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# **The EU's response to fragile situations – Putting Normative Power to the test**

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**Abstract:** *Since 9/11 a lot of attention has been paid to fragile states and state failure has also become an issue for the EU. EU elites frequently refer to the EU as a 'force for good in the world'. There is an extensive academic debate about what kind of power the EU is in world politics, and whether it can be described as a distinct normative power. In this comparative study of ten fragile states, the EU's response to fragile states is scrutinised through the theoretical lenses of normative power. The main argument of this thesis is that there are both elements of normative power and realism to be found in the EU's approach. The EU in relation to fragile states is an actor with normative ambitions, but normative power remains an ideal type that does not completely correspond to the empirical reality.*

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## List of Abbreviations

ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific States
AU	African Union
CAR	Central African Republic
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
CFSP	Common Foreign Security Policy
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy
CSP	Country Strategy Paper
DCI	Development Cooperation Instrument
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EBA	Everything But Arms
EC	European Community
ECCAS	Economic Community for Central African States
EDF	European Development Fund
EPA	Economic Partnership Agreement
ESDP	European Security and Defence Policy
ESS	European Security Strategy
JSP	Joint Strategy Papers
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
PCA	Partnership and Cooperation Agreement

## Introduction

Since 9/11 a lot of attention has been paid to weak, fragile or failing states. Many key multilateral institutions, such as the UN, OSCE, OECD and World Bank, have recognized the link between security and development, and have developed approaches to engage in fragile countries (Faria and Ferreira, 2007). The “persistent weakness of some states and regions may well prove a greater strategic challenge to the international community than the emergence of new powers like China” (Korski and Gowan, 2009: 7). State failure has also become an issue for the EU, and in the 2003 European Security Strategy (ESS) it is identified as one of the key security threats, having spill-over effects with a direct impact on the EU, for example through refugee flows and illicit trafficking of people, drugs and weapons. The increasing attention which has been paid to fragile situations is part of a general trend of ‘securitisation of development’, implying that security and development aspects are closely interrelated (Hout, 2010: 141). According to the 2003 ESS, on the one hand, security is a precondition for development. On the other hand, poverty and disease give rise to pressing security concerns. Hence, countries and regions “are caught in a cycle of conflict, insecurity and poverty” (ESS, 2003: 2).

While the European Community together with its member states is the world’s largest development and humanitarian aid donor, the EU has also increasingly become a security actor. It has a large variety of instruments at its disposal, including political, diplomatic, military and civilian, trade and development activities (ibid.: 11). As stated in the Commission communication on the EU’s response to fragile situations, the EU has *special* responsibilities in addressing challenges posed by fragile situations (COM(2007) 643 final). In addition to the emphasis on responsibility, European elites often refer to the EU as a force for good. The High Representative Catherine Ashton stated, for example, that “we have become increasingly outward-looking with a growing role and reach, acting as a force for good in our neighbourhood and beyond” (EU Press Statement, 7 May 2011). Even in the ESS it is referred to a ‘formidable force for good in the world’ (ESS, 2003: 13).

Taking statements such as ‘special responsibility’ and ‘force for good’ as a starting point, the aim of this paper is to analyse the EU’s approach towards fragile states. According to the Lisbon Treaty, the EU’s external affairs

“shall be guided by the principles which have inspired its own creation, development and enlargement, and which it seeks to advance in the wider world: democracy, the rule of law, the universality and indivisibility of human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for human dignity, the principles of equality and solidarity [...]” (Art. 21 (1), Treaty on European Union).

Article 21 of the Lisbon Treaty reveals the normative thinking which the EU’s external actions are supposed to be based on. Ian Manners has made the strong claim that “the EU has been, is and always will be a normative power in world politics” (2008: 45). The normative power approach rejects uncritical and unreflective attempts to analyse EU policy and influence in world politics empirically, and aims to contribute to a better understanding of the EU’s principles, how the EU acts, and what impact it has in world politics (ibid.). However, the question arises as to whether the empirical reality is consistent with the EU’s principles, values and its self-image as a force for good in the world. This is closely related to the extensive debate about what kind of power the EU is in world politics, with different interpretations ranging from realist to liberal-idealist views (see e.g. Manners, 2002; Hyde-Price, 2006).

Whether the EU acts as a normative power or a force for good has already to a great extent been analysed in the context of the European Neighbourhood Policy (see for example Bicci, 2006; Barbé and Johansson-Nogués, 2008; Haukkala, 2008; Niemann and de Wekker, 2010; Pace, 2007; Whitman and Wolff, 2010). Most of these studies have shown that there is a gap between the EU’s rhetoric and self-image as a force for good, and reality. The EU has been accused of applying double standards in its relations with neighbouring countries, and its policies are often inconsistent. Haukkala (2008) has argued that the EU acts as a ‘normative regional hegemon’ in its neighbourhood. Others have looked into empirical cases such as the promotion of labour standards through trade (Orbie in Whitman, 2011). Scheipers and Sicurelli analysed normative power in EU-Africa relations and concluded that there is evidence of normative commitment, but that the EU is far from being an effective normative power (Scheipers and Sicurelli, 2008). Birchfield looked for empirical evidence of normative power Europe by examining the EU’s development policy (in Whitman, 2011). With few exceptions, this study shows that the EU’s approach to development is consistent with its norms and values, while at the same time being effective and beneficial to the goals of development and poverty reduction. Normative power Europe

has also been discussed in relation to the EU's foreign and security policies and peace support operations (see Björkdahl and Martin in Whitman, 2011).

However, no previous research has been done concerning the EU's normative power and its approach towards fragile states. The EU as a normative power in relation to the EU's response to fragile states is particularly interesting and challenging, because the fragile states agenda brings together different policy areas. When addressing state fragility a multitude of actors can be involved, dealing with peacekeeping and peace building; disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR); post-conflict reconstruction; humanitarian aid; proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD); anti-terrorist activities; combating organised crime; poverty reduction; capacity-building etc. (Cammack & Christiansen, 2006). Thus there is a linkage between development, humanitarian, military and security aspects. As previously mentioned, the EU has a wide range of instruments at its disposal, and its foreign and security policies "continue to reflect an awkward mixture of civilian, military and normative instruments, and ambiguous goals" (Martin in Whitman, 2011: 187). The issue-area of fragile states could be considered an example par excellence, as responses to fragile situations require such an awkward mixture of instruments. Yet, the question remains if and how the EU employs its wide range of instruments in its approach towards fragile states. Particularly with regard to the EU's peace support operations in fragile states, can normative power and increasing military capabilities be reconciled? Interestingly, a great number of fragile states are former colonies of European member states. Is the EU's approach towards fragile states guided by its norms and values or by strategic interests? Is the EU a force for good in the world or just a means for its member states to re-engage in former colonies? The main objective of this paper is to assess how the EU acts in relation to fragile states. Therefore, my main research question will be:

*Looking through the theoretical lenses of normative power, how does the EU respond to fragile situations?*

Working questions in relation to my main research question are: Does the degree of EU engagement differ in fragile states, and if yes, how could these differences be explained? Building on the normative versus realist power Europe debate, the analysis will be guided by three hypotheses. The EU is expected to be more active in (i) former colonies of its member states; (ii) in countries where it has economic/trade interests; (iii) and in countries posing an obvious security threat by which the EU is affected.

Strategic interests do not per se exclude the possibility of acting in a normative way, but a strong bias towards any of the three factors would undermine the image of the EU as a force for good in the world, and support the argument that normative power is a cover for more covert strategic interests.

I have chosen to conduct a comparative case study and decided to select the ten weakest states according to the 'Index of State Weakness in the Developing World' (Patrick, 2011). The selected cases for this study are: Somalia, Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq, Burundi, Sudan, Central African Republic, Zimbabwe, Liberia and Ivory Coast. The main argument throughout this paper is that there are both elements of normative power and realism in the EU's response to fragile situations. The bottom line is that the EU in relation to fragile states is an actor with normative ambitions, but that normative power remains an ideal type.

The paper will be structured as follows. First of all, I will present the theoretical framework, which will consist of a short discussion about state fragility and the normative power Europe debate, including critical reactions. In the second part of this paper, the methodology section, the comparative case study method and the selection of cases will be discussed. Furthermore, it includes the operationalisation of variables for the analysis. The analysis will be presented in the third part, which is divided into two sub-chapters. Firstly, the selected cases are presented very briefly and analysed individually. Secondly, the selected cases will be compared. In the last section of this paper, concluding remarks will be made.

## **Theoretical Framework**

In this section I lay out the framework of analysis which will be based upon the normative power argument. Building on critical reactions to normative power Europe I will set three hypotheses. Yet, first of all, I will very briefly address the concept of state fragility and its definition. Secondly, I will present the initial normative power Europe argument, as put forth by Manners. Thirdly, the broader academic debate about the EU and normative power, including a range of critical reactions, will be reviewed and reflected upon. Finally, a brief discussion about whether military means can go along with normative power will be included.

## **State Fragility**

The notion of fragile states is heavily debated and it remains a fuzzy term. Among donors and partner countries there is a "fragile consensus on fragility" (Bertoli and Ticci, 2010). There is little agreement on what the notion of state fragility exactly entails, and various articles regarding the conceptual debate can be found (Bertoli and Ticci, 2010; Bøås & Jennings, 2005; Engberg-Pedersen & Andersen, 2008). State failure is not just one concept, but numerous different terms with different meanings can be found in the academic literature: failed states, failing states, fragile states, fragile situations, weak states, difficult environments etc. Yet, there seems to be a general consensus over the existence of a fragility spectrum, including different degrees of vulnerability and instability risks (Faria and Ferreira, 2007). The fragility spectrum ranges from collapsed states to states where governments are strong but not committed to the security and well-being of their citizens. In the Commission communication on an EU response to fragile situations, fragility refers to

"weak or failing structures and to situations where the social contract is broken due to the State's incapacity or unwillingness to deal with its basic functions, meet its obligations and responsibilities regarding service delivery, management of resources, rule of law, equitable access to power, security and safety of the populace and protection and promotion of citizens' rights and freedoms" (COM(2007) 643 final:5).

The definition given by the Commission is just one among several different definitions. In the Commission communication terms such as 'situations of fragility' and 'difficult environments' are used. I will interchangeably refer to fragile or weak states. While it is necessary for this paper to know what fragility refers to, the focus here is not on the conceptual debate concerning state fragility, but on normative power Europe, which will be dealt with in the following part.

## **Normative Power Europe**

There is an extensive on-going academic debate over what kind of power the EU can be depicted as in world politics. The debate ranges from realist views to liberal-idealist views. François Duchêne's notion of the EU as a 'civilian power' and Ian Manners' seminal article 'Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?' have become somewhat core references in this debate. Civilian power, as defined by Twitchett and Maull, involves three key features: the centrality of economic power to achieve national

goals; the primacy of diplomatic co-operation to solve international problems; and the willingness to use legally-binding supranational institutions (Manners, 2002: 237). Duchêne's original conception of the EU as a civilian power in world politics is based on the idea that the nature of the polity itself matters. It is the ability to extend its own model of ensuring stability and security through economic and political rather than military means that constitutes the EU's strength and novelty as an international actor (in Sjursen, 2006: 169). Manners has further developed Duchêne's conception and introduced the 'normative power Europe' argument, which grew out of the idealism and 'constructivist turn' that followed the end of the Cold War (Aggestam, 2008: 2). Meanwhile, the role and identity of the EU on the international scene have been heavily debated. Besides civilian, normative, and military power, other terms to describe the EU's foreign policy and its role in world politics, such as 'ethical power Europe' (Aggestam, 2008), 'transformative power' (Diez et al., 2006), 'pragmatic power Europe' (Wood, 2011), 'realist power' (Zimmermann, 2007; Hyde-Price, 2006), and 'soft imperialist' (Hettne and Söderbaum, 2005), have been elaborated.

Beyond the academic debate about the question of what kind of power the EU can be described as, it is evident that political elites have increasingly emphasized the ethical character of the EU's foreign and security policy (Hyde-Price, 2008). The strong self-image of the EU as an ethical power is well established (Björkdahl in Whitman, 2011: 105), and research has shown that European elites frequently refer to values and images of the EU's role in the world, depicting the EU as a 'force for good' (see Lucarelli and Manners, 2006; Diez and Pace, 2007; Diez et al., 2008, Nicolaïdis and Howse, 2002; Scheipers and Sicurelli, 2007). However, it is often argued that there is a gap between the EU's rhetoric and actual implementation, as the EU does not always act consistently and in accordance with its own norms and values. Both the strong self-image of the EU as a force for good and the normative power argument have been subject to heavy criticism, accused of being strategic interests in disguise. Nevertheless, as Manners has argued, normative ethics can provide us with a framework to assess the EU's relations with the world, and whether the EU is acting as a normative power in world politics (Manners, 2008: 59). Accepting the normative basis does not necessarily mean that the EU always acts in a normative way, consistent with its own values and principles. Thus, normative power Europe is not only a concept, but a theoretical grounding that can guide analytical work which attempts to explain the role of the EU as a global actor (Birchfield in Whitman 2011: 144).

The original concept of normative power Europe (NPE) is based on the idea of a power that is able "to shape conceptions of the 'normal' in international relations" (Manners, 2002: 239). The idea of normative power in world politics as such is not new, as for example Duchêne and Galtung already in the 1960s and 1970s were interested in the European Community as an *idée force*, and ideological power as the power of ideas (ibid.). The normative power argument stems from the social constructivist tradition, as it focuses on the power of norms to influence actors' behaviour, and it is based on the rejection of totalistic and state-centered views of traditional approaches to foreign policy (Diez, 2005; Whitman, 2011). NPE moves beyond the debate over state-like features and focuses on the EU's *sui generis* nature – a hybrid polity different to pre-existing political forms. Thus, the nature of the EU and its historical context lead on to acting in a normative way (Manners, 2002: 242). What the EU *is* becomes closely connected to what it *does*, or how it acts. While normative power can go alongside other forms of power, such as military or economic power, the concept mainly stands out through ideas and values, and is neither military nor purely economic (Manners, 2002; Diez 2005). Five core norms which compose the normative basis of the EU have been identified: peace, liberty, democracy, rule of law, and human rights (ibid.). Additionally, four 'minor' norms are suggested as part of the EU's normative basis, namely social solidarity, anti-discrimination, sustainable development, and good governance (ibid.).

These norms are spread through six mechanisms of diffusion. First of all, norms can be spread through *contagion*, meaning that norm diffusion occurs unintentionally, as the EU leads by 'virtuous example' and other actors replicate it. Second, strategic communications, such as new policy initiatives and declaratory communications can result in *informational* diffusion. The third mechanism of diffusion is *procedural* and involves the institutionalization of the EU's relationship with a third party, where normative elements are to be found in dialogues and agreements. The interregional dialogue with the Southern African Development Community, membership of the EU in the World Trade Organization, and enlargement negotiations are mentioned as examples of procedural factors. Fourth, *transference* implies that diffusion occurs when the EU exchanges goods, trade, aid or technical assistance with third parties. The use of conditionality, including financial rewards and economic sanctions, is an example of the transference mechanism. *Overt* diffusion occurs through the physical presence of the EU in third states and international organizations, for example through monitoring

missions or Commission delegations. Finally, the *cultural filter* is referred to as affecting the impact of international norms and political learning in third states leading to learning, adaption or rejection of norms. Examples of the cultural filter are the diffusion of democratic norms in China and human rights diffusion in Turkey (Manners, 2002: 245). Thus, EU norms in world politics are diffused through these six mechanisms, enabling the EU to “define what passes for ‘normal’ in world politics” (ibid.: 253).

In this context, it is inevitable to include some brief reflections about the term ‘power’. The term ‘power’ in Manners initial article seems to refer to a particular kind of actor, similar to the notions of a ‘great power’ or ‘superpower’ (Diez, 2005: 615). Yet, as Diez notes, the notion of normative power was introduced in order to get away from discussions about whether the EU is an actor or not. In the Weberian sense of power (implying that A is able to make B what B would otherwise not have done) the concept also has a characteristic of a relationship to it. Following the relational characteristics of the normative power Europe argument it would be an obvious option to direct the analytical focus towards the question whether the EU has normative power. However, whether the EU has normative power is extremely difficult to measure empirically. Especially in relation to fragile states, this analytical angle is due to practical reasons not very suitable for this study. Therefore, the research question is how the EU responds to fragile situations, which implies an analytical focus on whether the EU acts as a normative power. The concept of normative power Europe has three different qualities – an ontological, a positivist and a normative. The ontological quality to it implies that the EU can be *conceptualized* as a changer of norms in the international system. The positivist quality means that the EU *acts* to change norms in the international system. The normative quality to it implies that the EU *should* act to extend its norms (Manners, 2002: 252). This paper will mainly deal with the positivist quality to the normative power Europe concept, focusing on the EU’s actions in relation to fragile states.

Normative power Europe has become target of extensive critique that will be discussed in the following part. Although the normative power debate has moved the research agenda beyond the discussion whether or not the EU actually has a foreign policy, and raises important questions about the EU’s role and identity in international relations, it brings along a number of problems that need to be taken into consideration. First of all, critics have argued that the concept of normative power has not been problematized or

clearly defined, which gives the impression that normative power Europe is uncritically accepted as being necessarily a good thing (Pace, 2007). Yet, the EU's normative power turned out to be a "semantically 'empty' notion, at least in the context of the Middle East conflict (ibid.). Notions of the EU as a 'normative', 'ethical' or 'civilian' power are similar to those descriptions given by EU officials concerning the EU's international role. Researchers could be accused of being biased by their own sympathy for the European project (Sjursen, 2006a, 2006b). It becomes quite problematic and challenging for a researcher to study the EU's promotion of its principles, if these principles constitute the core values that the researcher believes in him- or herself, as it becomes difficult to achieve any critical distance (Hyde-Price, 2006). Secondly, the notion of the EU as a normative, ethical or civilian power is problematic, as it

easily conjures up images of European imperialists and missionaries, who set out to shape the world in their image, convinced that their values and the way of life was superior. Alternatively, it could be the stuff of hypocrisy, a simple cover for the promotion of particular interests. (Sjursen, 2007: 2)

Hettne and Söderbaum made a distinction between civilian power and soft imperialism. While civilian power implies a foreign policy built on the norms promoted internally within the Union, and on voluntary dialogue with a third party, soft imperialism refers to an asymmetric relationship and the imposition of norms in order to promote the EU's self-interests (Hettne and Söderbaum, 2005: 549). The form of the EU's external policy shifts over time and depends on a range of factors, such as power relations, EU actorness, the nature of the issue area etc. Moreover, different member states and different EU institutions take different positions; some of them tend to be more civilian in their approaches than others. Nevertheless, as Hettne and Söderbaum put it, "normative power is often a cover for more cynical designs" (ibid.). Taking EU relations with Africa as one example, "norms are a disguise for the strategic pursuit of material interests" (ibid.: 546). Africa is particularly useful for its markets, natural resources and minerals, and political conditionality imposed on African countries can be seen as a means to hegemonic control by the EU (ibid.). This argument is especially important in relation to the EU's engagement in fragile states, as a great number of countries categorized as fragile states are African countries.

Neorealist analyses of the EU's foreign policy argue against liberal-idealist accounts of the EU as a normative power. One of the main problems of liberal-idealist approaches

is that power is almost totally neglected (Hyde-Price, 2006: 218). The civilian power concept can be seen as a contradiction in terms, because

“the power of influence exerted by the European Community and other such civilian actors was conditional upon a strategic environment provided by the military power of states, which they did not control” (Bull quoted in Hyde-Price, 2006: 218).

Thus, the EU’s power of influence depends on a strategic environment provided by other actors, such as the US or individual member states acting outside the EU framework. Following the core assumptions of structural realism, states are the primary international actors driven by their own national security interests. Security is the main concern of states, and since states focus on relative gains, co-operative enterprises such as the EU are limited (Hyde-Price, 2006). Yet, states also pursue a range of ethical concerns, but those are always ‘second-order’ concerns, ranking below national security and other national fundamental interests (ibid.). According to the neo-realist explanation, the EU serves three main purposes for its member states. First of all, the EU can be considered an instrument for collective economic interests (Hyde-Price, 2008: 31). Secondly, it has come to serve as an institutional repository for ‘second-order’ concerns of its member states. EU member states would only allow for commitment to an ‘ethical’ EU foreign policy in parts of the world where other great powers do not have any significant strategic interests. As Hyde-Price put it, “member states will only allow the EU to act as the repository for shared ethical concerns as long as this does not conflict with their core national interests” (Hyde-Price, 2006: 223). Thirdly, the EU serves as an instrument for collectively shaping the regional milieu (Hyde-Price, 2008). In its neighbourhood, for example, the EU does not act as a normative power, but rather serves as an instrument of collective hegemony imposing the norms and values of the most powerful member states (Hyde-Price, 2006.: 227).

A study about the EU’s military conflict management policy in Africa suggests that the development of this policy was mainly motivated by different national interests, especially French national interests (Rye Olsen, 2009: 249). This supports the argument that

“the EU provides even the larger states (especially those with colonial histories) as means to re-engage in areas of former colonial influence in Africa and Asia... by acting as an agent of European foreign policy, Britain, France... could claim more credit for their dual national/European roles in troubled areas.”

However, it could be argued against this point that the EU's strong emphasis on multilateralism mitigates images of self-interested interventions, neo-colonial agendas and European imperialism, but this will be discussed further below.

According to a realist study on the EU's role in international trade negotiations, the EU's actions are dominated by geostrategic and mercantilist interests (Zimmermann, 2007). In the case of trade negotiations with China, for example, human rights concerns are subordinated to commercial relations, and "the often-quoted normative behaviour of the EU in external matters was conspicuously absent" (ibid.: 820). Member states with important commercial stakes in China, such as Germany and Italy, are often loath to apply sanctions.

One of the main points of criticism in relation to normative power Europe is concerned with inconsistencies between the EU's rhetoric and behaviour, and the lack of self-reflexivity, which in turn leads to problems of credibility. Talking about the EU as a normative, civilian or ethical power requires a great deal of reflexivity. The EU's 'narratives of projection', in other words the projection of the EU as a model, often lack the necessary self-awareness which would lead to the insight that "'what' is being projected is not the EU *as is* but an 'EU-topia'" (Howse and Nicolaidis, 2002: 769). Furthermore, the EU's credibility depends on consistency between internal practices and external objectives. Proclaimed external objectives need to be seen as benchmarks for internal policies, and, internally, the EU would need to realign to the utopia that it seeks to project externally (ibid.). Similarly, Diez has argued that

the projection of European norms and values [...] needs to be subjected to continuous deconstruction through the exposition of contradictions within this discourse, and between this discourse and other practices. This would [...] rescue normative power from becoming a self-righteous, messianistic project.(Diez, 2005: 636).

Thus, there is a need for greater reflexivity, both in the academic debate and in political representations of the EU as a normative power (Diez, 2005). However, the lack of reflexivity and consistency does not necessarily undermine the EU's normative power. Scheipers and Sicurelli have claimed that inconsistencies seem to be a characteristic feature of collective identities *per se*, and, additionally, self-representations always contain a 'good deal of utopia', as they would not be attractive to others otherwise (Scheipers and Sicurelli, 2007: 438). Furthermore, since the EU binds itself to international law, especially the United Nations system, the EU's principles appear to

be universally applicable, which makes the EU's attempt to project its values beyond its borders more credible (Scheipers and Sicurelli, 2007; Forsberg, 2011). Forsberg argues that normative power is an ideal-type of power, an idealized description of concrete features of things for purposes of comparison of otherwise fuzzy phenomena. Thus it is not an accurate description of what the EU truly is. Nevertheless, the EU approximates this ideal-type more closely than other great powers, because it has many characteristics of a normative power (Forsberg, 2011). Hence, even though the above-mentioned criticism should be kept in mind, especially the need for greater reflexivity, the notion of the EU as a normative power does not need to be discarded.

### **Normative power with increasing military capabilities?**

When looking at the EU's response to fragile situations through the theoretical lenses of normative power Europe, it becomes inevitable to discuss whether and how normative power is reconcilable with the EU's increasing military capabilities. This is important in relation to fragile states, because, as previously mentioned, an adequate response to fragile situations requires a mixture of instruments, among others military instruments. The accounts of normative power and neo-realist perspectives on power politics give the impression of being mutually exclusive. Yet, as Youngs argues, security concerns and normative values inform each other and the co-existence between strategic and ideational dynamics should not be neglected (2004a). In the post-cold war era new security doctrines are increasingly based on strategic interests linked to the advancement of human rights and political reform (ibid.). Thus, a combination of constructivist and rationalist explanations gives a more accurate picture of the EU's external actions.

Especially the new trend towards a 'military power Europe' casts doubt on the self-image of the EU as a civilian and normative power (Björkdahl in Whitman, 2011). Issues such as peace operations, humanitarian disasters, post-conflict reconstruction and international terrorism challenge the normative power Europe argument. The EU is increasingly developing a military capability, acquiring military and crisis management experience, and building capacity on the military-strategic side in its own organization (Matlary, 2008: 132). This 'military turn' has been criticized as weakening the EU's distinct profile on the international scene (Björkdahl in Whitman, 2011). The EU's self-image of a force for good on the one hand and its development of military capacity on the other hand might be perceived as a basic contradiction (Bailes, 2008: 116).

However, relying on a normative approach without any military capacity, the level of influence that the EU could exert in crisis situations, such as violent conflicts, is very limited. Thus it could be assumed that European peace operations by necessity require military capacity to support the normative approach (Björkdahl in Whitman, 2011: 104). The nature of military operations has changed, as the military tool is no longer deployed in defence of existential survival, but in defence of values, such as human rights, democracy and the rule of law (Matlary, 2008: 134). Moreover, the EU's operations are hardly purely military and the EU rather relies on comprehensive approaches, combining military and civilian tools. As Björkdahl argues, the common distinction between military and civilian/normative means of power is often too simplistic and does not take into account that Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)<sup>1</sup> missions often consist both of military and civilian instruments (Björkdahl in Whitman, 2011: 104). In the ESS it is acknowledged that the new post-Cold War security threats are not purely military and cannot be tackled by purely military means either (ESS, 2003: 7). The EU advocates a mix of instruments, including military instruments, economic instruments and civilian crisis management. Moreover, the importance of an international world order based on effective multilateralism is stressed. Multilateralism is a crucial factor for EU peace support operations, because it mitigates images of self-interested interventions, neo-colonial agendas and European imperialism. The emphasis on a comprehensive approach together with effective multilateralism makes EU peace operations more justifiable and legitimate. In contrast to nationally-led interventions, which are often driven by 'dubious interests', EU collective action defending its norms and values is said to be imbued with greater legitimacy (Youngs, 2004a: 418). The EU's peace operations "clearly have both an ethical side that is of significant political importance and a traditional realpolitik side that involves national interests and strategic choices, making the two sides at times difficult to unify" (Björkdahl in Whitman, 2011: 111). Nevertheless, normative power and military power are possible to combine, although it should be kept in mind that those two are still entirely different categories of power. Military means traditionally utilized to project military power could be used for humanitarian purposes to support a normative agenda. As Björkdahl notes,

"acting guided by, in accordance with and/or in defence of EU norms also outside the EU territory militaries may strengthen the robustness of these norms within the EU as well as

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<sup>1</sup> Formerly known as European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP)

around the world and contribute to their evolution. In this sense military forces may be ‘forces for good’” (Björkdahl in Whitman, 2011: 110).

Thus, normative power can be coupled with military means. This is an important insight for the analysis of the EU’s response to fragile states, because ESDP operations are part of the EU’s toolbox. However, the possibility of combining normative power and military means does not by implication mean that the EU acts as a normative power in practice. This will be examined further on in this paper.

To sum up, in this part the framework of analysis, namely normative power, has been established. Normative power Europe, initially introduced by Ian Manners in 2002, is one possible account of the EU’s role in world politics. It has provided a theoretical framework for many different studies, but not in relation to fragile states (see Introduction). Yet, it is particularly interesting and revealing to look at the EU’s response to fragile situations through normative power lenses for several reasons. First of all, the EU’s fragile states policy consists of a mix of different instruments, also including military means. As previously argued, the use of military means can go along with normative power, but it remains to be seen whether ESDP operations in the selected countries were conducted in a way which is consistent with the EU’s self-image of a force for good. Secondly, as discussed in this part, the normative power debate has evoked a lot of criticism and concerns which often involve accusations of neo-colonialism and imperialism. These concerns are relevant as regards weak and fragile states, because most of them are former colonies of European member states and located on the African continent, which could be considered very appealing due to its vast natural resources. Yet, before the analytical framework will be applied to the empirical data, in the next part the research design, methodology and operationalisation for this study will be presented.

### **Methodology/Operationalisation**

To carry out my research, I have chosen to work with the comparative case study method, as this allows me to compare the EU’s approach towards different fragile states. In the following section, the comparative case study method will be reflected upon. Secondly, the choice of cases will be discussed. Thirdly, I will indicate how I seek to operationalize the variables for my research. Finally, the empirical material will be presented.

## **Comparative case study research**

Comparative case study research has been chosen for this paper, because it “examines in rich detail the context and features of two or more instances of specific phenomena” (Campbell, 2009). Similar to the single case study method, comparative case study research strives for ‘thick descriptions’, but the main goal is to discover contrasts, similarities, or patterns across cases (ibid.). A multiple-case design offers analytical benefits, as conclusion drawn from two or more cases are often more powerful than those coming from a single case (Yin, 2003: 53). Comparison, as pointed out by Collier, is a fundamental tool of analysis, as it plays a major role in concept-formation by bringing into focus suggestive similarities and contrasts among cases (Collier, 1993: 105). Comparisons can be conducted both qualitatively and quantitatively. While forms of comparison vary and are employed in statistical analysis, experimental research, and historical studies, the label ‘comparative method’ has a standard meaning within the discipline of political science. It refers to “the methodological issues that arise in the systematic analysis of a small number of cases, or a ‘small N’” (ibid.). Yet, studies based on an analysis of a small number of cases are contested. There is no clear dividing line between statistical and comparative methods, since the difference only depends on the number of cases:

“The comparative method resembles the statistical method in all respects except one. The crucial difference is that the number of cases it deals with is too small to permit systematic control by means of partial correlations.” (Lijphart, 1971: 684).

Hence, it has been widely debated whether single or small-N analyses are useful approaches, especially compared to statistical analysis (Mahoney, 2000). Of central concern are methodological limitations, such as weak external validity. The debate has been centred on questions of what value unique examinations can contribute, and whether hypotheses and theory only are valid if they are testable and generalizable (Johnson, 2010). Even though the comparative method (the use of comparisons among a small number of cases) distinguishes itself from the case study method, I will work with the definition of case study methods given by Bennett and George, which includes comparisons of a small number of cases (Bennett and George, 2005: 18). Case study methods remind of statistical studies, *inter alia* due to the formulation of hypotheses and a variables- and casual inference-centered approach. Thus comparative case study research is based on positivist ontological and epistemological presuppositions. It could be argued against this choice of method that the normative power Europe concept is

often associated with social constructivism. As Manners states himself, “it is tempting to attempt to pigeonhole theoretical accounts for the normative power of the EU in some sort of ‘social constructivist’ camp” (Manners, 2004: 5). Yet, as mentioned in the previous section, there is a positivist quality to the normative power Europe concept. Since this is a positivist study of actions that the EU takes, qualitative comparative case study research is a well-suited method.

Case studies are generally strong where statistical methods are weak (George and Bennett, 2005: 19). First and foremost, the main advantage of case study methods is their capacity to address causal complexity and to offer rich in-depth explanations. In contrast to statistical methods, which often run the risk of ‘conceptual stretching’, case studies allow the researcher to achieve high levels of conceptual validity. Variables such as democracy, power etc. are often too complex and context-dependent to be measured statistically (ibid.). Therefore, researchers must carry out ‘contextualized comparison’, implying that the researcher needs to search for analytically equivalent phenomena across different contexts. While case studies can provide for detailed considerations of contextual factors, this is extremely difficult to do in statistical studies (ibid.). Statistical studies run the risk of ‘conceptual stretching’, as dissimilar cases are often lumped together to get a larger sample. Case studies, however, allow for conceptual refinements with a higher level of validity over a smaller number of cases (ibid.).

The comparative method requires a careful selection of cases. Cases both have to fit the research problem and demonstrate enough commonality to allow for comparison. It could be held against this research design that the notion of state fragility is rather contested, as there is not just one condition or dimension of it. Weak state structures can be caused by different factors that do not equally apply to all countries. Some states suffer from a complete absence of state structures, where they have literally collapsed. Other states have strong state capacities but are unresponsive to their populations. Consequently, it could be argued that different conditions or dimensions of fragility require different, individual approaches that cannot be compared with each other. However, the main focus of this study is not so much on fragile states as such, but rather on possible conditions for EU engagement and the different means that are employed by the EU, which could indicate what kind of power the EU is in relation to fragile states. The main aim is to analyse through the normative power lenses how the EU responds to fragile situations and whether its response is consistent with its self-

image as a force for good. I have chosen to compare different countries in order to get a broader picture of the EU's role in fragile states. The purpose of comparison is to see how the EU acts in different cases, and if strategic interests are a condition for and/or increase EU engagement.

### Selection of cases

Concerning the selection of cases, I have decided to look at the ten weakest states according to the Index of State Weakness in the Developing World. A range of different agencies have made attempts to measure and define state fragility, for example the Fund for Peace, the World Bank and the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (Briscoe, 2008; Stewart, 2011). It would have been most suitable to work with a ranking or list made by the EU. However, the EU's crisis 'watch list', which is prepared by the Council Secretariat and the Commission every six months, is confidential and not accessible (Commission Evaluation Report, 2011). For this reason, I will mainly work with the Index of State Weakness in the Developing World created by Susan E. Rice and Stewart Patrick in 2008. The index ranks 141 developing and transitional nations according to their relative performance in four core functions: economic, political, security and social welfare. While earlier attempts to measure state weakness were often focused on only one or two of these dimensions, for example propensity for conflict, this index gives a broader picture. This index is based on twenty different indicators, five in each of the four core areas of state function. As defined by Stewart, a state is strong and resilient "to the degree to which its institutions are designed to meet these core responsibilities; backed by adequate material resources; perceived as legitimate by its citizens; and nurtured and supported by the ruling regime" (2011: 28).

#### INDEX OF STATE WEAKNESS IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD

The 141 weakest states and their index basket scores are presented below. A basket score of 0.00 represents the worst score in the 141-country sample, a score of 10.00 signifies the best.

<b>Color Coding Key</b> Color coding and quintiles are based on full sample of 141 countries	BOTTOM QUINTILE
	2 <sup>ND</sup> QUINTILE
	3 <sup>RD</sup> QUINTILE
	4 <sup>TH</sup> QUINTILE
	TOP QUINTILE

Rank	Country	Overall Score	Economic	Political	Security	Social Welfare	GNI Per Capita
1	Somalia	0.52	0.00	0.00	1.37	0.70	226
2	Afghanistan	1.65	4.51	2.08	0.00	0.00	271
3	Congo, Dem. Rep.	1.67	4.06	1.80	0.28	0.52	130
4	Iraq	3.11	2.87	1.67	1.63	6.27	1134
5	Burundi	3.21	5.01	3.46	2.95	1.43	100
6	Sudan	3.29	5.05	2.06	1.46	4.59	810
7	Central African Rep.	3.33	4.11	2.90	5.06	1.25	360
8	Zimbabwe	3.44	1.56	1.56	6.81	3.84	350
9	Liberia	3.64	3.39	3.91	6.01	1.25	140
10	Cote D'Ivoire	3.66	5.23	2.12	3.71	3.56	870

*Source: Index of State Weakness in the Developing World, 2008*

A score of 0.00 represents the worst score in the 141-country sample, while a score of 10.00 signifies the best. According to the ranking, the ten weakest states are Somalia, Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq, Burundi, Sudan, Central African Republic, Zimbabwe, Liberia and Ivory Coast. However, since the Index of State Weakness in the Developing World has not been updated since 2008 and there are so many contested definitions and dimensions of state failure, it is necessary to check other indexes as well. More recent rankings such as the 2011 Failed States Index, published by *Foreign Policy* magazine and the Fund for Peace, or the World Bank's 2012 Fragile Situations List show that these countries still are among the ten weakest states. Despite the existence of more recent indexes, the Index of State Weakness in the Developing World will be the main basis for the case selection, because it is more comprehensive than the above-mentioned ones.

I could also have chosen countries from different continents or picked former colonies and countries without a colonial past deliberately. However, selecting countries in accordance with the variables or hypotheses would be too biased. The problem of selecting extreme cases on the dependent variable is that it "leads the analyst to focus on cases that, in predictable ways, produce biased estimates of casual effects" (Collier and Mahoney, 1996: 59). Therefore, in order to avoid accusations of selections bias I have selected the ten weakest countries following the index. It could be held against this choice that the findings would not be particularly meaningful, as it could be expected that the weakest states might get the most attention, while states lower down in the ranking might be neglected. This is why I have chosen to pick ten cases, which is a rather high number for qualitative comparative research. Nevertheless, the findings need to be treated very carefully, since there is a great amount of fragile states with varying degrees and forms of fragility or weakness, and a different selection of countries as cases may lead to different findings. The fragile states field is rather broad and my analysis will only be limited to the ten weakest states according to the index. Nevertheless, the analysis could still reveal interesting and relevant findings, and suggest tendencies which could be investigated in further research.

## **Operationalisation**

The analysis will consist of two parts. The starting point for this analysis is based on the arguments against normative power Europe. Drawing from the theoretical framework established in the previous section, I have chosen three main variables for the analysis of the selected cases: neo-colonial interests, economic interests, and security interests. This could indicate if there are any conditions for EU engagement or rather factors that influence the degree of EU engagement. As argued in the previous part, strategic interests do not per se exclude the possibility of normative actions and even though the EU may not equally be active in all fragile states it could still act as a force for good guided by its norms and values. Moreover, that the EU may not be equally engaged all over the world is not a matter of being altruistic, but also of resources and capabilities. Nevertheless, a strong bias towards former colonies or fragile states with strategic importance would show that ethical concerns are second-order concerns subordinate to strategic considerations. This would undermine the EU's self-image of a force for good in the world and its distinct profile as a normative power in world politics. Secondly, I will look at the measures taken by the EU in the respective countries. Taken together, these two aspects can give a picture of what kind of power the EU is in relation to fragile states.

First of all, as mentioned in the previous section, the EU has been accused of being a means for its member states to re-engage in areas of former colonial influence. Thus, it will be examined whether the selected cases are former colonies or not, and if yes whether they are former colonies of European member states. Secondly, it has been claimed that the EU's external actions are dominated by economic and geostrategic interests. Therefore, it needs to be established if the selected cases are resource-rich countries and if the EU has major trade interests or trade agreements with these countries. Thirdly, it will be examined whether the selected cases pose an obvious security threat to the EU. In the 2003 ESS state failure is identified as one of the main security threats. Since the selected cases for this study are categorised as fragile states all of them can, consequently, be considered threats to the security of the EU to some extent.

However, in order to analyse whether posing an obvious security threat affects the EU's engagement in fragile states other key security challenges mentioned in the ESS will be looked at. First of all, terrorism is one of the main security threats, and, therefore, one of the variables for the analysis will be whether the respective state serves as a base for

terrorism. Yet, it is important to mention that I only can take into account terrorist networks or cells which are known of, or which have been uncovered, but since terrorism is a very complex and widespread phenomenon, there may be unknown cases as well. Secondly, I will look into whether the respective country is known as a hub for organised crime. According to the ESS, Europe is a main target for organised crime, and brings along issues such as cross-border trafficking in drugs, women, illegal migrants and weapons (ESS, 2003). Although there may be more dimensions to it, organised crime for the purpose of this paper will be identified through the following criteria: the respective state is (a) a drug-producing country, (b) a transit hub, and/or (c) suffers from maritime piracy, which is a new dimension to organised crime. Thirdly, regional conflicts are identified as a key security threat, affecting European interests both directly and indirectly (ibid.). Therefore, another variable will be whether a country is conflict-ridden or not. Those three security threats are often closely related to each other, and also closely linked to state failure. Conflict, for example, can lead to extremism, terrorism and state failure. State failure, in turn, is often associated with terrorism and organised crime (ibid.). Moreover, organised crime can have links with terrorism. Nevertheless, those threats will be looked at separately, because they do not necessarily have to be related to each other.

The aim is to see how the EU reacts to the above-mentioned security threats, and if states where the security threat is particularly high and European interests are at stake receive more attention than others. The analysis will be guided by the research question, namely how the EU responds to fragile situations, and by three hypotheses:

*H1: The EU is more active in former colonies of its member states.*

*H2: The EU is more active in countries, where it has major economic/trade interests.*

*H3: The EU is more active in countries, which pose an obvious security threat.*

The second part of the analysis deals with the measures that are taken by the EU, meaning that it needs to be established which instruments the EU employs. The following aspects will be looked at: development/humanitarian assistance, civilian and military ESDP missions, the use of negative conditionality<sup>2</sup> and sanctions within the framework of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP).

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<sup>2</sup> Negative conditionality is defined as the suspension or termination of benefits if essential norms and values are violated.

## **Empirical Material**

The empirical data used for this analysis will mainly consist of official EU documents, such as the Commission communication on the EU's response to fragile situations, Country Strategy Papers (CSP) or Joint Strategy Papers (JSP) for the respective countries, Council Decisions concerning the use of sanctions, the suspension of the Cotonou Agreement, or EU operations. For some of the selected countries CSPs are only available in French and for others there are no CSPs available at all. However, there are profiles for each country on the website of the EU's External Action Service that are comprehensive and informative. Trade statistics published by the Commission are also included. Official EU documents must be treated with caution, because they may be biased.

Information concerning security aspects, such as terrorism, organized crime etc. has been retrieved from other than EU sources, as there do not seem to be any EU assessments besides EUROPOL's 2011 'EU Organised Crime Threat Assessment'. This is complemented with a transnational organized crime threat assessment made by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. Furthermore, different rankings and assessments presented in Patrick's 'Weak Links: Fragile States, Global Threats and International Security' are used as well. The collection of empirical material will be limited by a time span from the year 2000 to the present, meaning that I will only work with material that has been published during this period. Official EU documents will be complemented with newspaper articles and academic articles.

## **Limitations**

The choice to analyse the EU's fragile states policy and to conduct a comparative study of ten cases clearly involves a major trade-off. On the one hand, this research design does not allow me to go into detail. Both the individual cases and the different instruments which are part of the EU's policy could be addressed more in depth. The areas of development cooperation or CSDP missions, for example, are so extensive that they could be studied separately. On the other hand, the idea behind this study was to get a broader picture of the EU's engagement with fragile states.

## **Analysis**

I will now turn to the main part of this paper – the analysis. This section will be divided into two different parts. First of all, the selected cases will be analysed individually. For

each country subpart I will start out by giving very brief information about the situation in the respective country. In the second part of the analysis the cases will be compared and possible patterns discussed. The second part is also divided into two subsections. The first subsection will be guided by the three hypotheses which were earlier developed in this paper. The second subsection will be focused on the different measures which are employed by the EU.

## **Country Profiles**

### **Somalia**

Somalia, located on the Horn of Africa, has experienced sixteen years of civil war and has struggled with building peace and security. It has been without an internationally recognized government since the beginning of the 90s. It suffers from waves of violence, caused by inter-clan rivalry and terrorism. Somalia faces a number of development challenges, such as low life expectancy, high infant and child mortality and limited access to sanitation. Moreover, it is a resource-poor country. Around one million people are internally displaced, and it is one of the poorest countries in the world with a per capita income of \$226. The EU is the largest donor in Somalia (Delegation of the EU Somalia Unit Website). The country has not signed or ratified the Cotonou Agreement because of a lack of functioning institutions, and the EU has no formal or direct trade with Somalia. According to the JSP for Somalia, the EU's response strategy is to promote peace and security, which is considered a necessary precondition for an effective engagement in longer-term development (JSP Somalia 2008-2013). Therefore, "priority will be given to promoting a peaceful and secure environment in which human rights are respected and democratic processes and institutions can develop" (ibid.: 6). This shows that the EU in its approach towards Somalia emphasizes the importance of its norms and values, especially peace, democracy and human rights.

In December 2008, the first EU maritime operation, European Naval Force Somalia (EU NAFOR ATLANTA), was launched as part of the EU's comprehensive approach to counter piracy off the coast of Somalia. In February 2010, the Council decided to send a European Union military mission to contribute to the training of Somali security forces. This decision was based on earlier conclusions "to step up the engagement for promoting peace and security in Somalia" (Council Decision 2010/96/CFSP). In the Council Conclusions on Somalia (21 March 2011) it is stated that instability is not only posing a growing challenge to the security of people in Somalia and in the region, but

also to the rest of the world through terrorism, piracy and the proliferation of weapons. The need to strengthen initiatives to fight piracy is also reiterated, as the EU is particularly concerned about the growing number of people held hostage. The mandate of NAVFOR was extended until 2014, and additionally, the Council approved a new civilian mission to support maritime capacities in the Horn of Africa and the Western Indian Ocean (EUCAP NESTOR). Thus, the strong support for Somalia and the decisions to launch an EU counter-piracy mission and an EU Training mission are clearly influenced by the EU's own security concerns. Somalia poses an obvious security threat to the EU because of terrorism, piracy and illegal immigration.

### **Afghanistan**

Afghanistan is one of the few fragile states that are not typical former European colonies. Even though it was a British protectorate until 1919, the country remained relatively autonomous. Afghanistan has severely suffered from twenty-three years of war. Since the fall of the Taliban in 2001 the country has received a lot of attention and massive development aid from all major donors (CSP 2007-2013: 33). In the CSP it is emphasized that narcotics trade is a primary threat to stable political development, and that the security situation in Afghanistan remains fragile. Around 90 per cent of the heroin in Europe comes from Afghanistan (International Crisis Group Report, 2005: 1). The EU's policy towards Afghanistan is also part of its commitment against terrorism (ibid.). Thus, according to the third hypothesis, the EU is expected to be more active in the country, as it poses a security threat which directly affects the EU.

Afghanistan is a country with extensive natural resources, including gas, oil and valuable minerals (CSP 2007-2013). However, economic institutions are fragile and the economy remains dependent on international aid. The EU is among the largest donors in the country. The stabilization and development of Afghanistan is a major external priority for the EU, and since 2002 the Commission has contributed about 1.8 billion euros to the country (EuropeAid Website Afghanistan). For the period 2007-2010 a first budget of 610 million euros was programmed, and for the period 2011-2010 another allocation of 450 million euros is expected (ibid.). There is little trade between the EU and Afghanistan. Afghanistan is categorized as a least developed country and is therefore a beneficiary of the 'Everything But Arms' (EBA) arrangement, which gives duty free access to the EU for all products, except arms and ammunition (CSP 2007-2013). However, it has not taken much advantage of this trade initiative.

The US is by far the main foreign actor in Afghanistan, as it has been involved militarily, politically and financially. The UN's coordinating role and the U.S.'s strong presence in Afghanistan overshadow the EU's commitment. This is due to the EU's complex foreign policy structure and a lack of coherence among its institutions and member states (International Crisis Group Report, 2005). The EU too often uses development aid instead of collective political and military action (ibid.) Moreover, EU member states have been involved individually in stabilizing the security situation. This is an important aspect when discussing the EU's normative power, because the EU is not the only actor on the international scene, and normative power, or the EU's power of influence in general, may be limited by other actors' interests and actions. Afghanistan is clearly a case which supports the argument that the EU's influence is conditioned upon a strategic environment provided by the U.S. and individual member states.

Nevertheless, the EU has made use of its foreign policy instruments. In June 2007 the EU has launched an EU Police mission (EUPOL AFGHANISTAN), which has been extended until May 2013. This mission has been widely criticized and described as hardly impressive (Korski and Gowan 2009; Islam and Gross, 2009). The mission consists of only half of its authorized strength, as EU governments seem to prioritize their own national efforts rather than collective EU action (Islam and Gross, 2009). Again, the EU's opportunities to act as a civilian power depend heavily on the willingness of its member states, which shows that states are the primary international actors driven by their own national security interests. Thus, despite its efforts the EU remains a low-profile actor in Afghanistan.

### **Democratic Republic of Congo**

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), located in central Africa, is also one of the poorest countries in the world despite its wealth of natural resources. The DRC is part of the Great Lakes Region, which has been characterized by armed conflict and population displacements. Regional conflicts are listed as one of the key threats in the ESS, and the Great Lakes Region is particularly mentioned, impacting "European interests directly and indirectly" (ESS 2003). Thus, already from the outset it becomes clear that the EU has an interest in restoring peace and creating stability in the region and the respective countries involved, because, according to the ESS, European security interests are at stake.

The DRC has suffered from bad governance, wars killing millions of people, and the disappearance of most infrastructure (EuropeAid Website DRC). In three of the country's eleven provinces conflicts are still on-going, and out of a population of around 66 million there are 1.7 million internally displaced people and 426,000 Congolese refugees in neighbouring countries (EU@UN Article, 5 March 2012). The on-going war is a low-intensity conflict and therefore also referred to as a 'forgotten' war. However, the DRC is experiencing one of the world's most drawn-out emergencies and therefore, the EU has announced that it is increasing its funding for the DRC by ten per cent compared to last year (ibid.).

In June 2003 the Council decided to launch a military operation, code-named *Artemis*, in the DRC to contribute to the stabilization of security conditions and the improvement of the humanitarian situation. Even though this operation was geographically limited and of short duration, *Artemis* succeeded in establishing a secure environment for refugees' return (Björkdahl in Whitman, 2011: 113). From April 2005 until June 2007 the EU deployed a police mission in Kinshasa – the first civilian CSDP mission in Africa (EUPOL KINSHASA). The purpose of this mission, which was requested from the government of the DRC, was to monitor, mentor and advise the Integrated Police Unit in Kinshasa. After another official request by the DRC government, the EU has launched an advisory and assistance mission for security reform in the DRC (EUSEC RD CONGO) in June 2005. This continued commitment of EU political effort and resources was aimed at avoiding "potentially serious repercussions for the process of strengthening democracy, the rule of law and international and regional security" (Council Joint Action 2005/355/CFSP). Additionally, in 2006 the Council decided to send a military mission to support the United Nations Organisation Mission in the DRC (MONUC) during the election process (EUFOR RD CONGO). Even though the mission was widely criticized and seen as yet another example of European tokenism it was 'groundbreaking', as it showed how the EU could deploy hard power in favour of the so-called 'soft goals' of human development (Martin in Whitman, 2011: 204). In June 2007, the Council decided to conduct a mission to provide advice and assistance for security sector reform (SSR) in the DRC (EUPOL RD CONGO). The mission is aimed to contribute to Congolese efforts reform and restructure the national police and its interaction with the judicial system, and it was launched "as it [the EU] is aware of the benefits to be gained from adopting a comprehensive approach combining the different initiatives underway" (Council Joint Action 2007/405/CFSP).

Thus, in the DRC the EU has adopted a comprehensive approach consisting of both military and civilian operations. Taken together the EU had five missions in Congo, which "do amount to a sizeable measure of assistance, even though many might have wished for the EU to assume a far more ambitious role" (Howorth, 2007: 241). Nevertheless, the EU's efforts in the DRC, guided by its values and aimed at establishing sustainable peace in the country, can be perceived to increase the credibility of the EU as a normative and military power (Björkdahl in Whitman, 2011: 113).

### **Iraq**

Since the 1980's, Iraq has been struggling with internal and external turmoil. Saddam Hussein's regime was overthrown in 2003, and, ever since, the country has been facing a high degree of political volatility, sectarian violence, population displacement and socio-economic devastation (JSP 2011-2013). The EU's member states were deeply divided over the US-led invasion of Iraq and the "public spats between member states seriously undermined the credibility of the EU as an international actor" (Keukeleire and McNaughtan, 2008: 58). On the one hand, a group of member states, including the UK, Spain and Italy participated in the military invasion and occupation, while a group led by Germany and France actively opposed the war (ibid.). The candidate member states joined the former group. Tensions over the invasion were categorized as 'new' versus 'old' and 'Atlanticist' versus 'Europeanist' (Lewis, 2011: 70). Europe's discord over the invasion was a foreign policy debacle, which affected both transatlantic relations and relations among the EU's members (Lewis, 2009). However, as Lewis argues, Europe's reframing efforts over Iraqi reconstruction, for example the EU's rule of law mission (EUJUST LEX), offer some evidence for the EU's normative commitment. The normative commitment to promote democracy and the rule of law entrapped those member states which opposed any EU action into accepting EU-coordinated reconstruction assistance (ibid.: 434). In March 2003, the Political and Security Committee ambassadors

"saw a clear responsibility of the EU, and an opportunity, for humanitarian assistance, reconstruction, institution building and assisting the establishment of a more democratic order and civil society in post-Saddam Iraq" (quoted in Lewis, 2009: 442).

Since 2003, the European Commission has allocated around one billion euros to Iraq, including both reconstruction and humanitarian assistance. One of main overall medium-term objectives for EU engagement in Iraq is "the development of a secure,

stable and democratic Iraq where human rights and fundamental freedoms are respected” (JSP 2011-2013). Nevertheless, the EU only plays a marginal role in Iraq, and member states have not shown any desire to at least temper US influence (Youngs, 2004b: 4).

Iraq is an important partner for the EU due to its significant geopolitical position in the region and its proximity to the EU, and the recognition of these factors has guided the EU’s efforts since the fall of Saddam Hussein (Delegation of the EU to Iraq Website). Under Saddam Hussein’s regime, the EU had no contractual relations with Iraq. However, since 2004 the EU has repeatedly expressed a “fundamental interest in seeking greater engagement with Iraq” (JSP 2011-2013). Iraq, a resource-rich country, has become a major trading partner of the EU, and both parties have negotiated a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA). The signing of this agreement has been authorized by the Council in December 2011 and provisions of the agreement are applied provisionally until its entry into force (Council of the European Union Press, 22 December 2011). The PCA provides the legal framework for EU-Iraq relations, covering issues from political dialogue to trade relations and development assistance (ibid.). The EU and Iraq have even signed a Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of Iraq and the European Union on Strategic Partnership in Energy (2010). In this memorandum it is emphasized that both countries share common interests, since the EU is an energy consumer and Iraq a key oil and gas producer. Iraq could potentially become an energy bridge linking the Middle East, the Mediterranean and the EU (JSP 2011-2013). Thus the EU’s relations with Iraq are explicitly guided by the EU’s strategic and geopolitical interests, but nonetheless the EU plays a minor role in Iraq due to US presence.

### **Burundi**

Burundi is an East African country, which is, together with the DRC, part of the Great Lakes Region. As previously mentioned, the Great Lakes region is characterized by regional conflict, which is identified as one of the main key threats in the ESS. Twelve years of crisis have severely damaged the country. This crisis has been caused by ethnic tensions between the Hutu majority and Tutsi minority, which are spread over the entire region. In 2003 the Arusha Peace process, in which the EU was involved, led to a period of transition. Although the transitional period brought about some promising developments, the situation in Burundi still remains problematic in all areas, especially human rights, security, good governance, the economy, social sectors and human

development (CSP Summary). Despite a ceasefire agreement between the Palipehutu-FNL (party for the liberation of the Hutu people – National Liberation Force) and the government, which was signed in 2006, the peace process remains fragile (EAAS Website Burundi). Since Burundi is emerging from conflict, development cooperation has been difficult and the most important projects could not be launched until 2007 (EuropeAid Burundi). For the period of 2008-2013 the EU has allocated €212.1 million to the country. In 2010, on invitation of the government of Burundi, the EU decided to send an Election Observation Mission to observe the electoral cycle (EuropaPress Release IP/10/569).

Severe human rights violations in Burundi are of particular concern for international donors, and the country has been ranked as one of Africa's most corrupt countries by Transparency International (Reuters Africa, Feb 8, 2012). The EU delegation in Burundi has even expressed its concern over multiple violations of human rights and justice, because the situation remained 'disturbing', according to the EU ambassador Stephane de Loecker (EUBusiness News, Feb 18, 2012). However, he stated that the EU would maintain its current funding (ibid.). There are no current sanctions in force and the EU has not opened consultations under Article 96 or 97 of the Cotonou Agreement either.

### **Sudan**

Sudan, the largest country on the African continent, is despite its vast natural resources among the Least Developed Countries. It is one of the significant oil producing countries in the world. The country benefits from the EU's EBA initiative, but trade between the EU and Sudan is limited. In the 1990s al-Qaeda found a haven in Sudan, actively supported by President Bashir. Following international pressure, the group was officially expelled by the regime. However, according to a ranking on links between state fragility and transnational terrorism, a sizeable jihadi element has still been present in recent years (Patrick, 2011). Additionally, Sudan is a transit country for trafficking of drugs, arms and migrants. More importantly, the country has suffered from a devastating civil war between the North and the South that has been going on for more than two decades. Even though a Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was signed in 2005, the conflict in Sudan is still one of the fifteen major armed conflicts in the world, with an increase in battle-related deaths from 2009 (SIPRI Yearbook 2011 Website). Thus, considering all these factors, Sudan is a country which poses an obvious security threat to the EU.

In 2003 the Sudanese region of Darfur experienced a severe humanitarian crisis, which the EU failed to respond to. Despite rumours that the EU was preparing a military intervention force, in politico-military terms the crisis was too severe for the rather new-fledged ESDP (Howorth, 2007: 214). Yet, in 2005, at the request of the African Union (AU), the EU established a civilian-military operation to support the AU's mission in Sudan. The mission was understood as an attempt by France and other member states to counterbalance NATO's increasing role in Africa (Keukeleire and McNaughtan, 2008: 191). It consisted of both civilian and military components, as it made available equipment and assets, provided planning and technical assistance and sent out military observers. Moreover, it contributed with training of African troops and help with tactical and strategic transportation (EU Support to AMIS Website). This package was presented as further evidence of the EU's 'effective multilateralism' under the guise of 'working with partners' (Howorth, 2007: 216). The mandate for this mission was based on the principle of respect and support for African ownership (Council Joint Action 2005/557/CFSP). The EU's rather modest level of involvement in the Darfur crisis can be interpreted in two ways. On the one hand, the principle of respect for African ownership shows that the EU tries to avoid to conjure images of imperialism and colonialism, as "former colonial powers seek to take a back seat in crises, deferring to the AU as the principal stakeholder" (Howorth 2007: 216). On the other hand, the modest level of involvement could also be interpreted as a lack of political will and a proxy for avoiding direct involvement (ibid.). This in turn would go against the EU's rhetorical commitment to fragile situations. However, as Howorth put it, it is "relatively easy from the comfort of a university chair to accuse the EU and the international community of abandoning the 'responsibility to protect' (ibid.: 217). It needs to be acknowledged that the EU has invested energy and money into the country and tried to assist by sending its mission. Yet the results remain limited and the EU's "capacity to do other than provide band-aid to the deeply torn African continent appears circumscribed" (Howorth, 2007: 217). Thus, the EU has proven unable to live up to its own rhetoric and ambitions.

Following the signature of the CPA, the EU resumed development cooperation with Sudan. Yet, Sudan chose not to ratify the revised Cotonou Agreement by the legal deadline of 30<sup>th</sup> June 2009 because of a clause in the agreement which is related to the International Criminal Court. In the absence of a legal framework for relations between the EU and Sudan, the EU did not implement bilateral development cooperation under

the 10<sup>th</sup> European Development Fund (EDF), the EU's main financial instrument for development assistance. Nevertheless, Sudan was still receiving some development assistance from the European Community (EC) through other instruments, as the EU's "commitment is to the people of Sudan, [...]. The EC cannot disengage at such a critical time" (FAQ August 2009). In 2011, a referendum on self-determination for the semi-autonomous region South Sudan gained independence from the northern part of the country. Following an invitation from the Southern Sudan Referendum Commission the EU send an election observation mission to provide support for the development of the country's democratic institutions and procedures (EU EOM Sudan 2011). The EU has also appointed a Special Representative for Sudan and South Sudan.

Since South Sudan has only recently gained independence, it has not yet signed the Cotonou Agreement, which means that there is no legal framework for development cooperation. Moreover, there are no CSPs for Sudan or South Sudan. However, the EU's member states decided to bridge the current funding gap with ad-hoc allocations from unused money of previous EDFs. Due to the absence of a legal framework for EU relations with Sudan and South Sudan, there is, consequently, no conditionality or suspension clause to be found. Thus, the procedural mechanism of norm diffusion in the case of Sudan is clearly weakened if not absent.

### **Central African Republic**

The Central African Republic (CAR) is one of the poorest countries in the world despite its vast natural resources. Since its independence in 1960 it has experienced a number of coups and mutinies, and it is classified as a 'post-conflict fragile state'. The CAR is surrounded by crisis-ridden countries such as Chad, Sudan and the DRC, which are somewhat overshadowing the humanitarian situation in the country, turning it into a 'forgotten crisis' (Commission, Forgotten Crisis Assessment 2012). The EU is the largest donor in the country.

In 2008 the EU launched a military bridging operation EUFOR Tchad/RCA in eastern Chad and the north-east of the CAR. In March 2009 the operation has been transferred to the UN mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT). It has been the largest and most multinational EU operation in Africa so far, with 3700 troops and twenty-three member states involved (EUFOR TCHAD/RCA Website). In its conclusions regarding this mission, the Council emphasized that EUFOR's redeployment did not mark the end of the EU's engagement in Chad, the Central

African Republic and the EU would remain active at a political and diplomatic level (Council Conclusions on EUFOR Tchad/RCA, 18 May 2009). Moreover, this mission showed the “exemplary cooperation at all levels between the European Union and the United Nations” (ibid.). Thus, it is, once again, an example of the EU’s commitment to ‘effective multilateralism’. Moreover, in 2008, a mission for the consolidation of peace in Central African Republic (MICOPAX) under the responsibility of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) has been launched. The mission consists of 500 soldiers coming from the ECCAS and is aimed at contributing to peace and security in the CAR. Additionally, in 2010 a civilian component including a police unit of 150 officers was deployed by the ECCAS. These peace support operations are financed from the African Peace Facility, which is a fund for peace operations and long-term capacity-building. In February 2012 the EU has renewed its support to MICOPAX, with a financial support of more than 14 million euro. The EU’s support to MICOPAX can be seen as an example of effective multilateralism, which provides greater legitimacy for EU involvement and dilutes notions of neo-colonialism.

In 2003, following a military coup and the subsequent suspension of the Constitution, the removal of the President of the Republic and the Government, and the dissolution of the national Parliament, the EU decided to open consultations with the government of the CAR under Article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement. Essential elements of Article 9 of the Cotonou Agreement, such as the respect for democratic principles and the rule of law, were violated by the coup. In a letter to the Prime Minister of the CAR it is stated that the EU

“attaches great importance to the provisions of Article 9 of the Cotonou Agreement. The observance of democratic principles and human rights, including respect for fundamental social rights and the rule of law, on which the ACP-EU partnership is based, constitute essential elements of that agreement and consequently the basis of our relations” (Council Conclusion 14477/03).

Even though a process of transition towards a return to constitutional rule started, considerable uncertainties remained. Since the CAR had shown some commitment, the consultations were concluded. However, since important measures still had to be implemented the EU introduced a partial suspension of cooperation. The full and complete resumption of cooperation depended on the re-establishment of democracy and the rule of law (ibid.).

## **Zimbabwe**

Zimbabwe, a landlocked country in the Southern African region, is a former British colony and gained its independence in 1980. Zimbabwe has experienced politically-motivated violence related to the elections in 2002 and 2008. President Robert Mugabe and ZANU(PF) enjoyed a monopoly on power, which was not seriously challenged until the formation of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). In the 2008 elections ZANU(PF) lost its parliamentary majority and Mugabe lost in the first round of Presidential elections to Morgan Tsvangirai, leading to widespread violence against MDC supporters. In September 2008 a Global Political Agreement was signed and a coalition government was created. However, human rights issues are still of serious concern and are heavily criticized by the international community (Zimbabwe Country Profile, Foreign and Commonwealth Office). Furthermore, Zimbabwe's economy has been poorly governed and mismanaged by the Mugabe regime (ibid.).

In January 2002, consultations with the Zimbabwean authorities were held, because essential elements referred to in Article 9 had been violated. Yet, commitments made by the Government of Zimbabwe were insufficient. The EU has expressed its particular concern about politically motivated violence, freedom of the media, independence of the judiciary, and free and fair elections (Council Decision 6285/02). Cooperation with the Zimbabwean government has been suspended and funding has been reoriented in direct support of the population (ibid.). According to a declaration by the High Representative Catherine Ashton, the EU has decided to extend its measures by one year, as there has not been sufficient progress to justify a substantial change of the EU's policy towards Zimbabwe (Declaration on Zimbabwe, 15 February 2011). In February 2012 it was decided to extend the restrictive measure yet another year (Declaration on Zimbabwe, 4 April 2012). These measures include a visa ban and asset freeze of targeted individuals and entities, an arms embargo, and measures taken within the context of Article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement (ibid.). However, the EU recognized "progress made towards the creation of a conducive environment for the holding of free, fair, peaceful and transparent elections" and some of the sanctions have been lifted (Declaration on Zimbabwe, 17 February 2012). 51 individuals and 20 entities were removed from the visa ban and asset freeze list, and the suspension of development cooperation has only been extended for six months (ibid.). As stated in the Declaration, "[t]he European Union is committed to supporting the peaceful progress and democratic development of the people of Zimbabwe" (ibid.). Thus, the EU's approach

towards Zimbabwe is guided by the EU's norms and values, and the country has been subject to both Common Foreign and Security Policy 'restrictive measures' and 'appropriate measures' under Article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement.

Trade between Zimbabwe and the EU is not subject to any restrictive measures. Yet trade volumes between the two parties have declined significantly in the last years. In 2009 Zimbabwe signed an interim Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the EU that gives Zimbabwe 100% duty free-quota free access into the EU market with a transition period for rice and sugar (Delegation of the EU to Zimbabwe Website Trade). Following the creation of the coalition government, which has provided a framework for Zimbabwe's recovery, Zimbabwe- EU trade relations are set to improve and trade volumes are expected to rise (ibid.).

### **Liberia**

Liberia has suffered from fourteen years of civil war, which destroyed the country's infrastructure. The conflict was financed by Liberia's natural resources and illicit trade in blood diamonds and timber. In spite of Liberia's vast natural resources the government lacks the basic capacity for economic management and poverty is pervasive. Liberia's president Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Africa's first female elected head of state, is pursuing an ambitious reform agenda aimed at reconstructing the war-damaged society. Although the country is in a stabilization phase, local authorities are still weakened by years of war and are unable to provide basic services. According to the EU's 2005 forgotten crisis assessment, Liberia was among the countries, which were forgotten or had uncovered needs. The country's needs are enormous, but despite an increasing interest at the European and international level donors are still few (CSP 2008-2013). EU member states' presence is very limited. The United States government was the largest donor in the country in 2006/2007. However, in 2001 the EU had been the biggest donor of aid to Liberia since the civil war in 1996 and it was the only donor who maintained its presence throughout the war (Consultations with Liberia, 9 November 2001). Interestingly, Liberia is one of the two countries in Africa which are not former European colonies, as the country was colonized by freed American slaves. Thus, the EU member states' limited presence and lack of interest could be associated with the fact that Liberia does not have any roots in the European colonization of Africa. Notwithstanding, the EU is involved in Liberia, which shows that it is not only active in former colonies of its member states.

In 2001 the EU opened consultations with the Liberian authorities in accordance with Articles 96 and 97 of the Cotonou Agreement to discuss issues relating to human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law. The Libyan Government made commitments and took positive steps to meet those. However, the EU emphasized the need for more substantial action. According to the Council Decision concluding the consultations, the EU could gradually extend its cooperation, depending on the progress made (Council Decision 6885/02). Furthermore, Liberia is subject to CFSP restrictive measures, such as an embargo on arms and related material, a ban on the provision of certain services and a restriction of admission (visa or travel bans) (European Union – Restrictive measures (sanctions) in force, 17.04.2012)

Trade flows between the EU and Liberia are very limited. Liberia benefits from the EBA initiative, and being part of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), it is currently negotiating an EPA with the EU.

### **Ivory Coast**

Ivory Coast has been experiencing political turbulence since 1993. An attempted coup in 2002, together with an armed uprising in the north of the country, led to a civil war. After a ceasefire in 2002 the country was split into two, and attempts to reunite the country had little success. This state of armed peace has led to a dramatic decline in social welfare and deterioration in governance. The EU is the biggest donor in the country. Moreover, West Africa is one of the EU's main trade partners and about 80% of exports to the EU are from Ivory Coast, Ghana and Nigeria. Ivory Coast is the world's largest cocoa producer. The EU has signed an interim EPA with the country.

Following presidential and legislative elections in 2000, the EU opened consultations under Article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement, because not all “shades of political opinion” were represented at the polls. Moreover, several acts of violence occurred (Council Opening of consultations, 12 January 2001). Although the Ivorian authorities failed to meet the commitment made during the consultations, the Council decided to resume cooperation gradually. In 2004 the Commission decided to propose opening consultations with Ivory Coast again, due to the deteriorating human rights situation in the country. According to the Commission, human rights were seriously violated, democratic principles were jeopardized and the rule of law was compromised (EU@UN). However, the final decision is to be taken by the Council of Ministers, and consultations were not opened. The Council, Germany and France in particular,

opposed a new round of consultations, as it was argued that a suspension of development cooperation would be counterproductive. France was worried about the violence against its citizens and a threat of suspension was considered to exacerbate the situation (Laakso et al, 2007: 85).

In the 2010 elections, Ivory Coast experienced a severe post-election conflict, because Laurent Gbagbo refused to step down as president after he had lost to Alassane Ouattara. Ivory Coast is one of France's largest expatriate communities in Africa, and about 15000 French nationals are believed to live in the country (Europeanvoice, 06.01.2011). During the crisis, France was rather detached from collective EU action, as it prioritized the Security Council and its own bilateral relations (Barrios, 2011: 3). France's failure to involve the rest of the EU was due to member states' reluctance to intervene for French interests, especially because intervention was depicted as neo-colonial interference in Gbagbo's communication campaign (ibid.). France's 'neo-colonial' action was heavily criticized by the international press (LeMonde.fr, 12.04.2011). Nevertheless, the EU's approach towards the post-electoral crisis in Ivory Coast, characterized by non-action, was mainly shaped by French national interests: "While France's strength precluded EU leadership, EU institutions and member states also accommodated France" (Barrios, 2011: 3). The use of force was a point of disagreement between the member states, especially after Germany's refusal to intervene in Libya (ibid.). This supports the argument that member states only allow the EU to act as long as this does not conflict with core national interests. However, considering the claim that the EU provides a means to re-engage in areas of former colonial influence in Africa, this example shows, on the one hand, that at least some of the EU's member states seem cautious, trying to avoid neo-colonial accusations. On the other hand, France pursued its supposedly neo-colonial policy bilaterally, without any attempt to claim more legitimacy through collective EU action. The intervention in Ivory Coast was seen as a potential vote-winner: "The president of the republic thinks the French experience a certain pride in seeing their country play an important role on the world scene and that this role is recognised outside its borders." (The Guardian, 11 April 2011). Thus, it could be said that EU member states would only allow for commitment to an 'ethical' EU foreign policy, given that they do not have any core national interests in the respective countries or regions.

The EU, in the case of Ivory Coast, has not been able to move beyond its traditional aid management role, as it lacks a more politically-focused and strategic approach (Barrios,

2011). In order to become a civilian power and to effectively deal with conflict and stabilisation, CSDP operations should become a valid option as part of the EU's promoted 'comprehensive approach' (ibid.: 3). Notably, in its traditional area of development cooperation, the EU was restricted by its own legal provisions. During the post-election crisis in Ivory Coast, development cooperation could not be suspended under Article 96 or 97 of the Cotonou Agreement, as this legally requires consultations with the government (Europeanvoice, 06.01.2011). Hence, the EU's opportunity to act as a force for good or normative power through procedural or transference mechanisms of norm diffusion, such as conditionality, is very limited. However, Ivory Coast is subject to CFSP restrictive measures, among others an arms embargo, visa ban and asset freeze (European Union – Restrictive measures (sanctions) in force, 17.04.2012).

### **Country Comparison**

In the following section, the EU's engagement in the selected cases will be compared. It is necessary to bear in mind that there are different dimensions of state fragility and that the countries find themselves in very individual situations requiring different responses. Yet, the focus of this paper is on the EU as a normative power and the aim of this analysis is not to investigate whether all the countries get exactly the same treatment, but rather if the EU's actions are guided by its norms and values or strategic interests. First of all, I will look at the previously developed variables, namely neo-colonial interests, economic interests, and security interests. Looking at these factors could indicate if there are any conditions for EU engagement. The second part of the analysis deals with the measures that are taken by the EU. These measures include development assistance, civilian and military CSDP missions, the use of negative conditionality and sanctions.

#### **Strategic interests as condition for EU engagement?**

Overall, the country comparison does not reveal any strong patterns. The first hypothesis to investigate was whether the EU is more active in former colonies of its member states. Out of the ten selected cases, only Afghanistan and Liberia are not former colonies of EU member states. On the one hand, it is remarkable that eight of the ten most fragile states are former European colonies. On the other hand, it becomes almost impossible to draw any conclusions in relation to the formulated hypothesis, since two cases out of ten are too few. Nevertheless, some remarks can be made.

First of all, for further research the hypothesis should be reformulated. Taking the case of Ivory Coast, the EU is not necessarily more active, but special treatment could also

occur in the form of non-action, for example the reluctance to apply sanctions or suspend development cooperation. Furthermore, during the post-election crisis little EU involvement was seen. Yet, this was not due to a lack of interest in the country, but mostly because of France's dominating bilateral policy. Conversely, this can also be said for Afghanistan. Afghanistan is not a former European colony, but the EU's relatively low profile cannot be traced back to a missing feeling of responsibility. The presence of other main actors and individual member states' efforts undermine and overshadow the EU's involvement in Afghanistan. In Liberia the EU is also modestly involved, even though the country does not have any roots in European colonization. Yet, Liberia is not as big a security challenge for the EU as Afghanistan.

Looking at development aid, the EU is among the largest donors in all of the cases. However, the allocated amounts differ significantly. For the period 2007-2010 an aid budget of EUR 610 million was allocated to Afghanistan, and for the period 2011-2013 an additional allocation of EUR 450 million is expected. Compared to the amount of aid that has been allocated to the African cases for the period 2008-2013, Afghanistan receives almost ten times as much development aid as Liberia and the CAR (see Appendix). Hence, Afghanistan appears to be a priority country, which can be ascribed to political and security aspects.

In terms of CSDP operations the cases are treated differently, but again without any strong pattern. As the cases of Afghanistan and Ivory Coast have shown, the EU has been criticized for its focus on development aid instead of collective political and military action. In the DRC, in contrast, the EU has deployed five different CSDP operations in the course of years. Being a former colony of a European member state is certainly a crucial factor for so much EU engagement. However, CSDP operations in relation to former colonial areas are difficult to assess in ethical terms. On the one hand, the EU with its member states could be said to have a special responsibility to help with problems, especially those linked to the colonial heritage. On the other hand, European military forces may easily give the impression of 'neo-colonial interference' linked with interests of the former colonial powers such as France (Bailes, 2008: 124). For the intervention in Bunia in the DRC France was eager to find a Swedish commander, which was probably an attempt to avoid accusations of neo-colonialism (ibid.). The absence of collective EU action during the crisis in Ivory-Coast, for example, was due to member states' reluctance to intervene for French interests, because intervention was seen as neo-colonial interference. Thus, in relation to CSDP operations it cannot be said

that the EU is more active in former colonies of its member states. Quite the contrary, intervention in former colonies is a very sensitive and difficult issue, which is treated very cautiously and which could also lead to non-action, as in the case of Ivory-Coast.

Secondly, the level of EU engagement was expected to be higher in countries where the EU has strong economic interests. This hypothesis was built on the argument that especially Africa is useful for its markets, natural resources and minerals (Farrell, 2006). In light of the selected cases, this hypothesis almost seems redundant, because eight out of ten countries are located on the African continent and if Africa is generally useful for its markets and resources, it is hard to look for differences in the EU's engagement. Secondly, it appears to be difficult to establish any casual relationships, because colonial heritage, economic and security interests are closely connected. Among the ten selected cases, Somalia is the only resource-poor country which does not have any direct trade with the EU. Nevertheless, the EU has stepped up the engagement for promoting peace and security in Somalia. This is most likely due to Somalia's poor security situation, which directly affects the EU. Iraq and Ivory Coast are the only two countries that are major trade partners of the EU. The EU has a strong interest in Iraq because of its important geopolitical position in the region, its proximity to the EU and its resources. Iraq is a key oil and gas producer. Taken together with the security situation in the country, Iraq is clearly a priority for the EU and the EU has spent around one billion euros to Iraq since 2003. Nevertheless, the EU's role remains marginal and its engagement is dampened by the strong US influence in the country. Thus, the EU's engagement in fragile states does not only depend on its strategic interests, but also on other actors involved. The case of Somalia shows that the absence of natural resources and economic interests does not necessarily mean less EU engagement. It remains unanswered though whether resource-poor countries which do not pose a security threat would experience less EU engagement.

Thirdly, the EU was expected show a higher degree of engagement in states which pose an obvious security threat. Indicators for an obvious security threat are if countries suffer from major armed conflict and/or are hubs for terrorism and organized crime. According to the country matrix, Somalia, Afghanistan and Sudan are the countries which are worst off in terms of security, because they are suffering from major armed conflicts and are hubs for terrorism and organized crime (see Appendix). Additionally, while piracy off the coast of Somalia has been a threat to international security, Afghanistan is a major drug-producing country. In Somalia the EU is committed to

contributing to peace and security. In addition to development and humanitarian aid, as part of its comprehensive approach a European Naval Force (EU NAVFOR-ATLANTA) and a military mission to contribute to the training of Somali security forces (EUTM Somalia) have been launched. Another civilian mission (EUCAP NESTOR) will soon be deployed to support the fight against piracy. In Afghanistan, as mentioned before, the EU has launched a hardly impressive police mission and remains a low-profile actor due to US influence and individual member state' national interests. Hence, the cases of Somalia and Afghanistan demonstrate that security interests can possibly increase the EU's level of engagement, but they do not necessarily have to, as the presence of other actors is an important factor in this regard.

Strikingly, the level of engagement in Sudan is relatively low, especially compared to the five missions in the DRC. As previously noted, the humanitarian crisis in Sudan was too severe for the CSDP in politico-military terms. The EU's halting and modest response shows that the principle of non-intervention seems to be stronger than the emerging norm relating to the 'responsibility to protect' (Björkdahl in Whitman, 2011: 114). It also demonstrates the gap between the EU's rhetoric and practices, and a lack of political will. One reason for inaction could be 'negative choices', implying the "deliberate avoidance of obligations and risks that might overstretch the capacity (or the subjective confidence) of the emergent EU security community" (Bailes, 2008: 121).

The Darfur crisis demonstrates that security challenges do not necessarily lead to more EU engagement. Thus, especially the cases of Afghanistan and Sudan, but also Iraq, prove the hypothesis that the EU is more active in countries which pose an obvious security threat wrong. The cases of Afghanistan and Iraq reveal how the EU's level of engagement depends on the presence of other actors, while Sudan is an example of the lack of political will. Hence the EU's actions are not always dominated by own security interests, as other factors also need to be taken into account, but the examples still suggest that realism trumps over idealism. Yet this will be discussed further in the second part of the analysis.

The first part has shown that there are no clear patterns concerning strategic interests as conditions for EU engagement. By means of the selected cases it could not properly be investigated whether the EU would be engaged in countries where strategic interests are completely absent. Yet it could also be questioned if such countries exist, since state

failure as such already is identified as a key security challenge in the ESS. However, the findings suggest that the EU does not seem to have a strong bias towards the former colonies of its member states. First of all, security aspects appear to be more important than colonial ties. Secondly, the EU is even engaged in states where colonial ties are absent and the security challenge is not as big as in other cases. This does certainly not prove the accusation that the EU is a means for its member states to re-engage in former colonies wrong, but it shows that the EU's declared special responsibility goes beyond the scope of former colonies, which supports its self-image as a force for good in the world. Another finding is that the presence of strategic interests does not necessarily lead to a higher level of EU engagement. Factors such as political will, capacity in terms of institutional and operational constraints, and the involvement of other actors play an important role in relation to the EU's degree of involvement.

### **The EU's toolbox**

The following subpart of the analysis will be devoted to the measures employed by the EU, such as development assistance, civilian and military CSDP missions, the use of negative conditionality and sanctions. The question is how these measures are applied and if they are consistent with the EU's norms and values, and its declaratory commitments.

### ***Development***

As earlier mentioned, the EU together with its member states is the world's biggest aid donor and more than half the money spent on helping poor countries comes from the EU (EU Website Development and Cooperation). According to the European Consensus on Development, “[c]ombating global poverty is not only a moral obligation; it will also help to build a more stable, peaceful, prosperous and equitable world [...] the EU is an important force for positive change” (2005). Combating poverty is a particular challenge for least developed countries and countries in situations of fragility. In almost all of the cases the EU is the largest donor in the respective countries. Yet, the EU's engagement with developing countries has been described as a ‘policy patchwork’ characterized by considerable variations in both focus and intensity (Bretherton and Vogler, 2006: 111).

Different frameworks are used for different regions. Six of the ten cases are signatories of the Cotonou Agreement, the EU's legal framework for relations with African, Caribbean and Pacific States (ACP). Financial assistance to the ACP countries is

provided through the EDF, whereas support to countries in the Gulf region and Asia is provided through a rather new Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) which came into force in 2007. Historically, Asia has been the region most neglected by the EU despite colonial ties to Member States (Bretherton and Vogler, 2006: 129). Since Afghanistan is the only Asian country among the cases, differences between the EU's development policy in African and Asian country cannot be assessed in this study. Nevertheless, Afghanistan is an interesting case, because the EU's commitment to post-war reconstruction in the country has been most significant in terms of EU activity in Asia and, as earlier mentioned, Afghanistan has received a considerable amount of aid from the EU (ibid.: 130). The importance of political and security aspects illustrates "the way in which post-9/11 priorities, [...], intrude upon and potentially override other policy priorities" (Bretherton and Vogler, 2006: 130). The primary objective of the EU's development policy to eradicate poverty seems to be undermined by security concerns.

The distribution of EU aid is not particularly focused on the poorest countries. Country choices are not always coordinated, but more importantly country choices are often very political (Bigsten et al., 2011:130). Many donors show characteristics of herd behaviour in giving aid, which leads to the phenomenon of aid darlings and aid orphans. The EU has made efforts to address the issue of aid orphans, *inter alia* through a 'Forgotten Crisis Assessment methodology' which is aimed at identifying victims of crises that receive only little or no media or donors attention (COM(2007) 643 final: 6). Countries, such as the CAR, Burundi, Liberia and even the DRC are examples of aid orphans which only attract a small number of donors. Yet, the EU is among the largest donors in all of these countries. As Carbone argues, the responsibility towards aid orphans or forgotten states could be considered a "manifestation of the fact that the EU cares about all developing countries, regardless of their colonial past or strategic importance" (in Hill and Smith, 2011: 338). While this commitment clearly strengthens the EU's credibility as a force for good in the world, the allocation of aid is still questionable. Countries such as the CAR, Burundi and Liberia are still relatively neglected compared to the other cases. It is also remarkable that China still receives development aid, although China has become an emerging donor to developing countries. However, in 2011 the Commission has published an 'Agenda for Change', in which it is recognised that the EU's development policy must become more differentiated, because "several partner countries have become donors in their own

right, while others are facing increasing fragility” (COM(2011) 637 final: 3). The Agenda for Change, as proposed by the Commission, would lead to an increased volume of EU aid to countries most in need and where the EU can have a real impact.

As above-mentioned, six of the ten cases are signatories of the Cotonou Agreement. One of the main aspects of the agreement is the strong emphasis on partnership between the EU and the ACP countries, but the relations between those two parties have been described as an asymmetrical relationship characterized by unequal political and economic strength (Farrell, 280). The commitment to democracy, human rights and good governance was not only imposed, but proved more rhetorical than substantive – ‘often resulting in significant policy evaporation on the ground’ (Carbone in Hill and Smith, 2011: 335). This will be discussed further below in relation to conditionality and Article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement. One key element of the Cotonou Agreement is the negotiation of EPAs, which are a result of the Commission’s emphasis on reciprocal trade liberalisation over development. The EPAs have been widely criticized for several reasons. Trade liberalisation has become more important than development and social dimensions. However, trade liberalisation does not address how to link poverty reduction with development promotion and how to deal with conflicts and maintain peace. Those aspects are all obstacles to economic progress and growth (Farrell, 278). Moreover, one of the main aims of the EPAs, namely the promotion of regional integration, failed, because some countries, for example Ivory Coast, decided to turn away from their regional partners and sign interim individual EPAs (Carbone in Hill and Smith, 2011: 335). Thus, the Cotonou Agreement casts doubt on the credibility of the EU as a normative power, because it illustrates how not only values but also neoliberal ideas are imposed on a so-called partner. Furthermore, the aspect of ‘doing good’ is also highly questionable in this context.

EU development cooperation with fragile states clearly reflects a mixed picture. On the one hand, as the commitment to aid orphans has illustrated, the EU seems to care about all developing countries, regardless of their strategic importance. It has even been proposed to focus more on countries in need in the future. This supports the self-image of the EU as a force for good in the world. However, the imposition of values, negotiations characterised by asymmetrical relations, and the failure to promote principles such as regional integration undermine the credibility of this self-image. It also supports the argument that the EU can be seen as a soft imperialist, as normative power seems to be a cover for more cynical designs.

### *CSDP military and civilian operations*

In six out of ten countries, the EU has deployed civilian or military operations. In countries such as Somalia and DRC there has even been more than one operation. Taking into consideration that many observers consider the EU an economic giant but a political and military dwarf, it is a considerable amount of CSDP operations. However, it would go too far to call the EU an emerging military power at the cost of its distinct civilian and normative profile. CSDP operations and resources expended on it remain modest, and diplomatic, aid and other civilian efforts are devoted to far more countries than military operations (Bailes, 2008: 118). The main focus in the EU's response to fragile states is still on development cooperation, as the cases have shown. Moreover, out of the twelve CSDP operations that have been deployed in six of the cases, seven missions are of civilian nature, for example police operations (EUPOL Afghanistan and Congo), rule of law mission (EUJUST-LEX Iraq), and advisory and assistance missions for security reform (EUSEC RD Congo). EU operations are rarely, if ever, purely military. The strength of EU peace support operations is its ability to combine military operations with its traditional economic and diplomatic capabilities (Björkdahl in Whitman, 2011: 113). Hence, the EU is not becoming over-'militarized' and there is "certainly no risk of losing its generally peaceful and non-threatening image" (Bailes, 2008: 118).

It could be argued that both *Artemis* and EUFOR RD Congo were guided by core values of the EU, such as peace, peaceful conflict resolution and democracy, and could therefore be seen as examples of military mission supporting the normative agenda. Yet, the Darfur crisis in Sudan has challenged the credibility of the EU as a normative power, because the EU has neither been allowed, willing nor ready to make use of its military instruments in order to defend humanitarian values and human rights (Björkdahl in Whitman, 2011: 114). In contrast to the crisis in Sudan, there was sufficient political will to deploy the *Artemis* mission in Congo, even though it has been argued that bringing the mission under the EU banner was not necessarily advantageous from a military point of view. The mission in the DRC was closely connected to the controversy about the intervention in Iraq and seen as an attempt to overcome the internal crisis following the disagreements over Iraq (Howorth, 2007: 233). Gégout has even argued that *Artemis* did merely stem from a "will to promote the EU's own image" rather than from a reaction to a crisis situation in Africa (in Howorth, 2007: 235). Both *Artemis* and the example of Sudan demonstrate that ethical concerns appear

to be 'second-order concerns', pointing towards the strategic pursuit of preferences as emphasized by realism. However, it is also important to keep in mind that despite the EU's self-image as a force for good and its special commitment to situations of fragility, as Bailes rightly puts it, "neither resources nor political will allow every ethically plausible need for intervention to be met" (Bailes, 2008: 116).

To sum up, as part of the EU's toolbox military and civilian CSDP mission have been deployed in six different countries. Yet military missions per se do not necessarily undermine the EU's normative power, as military means are reconcilable with normative power if they are deployed to defend the EU's core values. It can be concluded that the EU is far from being an emerging military power. However, this does not mean that it necessarily always acts in a normative way. The absence of any collective EU action in some of the cases and accusations of image promotion undermine the EU's credibility, as ethical concerns are not always a top priority. Normative characteristics are to be found in CSDP missions that distinguish the EU from other actors, but they are limited, not at least due to a lack of resources, political will and a coherent strategy to make use of its toolbox.

#### *Sanctions and Negative Conditionality*

Sanctions in force against Ivory Coast, the DRC, Iraq, Liberia and Somalia have been adopted following resolutions by the UN Security Council (UNSC), which the EU's member states are obliged to implement (Brummer, 2009: 197). The UNSC's sanctions are always driven by security concern, as the UNSC cannot impose sanctions in relation to democratic wrongdoing (ibid.). However, there is still room for the EU to react to violations of its norms and values, such as democracy, human rights and the rule of law, by supplementing sanctions with additional measures. Additional measures were, for example, imposed on the DRC and Sudan. Zimbabwe, by contrast, is subject to autonomous EU sanctions. Sanctions on Zimbabwe were imposed on grounds of serious violations of human rights by the Government of Zimbabwe (Council Regulation (EC) No 314/2004). However, looking at Ivory Coast before the 2010 elections, despite its considerable deficiencies, the EU did not impose any autonomous sanctions. In Burundi, the EU does not have any sanctions in force, despite a concern over multiple human rights violations. Thus, sanctions are not imposed consistently. There seem to be some cases where the EU imposes autonomous sanctions motivated by violations of its norms and values, while in Burundi there are no sanctions in force at all in spite of human rights violations. In Ivory Coast UNSC's security-oriented

sanctions were not supplemented by autonomous sanctions directed at the human rights situation. Hence, concerning the use of sanctions, the EU does not respond to all violations of its norms and values consistently. Norms and values appear to be of secondary importance for the EU's sanctions policy (Brummer, 2009: 202). As Brummer states, the EU "is not even close to sanctioning all countries that are in serious violation of the CFSP's objectives" (ibid.).

A similar observation can be made in relation to Article 96 and 97 of the Cotonou Agreement. First of all, it is important to note that the use of negative conditionality relies on legal agreements between the EU and third parties. With the countries outside Africa that are not part of the Cotonou Agreement the EU does not yet have legal agreements in place. The signing of a PCA with Iraq has recently been authorised by the Council, and Afghanistan is currently negotiating a PCA with the EU. It remains to be seen if and how the EU will apply conditionality to those countries in the future. Not all of the selected cases are part of the Cotonou Agreement, but among the countries that have signed the Agreement inconsistencies concerning the opening of consultations can be seen. In 2004, for example, the Council rejected the Commission's proposal to open consultations with the Ivorian Government. In Burundi consultations have never been opened despite expressed concern over multiple human rights violations. However, the EU has a tougher approach towards Zimbabwe, as development cooperation has been suspended since 2001. Consequently, when it comes to the use of sanctions or negative conditionality, the EU's action is not always guided by its norms and values. One possible explanation for the inconsistent application of sanctions could be that member states try to avoid detrimental effects on their own national interests – be it political, security and/or economic (Brummer, 2009: 204). Moreover, Member states have diverging views concerning the nature of sanctions as such and its viability as a foreign policy instrument. While the United Kingdom and the Scandinavian countries consider sanctions as viable foreign policy tools, countries from the Mediterranean question their viability (ibid: 205). The complex nature of the EU's foreign policy with different institutions and actors involved, and especially decision-making in the Council by unanimity, is certainly one crucial factor.

To sum up, sanctions and conditionality are instruments that potentially enable the EU to promote and defend its norms and values. As the individual cases have demonstrated, governments showed at least some commitment during consultations under Article 96.

However, both negative conditionality and the use of sanctions are applied inconsistently, and norms and values seem to be second-order concerns.

In short, this part of the analysis has pointed out that there are elements of normative power to be found in the EU's foreign policy instruments. However, promoting or defending its norms and values is not always a top priority for the EU. Inconsistencies and incoherence in combination with tendencies of soft imperialism cast doubt on whether the EU's self-image as a force for good is justified, but also whether its allegedly distinct profile as a normative and civilian power in world politics is empirically accurate.

## **Conclusion**

The main objective of this comparative case study was to analyse through the theoretical lenses of normative power how the EU responds to fragile situations in order to be able to say something about the EU's role in world politics. The first part of the analysis was concerned with the question whether EU engagement is conditioned or increased by strategic interests. There are no clear patterns concerning strategic interests as conditions for EU engagement. The EU does not appear to have a strong bias towards the former colonies of its member states, and security considerations seem to be more crucial than colonial or economic interests. This does, however, not necessarily mean that the EU is not a means for its member states to re-engage in former colonies, but the emphasis on effective multilateralism and examples such as Ivory Coast weaken this argument. In the second part of the analysis the different instruments that the EU has at its disposal were looked at. Looking at development cooperation, CSDP missions and the use of sanctions and negative conditionality, it has become clear that the EU does not always act in a way consistent with its norms and values, but that normative characteristics are to be found nonetheless.

The EU has increasingly become a security actor, but with a civilian profile and a normative agenda. As shown in the analysis, the EU's engagement in fragile situations does not only involve a mix of different instruments, but it also reflects a mix of strategic interests and normative characteristics. 'Strategic interests versus normative power' is a false dichotomy. First of all, they are not mutually exclusive. Even though the EU's involvement in some fragile states is influenced by strategic interests does not necessarily mean that the EU cannot be a normative power. Moreover, the EU can act in defence of its norms and values, and pursue strategic interests at the same time, as

the example of CSDP mission shows. Arguing along the lines of Youngs, security concerns and normative values inform each other. Secondly, if and how the EU acts is also often determined by other factors, such as capacity in terms of institutional and operational constraints, and the presence of other actors. These factors clearly restrain the EU's external actions – be it the pursuit of strategic interests or of a normative agenda. Nevertheless, the analysis of the EU's instruments, such as development cooperation, CSDP missions and the use of sanctions and negative conditionality, has revealed that the EU's actions or non-actions characterised by inconsistency often undermine the credibility of its self-image as a force for good in the world, and point towards the argument that realism trumps over idealism.

The EU's approach towards the ten selected cases did not reveal any clear patterns, but rather gave the impression that EU actions often occur on an *ad hoc* basis. The credibility of the EU as a normative power depends on consistency and coherence, but in the absence of a clear strategy towards fragile situations, consistency and coherence become quite difficult to achieve. This study has demonstrated that the EU does not always act in a way consistent with its norms and values and rhetorical commitments. However, as discussed earlier in this paper, inconsistencies seem to be a characteristic feature of collective identities per se. Furthermore, self-representations always contain a 'good deal of utopia', as they would not be attractive to others otherwise. Therefore, normative power can best be described as an ideal-type of power. Arguing along the lines of Forsberg, the EU approximates this ideal-type more closely than other great powers, because many characteristics of a normative power can be found in its response to fragile situations. Thus, normative power is certainly one part of the EU's external identity, but it is just one piece of the puzzle. Manners' claim that the EU has been, is and always will be a normative power in world politics goes too far.

The EU's normative power is severely challenged by the Euro crisis. While the normative power Europe argument is built on the ability to extend its own model of ensuring stability and security and on the EU's power of attraction, the Euro crisis considerably weakens the image of the EU as a well-functioning model. The current situation hardly reflects the image of a successful model that can be appealing to others. Thus, the Euro crisis undermines the EU's credibility of advancing its own principles in the wider world. What is more, foreign policy is costly. In times of crisis and heavy budgetary constraints, there is a risk that member states would be inclined to spend more money at home rather than abroad. They may not be willing to provide sufficient

resources for CSDP mission, given that some of them already now are under-resourced in terms of staff and equipment. As taken up a few times in this paper, the EU makes a name for itself as the world's biggest donor. Generally, the EU's diffusion of norms through conditionality heavily relies on financial aid.

The Commission's Agenda for Change reflects the awareness of these problems, at least in relation to development aid. At the latest Foreign Affairs Council meeting, the Council adopted conclusions on the future of EU development policy. The Council has, in line with the Agenda for Change, reiterated the need for a more differentiated approach to development with a strong emphasis on the EU's norms and values: "Support to partners will be adapted to their development situation and commitment and progress with regard to human rights, democracy, the rule of law and good governance" (Council Conclusions, 14 May 2012). The Council has also stressed that the EU will remain engaged in fragile states and that this engagement requires the development of a comprehensive strategy. Thus, it remains to be seen whether the EU will be able to keep up its distinct profile in world politics as a power which mostly approximates the ideal-type of normative power.

## **Executive Summary**

Since 9/11 a lot of attention has been paid to weak, fragile or failing states, and state failure has also become an issue for the EU, being a key security challenge as identified in the 2003 European Security Strategy. EU elites often refer to the EU as a ‘force for good in the world’, and in addition, the EU has declared a special responsibility to fragile states. Taking statements such as ‘special responsibility’ and ‘force for good’ and the claim that “the EU has been, is and always will be a normative power in world politics” (2008: 45) as a starting point, the aim of this paper is to analyse the EU’s approach towards fragile states. From a normative power perspective this thesis aims to scrutinise how the EU responds to fragile situations. This thesis is a comparative study of ten fragile states: Somalia, Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq, Burundi, Sudan, Central African Republic, Zimbabwe, Liberia and Ivory Coast. These countries are the weakest states according to the Index of State Weakness in the Developing World (Patrick, 2011). The main argument throughout this paper is that there are both elements of normative power and realism in the EU’s response to fragile situations. The bottom line is that the EU in relation to fragile states is an actor with normative ambitions, but that normative power remains an ideal type.

While there already has been done extensive research on the EU as a normative power in other contexts, for example in relation to the European Neighbourhood Policy, there is no previous research concerning the EU’s normative power and its approach towards fragile states. Yet, the EU’s response to fragile situations is particularly interesting and challenging, because it brings together different policy areas and is based on a mixture of development, diplomatic, civilian and military instruments. The EU has increasingly become a security actor and has deployed peace support operations in fragile states. The link between development, humanitarian, military and security aspects is especially important and raises the question as to whether the EU’s normative power is reconcilable at all with increasing military capabilities. Moreover, as the theoretical framework of this paper shows, the EU is often accused of being a means for its member states to re-engage in former colonies. Interestingly, a great number of fragile states are former colonies of EU member states. Hence, the main objective of this paper is to analyse whether declaratory claims of being a force for good and having special responsibilities are a cover for more strategic interests.

The theoretical framework of this thesis is composed of the normative power Europe debate, initially started by Ian Manners in 2002, and critical reactions to it. Normative power Europe is based on the notion that the EU is able "to shape conceptions of the 'normal' in international relations" (Manners, 2002: 239). The EU's core norms are peace, liberty, democracy, human rights and the rule of law. The normative power debate has evoked a lot of criticism and concerns.

One strand of criticism stems from realist perspectives, arguing that strategic interests, especially those of individual member states, are more important than the EU's normative concerns. Another main point of criticism is concerned with inconsistencies between the EU's rhetoric and behaviour, and a lack of self-reflexivity. However, the lack of reflexivity and consistency does not necessarily undermine the EU's normative power, as inconsistencies seem to be a characteristic feature of collective identities *per se*. Self-representations always contain a 'good deal of utopia', as they would not be attractive to others otherwise (Scheipers and Sicurelli, 2007: 438). Moreover, a combination of constructivist and rationalist explanations gives a more accurate picture of the EU's external actions, because security concerns and normative values inform each other (Youngs, 2004a). Arguing along the lines of Forsberg, normative power is considered an ideal-type of power, an idealized description of concrete features of things for purposes of comparison of otherwise fuzzy phenomena, rather than an empirically accurate description of what the EU is (2011). A third group of criticism involves accusations of neo-colonialism and imperialism. Yet, the EU's strong emphasis on multilateralism mitigates images of self-interested interventions, neo-colonial agendas and European imperialism.

An important insight for the analysis of the EU's response to fragile situations is, as discussed in the theoretical framework, that normative power can be coupled with military means. Military means traditionally utilized to project military power could be used for humanitarian purposes to support a normative agenda, legitimised through an emphasis on a comprehensive approach together with effective multilateralism (Björkdahl in Whitman, 2011).

The analysis consists of two parts. Building on the normative versus realist power Europe debate, the first part of the analysis is guided by three hypotheses. The EU is expected to be more active in (i) former colonies of its member states; (ii) in countries where it has economic/trade interests; (iii) and in countries posing an obvious security

threat by which the EU is affected. Strategic interests do not per se exclude the possibility of acting in a normative way, but a strong bias towards any of the three factors would undermine the image of the EU as a force for good in the world, and support the argument that normative power is a cover for more covert strategic interests. The second part of the analysis deals with the measures that are taken by the EU, including development/humanitarian assistance, civilian and military ESDP missions, negative conditionality and sanctions.

In the first part it is shown that there are no clear patterns concerning strategic interests as conditions for EU engagement. The EU does not seem to have a strong bias towards the former colonies of its member states. Security aspects appear to be more important than colonial ties. Furthermore, the EU is even engaged in states where colonial ties are absent and the security challenge is not as big as in other cases. This does not prove the accusation that the EU is a means for its member states to re-engage in former colonies wrong, but it shows that the EU's declared special responsibility goes beyond the scope of former colonies, which supports its self-image as a force for good in the world. Another finding is that the presence of strategic interests does not necessarily lead to a higher level of EU engagement. Factors such as political will, capacity in terms of institutional and operational constraints, and the involvement of other actors play an important role in relation to the EU's degree of involvement and its ability to exert influence.

The second part of the analysis has pointed out that there are elements of normative power to be found in the EU's foreign policy instruments. However, promoting or defending its norms and values is not always a top priority for the EU. Inconsistencies and incoherence in combination with tendencies of soft imperialism cast doubt on whether the EU's self-image as a force for good is justified, but also whether its allegedly distinct profile as a normative and civilian power in world politics is empirically accurate.

It is concluded that the EU has increasingly become a security actor, but with a civilian profile and a normative agenda. The EU's engagement in fragile situations reflects a mix of strategic interests and normative characteristics. If and how the EU acts is often determined by other factors, such as capacity in terms of institutional and operational constraints, and the presence of other actors. These factors clearly restrain the EU's external actions, regardless of its normative agenda or strategic interests.

The EU's approach towards the ten selected cases did not reveal any clear patterns, but rather gave the impression that EU actions often occur on an *ad hoc* basis. The credibility of the EU as a normative power depends on consistency and coherence, but in the absence of a clear strategy towards fragile situations, consistency and coherence become quite difficult to achieve. Yet, as previously mentioned, self-representations always contain a 'good deal of utopia', as they would not be attractive to others otherwise. Therefore, one of the main conclusions of this thesis is that normative power can best be described as an ideal-type of power. The EU approximates this ideal-type more closely than other great powers, because many characteristics of a normative power can be found in its response towards fragile situations. Thus, normative power is certainly one part of the EU's external identity, but it is just one piece of the puzzle.

Finally, it is reflected upon the EU as a normative power in light of the Euro crisis. The crisis is a challenge for the EU's normative power, as it considerably weakens the image of the EU as a well-functioning model. Foreign policy is very costly, and in times of crisis and heavy budgetary constraints, there is a risk that member states would be inclined to spend more money at home rather than abroad. Moreover, the EU makes a name for itself as the world's biggest donor, and important instruments for norm diffusion are connected to financial aid. Thus, it remains to be seen whether the EU will be able to keep up its distinct profile in world politics as a power which mostly approximates the ideal-type of normative power.

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## Appendix

Countries	Economic interest			Security threat			Development	CSDP missions		Sanctions/ conditionality	
	Former colony of an EU MS	Resource-rich country	Trade	Terrorism	Major Armed Conflict	Hub for organized crime	Legal Framework	Aid	Military		Civilian
<b>Somalia</b>	x	No	no direct trade	terroism and piracy	Yes	drug transit, illegal immigration		€215.8 million	EUTM Somalia, EU NAVFOR	EUCAP NESTOR	sanctions in force
<b>Afghanistan</b>		Yes	EBA but limited trade volume	Yes	Yes	Drug-producing country, money laundering, illegal immigration	Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (negotiations)	€610 million (+450million)		EUPOL	sanctions in force
<b>Congo</b>	x	Yes	limited trade volume, EBA	potential center of terrorist financing, piracy		drug transit, arms trafficking	Cotonou	€561.7 million	ARTEMIS, EUFOR RD	EUPOL KINSHASA, EUSEC RD, EUPOL RD CONGO	sanctions in force
<b>Iraq</b>	x	Yes	major trading partner, PCA negotiations	Yes		drug transit, illegal immigration	Partnership and Cooperation Agreement	65.8 million (2009-2010)		EUJUST-LEX	sanctions in force
<b>Burundi</b>	x	Yes	limited trade volume	potential center of terrorist financing		drug transit, illicit arms	Cotonou	€212.1 million			
<b>Sudan</b>	x	Yes	EBA but limited trade volume	Yes	Yes	drug transit, arms trafficking, migrants		(€300 million)	AMIS	AMIS	sanctions in force

## Appendix

<b>Central African Republic</b>	x	Yes	limited trade volume	No			Cotonou	€142.8 million	EUFOR TCHAD/RCA		Cotonou Art 96 in 2003
<b>Zimbabwe</b>	x	Yes	limited trade volume, interim EPA signed	No		drug trafficking, diamond and gold smuggling	Cotonou	N/A			Cotonou Art 96, sanctions in force
<b>Liberia</b>		Yes	small-trade flows	potential center of terrorist financing		arms trafficking, diamonds	Cotonou	€161.8 million			Cotonou Art 96 in 2001, sanctions in force
<b>Ivory Coast</b>	x	Yes	main trade partner, interim EPA signed	potential center of terrorist financing		illicit arms transfers	Cotonou	€254.7 million			Cotonou Art 96 in 2001, sanctions in force