EU as a Cosmopolitan Model for Global Democracy?

Debating EU Foreign Policy

European Union today represents a key, though sui generis, actor of global politics. The magnitude of its market, institutional influence, technological development, and cultural production made the EU a full global actor. In terms of political and economic weight, EU is doubtless the only actor that can compete with US leadership. Globally speaking, EU is the first commercial power (20% of world export and import) and it equals the US in terms of GDP. EU is the second monetary power in terms of circulation and currency reserves. And it is the first world power concerning international cooperation and humanitarian aid (Gordon, 1997; Regelsberger et al., 1997; Hix, 1999; White, 1999, 2001; Knodt and Princen, 2003; Lavenax, 2004; European Commission, 2005; Council of the European Union and European Commission, 2007; European Commission, 2007).

And yet, it is not only for these factors that the EU today represents a crucial actor in the world context. This essay argues that further normative component of EU foreign policy is key in order to understand its significance and its novelty in the current scenario (Khaliq, 2008). EU external projection is characterised by a high degree of, both explicit and implicit, normativity by which I mean the appeal to values
and principles that claim to be universal. Since the ’70s, the normative component begun to permeate the key programmatic European documents (Hill and Smith, 2000). Its (not yet structured) foreign policy is thus understandable only by pointing to its normative ambition that, together with the more traditional diplomatic instruments (diplomacy, armaments, and economy) constitutes an exception in the international scenario. This normative component is what most distinguishes the EU foreign policy from the policies pursued by other global and regional actors. By focussing on this peculiarity, this essay intends to critically survey the major interpretative theories that have been recently elaborated to account for the normative nature of the EU foreign policy. And by doing this, this essay also aims to investigate the possible connections between the EU model and the model of global democracy as discussed in the contemporary debate on international political theory (Marchetti, 2008a).

This claim on the normative component of EU foreign policy is not uncontroversial. Amalric and Stocchetti, for instance, see the EU power somewhere else. Finance, trade and technology are, according to them, components of the EU power that assure it the superpower status, regardless of the normative card (Amalric and Stocchetti, 2000; Amalric and Stocchetti, 2001). In particular, the power of these components would derive from the specific historical situation that combines three distinct dynamics: the increased global interdependence, the intensification of the integration process that made the EU a financial and economic power, and the end of the cold war. Other scholars, instead, do consider the normative dimension of the EU, but relegating it to a secondary position. According to Kagan, for instance, the appeal to the normative dimension s invoked by the EU to counterbalance its political weakness, rather than as a free choice (Kagan, 2003). Without major leverages of global power, the EU would not have any other tools at its disposal than the feeble universalistic aspirations of

1 For the debate on the EU as global actor see (Galtung, 1973; Piening, 1997; Whitman, 1998; Sjursen, 2002; Bailes, 2003; Cremona, 2004; Leonard, 2005; Reid, 2005; Bretherton and Vogler, 2006; Hyde-Price, 2006; Johansson-Nogues, 2007; Ortega, 2007; Wall and Goldgeier, 2007).
moralistic kind. And yet, by doing so, the EU would be condemned to remain a secondary power, a Venus continuously subject to the friends of Mars. However, this paper claims that beyond these and other realist positions it is indeed possible to identify a wide interpretative trend that fully recognises the significance of the normative dimension of the EU foreign policy. These authors tend to be constructivists and to appreciate the added value of the EU soft power. This essay engages in discussion with them.

**Civilian Power Europe**

The perspective on the normative dimension of European foreign policy emerged in the ‘70s. Duchêne has been the scholar who has originally associated the general idea of civilian power to Europe thus giving life to an intense debate that has animated the political and academic community until our days (Duchêne, 1972, 1973). He identifies civilian power with a political organization that pursues domestication or normalization of international relations through the transformation of controversies from international to domestic. For Duchêne, the idea of civilian power implies the passage from international diplomacy to internal politics of contractual negotiation. European politics should therefore be seen as a strategy of transformation of semi-legal interstate relations into legal domestic relations.

Such transformation does not come into effect with coercive instruments, but with what is today defined as ‘soft power’ (Nye, 2004), that is a persuasive force implemented above all through cooptation, multilateral cooperation, institution-building, integration and the power of attraction (Hill, 1990). In particular, the European strategy of internalization is put into effect mainly through the instrument of enlargement. With the progressive accession of the neighbouring countries, Europe, in fact, succeeds in modifying the relations between the governments of the Member States in such a way to create a common centre of direction and resolution of controversies. This is a strategy that, being
based on consent, does not need coercive force of a military kind, but a force of persuasion of a normative kind. In this way, the European institutions generate a stabilizing effect that gives way to a new mode of engagement with international relations: the EU is accordingly able to avoid the obstacle of the lack of a European military force by developing a normative praxis able to convince, rather than to impose through coercion a specific political line to competitor countries.

In these decades, the meaning of the adjective ‘civilian’ has been differently interpreted (Orbie, 2006). It is, however, possible to identify two main interpretative traditions according to which civilian can alternatively denote an empirical observation (on the form of the power exercised by the EU) or a normative assertion (the civilisational or domestication role) (Stavridis, 2001). Regarding the first exegetic perspective, there are three characteristics of the ‘civilian’, according to Twitchett: 1) the central role of the economic power for the pursuit of national interest objectives; 2) the priority recognized to diplomatic cooperation in order to resolve international controversies; and 3) the will to use supranational institutions with legal binding power in order to pursue international progress (Twitchett, 1976).

However, there are many of those who have criticised such an empirical perspective. One who has never trusted the effectiveness of the European civilian power is Hedley Bull, an English scholar who considered the lack of military self-sufficiency a fatal limit for European global ambitions (Bull, 1982). In order to fill this gap, Bull suggested building a European power with nuclear armaments able to develop a relation of co-existence with the USA and the Soviet Union. Highly notorious and on similar positions is also the already cited position of Kagan, according to whom the EU, lacking an army (and therefore associated to Venus), must out of necessity remain tied to the soft power of Kantian norms (Kagan, 2003). By contrast, the USA, having full military force, can afford to have a realist and Hobbesian vision of international relations and consequently a completely different role in global politics.
The lack of traditional military and political powers would have therefore weakened the action of the EU to such a point as to create a false expectation, a gap between desires of influence and concrete possibilities of action (Hill, 1993). Only starting from 1999, with the elaboration of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) and the concomitant creation of the Rapid Reaction Force (RRF), it has been possible to give an (still weak) answer to that kind of criticism. Nevertheless, this innovation has not completely rebutted the civilian perspective. In fact, there have been scholars, such as Smith, that have pointed out that even a civilian power needs an army in order to put into effect its non-realist policies (Smith, 2000). Against the thesis of the necessary choice, of the non-choice supported from Duchêne, who maintained Europe was civilian out of necessity inside the context of the Cold War, Smith and others instead hold the idea that the EU can be civilian out of free choice.

An actor who uses civilian instruments out of his own choice is an actor who intends to civilize international relations (Boerzel and Risse, 2007). Following Harnisch and Maull (Maull, 1990; Harnisch and Maull, 2001), Boerzel and Risse synthesize the characteristics that define a civilian power in six points:

1. “Efforts to constrain the use of force through cooperative and collective security arrangements;
2. Efforts to strengthen the rule of law through multilateral cooperation, integration, and partial transfers of sovereignty;
3. Promotion of democracy and human rights, both within and between states
4. Promotion of non-violent forms of conflict management and conflict resolution;
5. Promotion of social equality and sustainable development;
6. Promotion of interdependence and division of labour” (Boerzel and Risse, 2007: 4).
Boetzer and Risse develop their appraisal of the civilian character of the EU through a study of the major foreign policies of the EU, that is, policy of development, policy of enlargement, neighbourhood policy, and the initiative on democracy and human rights (EIDHR). For a long time, according to these authors, the EU has ignored the promotion of democracy, human rights and the rule of law, as its policies of development were essentially focused on economic cooperation. Later, from 1999 onward, things have changed. Today, the EU has, according to these authors, a comprehensive strategy for the promotion of democracy, human rights, the rule of law and good governance covering the entire planet. Through such strategy the EU is explicitly straining to project its civilian model on all the states with which it interacts. In synthesis, these authors continue, the instruments used in the different European policies can be reduced to three: political dialogue for educational and persuasive aims, the clause of political conditionality that manipulates the cost-benefits calculation through the creation of new incentive structures, and finally, several programs of capacity-building for the institutionalization of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. This constitutes an impressive plan of values export that indeed aims to civilize international relations according to the EU image.

This interpretative line of civilization is also adopted by others. Sjuresen, for example, in order to define a civilian power, identifies its attitude to the promotion of the international right in terms of cosmopolitan respect of human rights as a criterion (Sjuresen, 2006: 249). In this way, military force can be present and also used without discrediting the normative aspect of the actor, provided such force is used for objectives (cosmopolitanism) and with strategies (legitimization of the international community) normative in kind. In a similar way, Telò emphasizes the democratic character of the most recent European foreign policy. Telò points out that throughout its first period, the EU’s (or better the European Community) key objective was to make the area of central Europe peaceful, especially concerning the relations between France and Germany (Telò, 1995; 2006; 2007). This objec-
tive has been pursued through policies of mutual integration of the countries at stake, and by accession of the neighbouring countries. Stability and peace, however, have been possible only through the process of internal democratization of the Member States. According to Telò, this is still one of the greater points of force of the EU. Through its institutional dynamics that is bound to democratic principles, the EU is creating an increasingly wider area of stability and peace, first with its politics of accession of new members, and then with its neighbourhood politics and the Euro-Mediterranean partnership, and finally, with the humanitarian interventions and trade agreements on a global scale.2

As shown, the perspective of the EU as a civilian power has had an uninterrupted fortune from the ‘70s until our days. It has for sure contributed to change the way in which the EU is seen (Ortega, 2004; Lucarelli, 2007), up to the point to modify the very same way in which the EU presents itself and the more general interpretation of global politics. Despite this, there was no shortage of critical and alternative proposals, as we will see in the following sections of this essay.

Normative Power Europe

During the last few years, a new interpretative line has been developed that, despite sharing many of the assumptions underpinning the civilian perspective, contests other points by developing further the normative dimension that supportś European foreign policy. Initiator of such vision has been the Danish scholar Ian Manners, who constructs his position in contrast both to the most traditional realist and the civilian formulation (Manners, 2002; 2006b; 2006a; 2008). According to the author, the idea of civilian power and that of military power as a civilian power has been pursued through policies of mutual integration of the countries at stake, and by accession of the neighbouring countries. Stability and peace, however, have been possible only through the process of internal democratization of the Member States. According to Telò, this is still one of the greater points of force of the EU. Through its institutional dynamics that is bound to democratic principles, the EU is creating an increasingly wider area of stability and peace, first with its politics of accession of new members, and then with its neighbourhood politics and the Euro-Mediterranean partnership, and finally, with the humanitarian interventions and trade agreements on a global scale.2

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2 For further references to the idea of civilian power EU see (Nicolaidis and Howse, 2002; Whitman, 2002; Braud and Grevi, 2005; Linklater, 2005; Pace, 2007; Scheipers and Sicurelli, 2007). For an interesting articulation of the idea of Europe from a historical and philosophical perspective see (Pagden, 2000; Friese and Wagner, 2002; Pagden, 2002). For a critical reading see (Williams, 2004).
power share, in fact, a series of implicit formulations that can only capture some of the aspects of contemporary European politics. Both, for example, share the idea of power as something direct (economic for the first, military for the second), but also the idea that such power is all internal to Europe. Manners instead holds that we need to pay attention also to the forms of power that are more indirect and external to the EU, in order to succeed in capturing the true innovative essence of the EU as a global actor. Hence, we need to search for what he has defined as the normative dimension of the EU.

In order to be fully grasped, the perspective advanced by Manners has to be inserted into the wider scientific horizon of the reflection on international relations. By doing that, it can be noted that the normative aspect of international affairs is today very present in the entire disciplinary area, not only in European studies. In order to see this, it is enough to turn to the constructivist trend, predominant today in international studies, and to the importance associated to non-governmental actors as generators of new transnational norms. Many decades ago, Carr has distinguished three types of power: economic, military, and public opinion (Carr, 1939). The third type of power, the power of ideas and ideologies, is such insofar as it succeeds to influence the choice of the third party without the use of coercive force (Galtung, 1973). Obviously, the final result will never be entirely caused by the force of ideas, and yet there are many cases in which the lack of the normative component renders the achievement of the goal more difficult. The fascination of ideas has always been, especially in international relations, an added value that great powers, the only ones in a position to construct and support universalistic ideologies, were able to use in order to persuade their allies. If we concentrate on the normative aspect, then we need to take into consideration the cognitive processes and the cultural-political actors that facilitate such processes, like the actors of civil society, think tanks, foundations, etc. Manners draws a clear table that allows comparing his theory.
In its simpler formulation, the normative power of the EU refers to its institutional-ideological nature, which predisposes it to act in a certain way. Accordingly, the normative power has to be primarily searched not in what the EU does or says, but in what the EU is. The normative prerogatives of the EU are in some sense unique (different from other similar pretensions of past empires) in that they are based on a historical context, a hybrid political form, and a political-legal constitution completely sui generis. Being created after WWII, the European political organization has always had peace and freedom as objectives. For what regards its form, it represents a unicum as it extends the traditional character of Westphalian norms. Finally, regarding its legal-political constitution, it is indeed peculiar as it is based on a process guided by elites, based on treaties and a legal order. For these reasons, a number of principles such as the principle of democracy, the rule of law, social justice and human rights (enunciated for the first time in the declaration of Copenhagen of 1973 and then `constitutionalised’ in the institutive treaty of the European Union of Maastricht of 1992) are in some way intrinsic to the EU action, and are costitutionalised regardless of a specific constitution. The respect of such norms has become an unavoidable condition for any internal action and a binding condition for any external action.
A crucial difference with other past hegemonic actors is constituted by the lack of coercive force. Without military leverage on hand, the EU must, out of necessity, concentrate on the other two available levers, the economic and the normative one. In particular concerning the latter, it is forced to use it in its purer form, which is to take advantage as much as possible of the force of ideas in themselves. There are five fundamental norms at the base of European normative power: peace, freedom, democracy, rule of law, and human rights and fundamental freedoms. Beyond these, there is a series of secondary norms that include social solidarity, anti-discrimination, sustainable development, and good governance. According to Manners, the modalities through which European fundamental norms are diffused are the following ones: the unintentional `contagion’ that includes the informational spread (result of communicative strategies) and the procedural spread (result of diplomatic interaction), and the transfer that includes the explicit spread (result of the presence of the EU in other countries) and the cultural filter (result of the construction of the identity of other actors) (Manners, 2002: 245).

A further elaboration of the idea of Europe as a normative power has been offered by Sjursen, according to whom the EU is normative when it acts in order to change the parameters of power politics through a reform of the international legal system (Sjursen, 2005; 2007). The EU is therefore a normative actor, which acts according to legal principles, regardless of whether or not these overlap with the specific European interests at stake. Respect of international law and support to multilateralism certainly go in this direction, but they are not sufficient in that they are still incomplete political institutions. In order to overcome such incompleteness, it is necessary to make an additional effort for the complete acknowledgment of human rights inside the international legal system by making it internally consistent (Menéndez, 2004; Lerch and Schwellnus, 2006). According to this reading, the EU would be the actor better equipped to pursue this type of normative global politics.3

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3 For further references on the normative dimension of EU foreign policy see (Smith, 2001;
As shown, the theory of normative power Europe, while accepting some of the considerations of the previous theory of civilian power, moves the accent on the role of ideas, as internalized by the European institutional structure. In this way, it allows for a better understanding of the innovative role that the European institutions are playing in the current international scenario. And yet, the theory of normative power has also provoked perplexity on the grounds of alleged ethnocentrism that would hardly explain the attractive force of the EU. In order to understand it, we must move to the next school of thought in the following section.

*Ethical Power Europe*

The third moment of the reflection on the principles of European foreign policy has developed in a double relation of continuity and discontinuity with the two previous interpretative lines, that of civilian and normative power. Promoter of this new perspective is Aggestam, who elaborates her position starting from the observation of recent EU developments (Aggestam, 2008). Just in coincidence with the internal crisis due to the failure of the constitutional referenda, the EU is, the author suggests, more and more in search of an external identity, of an international projection with clear and reassuring connotations. The economic results that have made it a decisive actor in the processes of global economic transformations are not sufficient any more. Today, the issue of a more incisive role in military and civilian terms is more and more pressed, in spite of this ambition touching the sensitive key of the sovereignty of Member States. To the identity question, the EU with 27 members today seems in search of an answer concerning its modalities of international relations and security. This is articulated with a universalistic discourse of a `good’ and `peaceful’ power in a markedly ethical manner.

Michalowitz, 2003; Smith, 2004a, 2004b; Diez, 2006; Tocci, 2007b, 2007a; Tocci et al., 2008).
In order to interpret this new tendency, Aggestam and others (Aggestam, 2008; Dunne, 2008; Hyde-Price, 2008; Manners, 2008) have coined the expression ethical power Europe that would differentiate itself from the previous interpretations in that it concentrates rather on what the EU does, than on what the EU is. In this way, the EU would be undergoing a process of transformation from power of attraction to action power that actively takes part in the world in order to promote changes in the direction of the ‘global common good’. In a way, the EU claims to be ‘capable’ and ‘responsible’ (in some way recalling neo-cons American statements) to manage new areas of competence, such as crisis management, peace-keeping, state-building and the reconstruction of failing states, beyond those already exercised of development aid, humanitarian assistance and promotion of democracy and human rights through economic conditionality. In these new areas, the EU could succeed to conciliate European interests with wider worldwide interests, through the strengthening of international justice (human rights) and order (multilateralism).

In contrast with the previous readings of Europe in terms of civilian and normative power, this reading in ethical terms takes into consideration the civilian and military, together with the social and material aspects of power. In particular, there are five aspects that differentiate this reading from the previous ones:

1. A new attention to the agency work of the EU. A move is suggested from institutional structure to effective behaviour of the EU. After the experience of impotence during the crisis in the Balkans, the EU has proposed itself more and more as an actor ‘capable’ to act in a positive sense. Rather than seeing the EU in terms of passive and indirect power, the concrete objectives and effects of EU action are observed.

2. A greater attention to ethical justification that underpins the choice between civil and military instruments in foreign policy. The clean traditional distinction between civilian power Europe and normative power Europe is not, in fact, able to fully inter-


pret the new European policy of security and defence (ESDP).

3. A wider consideration of the international and global context in which the Union acts. Rather than describing only the internal mechanisms that were supposed to generate the external normative dimension of the EU (the argument according to which the EU modelled international relations to its own image), with this approach, the internal perspective is placed side by side with the external one. Global transformations, in normative sense, such as, for instance, the increased importance of human rights inside the framework of the United Nations and the new concept of responsibility beyond borders (responsibility to protect), are analysed and, starting from these, the European action is legitimized.

4. If the hypothesis in point 3 is true, then the typical sui generis feature of the EU is diminished. The EU would thus remain a special actor given its hybrid form, but it would become more similar to other actors of the international scene, who are legitimized and made capable to act by their alignment to the dominant global paradigm.

5. The return of the dimension of the Member States in the argument on the EU foreign policy. While previous readings tended to relegate as secondary the inner `black box’, with this new ethical reading, EU foreign policy turns out to be the result of a combination of national interests and ethical considerations.

According to this reading, the Union would have a responsibility to promote global public good. It would therefore be `a force for the good’ that pursues objectives such as human rights, physical security, economic prosperity, democracy and social well-being, with reference to individuals, rather than to states (Solana, 2005; Kaldor et al., 2007). In this sense, this narrative gets closer to cosmopolitan rationalism, as these objectives would be destined for all individuals, regardless of their identity. At the same time, however, the EU would also present itself as the European model, a socio-political model with very spe-
pecific characteristics that make reference to delimited political community able to influence the others, but not universalistic in its principles. Newborn political philosophy of the EU (Friese and Wagner, 2002) would therefore offer a particularistic and republican foundation that would complement (though, at times, in competitive integration) the cosmopolitan ambition of the global common good.

More in particular, the perspective of the ethical power EU interprets the ethical datum in at least three different ways, which, although conceptually distinguished, overlap at times. First, European foreign policy could be guided by genuine principles aiming to other peoples’ well-being. In this way, Europe would be an ethical actor in that it uses its power in order to promote the good of the others. Second, European foreign policy could be guided by altruistic considerations that coincide with considerations of regional interest. In this way, the ethical datum would get confused with strategic and instrumental acting. European neighbourhood politics would therefore be seen as ethical action but also as an interested action (Tocci, 2007a) inside the model of the EU ‘transformative’ power. Third, European foreign policy could be interpreted not so much as motivated by ethical reasoning, but as using ethical tools. Strategies of persuasion, negotiation, and dialogue would be preferred to mere coercive force.

Although formulated only recently, the perspective on the EU ethical power is a convincing reading, able to integrate more the operations of the EU inside the global dynamics. In this, not only the EU actions become more identifiable, but also its attractive force beyond the borders and the neighbouring regions becomes more comprehensible. The first part of this essay ends with this third moment of the theoretical interpretation of the principles underpinning European foreign policy. In the second part, I concentrated on two macro-readings of the EU that allow the framing of three theories examined so far (civilian, normative and ethical power) in the light of a wider theoretical-political reflection that has recently gained attention in academic and political circles: the cosmopolitan reflection. Cosmopolitanism is selected here on the grounds of its greater capacity to develop a more
reasonable positive and normative reading of our times (Held, 1995; Archibugi et al., 1998; Marchetti, 2008a).

Cosmopolitan Democracy

Cosmopolitan democracy refers to a model of political organisation in which citizens, regardless of their geographical location, have rights of political participation through representation in global affairs, in parallel with and independently of their own government. Although the term originated in Greek stoic philosophy (cosmos = world, polis = city, demos = people, cratos = power), the modern use of the cosmopolitan ideal was first proposed by Kant with the concept of jus cosmopoliticum deployed in his project for a Perpetual Peace (Kant, 1795; reprinted 1991). More recently, Held and Archibugi (Archibugi and Held, 1995; Archibugi et al., 1998) revisited this notion, initiating the contemporary discussion of cosmopolitan democracy.

Underpinning the model of cosmopolitan democracy are two prescriptive assumptions concerning moral cosmopolitanism and political democracy, and an empirical assumption regarding world interdependence. According to the prescriptive assumptions, the scope of justice should be universal insofar as no discrimination is justified when considering the ultimate entitlement of every citizen to control his/her own destiny (ethical universalism). Conversely, the second presupposition holds that individuals as equals should be entitled to exercise collective self-determination over public issues that affect them, insofar as only by simultaneously retaining the status of legislators and subjects can citizens remain free (congruence/reflexivity between decision takers and decision makers). Finally, when these principles are coupled with empirical observation of the increasing global interdependence of current international affairs, a fundamental right to autonomy and self-legislation emerges, which requires the creation of an authoritative global institutional framework to permit the implementation of such democratic prerogatives.
In presenting a model in between confederation and federation, cosmopolitan democracy aims to avoid both the indirect representation of the first (and consequently the likely exclusive pursuit of national interests), and the risk of despotism of the second (and consequently the likely pursuit of technocracy and homogenisation). Through cosmopolitan citizenship, individuals are allowed to have a direct political voice on several decision-making levels, participating thus in the deliberative process of local, state and world politics.

Cosmopolitan democracy fosters democratic reform of both UN institutions and the wide network of global governance organisations. With regard to the UN, the following proposals are supported: the creation of a second advisory Peoples’ Assembly, the abolition of the veto system, together with the enlargement of the Security Council, the compulsory jurisdiction before the International Court of Justice, and the establishment of an international humanitarian force. Conversely, regarding global governance, the changes recommended are in the direction of the enhancement of regionalization, the diffusion of authority to different bodies, and the strengthening of democratic procedures within such institutions.

Critics point to two principal and opposite deficiencies of cosmopolitan democracy. On the one hand, the model of global institutionalism is seen as inherently dangerous in terms of cultural and political imperialism of the West as the most powerful international actors, which would sanction their de facto influence by means of a legal endorsement. On the other extreme, such a model world democracy is claimed to be failing in establishing a viable structure through which citizens’ consensus can be expressed, in that the co-ordination of several centres of political authority would lack inclusive and super-ordinate democratic control (Marchetti, 2006; 2008a; 2008b).
Cosmopolitan Europe

Since the very beginning of European Political Cooperation (EPC) in the ‘70s, Europe has been reluctant to use coercive means to resolve conflicts and pursue its objectives. This characteristic of civilian power has been put in doubt by those that interpret its military development as a move towards an alignment with other world powers. The cosmopolitan approach, as elaborated by Eriksen and others, is meant to offer a theoretical framework through which conceptualising the normative aspect of European foreign policy in such a way as to include both the civil and the military component in a Kantian perspective (Eriksen, 2005a; 2005b; Eriksen and Fossum 2005; Eriksen, 2006; Eriksen and Fossum, 2007). From this perspective, it is not so much the instrument used that is taken in consideration, but rather the objective pursued. If a specific objective based on human rights demands the use of force or the threat of the use of force, then the EU must be ready to use coercive means in order to render the right effective. This order of ultimate justice is identified in the international law by cosmopolitans such as Eriksen, especially with reference to human rights, democracy and the rule of law. In this, the political objective of the EU would therefore be twofold: on the one side, the pursuit of those imperatives that render the EU a working, self-sufficient, and legitimate organization, and on the other side, the pursuit of those imperatives that allow other regional organizations to be equally developed and legitimate.

The Charter of Fundamental Rights approved by the European Council of Cologne (June 1999) and proclaimed at the Summit of Nice (December 2000) contains the fundamental references of the EU inspired by humanism and democracy. In particular, this Charter assures the dignity of the person, the essential freedoms, European citizenship, equality, solidarity and justice. These contents, together with others which appeal to the Charter of the United Nations regarding EU peace-keeping and conflict prevention missions, have then been received in the Convention of Laeken (2002-2003). These principles
have been implemented not only inside the EU, but also in its external relations. The criteria of membership have been inspired, for instance, by the principle of human rights and democracy; trade agreements and development aid have included political clauses; and cooperation and association treaties have incorporated a conditionality based on the respect of human rights. Equally, the recent campaign at the United Nations against capital punishment has been led by the EU on the very same grounds of human rights. Of course, there have been exceptions and differential treatments. The EU relations with Russia, Israel, China or Uzbekistan have not been influenced by the negative human rights record of these countries. Notwithstanding these cases, EU foreign policy has maintained a cosmopolitan character throughout recent times. And all this has been implemented, against realistic critiques, despite the high costs in political and economic terms. The EU, in fact, finances 55% of the aid to international development, it is the greatest contributor to programs for the spread of democracy, and it continuously endures political pressures because of its battle against capital punishment (Eriksen, 2006).

Eriksen is not alone in interpreting the EU along cosmopolitan lines. Eleftheriadis is another scholar who has introduced a robust Kantian interpretation of the EU from a legal perspective (Eleftheriadis, 2001; 2003). According to the author, EU law can be interpreted as cosmopolitan law insofar as it is characterised by an atypical theory of the origins of law, an atypical theory of sovereignty, and a non-hierarchical theory of sovereignty regarding interpretation and application of EU law. In cosmopolitan Europe, exactly as anticipated some centuries ago by Kant (Tully, 2002), some laws can be entirely national, others entirely international, while yet others represent a legal hybrid (Eleftheriadis, 2003: 259). Some laws could have originated elsewhere, and were then incorporated inside the national legal order, thereby becoming fully national. These are non-state laws valid within the state, exactly as it happened with the body of international law on human rights. More in particular, the EU imposes to its members a duty to maintain domestic political structure of a liberal and demo-
cratic type, and this satisfies the first criterion established by Kant for a perpetual peace according to the cosmopolitan model (Kant, 1795; reprinted 1991). But Member States also have a mutual obligation supervised by a supranational executive and judicial organ, and this satisfies the second Kantian criterion of having a federal system without the creation of a new federal state. Finally, and this is the crucial point for our study, the EU generates obligation on Member States towards foreign nationals of other Member States, therefore also satisfying the third requirement of hospitality of the cosmopolitan law (Archibugi, 1995; Eleftheriadis, 2001).

The cosmopolitan interpretation briefly pointed out here opens a new perspective for study of the case of the EU (Telò and Magnette, 1996; Bellamy and Castiglione, 1998; Delanty, 2005a, 2005b; Rumford, 2005; Bohman, 2007; Marchetti, 2009). One of these, which associates the cosmopolitan idea to that of an empire in an apparently paradoxical way, is doubtless fascinating. It is introduced here to conclude this survey, as it is deemed to be the theory closer to the correct interpretation of the modalities and the principles animating European foreign policy.

Europe as a Cosmopolitan Empire

The last interpretative theory examined in this essay is the one formulated by Beck and Grande in terms of cosmopolitan empire (Beck and Grande, 2005). Combining the normative cosmopolitan principles with positive observations inspired by the imperial model, the two authors formulate a very convincing representation of the European political dynamics.

Beck and Grande are not alone in holding that the peculiarities of the EU cannot be captured through the traditional statist form. Zielonka has, for example, recently produced a study of great interest in which the EU is characterized as a political organization that goes beyond the state entailing power asymmetries similar to those of empires. The
The approach of Beck and Grande is similar, but has the added value of cosmopolitan interpretative key. Besides reading the European institutional forms as characterized by asymmetry and decentralization, these authors also hold that the EU is characterized by a cosmopolitan component based on a peculiar approach to social alterity.

From the beginning, the analysis of Beck and Grande concentrates on the imperial political model intended as a form of exercise of sovereignty, whose main characteristic consists in stretching permanently to gain control of the non-controlled. Differently from the statist formula, in fact, the subordinates keep a margin of formal independence. “The empire as form of non-hegemonic political exercise of sovereignty does not rest, at least in the first instance, on the hierarchical `power to control’, but on the added political value produced to the advantage of actors engaged in sustained consensus” (Beck and Grande, 2005: 78-9). The empire tries to resolve its internal problems with a continuous process of potentially unlimited expansion that renders its own borders changing by definition. However, it is distinct from the hegemonic order because it is integrated and distinct from the world state because it is asymmetric. Imperial sovereignty thus entails an asymmetry of the forms and the rights of belonging and a differentiated integration that goes beyond the traditional hierarchical centre-periphery relationship. The following table comparatively synthesizes the imperial model adopted by Beck and Grande.
According to Beck and Grande, the EU as a cosmopolitan empire is characterized by ten constituent elements (Beck and Grande, 2005: § 3, spec. 86-96). They are the following:

1. Order of asymmetric sovereignty. Its members do not possess the same status and, consequently, have asymmetric rights and duties. Such formal inequality is essential in order to allow for the acknowledgment of diversity and heterogeneity inside the political integration. There are four zones that structure the European empire: zone of full integration (e.g., the euro zone); zone of intense cooperation (e.g., domain within the first pillar: agriculture, competition, industry, research, technology, regional and environmental policies); zone of limited cooperation (e.g., domains within the second and third pillar: domestic and justice policy, foreign and security policy); zone of enlarged sovereignty (e.g., state candidates, associated states, etc.).
2. Open and variable space structure. There are no fixed borders insofar as the system is by nature dynamic and subject to continuous territorial change. The principle of political contingency has thus fallen back on the vertical (different institutional levels) and horizontal (different societies) interlacing, on the internal transformation of the states, on the movement of the territorial borders, and on the cultural and cosmopolitan pluralisation.

3. Multinational social structure. The multinational, multi-ethnic and multi-religious components inside the EU are not recomposed through the homogenization of a single and imposed culture, but through the acknowledgment of cosmopolitan pluralism. The European empire differs in this from the national state as it recognizes various national states in it.

4. Integration through law, consent, and cooperation. Differently from other past empires, the EU consolidates through law rather than force. Consent and cooperation of single members are never extorted with coercive and violent power, but always by free choice, beginning from the adhesion to the ratification of each treaty. In this way, the taboo of the force is asserted, as this remains in the hands of the Member States. Consequently, the one who endures the decisions is also the one who has to implement such decisions.

5. Priority of well-being over security. Although being born with a security motivation, the EU has been slowly transforming into a political organization based on the economic criterion. The primary objective therefore has become the increase of its members’ well-being.

6. Horizontal and vertical institutional integration. The European empire is characterized by a complex institutional structure. Horizontally, the system is divided into different zones of political agency that generate various rights and duties according to the degree of integration. Vertically, the system is one of governance on different levels. The local, national and macro-re-
Regional levels are interlaced in a type of relation that is not simply of vertical hierarchy, but rather of continuous overlapping of competences.

7. Network power. The power to network of the European empire is characterized by a non-hierarchical form of the decisional process in which not only the European institutions, but also the subjects and the Member States, have decisional autonomy. Besides this, a great number of actors have political voice. In this way, decisional power becomes bargaining power, and the hierarchical power becomes network power. The crossing points, the nodes, become the true places of power. The traditional imperial structure based on centre-periphery is overcome.

8. Cosmopolitan sovereignty. The concept of sovereignty is itself transformed inside the EU. From being absolute sovereignty becomes complex and cosmopolitan. Contrarily to traditional empires, the more sovereignty one loses the more one gets it: the more one gets integrated by renouncing to a number of prerogatives, the more one is endowed with a status of power. And, on the contrary, the more one is far from the centre and therefore formally sovereign, the less one remains sovereign.

9. Ambivalence of abolishment and creation of borders. Like any other empire, the EU also has a tendency to enlargement, but, differently from other empires, the EU does not have universalistic ambitions. Consequently, if it is true that it has a tension towards the inclusion of new subjects, it is also careful to redefine its borders in an exclusive way.

10. Emancipatory cosmopolitism versus despotic cosmopolitism. The European empire finally shows a double nature regarding the version of cosmopolitanism that it adopts. If, for Beck and Grande, cosmopolitism means acceptance of alterity, for the EU, cosmopolitism is implemented in two contradictory ways. With emancipatory cosmopolitism, the European empire recognizes alterity by strengthening individual and collective autonomy. With despotic cosmopolitism, instead, the European
empire asserts the differences but only in order to stabilise them through a control mechanism.

This last point on the twofold nature of European cosmopolitism opens a scene of urgent and decidedly important hermeneutical-political research. The crossroads that the EU faces in its practice of international relations goes to the heart of the issue of justice in the global order. Assuming the historical presence of great power on the international scene, the alternative of global politics seems to offer just two options: an emancipatory or a despotic cosmopolitism. While the first one takes advantage of the powerful position, in order to favour a system in which other actors can also have a political voice and develop their own political project in a relatively independent way, the second type of cosmopolitism depicts a system directed by a single superpower in an authoritarian way.

Conclusions

Objective of the present essay has been to survey the major theories formulated in the last few decades in a critical way, in order to give an account of the normative component of the European foreign policy. It has begun from the theory of civilian power Europe, in order to pass to its two more recent versions, that of normative power and ethical power Europe. Through the examination of these three interpretations, a comprehensive account of the most meaningful components of the principles of European foreign policy has been provided. In the second part of the essay, the normative components of the European foreign policy have been analyzed through the light of the wider theoretical picture of cosmopolitism. This essay intended to provide a conceptual reference for further contributions on the nature of European foreign policy, as one of the more innovative political experiments on international scale of the last centuries.
References:


