interests', 'normative steadiness', 'inclusiveness' and 'external legitimacy', 'moral power' espouses a 'hermeneutic' 'paradigm' (Vasilyan, 2020)[4]. These parameters, in turn, contain norms that may be tarnished, and have an ethical trajectory, unless violated.

The clash between contending "moral choices" (Douglas, 2019, p. 49) such as in the case of humanitarian intervention presuming violation of state sovereignty for the sake of the protection of civilians (institutionalised in the R2P), the concept of 'right intent' in just war theory or refraining from war altogether, transitional justice versus immunity, terrorism versus freedom fighting in the cases of irredentism, together with the globally increasing gap between the rich and the poor, and climate change versus economic upheaval remain unresolved in moral theory; therefore, they require weighing (Vasilyan, 2020). Hybrid wars have added complementary 'ethical dilemmas' (Vasilyan, 2020), for example, collateral damage in indiscriminate drone strikes (Konert & Balcerzak, 2021), human rights abuses through arms (and parts thereof) export (Besch & Oppenheim, 2019), etc.

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[4] Thus far, besides the EU, it has been applied to Japan's policy towards the South Caucasus (Vasilyan, 2019).

Meanwhile, the 'normative power' has been selective in terms of norms: liberty – given its crux–is the restrained use of freedom, which resides under the rule of law and is inferior to human dignity (Baer, 2009). Democracy is not uniform and may be representative or deliberative (Landemore, 2017). Beyond the right to life converted into the abolition of the death penalty (Manners, 2002) and human security, human rights belong to various generations and can be social, economic, and political with a plethora of elements (Badalyan & Vasilyan, 2020). With peace designated as the normative crown, Kratochwil (2018, p. 216) states that "it is indeed difficult to conceive that a society able to make social interactions possible… or of achieving prosperity through production and trade, if the fear of violence is pervasive". While the EU stands out as an epitome of peace faring as an 'international society', which has surpassed the 'world society' by transcending the 'international system' (Buzan, 2001), hybrid wars have been negligent of norms and ethics.

Normativity–deemed to be a container of 'values, principles, rules and standards' (Vasilyan, 2020)–is the skeleton of morality, ethics is its flesh, while without morality they lack a soul. Thereby, the five core norms of the 'normative power' have their seeds in moral theory, yet, they diverge: (Kantian) peace is under the purview of morality (McElroy, 1992), liberty – of ethics (Rothbard, 2015), democracy – of normativity (Frega, 2017), rule of law – of ethics (Leys, 1962), and human rights

and fundamental freedoms – of morality (Perry, 2013). As for the four minor norms, social solidarity (Hart, 1967) and anti-discrimination (Williams, 2013) belong to the realm of morality, sustainable development (Langhelle, 1999) and good governance (Congleton, 2020) – to ethics. The establishment of such a normative hierarchy – a lacking prescript in international law giving way to legal argumentation and interpretation (Kratochwil, 2018) is innate to the 'liaisons' of constructivism and critical theory (Price & Reus-Smit, 1998). Such categorisation allows the 'de-construction' of the 'normative power' by 'constructing' a missing 'pyramid' of normative hierarchy via compartmentalisation (Vasilyan, 2020), as presented in the Figure below.

FIGURE 1. PYRAMID OF NORMATIVITY, ETHICS AND MORALITY

Source: Author's compilation.

In the global context 'world disorder' qua 'entropy' is deemed to be characterised by a 'multilevel state system with non-ideological

power plays', 'normative chaos', 'international regime meltdown', 'state dysfunction', 'rise of nonstate and protostate actors', 'rise of unnatural disasters and environmental uncertainties' (Zartman, 2019, pp. 6-8). Thereby, 'norms have been trampled' (p. 6). "Norms on the conquest of territory, treatment of refugees, and internally displaced persons (IDPs), treatment of dissidents, territorial integrity, weapons of mass destruction, trade practices, national self-determination, protection of populations, and humanitarian assistance are regularly contravened, and attempts to reinforce them fall into the national power competitions" (p. 7).

In conditions of anarchy, which either pushes states to resort to self-help via realist pursuit for power (Morgenthau, 1954), neo-realist offensive (Mearsheimer, 2009) or defensive (Waltz, 2000) security-maximisation strategies or the constructivist 'what states make of it' (Wendt, 1992) understanding, "anything goes, power (unilateral capability) being the only criterion" (Zartman, 2019, p. 7). The 'security dilemma' filled with an 'arms race' resulting in escalation has, thereby, been transformed into an 'insecurity quandary' plagued by hybrid wars between/among great and middle powers, which may produce a 'butterfly effect'.

In light of the aggravated conflict-ridden trends in the South Caucasus, Eastern Europe, Middle East and North Africa at best scepticism and at worst cynicism towards the European/Western/international norms have emerged. Not only the problem of transposition to the local/regional context, which shapes and moulds them, and defective adaptation/adjustment has loomed large but also aversion to 'alien' norms has been witnessed. Framed as a tension between cosmopolitanism–'a source of resistance against Western dominance'–and universalism comprising "minimal conditions that all societies have to meet... about the moral value of the person and the nature of justice" (Delanty, 2014, p. 3), the objections have been linked to the perceived globalism. The latter has incited antagonism vis-à-vis the liberal agenda of the US and/or international organisations viewed as globalist associates. Defined as "a market ideology that endows current globalisation processes with neoliberal norms, values" (p. 4), globalism "implies a cohesive set of beliefs and practices that requires all states, societies, and cultures to be managed like a corporate capitalist enterprise" (p. 68), whereas "the post 9/11 manifestation of globalism is more openly imperialistic and militaristic" (p. 10). Conceived as unilateralism, rather than 'plurilateralism' predicated on international law aka "global government" of the US (Trachtman, 2014, p. 43) through converted (neo)liberalism/coveted globalism,[5] this perception has

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5   This goes beyond the scholastic third debate between realism and globalism after the realist/idealist, traditionalist/behaviouralist waves (Magroori & Ramberg, 1982). Conceptually, it should not be conflated with *globalisation* as a dynamic notion, which denotes increasing exchanges of people, goods, services and

plummeted into normative digression and moral distortion.

The next section will anatomise the ENP through the seven parameters of the conceptual framework of 'moral power'. These have been morally distorted becoming transfigured into morally utilitarian, unmoral, amoral, anti-moral, immoral, non-moral and moralist types due to corresponding normative digressions, i. e. corrosion, derogation, deviation, perversion, erosion, conversion, and subversion.

'MORAL POWER' PARAMETERS

CONSEQUENTIALISM

Consequentialism denotes a policy with good intent aiming at generating benevolent outcomes (Vasilyan, 2020): "moral terms apply to acts in view of their natural consequences" (Drake, 1929, p. 24). While spotting the intent may not be feasible since it may be hidden/modulated/calibrated, assessing the goodness of consequences of a policy is plausible.

With the ENP having flown along the eastern and the southern tracks, the Global Mediterranean Policy (GMP) launched in 1972 was followed by the New Mediterranean Policy (NMP) in 1989, which,

in turn, gave way to the Renewed Mediterranean Policy (RMP) in 1992, then the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP)– called the Barcelona process–in 1995 in the south. In the east the Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia (TRACECA) and Inter-State Oil and Gas Europe (INOGATE) were incepted. Ultimately, under the aegis of the ENP and the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) for the south and the Eastern Partnership (EaP) for the east marked an incremental strategic upgrade. They were also accompanied by tactical updates with augmented funding through *Mesures D'Accompagnement* (MEDA) for the south and Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States (TACIS) for the east, then the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) and the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) for both (Vasilyan, 2020). Both were also eligible for programmes, projects, facilities, loans, and grants. However, while strategically the ENP was atomised into specific countries, tactically the new Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) for the 2020-2027 budgetary period cumulates the previously debunked funding instruments. This has elucidated the moral utilitarianism of the EU.

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capital (with the four freedoms of the EU's Single Market being a 'smaller version' of the latter) (Vasilyan, 2020), with advances in technology, communication and transportation leading to 'interconnections, or interdependence, a rise in transnational flows' (Mittelman, 2000, p. 5), '*global governance*' "that identifies the new forms of rule that develop beyond the traditional state structures" (Kratochwil, 2018, p. 148) or '*global order*' as a liberal(ist) "cosmopolitan democratic law" (Held, 1995, p. xi) or a neoliberal doctrine based on the Washington consensus presuming "a de facto world government" of a "new imperial age"' (Chomsky, 1999, p. 20.).

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Albeit the Union itself could 'construct' its prowess thanks to American security guarantees in the aftermath of World War 2 with the help of the Truman Doctrine politically and the Marshall Plan economy-wise, its neighbourhood could not afford the same 'luxury'. Therefore, the reverse functional logic of making peace – as a moral category (see Figure 1) – through commercial inter-dependence in the neighbourhood, in the neo-liberal sense, has not just been non-viable but logically inverse given the reignited conflicts signalling the primacy of security in the neo-realist sense. These have been accompanied by political disarray and an economic downslide. Consequentialism has been normatively corroded.

COHERENCE

As a legally embedded category the value of coherence, which is tied to rules, "is undeniable" (Raz, 1992, p. 276). Applicable to judgment and justification, coherence is not just epistemic but also constitutive (p. 276). According to Hage (2015, p. 13), while there are regulative and constitutive rules, the "connection between rules and normativity is much looser than is often assumed". As argued by Boghossian (2015, p. 11) "rules and rule-following facts are not normative in themselves' but 'derive their normativity… from the holding of some underlying moral truth", thus, being essentially constructivist.

As coherence is to flow from the EU's legal constitution, with respect to the ENP,

the European Council and the Council of Ministers have provided general policy guidance and direction catering to the member states' national interests. The Commission as a technocratic body charged with the everyday management of the policy via its Directorates-General (DG) has levelled off the differences, seeking compromise and consensus through low-key, lowest common denominator solutions. This has not only self-served but also empowered its agency. In comparison, the European Parliament via its committees, sub-committees and Delegations has voiced the full spectrum of public preferences within the EU. While the Committee of Regions and the Economic and Social Committee initially acted as advisory bodies, their role decreased afterwards. Because of turf wars, lack of coordination and non-sharing of information, (sub-)horizontal coherence was not in place. Parallel coherence between member states, much like the vertical coherence between the institutions and member states, was assured. The cooperation with intergovernmental organisations, the United Nations (UN) agencies, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Council of Europe, the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the International Labor Organisation (ILO), etc. ensured perpendicular coherence (Vasilyan, 2020). Ironically, even though since 2016 EU's coherence has become more adhesive, the issue of arms export demonstrated normative derogation between the European Parliament insisting on the inclusion of human rights clauses and the Commission,

which had surrendered to the interests of private companies under the pressure from the Council. Consequently, an unmoral attitude transpired.

CONSISTENCY

In terms of the match between rhetoric and practice, discourse-wise the ENP was to promote stability, security, and prosperity. Stability would be fostered through democracy and development, prosperity – via trade and investment, and four freedoms (Vasilyan, 2020). The Treaty of Lisbon presupposed 'an area of prosperity and good neighbourliness, founded on the values of the Union and characterised by close and peaceful relations based on cooperation' hinting at an "inward looking" perspective, despite the promise of "partnership" (pp. 89, 90).

In practice, when choosing between stability and democracy, the Union opted for the former, especially, in the south and vis-à-vis Azerbaijan conditioned by energy supply and diversification from Iran and Russia (Vasilyan, 2006; Vasilyan, 2020). Negative conditionality has been used by the EU solely vis-à-vis Belarus, Libya and Syria but not Azerbaijan. As for positive conditionality, countries willing to reform (Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, and Tunisia) were attributed additional funding in line with the 'more for more' principle, the European Initiative – later to become Instrument–for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), Non-State Actors

and Local Authorities (NSA & LA) and the Decentralised Cooperation Instrument (DCI) (Vasilyan, 2006, 2020). Yet, this was discontinued after the ENP review in 2015 marking a disjuncture from norms and, thus, normative deviation.

A content analysis of the documents relating to the EU's eastern and southern neighbourhood(s), which lay out the EU's vision towards its neighbourhood, is representative of the prioritisation of norms. Dissecting the norms from Joint Communication 'Eastern Partnership Policy beyond 2020' and Joint Communication 'Renewed Partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood' in tune with the stratification in the pyramid above (see the Figure) has enabled the production of Table 1 below (European Commission, 2020, 2021).

TABLE 1. APPLICATION OF NORMS

Norms	South	East
Democracy	5 (in titles)	3
Liberty	0	0
Rule of law	12 (3 in titles)	14 (1 in a title)
(Social) solidarity	2	2 (in titles)
Sustainable development	7 (3 in titles)	5 (2 in titles)
Good governance	11 (3 in titles)	2
Peace	16 (5 in titles)	1 (in a title)
Human rights	12 (3 in titles)	7 (1 in a title)
Fundamental freedoms	1	0
Anti-discrimination	2	2

Source: Author's compilation.

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The contrast between the east and the south is the frequency of 'peace', and less so of 'good governance' and 'human rights' in the given order. This questions primarily the moral preponderance of the Union. All in all, the ethical issues, except for 'liberty' to be eliminated, prevail over moral ones; the normative ones are minimal. These have rendered the EU amoral.

Balance Between Values and Interests

'Shared values'–comprising democracy, human rights, rule of law, fundamental freedoms, and peace – were the kernel of the enp; in the 2015 review of the enp 'common interests', despite being coupled with 'universal principles', came to replace 'shared values' (Vasilyan, 2020). Through the review, the Union minimised the Priorities for Action to 'economic development, energy/connectivity, migration and mobility, security, governance, and youth', thus, compressing the normative gamut of the enp (Vasilyan, 2020).

Diachronic scrutiny of the State of the Union (soteu) addresses delivered by the President of the European Commission demonstrates the recoiling of the EU's normativity (European Commission, n.d.a.; European Commission, n.d.b). The soteu 2015 mentioned the problem of Syrian refugees in the neighbouring Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Turkey and Egypt with the EU keen on assisting them, while the ratio of the frequency of 'values' as opposed to 'interests' was 8/1. The soteu 2016 concentrated on trade and investment; the values to interests

ratio was 18/4. In 2017 the soteu only singled out the Western Balkans as the EU's neighbourhood with a 5/1 ratio. The rhetoric in 2018 was nearly identical with 4/1ratio. While no speech was delivered in 2019 due to the covid-19 pandemic, the soteu 2020 viewed the Baltic states, Turkey, Western Balkans, Eastern Partnership, the southern partners, and the African Union as parts of the 'swelling' neighbourhood; the values/interests ratio was 9/4.

With a staggering 14/1 ratio, the soteu 2021 acknowledged the position of the Union in a 'more contested world' (European Commission, n.d.b; Vasilyan, 2021). Downgrading the notion of 'neighbours', strategic shrinking was witnessed in the referral to ''failure-stories', such as Belarus. The soteu 2021 omitted the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, not reprimanding Azerbaijan for disrespecting the UN appeal for a 'global ceasefire' through 'silencing the guns' amidst the covid-19 pandemic by launching an aggressive military attack with the use of chemical weapons of mass destruction prohibited by the Geneva Conventions. Nor did the Union rebuke the openly articulated Turkish military assistance in the form of training, advice, use of unmanned aerial drones and recruitment of mercenaries from Syria to Nagorno-Karabakh denounced by France. Squeezing of the wars in Libya and Syria to human rights violations and refugees, respectively (European Commission, n.d.b), reflected a minimalist introvert attitude on the part of the Union. Focusing on cooperation with the US, Russia and China the EU manifested

'strategic backtracking' to the 'traditional mode of crafting geopolitics', thereby switching its tactics from 'principled pragmatism' in the Global Strategy adopted in 2016 to sheer pragmatism (Vasilyan, 2021).

The Joint Communications on the east and the south show that 'values' were uttered 9 times in the former, and 5 times in the latter; 'interests' were stated 4 times in each document (European Commission, 2020, 2021). Content-analysis of the document on the EaP shows that 'common values' were mentioned twice, 'shared values' – once: in four cases the reference was to 'EU values', once–to 'European values', and once–to 'values' relating to the judiciary (European Commission, 2020). In the document for the south 'common values' were singled out once, 'shared values' – twice, 'EU values' – twice, and 'European values'–once, with 'values' being tied to 'democracy' (European Commission, 2021). In the document for the east 'mutual interests' were stressed once, the interests of other regional and global actors–once, the ones of the partner country – twice (European Commission, 2020). In the document on the south there is one reference to the EU's interests, two – to joint interests, and one – to the partners' interests (European Commission, 2021). Moreover, while in the east the allusion is to 'interests' in general (European Commission, 2020), in the south the generic wording appears once, the other instances being 'financial', 'migration' and 'energy'-related (European Commission, 2021). This shows that notwithstanding the prevalence of values over interests, most of the time the EU's point of departure and the point of arrival were its own values. Deviating from 'shared values', despite the discursive volume, the Union displayed anti-morality.

Although the (colour) revolutions in the east and the south were value-laden, the Union was not an upfront supporter. Despite the discreet (in)direct push for regime change against authoritarian and/or conservative leaders willing to maintain a firm grip on power, the EU's reactive posture could be interpreted as a defensive mechanism to avoid moral obligation and shield its interests (trade, investment, energy resources, etc.) in either scenario. Hence, the EU was reticent and wavered during the 2018 revolt in Armenia congratulating, first the former leader and then the incumbent one (Vasilyan, 2020); it was hardly responsive to the second wave of the Arab Spring unleashed in Lebanon and Algeria in 2019. Whereas the calls for reform hinged on socio-economic grounds against corruption, lack of accountability, transparency, etc. in the south, the fear of a military coup in Egypt, or Salafist and Wahhabi militants coming to power in Libya, Syria, and Algeria, and the aversion of EU member states to terrorism and immigration conditioned the stance of the Union and its member states.

This further eroded into the rivalry between the West, especially the US and Russia, fuelled in the political discourse as of 2014 and the suspension of Russian membership from the G8. While since the cease-fire over the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in 1994 the co-chairs of the Minsk

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Group scheduled parallel meetings with the parties single-handedly (Vasilyan, 2020), the power-related interests have lingered to date. During the latest 44-day war over Nagorno-Karabakh in 2020, three sequential attempts to halt the war were made by the respective leaders in Moscow, Washington D.C. and Paris; at the brink of the trilateral meeting to discuss issues of demarcation, delimitation, etc. in Sochi, an invitation was extended for a meeting in Brussels. 'Peace' was turned into a 'ball' in the 'power-game' between Russia and the West marking anti-morality.

While Azerbaijan had preferred a Strategic Modernisation Agreement devoid of values to position itself as an equal with the EU after refusing one in 2013, despite the European Parliament Resolution over Azerbaijan's human rights violations in 2015, in 2016 the European Council issued a mandate for talks on a Comprehensive Agreement (CA) not concluded to date. The longing for material resources in terms of shares in oil and gas pipeline projects, such as Baku-Ceyhan, Baku-Erzrum, as well as the Southern Gas Corridor (comprising the Trans-Adriatic Pipeline (TAP) operational since 2020 and the Trans-Anatolian Pipeline (TANAP) since 2018) (Vasilyan, 2020), led to sidestepping norms mutating the EU's normative clout. Moreover, the pursuit of power-related interests (vis-à-vis Russia) through proxy wars in Libya, Syria, Donbas and Nagorno-Karabakh as '*quid pro quo* deals' (Vasilyan, 2018) showed that values have been superseded by intersubjectively constituted *realpolitik* reflected

in the (mis-)(perceived)) friction of national interests, despite the absence of a direct threat to vital interests.

To compensate for de-moralisation after the war in Nagorno-Karabakh framed as 'hostilities' or 'confrontation' by the EU High Representative (EUHR) (European Commission, 2020; European External Action Service, 2020), the EU allocated humanitarian aid in 3 tranches in 2020-2021. The focus of the European media on the post-electoral developments in Belarus, the poisoning of Alexei Navalny imprisoned in Russia and Tikhanovskaya in exile in Lithuania underscored the partiality of the Union vis-à-vis the regimes in Russia and Belarus. While the Union had both rewarded Belarus by involving it in the EaP and punished with outright sanctions (Vasilyan, 2020), it has refrained from criticising energy-rich Azerbaijan for the consolidation of authoritarianism. Similarly, while the protests in Lebanon after the port explosion were followed by the imposition of sanctions on specific officials, the Union was silent concerning the Hirak movement in Algeria, which holds large oil and gas reserves.

With France supporting the rebel-led National Transitional Council in Libya and being a part of the NATO operation with the US, which toppled the regime, the EU has stood out as the biggest donor of humanitarian aid. Backing the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) and endorsing the arms embargo, the EU modified its Operation Sophia, which also conducted a rescue function, into Operation EU Active

Surveillance (Operation Irini). Due to objections from Austria, Hungary, and Italy to allow immigration as a measure of rescue, the latter was demoted to patrol missions for trafficking and smuggling of insurgents and arms by Turkey.

The Syrian rebels have been supported by France and the UK, together with the US, against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). The EU, besides being the major donor that is funding refugee camps in Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, and Egypt (as well as Iraq), adopted sanctions against the Assad regime. Similar to the US, which closed its embassy in Syria in 2012, so did most of the EU member states, except for the Czech Republic and the EU Delegation evacuating their diplomats to Lebanon. Others–Bulgaria, Cyprus, Hungary and Greece–reopened limited diplomatic missions or embassies signalling a variation in the levels of inclusiveness.

Morocco's normalisation of relations with Israel in 2020 went hand in hand with the US recognition of Moroccan sovereignty over Western Sahara, which bypassed the UN-brokered settlement process under the auspices of the UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) leading to a military confrontation in the demilitarised buffer zone. While the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic governed by the Polisario Front has been supported by Algeria and recognised by the African

Union as a member state, it has not earned US recognition. Meanwhile, the EU took a morally steadfast position officially objecting to the US's move and insisting on the UN umbrella for the negotiations even if manifesting incoherence on the part of its institutions and member states.

Ukraine crystallised the confrontation between the US/EU and Russia, with the political agenda based on values being disfigured into an insecurity agenda after Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014. This was manifested through the potential blockage of the NordStream2 pipeline, the diversion of the Russian gas supply through the construction of TurkStream[6], and the escalation in the Kerch Strait connecting the Black and Azov Seas. The relationship was aggravated after the resurgence of fighting in Donbas in March 2021, after a decline in tensions in 2015 with the signature of the Minsk Agreements under the patronage of the Trilateral Contact Group. Further, the call by Ukraine in April 2021 to include the US in the Normandy Format was followed by Russia's objection to renewing the mandate of the Border Observation Mission in September 2021[7]. The recognition of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church as independent from the Russian Orthodox Church by the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople in 2018 drew a normative schism and a political rift between 'common'/'shared' Ukrainian/Russian identity stemming from

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[6]   Inaugurated in 2020, this gas pipeline was an alternative to the cancelled South Stream in 2014.

[7]   It has been operating together with the Special Monitoring Mission.

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the Kievan Rus as a single *ethnos*. Ukraine's constitutional strategic non-bloc alignment clause–amended in 2019 to orient it towards membership in the EU and NATO with the inclusion in the Enhanced Opportunity Partners list–drew the political/security dividing lines between Kyiv and Moscow more sharply[8]. On top of that, the adoption of the titular nation law and dominant native language in 2021 exacerbated the chasm. The ideological row over Ukraine viewed as a part of the 'Eurasian chessboard' (Brzezinski, 1997, p. 46) became no longer interpreted as a call for 'dignity' ingrained in the formal name of Euromaidan but interests[9]. In this context, with Turkey supporting the Tatars in Crimea, the Russia-Turkey deal appeared to be more of a balancing act based on a sporadic partnership than a strategic alliance, and provided the ideologically residual clash between neo-Ottomanism/pan-Turkism and Eurasianism.

Although Moldova has maintained neutrality, in 2017 Moldova's Constitutional Court ruled that the stationing of Russia's 1,500 troops in Transnistria was unconstitutional. While in 2018 the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution urging unconditional and immediate withdrawal, the newly elected government has adhered to a pro-EU/pro-NATO stance. In that context as in 2021, Russia welcomed the initiative of Transnistria to resume negotiations within the 5+2 format of the OSCE, the message implied a power game with the West over yet another de facto state where the EU Border Assistance Mission (EUBAM) civilian mission was deployed.

Though the EU has capitalised on norms, its policy towards the neighbours has not been sterile of interests. The (dis-)balance between values and interests has relayed normative perversion and anti-moralism.

NORMATIVE STEADINESS

Normative steadiness has signified commensurability or collision between/among principles/values/norms (Vasilyan, 2013, 2020). The internationally codified legal principles of 'the right of people to self-determination' and 'territorial integrity in the Helsinki Final Act and the UN Charter inserted in the EU-Armenia and EU-Azerbaijan APs, respectively, paradoxically, were ascribed to the Union's policy of 'differentiation' (Vasilyan, 2020). While the EU exhibited double standards by supporting the self-determination of Kosovo but territorial integrity apropos the *de facto* states of Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Crimea, this has been viewed as an anti-Russia take, ''wrapped' in the normative package" (p. 166) of bypassing the principle

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[8]   Other Enhanced Opportunity Partners are Australia, Finland, Georgia, Jordan and Sweden.

[9]   In contrast to Armenia, where the reversal of the foreign policy course in 2013 did not trigger protests, in Ukraine it resulted in deaths, ouster of Yanukovich and sentencing in absentia for 13 years, similar to Saakashvili's sentencing for 6 years and his jailing upon return to Georgia in 2021.

of sovereignty. During the latest war over Nagorno-Karabakh, except France and Greece, no EU member state pinpointed Azerbaijan as the party that violated the OSCE Minsk Group negotiations with the declared support of NATO member-state Turkey. On 27 September 2020 – the first day of the war – the EUHR denominally called for 'an immediate cessation of hostilities, de-escalation and for strict observance of the ceasefire' and on 10 November 2020, i.e. after the announcement of the cease-fire mediated by Russia on 9 November 2020, the EU welcomed 'the cessation of hostilities in and around Nagorno Karabakh' (European Commission, 2020; European External Action Service, 2020). This manifested annulation of the universal equivalence between the two principles of 'right of people to self-determination' and 'territorial integrity' in favour of the latter via silent consent[10], Further, when in September 2021 Azerbaijan attacked Armenia the President of the European Council tweeted by demanding 'urgent de-escalation and full ceasefire' overlooking Azerbaijan's incursions against Armenia's 'territorial integrity'. Moreover, marginalising substantive 'deep' democracy, the Union tilted towards procedural formalism in Georgia, Ukraine, and Armenia. It turned out increasingly

unsteady supporting specific principles/values/norms at the expense of others. In the process of erosion of norms, the EU exhibited immoralism.

INCLUSIVENESS

Inclusiveness–analogous to 'joint ownership' entailing equity in the relations and being a trait of the ENP–presumed equal contribution to and benefit from the policy. However, the EU was selective in the choice of agents to partner with. Beyond the limited number of agents from the Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS), on the one hand, and the representatives of governments of the neighbouring countries, on the other, who took part in the negotiations to draft the respective Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCAs), Action Plans (APs), Association Agreements (AAs)/Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas (DCFTAS) and the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA) with Armenia not many interlocutors were involved in the policy-making, policy-implementation and policy-evaluation stages (Vasilyan, 2020)[11]. Meanwhile, after the ENP review in 2015 following Armenia's foreign policy shift in favour of joining the CU/EAEU, the crisis in Donbas and the

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[10]   The revival of the calls for independence in Catalonia since October 2017 with a potential 'domino effect' within the EU, may have also bent the EU's proclivity to 'territorial integrity' at the expense of the 'right of people to self-determination'.

[11]   Representing political roadmaps, the APs coexisted with the legally binding PCAs. Afterwards the AAs in the cases of Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine replaced the PCAs, and the APs were supplanted by the Association Agendas.

proclamation of independence of Crimea, 'joint ownership' was modified into 'ownership'.

Albeit through the UfM and the EaP, the EU created the Civil Society Forum with the National Platforms, Conference of Regional and Local Authorities for the Eastern Partnership (CORLEAP), as well as the Business Forum; these became exclusive clubs. Only a 'handful' of EU-disposed and in the east Russia-opposed NGO representatives were to turn into favourites, with the others being sidelined (Vasilyan, 2020). This was also the case with the acquisition of grants from the European Endowment of Democracy (EED).

The EU's categorisation of Sunni Islamist Hamas, which has not recognised Israel, as a terrorist organisation and the Union's collaboration only with Fatah have shown the limits of the EU's inclusiveness[12], despite the provision of humanitarian aid to Palestinians. Similarly, the classification of Hezbollah[13], which is a part of the governing coalition in Lebanon, as a terrorist grouping and the designation of its military wing by the EU and the entire entity by Austria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany, the Netherlands and Lithuania, has also shown the limits of the avowed inclusiveness.

Regionally, the Union has also been selective in terms of cooperation with the regional groupings (Vasilyan, 2020). Unlike the support to the BSEC and involvement in the organisation, "the reluctance to recognize the CU/EAEU, establish a dialogue… and/or sign an FTA has been tied to power-related and material interests connected to Russia's role in the eastern neighbourhood" (pp. 140-141). Moreover, some EU member states supported Georgia/Ukraine/Uzbekistan/Azerbaijan/Moldova (GU(U)AM) Organisation for Democracy and Economic Development,[14] others had become members of the Countries for Democratic Choice (CDC) founded by Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.[15] Moreover, after the cease-fire agreement signed over Nagorno-Karabakh in 2020 Russia and Turkey propagated the 3+3 formula proposed by Iran still in 2003, ironically, now objected to (if not rejected) by the US and the EU as long-time advocates of regional cooperation (Vasilyan, 2006). The conversion of norms has indicated the EU's non-moral attitude.

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[12]   Hamas controls a part of the West Bank and Gaza.

[13]   Hezbollah cooperates with Iran and the Assad regime in Syria and has been subject to US sanctions.

[14]   While Uzbekistan withdrew from the organisation in 2005, which turned it into GUAM, the EU member states supporting it were Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, and Slovakia.

[15]   These were Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Romania, Slovenia, and the candidate–Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM)–renamed into North Macedonia in 2019–together with the EU as an observer on a par with Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, the US and the OSCE.

External Legitimacy

While external legitimacy is inextricably linked to an actor's 'reputation' (Vasilyan, 2020), it will be hereby interpreted through critical reflection/re-valuation encompassing the other parameters of 'moral power'. The EU's consequentialism, notably, monitoring of normative ascription/subscription through approximation/harmonisation as means of 'policing' through rules encoded in agreements has been viewed as self-serving standard(isation). (Non-)convergence/compliance on the part of the neighbours, irrespective of the mode of the EU's influence, e.g. appeasement, co-optation, etc., has, thus, been perceived as deviant behaviour. The mismatch between rhetoric and practice pertaining not only to the balance of values and interests but also to the EU's framing issues, e.g. equivocal posture during the revolt in Armenia in 2018, silence concerning the protests in Algeria in 2019, etc. have given rise to polemics as to whether a value/norm is an interest *per se* or an interest is a value/norm. As for normative steadiness, the quest for (transitional/social) justice at the expense of order (Bull, 1971) has surfaced as a destructive rather than a constructive socio-political demand leading to instability in the neighbouring countries.

The attempts of instituting transitional justice in Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine, Armenia with the Constitutional Courts being the targets manifested not only cherry-picking of pro-government candidates but also meddling with the independence of the three branches of power and checks and balances. The judiciary was denigrated by the 'revolutionary' governments harming the rule of law, rather than repealing trust, as pledged. As a result, the societies in the neighbouring countries became inimical to the templates of the EU's proposed vetting and lustration (practised, e.g. in Kosovo, Albania, etc.) in circumstances of lack of professional cadres with integrity and appropriate training to replace the outgoing judges.

Politically, the disenchantment with liberalism–perceived as a Western experiment – was fraught with negative repercussions, such as weakening of the institutional apparatus, political dilettantism (Armenia, Ukraine, Tunisia), economic slump, lurking (in)security (Georgia, Armenia, Ukraine, Moldova). The euphoria of democratic 'activism' advocated as a 'moral' – to be read 'normative'–panacea (Baglione, 2008) materialised as a result of the '(r)evolutionary' boycott pioneered by (un-)civil society in Egypt, Tunisia, Georgia, Ukraine, Armenia, Algeria, Lebanon (Vasilyan, 2020) have rendered a normative vacuum. The state of affairs being the shakiness of the political system in Georgia with the EU 'intervening' to resolve the electoral/coalition crisis, the societal rupture and the war in Ukraine, the debacle in Armenia due to the 2020 war launched by Azerbaijan against Nagorno-Karabakh, dependence on international loans and increase in public debt, non-improvement of poverty and unemployment, inflation, lingering corruption – albeit with the change of (veto) players, including oligarchs (in Armenia,

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Ukraine, Moldova)–stigmatised as malaises due to non-distributive justice, unstable governments and reshuffling, public trust in democracy/liberalism has lost traction. The warnings of the Rose, Orange, Euromaidan, and Velvet revolutions through the manipulative use of (social) media and the advent of populism have led to questioning the subtext of democratic norms.[16] The sceptical/cynical appraisals suggest that instilling liberal democracy, i.e. loosening the stronghold of (a) ruler(s) on the state allows external forces to 'appoint' a pliable leader (e.g. in Ukraine, Armenia). Moreover, despite improvements in specific scores, the overall ranking still classifies Armenia as a 'semi-consolidated authoritarian regime', Egypt as 'not free', Ukraine and Georgia as a 'transitional hybrid regime', with only Tunisia being free since 2018 (Freedom House, n.d.). Therefore, democratic, and foreign policy 'change' has become associated with disorder or even chaos as opposed to illiberal/authoritarian 'continuity' associated with order or stability.

As for human rights, the 'reforms' pushed forth by 'revolutionary' liberal governments have been perceived as deforming the 'recipient' society. State policies of targeting the dominant Armenian Apostolic, Georgian Orthodox churches (making other religious denominations branded as 'sects' equally salient versus highlighting secularism), removing instruction of history,

native language and literature courses in higher education institutions (framed as 'nationalistic' as opposed to 'internationally accepted' curricula), pounding child rights via the Lanzarote Convention (perceived as introducing early sexual education versus the protection of minors), gender rights via the Istanbul Convention (raising concern over the neutral terminology regarding family formation versus reinforcing women's rights) and minority rights (perceived as favouring LGBTI rights versus the rights of Kurds, Armenians, Assyrians in Syria, Copts in Egypt, etc.) have demonstrated that the normative 'devil is in the details'. This has caused a backlash to the globalist agenda. They created social chasms, political fault lines and led to polarisation (Armenia, Georgia, Ukraine), fragmentation (Tunisia) and radicalisation (Egypt). It has led to resentment towards the substitution of traditionalism (Armenia) and ethnocracy (Israel) with the 'void' of liberalism.

The 'international community' as a point of reference setting the 'bar of excellence' has been discredited in the public mindset with the EUHR issuing impartial–perceived as partial – statements relating the Karabakh war handy for Azerbaijan as an energy partner, not condemning Turkey as a NATO ally for equipping Azerbaijan militarily. In this context, even the recognition of the Armenian Genocide by the US and the UK House of Commons in 2021

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[16]   These have been ideologically different from right-wing populism witnessed in the EU, such as in Hungary, Italy, Poland, Catalonia, etc., as well as the US, labelled as anti-liberal.

was perceived as a time-wise opportune punishment of Turkey for the purchase of the Russian S-400 missile defense system, rather than a 'moral act' (Kaspar, 2019).

The vivid pursuit of ('normative') interests in practice, even if at times concealed and/or unmasked, has caused de-legitimisation of the EU in the neighbourhood. The EU's moralism has been a by-product of normative subversion.

CONCLUSION

This article has pinpointed the theoretical convalescence from the 'normative power' to 'moral power' laying out the subjective EU-bound compactness of the former and the objective outbound sway of the latter. Deducing categories from moral theory, it has drawn on inductive bottom-up and outside-in dynamics to explain the reversal of norms. Given the changes in the regional/global context since the onset of the New Cold War characterised by hegemonic competition, norms have been depleted urging (d)(e)) valuation of the EU's 'moral power' in its political neighbourhood.

Firstly, it has configured a pyramid of normative hierarchy layering the core and minor norms of the 'normative power' on the 'shelves' of normativity, ethics, and morality. These have been subsequently applied to the ENP. Secondly, it has anatomised the case study with the use of the 'parameters' of 'morality' diagnosing moral distortions and corresponding normative digressions, with the type of power being 'actual' (see Table 2).

Verifying the anachronism of norms through 'moral power', normative draining (of values and the agents transferring those) has been detected by discerning the 'inappropriateness' of specific values and/or their improper transposition to the neighbourhood. This has prompted ethical thinning of the aspired 'right' course of the EU's policy. Conversely, the conceptual framework of 'moral power' has been hereby thickened.

TABLE 2. PARAMETERS OF 'MORALITY', 'MORAL' DISTORTION, 'NORMATIVE' DIGRESSION AND TYPE OF 'POWER'

Parameter of 'Morality'	'Moral' Distortion	'Normative' Digression	Type of 'Power'
Consequentialism	Morally utilitarian	corrosion	
Coherence	Unmoral	derogation	
Consistency	Amoral	deviation	
Balance between values and interests	Anti-moral	perversion	actual
Normative steadiness	Immoral	erosion	
Inclusiveness	Non-moral	conversion	
External Legitimacy	Moralist	subversion	

Source: Author's compilation.

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