The Narrative of a Normative Empire. Secular Europe in the Southern Mediterranean Region
Mariano Barbato, Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca/Universität Passau, ECPR, Reykjavik 2011

Draft, please do not quote without permission

Abstract
Without being a state, but having to act like one especially towards its borderlands, there arises a new attractiveness of liberal imperialism in the EU (Robert Cooper). Ian Manners' "Normative Power Europe" which develops the narrative of a civilian power has an ambivalent record in this respect (Thomas Diez). Barroso’s “non-imperial empire” seems to be the highly problematic combination of both. In contrast Jan Zielonka's medieval empire avoids issues of domination and concentrates on understanding the new formation of overlapping spheres. Based on the work of Federica Bicchi this paper discusses these approaches of liberal imperialism in relation to the Mediterranean South and identifies a secular underpinning as one of the main problems of liberal imperialism. The Muslim-Christian tension, which is constitutive for a convincing narrative in this region, is generally avoided on the surface but brought back in as a "secular crusade", highlighted in the support of the secular regimes under pressure by popular protest to avoid an "Islamic" counterpart. As an alternative this paper argues from a post-secular perspective (Jürgen Habermas) for addressing issues of religion directly and for using religious semantics to constitute a common meaning. For example, the idea of pilgrimage which is common to Christians, Muslims and Seculars alike can help to constitute a narrative of an enlarging and deepening European Union with open borders.

Spring revolutions and winter philosophy. The ambivalence of Europe's Normative Power in the Mediterranean South
In March 2011, when the unexpected early Arab spring had already blossomed in Tunisia and fought hard for a politics of becoming against powers of stability – winter philosophy to use Nietzsche’s term – a well-thought out article was published asking if the Mediterranean policy is “Third Time Lucky.” After the Euro-Med-Partnership in 1995 and the Neighborhood Policy in 2003, the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) in 2008 was the EU's third trial to resonate with the Mediterranean. The UfM was considered a potential success based on the prospect of an energy co-operation. Another

article in the same issue of the journal gave a rather negative answer to the question if this was “A New Beginning?”.

Given that Oliver Schlumberger’s assessment of the UfM as a “triple victory for Arab authoritarian regimes, [...] may also be read as a convergence of interests by European and Arab political elites around the political status quo”, stopping the elitist project suddenly might be a double victory for the grass roots revolutions of the Arab people, most visible when its Vice-president the Egyptian foreign minister stepped back from this post. Actually, the UfM was not quite a novelty as Federica Bicchi pointed out, measuring it against the long rather random power projection of the EU towards its South. However, the striking question of this failure points deeper than to the institutional shortcomings of the UfM. Why is the EU not able to offer the Mediterranean neighbors a convincing narrative? Schlumberger phrases the call for action that is implied in this question very nicely: “If Europe, then, is the ‘normative power’ Manners (2002) and his followers tend to see in the EU, or the ‘norm entrepreneur’ that Pace (2007) searches for in Europe’s foreign policies, we should expect the Arab world to be the prime addressee of European efforts at exporting its core political norms and values (such as respect for human rights, the rule of law, or pluralistic, inclusive, transparent and accountable modes of political decision making), whether for utilitarian or idealistic reasons.”

However, this is not the case. “As Kausch and Youngs (2009: 967) argue: ‘the EU has moved further and further away from seeking a “ring of well-governed states” on its southern edge towards seeking a “ring of firmly governed states”’.”

Actually, in my view the answer to this question is rather simple: I argue that the EU wants a secular democracy and if the EU has to decide if it favors democracy or secularism its preference is currently with secularism. This has of course to do with liberal concerns of human rights under Islamic rule but, as the Arab revolutions in the secular Egyptian ally of the West showed publicly, torture, intolerance etc. are also endemic in secular regimes. In addition, the West has no problem to put trust into the most fundamentalist regime, the Wahhabi of Saudi-Arabia, because they have a record as status quo powers, not as revolutionary powers. Thus, one could suppose that the problem is neither fundamentalism nor human rights but that the focus is solely on interests and stability. However, this realist picture is flawed and oversimplified. There is indeed a strong normative agenda of

4 The triple victory includes three points: a move from Arab society to Arab government, giving the governments an institutional veto position, and preferring policy areas the government likes.
7 Bicchi, Federica, European Foreign Policy Making Toward the Mediterranean (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2007).
8 Schlumberger, 2011, p. 137.
9 Schlumberger, 2011, p. 148
10 On status quo and revolutionary powers see Henry Kissinger, A World Restored (London: Gollancz, 1974).
democracy in the EU which, however, clearly favors a very secular version of European democracy. This approach is reflected nicely in Ian Manner’s approach of a normative power Europe. Among others, Thomas Diez and Federica Bicchi criticized Manners’ approach to the EU as there would be a danger of becoming a rather unreflexive exporteur of norms derived from navel gazing. Applied to the Mediterranean policy of the EU, Emanuel Adler and Beverly Crawford argued already that the Barcelona Process has meant so far to the South “at best, Euros, at worst a neocolonial plot.” Or as Bicchi has put it: ‘our size fits all’: “In the Mediterranean case, an ‘our size fits all’ argument explains norm promotion not by the expected benefits in terms of economics and/or security for the EU, nor by the intrinsic value of regionalism as a universal norm but by the EU’s specific and internal experience as a regional organization, parlayed as a required form of behaviour for external actors.” As Bicchi argues elsewhere, our size comes with a secular fashion or as she aptly formulated for EU democracy promotion: “Want Funding? Don’t Mention Islam.” Bicchi shows that for the EU promotion of democracy in Muslim countries secularism is a precondition for support.

“The evidence [...] highlights that the EU in fact prefers not to engage with Islamic organisations, regardless of how moderate or how central they are to the social and political scene of Mediterranean Arab countries. Governments remain a key partner in EU democracy promotion, and when action explicitly targets civil society, Islam-leaning organisations still remain outside the EU remit.” Based primarily on empirical research in Morocco, this assessment does not have the whole picture, for instance the Anna Lindt Foundation which we will see later, engages at least with religious representatives, however, the tendency is undisputed. As the opposition in the Muslim countries was mainly one with an Islamic outlook, this had a major impact. Actually, a strategy of democracy promotion based on such premises is a kind of mock exercise as it means that the EU wants democracy for the Arab people but not with them. The West wages a war in Afghanistan and parts of it did it in Iraq arguably to bring democracy to a Muslim country. However, as soon as

---

Muslim people make a revolution Westerners get cold feet. Different to the revolutions of 1989, the spring revolutions of 2011 were not welcomed full-heartedly. To add insult to injury, the Europeans got only really fuzzy when some immigrants landed at the tiny island of Lampedusa because they were no longer kept at bay by the autocratic, now overthrown, regime or keeping up with their own problems. Thus, it is fair to say that democratization happened without and against the European partner. To get a balanced picture and for the retrieval of the West’s honor one has to add that in those countries allied closely to the West and with a ruling elite integrated in some socialization processes of Western norms as in Tunisia and Egypt, the ruling powers were prepared to give way. This stands in sharp contrast to the tyrannies of Libya and Syria which are prepared to defend their power with all means against their people. The French minister for foreign affairs offered initially some help to crackdown the uprising in Tunisia and as the crackdown in Bahrain happened the British were fast to defend it, including their European personnel. Whereas Britain and France put their money where their mouth is at least in the case of Libya, the German government voted in the first time in history together with China and Russia against the US, France, and Britain. While this showed that the German government does not really care about what is going on in the Mediterranean, it made en passant even more clear that after reshaping the Sarkozy Mediterranean Union into the Union for the Mediterranean\(^{19}\) Germany is willing to block everything France will come up right from the start. The breakdown of a common European policy was thus inevitable. This paper started under this impression of European reaction to the Arab Spring. The most striking thing to me was that the revolutionists were of course mainly Muslim, in Egypt a portion of Christians as well. Friday prayers had a similar functions for the revolutions as Monday Prayer’s in the East Germany in 1989. However, similar to German protesters starting from the churches in Leipzig, the protesters of Cairo from the Mosques were demanding civil rights not the Sharia. Their revolution was more liberal than fundamentalist. Even when the Muslim Brothers woke up to participate it still looked more like 1989 Central Europe than 1979 Iran. The future is open, but a Turkish development seems to be more likely than an Iranian, given the crackdown of the Green Revolution there and the re-election of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan here. However, this need unfortunately not to be good news for every European. The Turkish democratization with Islamic roots already started to call the enlargement promises of the Europeans a bluff. A larger proportion of European voters and politicians are not happy with a democratic but still Muslim Turkey demanding to become part of Europe. However, it is less the Christian Club Argument which secular Europeans can rebook immediately but rather the self-construction via othering which Diez criticized in respect to

\(^{19}\) Schumacher, Tobias (2011) 'Germany and Central and Eastern European Countries: Laggards or Veto-Players?', Mediterranean Politics, 16: 1, 79 — 98
Europeans do not need to be Christian to define their selfs in opposition to being Muslim. Huntington’s prophecy starts to become reality, however, the other way round. While the Muslim world gets democratic, Europe shows tendencies of getting xenophobic. Edward Said’s pathbreaking Orientalism of 1978 has not lost its relevance. However, the relevance is less on unmasking the socially constructed and biased nature of this narrative but to engage with it. Thus the questions of this paper are why the Europeans reacted so half-heartedly and what can be done to change it. The answer to the first question will be that there is a deep resentment of Europe towards its Muslim neighbors which combines the legacy of European colonialism but also the Ottoman siege of Europe. Kalypso Nicolaidis and Dimitri Nicolaidis argue that the mythical area of a Mare Nostrum dating back to Phoenician or Arab trade shape the living memories less than “the recent past of Ottoman and colonial eras.” One has to add the emphasis that the Ottoman past does not only shape the memories of Arabs but also of Europeans. In addition, if Europeans dream of a mythical past of the Mediterranean as Mare Nostrum they remember – even if they do not understand Latin – rather of Rome and maybe Athens and Jerusalem but not of Arabic trade. They also have the tendency to forget that their mythical Europa was a princess from the Levant. These opposing and sometimes contradictory memories and legacies have to be addressed directly. Failure to do so is a crucial problem of secular versions of normative power Europe. Without a change in this respect, the problems of Orientalism will repeat themselves again and again, like Groundhog Day in the Billy Murray movie, to quote the secular version of Charles Dickens’s story. The normative power Europe narrative will be discussed with the narrative of a non-imperial empire. After these sections an alternative narrative will be offered using Jürgen Habermas idea of a postsecular society as the theoretical foundation which argues for an engagement with religious semantics to foster democratic politics. Based on this, the religious concept of pilgrimage will be introduced to formulate narratives which put their emphasis on an “emergence of a sense of ‘we-ness’” around the Mediterranean. It is this positive outlook of what needs to be done that should have set the tone of my paper. However, as things got worse in the meantime, one preliminary section had to be added that deals with the terrorist attacks of Oslo and Utøya.

**European terrorism as crusade**

While finalizing the paper for the presentation at the ECPR-conference in Reykjavik, Anders Behring Breivik killed on July 22 2011 eight people with a car bomb in the government quarter of Oslo and

---

20 Diez, Thomas 2005.
23 Ibid. 348
shot dead 69 people at the Utøya Youth Camp of the Social Democrats. This terror act finally terminates the 9/11 decade. It was not as expected and what turned out to be the barbaric act of a self-declared defender of Europe against Muslim immigration was initially even distributed via the press media as a revenge of Al Qaeda for the execution of Osama Bin Laden of the 2nd May. The similarity to Islamistic violence was given insofar as there was also a tendency to kill the internal enemies first to deal with the external enemy later. Although Breivik was a single perpetrator, the well established xenophobic discourse of Muslim immigration to Europe was used by him to justify his terror. As plagiarism hunters discovered very soon, his 1500 page so-called manifesto was nothing more than a cut and paste patch work from the internet where xenophobic debates are widely spread. The striking thing for public discourse was his usage of Christian semantics to frame and illustrate his thoughts. The Templar crusaders and the Ottoman siege of Vienna in 1683 which provided the figure of 2083 were most prominent. While this discourse on Crusade and Vienna is also endemic, the label which the Norwegian police pinned on him by calling him a Christian fundamentalist misses the point. Fundamentalist and xenophobic can be combined, however, they are not the same. To understand Breivik's narrative as Christian fundamentalism overstretches the term of religious fundamentalism to an extent that it becomes meaningless. The term ‘fundamentalism’ started its career during the 19th century when it referred to American Protestants who took the Bible literally. Meanwhile, fundamentalism has been linked to any form of strong religious belief and associated with Islamic terrorism. Thus, it is understandable that any religious reference is linked to this concept but this extension was already a very problematic exercise, or to put it in Peter L. Berger’s words: ‘fundamentalism’ “when all is said and done, usually refers to any sort of passionate religious movement.” The author of the so criticized fundamentalism project added the term “strong religion” to fundamentalism. To keep any meaning for the concept of strong religion or religious fundamentalism the idea of a strong religious awakening must be kept in place. There must be a notion of piety or at least a claim to something other-worldly. A maniac should hear at least some other-worldly voices, for instance, or be challenged at least by the devil as was the murderer of John Lennon. This stretches the term already too much but would still be more precise than calling someone a religious fundamentalist who makes no reference to God but only borrows parts of the cultural heritage of a religion to construct a political narrative. This is closer to

24 See for instance Muslim Demographics, a pseudo-scientific video clip on youtube about fertility rates and Muslim immigration which had in August 9, 2011 13.058.987 viewers. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6-3XShFXYU


secular ideologies which can be debated as political religions but hardly as religious fundamentalism. In fact, the widespread discourse Breivik used is doing something very well-known in the history of political ideas. Carl Schmitt for instance was very much interested in the political form of the Catholic Church. The self-declared agnostic Charles Maurras and the Action française which relied heavily on Catholic semantics for their monarchist and proto-fascist ideas were excommunicated in 1926 for not being Catholic by the rather conservative – measured by liberal standards of our time almost fundamentalist – Pope Pious XI. Thus, it should not be termed Christian fundamentalism but Christian formalism. A second point clarify this: Breivik calls himself not only Christian but also a freemason, thus directly addressing secular Enlightenment legacies. His facebook self-description added ‘hunter’ and ‘video game player’ to the image and turned him almost into a caricature. In addition, he is pro-gay, pro-Israel and pro-abortion in case of handicapped children. This sounds hardly like the description of a fundamentalist Christian but comes pretty close to the Dutch populist Pim Fortuyn who was assassinated by a violent animal rights activist who did not like Fortuyn’s position on animals. To put it in a nutshell, not only the sacred is ambivalent, as Scott Appleby has pointed out, but each political project, even animal rights. All forms of Weltanschauungen, be they Christian fundamentalist, Christian culturalist, freemasons, or, not to forget the former usual subjects, Islamic fundamentalists, have to be judged by their concrete narratives and choices of means to bring them about. It was William Connolly who suggested a new narrative of deep pluralism beyond secularism to form political communities which enable more people to contribute with their loyalty and wisdom to the public sphere. Jürgen Habermas proposed to translate Christian semantics for non-believers to create together a post-secular society of religious and secular believers in which mutual learning processes can take place. Formally, the discourse Breivik refers to is doing very much the same, however with a different aim. What Habermas did with progressive semantics of Christianity this discourse does with semantics in order to fuel his backward narrative. However, it makes no sense to call for a stop of the Habermasian project as it makes no sense to blame Christians or freemasons. The interesting thing however is to take on the fight about the use of semantics, religious, cultural or whatever, to form a reliable European narrative strong enough to shift the xenophobic usage of Eurabia to a positive Utopia around the Mediterranean. However, the political discourse has to come up with something more innovative than the plea of the German Interior Minister for an end of anonymity in the internet. Maybe he should talk more to his Arab colleagues to understand at least the technical limits of this

27 Hans Maier, Politische Religionen: die totalitären Regime und das Christentum (Freiburg: Herder, 1995).
approach. The rather unsatisfying reaction to one of the most disturbing terrorist acts in Europe does not only show the whole war on terror problematique once again but can also be read as the spread of angst across Europe. The European identity construction in the making fell back to its classical oriental other already soon after the Cold War ended. Huntington was its first notorious prophet. The Ottoman threat and the colonial adventures were still very much alive. However, the European identity formation came under heavy pressure more from within than from outside. Nevertheless, these discourses are used to create a European Self based on self-doubts, calling back the times of Ottoman pressure on Europe.

Aleida Assman’s conceptual separation of function memories (Funktionsgedächtnis) and storage memories (Speichergedächtnis)\(^{31}\) is an illuminating tool to understand these kinds of processes. Funktionsgedächtnis is understood as belonging to a group which derives its identity from these narratives. Speichergedächtnis is everything which can be memorized not by one’s own experiences but brought from the archives and dumps of history. Speichergedächtnis, however, is not dead. Quite on the contrary, Speichergedächtnis serves to adjust or transform given Funktionsgedächtnisse over time. Everything in the Speichergedächtnis can be used for a new Funktionsgedächtnis. Instead of ignoring such vibrant processes by developing rather unreflected narratives of normative power they should be addressed to prevent dark versions of postsecular narratives and foster bright ones.

Europe has to get into touch with its history and its orientalist othering stories. Each functionalist or neo-liberal project in, say, energy cooperation, needs a context of common identity and we-feeling. It can be fostered by economic gains, but, as we have seen for the Greek case, the Northern shelf of the Mediterranean needs stronger ties than that, too. A cooperation of civilizations to match the clash of civilization was a step in the right direction. However, cultural divides of West and East perpetuate Orientalism. Constructivist insight into the social construction of the world brings the good news that change is possible. However, change is not easy. Edward Said was very successful to deconstruct Orientalism and nevertheless Orientalism is still alive and kicking. The children who called the emperor naked in the fairytale of the emperor’s new clothes belong to the world of fairytales. Usually, this kind of critique takes much more time and work. Thus, instead of simply abandoning the construction\(^{32}\) it has to be studied critically as Stephan Stetter argued for.\(^{33}\) Along these lines the next two sections will deal with the narrative of a non-imperial empire as well as with the normative power version of it and its application to the Mediterranean. This will develop the critique of the European politics towards the South mentioned above. In two further sections


Habermas' idea of postsecular translation of religious semantics is defended and applied to offer a post-secular narrative for Europe and the Middle East via the figure of the pilgrim.

The narrative of empire
The narrative of the empire is surprisingly en vogue. Not many are ready to quote Kipling’s notorious poem of the White man’s burden in full length and with a positive understanding as the editor of the German newspaper Welt am Sonntag Alan Posner did, who appreciated his childhood in a British colonial context and thus makes a pretty simple differentiation between bad imperialism – Hitler and Stalin – and good imperialism- Rome and Britain. The later he wants to see applied for the European superpower in the making.

Following the lines of Hedley Bull’s new medievalism and Ruggie’s thinking about territory, Jan Zielonka offers a different version of the empire analogy. His notion of empire is not informed by ancient or 19th century’s imperialism, but the Holy Roman Empire which had its zenith in the Medieval Ages. The task of his comparison is not fostering the EU’s role in the world but the understanding of its internal structure characterized by overlapping loyalties and functions.

Barroso’s „non-imperial empire“ seems to engage both notions. For him Europe has no power center which is enabled to enforce its will on the periphery. The many nation states as parts of the European Empire stick together voluntarily. However, this power to enforce seems very much part of the basic understanding of what constitutes an empire, so much that Barroso’s term has to deny the “imperial” notion of empire in the European Union’s case by calling it “non-imperial.” The aim is an empire without imperialism. Following his statement, Commissioner Margot Wallström expressed her doubts about this contradictio in adjecto, by offering the rather harmless metaphor of football team playing together to get results.

Nevertheless, Barroso’s idea of a non-imperial empire has its theoretical underpinning. Robert Cook developed the idea of liberal imperialism in depth. His concept is completely based on a foreign affairs approach and not meant to analyze internal structure more illuminatingly. Based on the lessons of 9/11 he states that sometimes “a zone of chaos can turn into a major threat to state

39 Ibid.
security elsewhere”. He argues for a robust liberal imperialism, which is prepared to project power abroad to restore and to keep order. Against Henry Kissinger’s realism of hegemony and balance of power, Cooper argues that balance is too dangerous and hegemony causes too many frictions. In his view, the era of strong states is a period of the past, lasting from 1648-1989. Now, under postmodern conditions, the problems include not only its own postmodern complexity but the need to deal with a pre-modern world of potential chaos and a still modern world of nation states and their competing interests. Open states and international organizations have to do the job to project order via transnational cooperation. Their task is to bring about “postmodern security”. However he is fully aware of the problematic nature of this task, particularly its military component. For him, even in a postmodern world, Clausewitz still applies: “Military intervention should always be accompanied by political efforts. If these fail, or if the cost of the military operation becomes too great, then there is no alternative but to withdraw.” This prudent combination of civilian and military means does not only have Clausewitz strategic thinking of 19th century on its fundament but moreover even a clear understanding of the adaptation of 19th century imperialism under postmodern conditions. The necessity of the “non-imperial” negation of empire is in the center of the concept: “The nation state may be liberal, but liberal imperialism is a contradiction in terms. Nineteenth-century empires were based on shared racist assumptions [...]. But these assumptions are gone. The postmodern version of empire has to be voluntary if it is to be acceptable; if it is to last it has to be co-operative.” He explains further about his version of imperialism under postmodern conditions: “These arrangements are not as efficient as traditional imperialism. Because it is voluntary, everything is subject to negotiation and compromise; [...] Nevertheless, in a postmodern era, international and voluntary spells legitimate and in the end nothing else will work.” These general remarks on the problem are applied to Europe in a particular way. He continues this central thought: “The most far-reaching form of imperial expansion is that of the European Union. In the last few years countries all across central Europe have transformed their constitutions, rewriting their laws, adjust the rules of their markets, set up anti-corruption bodies and adopted a huge volume of EU legislation – all in the interest of becoming members of the Union. [...] This form of empire is likely to last, since its co-operative structure gives it a lasting legitimacy; ‘commonwealth’ would be a better name for it.”

---

41 Ibid., p. 76, for the argument particularly see 76-80.
42 Ibid., p. 75
43 Ibid., p. 70
44 Ibid., p. 71.
45 Ibid., p. 71-72
Nevertheless, Cooper sticks to the term of empire instead of abandoning it in favor of commonwealth. Soon it becomes pretty clear why. Like in the case of Britain, empire comes first, commonwealth might come later. Cooper’s aim is to keep Europe’s ability to project its power abroad as the EU did via enlargement towards Central and Eastern Europe. Actually, the whole globe should become Europe, the classical 19th century imperial narrative, which reaches back to Catherine the Great in the 18th century to whom he refers to directly: “The postmodern, European answer to threats is to extend the system of co-operative empire ever wider. ‘I have no way to defend my borders but to extend them,’ said Catherine the Great – and the European Union sometimes seems to be saying the same. This is, in fact, an exact description of the most natural security policy for a postmodern community of states. The wider the postmodern network can be extended, the less risk there will be from neighbours and the more resources to defend the community without having to become excessively militarized.”

In the last remark it is again obvious that the postmodern cooperative empire is not the European naïve paradise Kagan criticized. The European empire can organize the community’s defense without becoming “excessively militarized”. However, to paraphrase the “non-imperial”, it has to become non-excessively militarized; it has to have a robust military component, a “little stick” as Cooper once said it in a presentation at the UECES Conference in Newcastle in 2003.

Taken to the praxis test in 2011, Robert Cooper defends a rather straightforward form of imperialism. In his function as an EU envoy on the Middle East, Cooper was prepared to defend the crackdown of the protests in Bahrain in a MEP briefing. Instead of understanding the protest of the Shia majority in terms of an uprising by the people in demand for democracy, he puts it in sectarian terms. Describing the kingdom as a “rather pleasant, peaceful place” and analyzing the protests in terms of an advantage for the neighbor Iran, he was pushing to understand the death by the violent crackdown as “accidents”.

Andrew Hurrell’s nuanced critique on liberal imperialism comes to mind: “The hard-line hegemonist ‘we can do it alone’ is clearly wrong. But the liberal hegemonist version, ‘we can do it together’ depends on who ‘we’ are, on what ‘it’ is, and what is meant by ‘together’. Applied to the case of Bahrain and an EU advised by Cooper, it seems that “we” excludes the Shia people of Bahrain as well as Iran, “it” means a rather classical imperial understanding of zones of influence, given the 7th US American Fleet there, and “together” a burden sharing of defending it and cracking down on democratic protests.

The non-imperial empire of the EU seems to have a tendency to understand pressure and repression on Shia movements not as a problem. The sectarian split in the Islamic world, however, is not a clear

46 Ibid., p. 75.
cut one where Shia is always the adversary and the Sunni fraction always the partner. In the case of regime change in Iraq it was the other way round. Thus, this cannot be understood as a secularist undertaking against religious citizen. It is more a classical realist imperialist attitude which understands the enemy of my friend as a friend and the friends of my enemy as an enemy. The same holds true for Saudi-Arabia, one of the closest friends and partners of the EU and the US. Although there had been some tensions because of the Saudi origin of Osama Bin Laden and al Qaida, the religious orientation of the Saudi monarchy in its strong alliance with Wahbism, one of the most fundamentalist interpretations of Islam, never changed and was not an issue. The German government, for instance, agreed on a deal of German Leopard Panzer to Saudi-Arabia. The rights of women, religious minorities, cruel punishments or democracy are no issue at all. Thus, it seems that there is a very robust classical realist narrative of cooperation with everyone who is known as a reliable and stabile partner. Non-imperial empire seems to be a narrative which is less keen on the input legitimacy of its members and partners but more interested in out-put legitimacy understood as reliability and stability. Thus, it seems that the European non-imperial empire falls already short to what the United States contributed to the European integration. Geir Lundestad argues that the US strongly supported an integrated Europe. In contrast to the usual divide et impera policy of hegemons the US formed its “empire’ by integration” allowing thus a center beyond its own. Lundestadt summarizes the success of this project for the Americans: “In Western Europe Washington was able to organize NATO, control the larger part of crucial Germany, keep the Communists out of power, include the region in the American-organized system of freer trade, and greatly enhance the influence of American culture. In a comparative perspective this was an outstanding record.” The empire narrative should nevertheless try to measure up to that record, if it can. This is also true for the closely linked narrative of normative power, which we discuss in the next section. Thomas Diez rightly insists in his critique that the normative power of the US should not be dismissed out of hands for their frequent use of military power. It is rather a guideline to measure the good and wrongs a normative power can do. Diez thus links the normative power discourse to Robert Cooper’s ideas, and the structure of this argument here follows him.

The narrative of normative power
Ian Manners’ narrative of a normative power Europe tries to keep along these lines in a much more nuanced version and with more elaborated theoretical branding than the “non-imperial” or cooperative empire version. Based on the classical idea of a civilian power but aiming beyond it, Ian

49 Geir Lundestadt, „Empire’ by Integration. The United States and European Integration, 1945-1997.
50 ibid, p. 2.
51 Diez, Thomas, 2005, 620-624, 629.
52 This narrative of normative power is wide spread. For the latest overview see: Richard Whiteman (ed.) Normative Power Europe: Empirical and Theoretical Perspectives (Basingstoke: Palgrave: 2011)
Manners develops his concept in contrast to Hedley Bull’s claim that the EU is no power at all.\textsuperscript{53} Ian Manners starts his own narrative of a normative power Europe with a quote from Rosecrance: “It is perhaps a paradox to note that the continent which once ruled the world through the physical impositions of imperialism is now coming to set world standards in normative terms. (Rosecrance, 1998, p. 22)”\textsuperscript{54} Referring to a legacy of normative power which includes also Johan Galtung’s concept of “ideological power”\textsuperscript{55} it is obvious that Manners is firstly concerned with arguing that normative power is power too and less concerned about the ethical value of this normative order. He is arguing that its growing military and its established civilian power aside, the EU’s “ability to shape conceptions of ‘normal’ in international relations needs to be given much greater attention.”\textsuperscript{56} Indeed, few things are more powerful than to establish the norm of conduct. Thus, Manners rightly argues that “normative power” is no contradiction in term “as the ability to define what passes for ‘normal’ in world politics is extremely rich.”\textsuperscript{57} However, the interesting questions are, if these norms bind the entrepreneur of the norms by itself and do not only good to him and harm to others, or even in a worst case scenario harm both, but establish a common ground for a mutual beneficial norm of both. These are the normative questions next to the power question. In the perspective of power, it is crucial to understand if the EU can project its norms and thus have power, passively by being a role model and active by cultivating its norms. Ian Manners is well aware of these questions. He argues that the EU makes a difference because it is on the one hand committed to non-forcible means and freedom and on the other hand still able to project its norms despite and because of this peacefulness.\textsuperscript{58} In his “formulation the central component of normative power Europe is that it exists as being different to pre-existing political forms, and that this particular difference predisposes it to act in a normative way.”\textsuperscript{59} To make these norms concrete Manners is referring to a set of five “core norms”: peace, liberty, democracy, rule of law, human right. He adds some “‘minor’ norms,” which are social solidarity, anti-discrimination, sustainable development, and good governance.\textsuperscript{60} The diffusion of these norms can be a kind of self-runner – Manners terms this “contagion”\textsuperscript{61} or more deliberated by the actor which is spreading it – Manners’ term is here “transference.”\textsuperscript{62} He summaries his argument: “The concept of normative power is an attempt to suggest that not only is the EU constructed on a normative basis, but importantly that this

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid. 238
\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., 239
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid. 239
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., p. 236
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., 241-242
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid., 242
\textsuperscript{60} Ibid., 242-243
\textsuperscript{61} Ibid., 244
\textsuperscript{62} Ibid., 45
\end{footnotesize}
predisposes it to act in a normative way in world politics. It is built on the crucial and usually overlooked observation that the most important factor shaping the international role of the EU is not what it does or what it says, but what it is. Thus my presentation of the EU as a normative power has an ontological quality to it – that the EU can be conceptualized as a changer of norms in the international system; a positivist quantity to it – that the EU acts to change norms in the international system; and a normative quality to it – that the EU should act to extend its norms into the international system.\textsuperscript{63} Thus, Manners answered both of two crucial questions, if these norms are good for the world and if the EU is managing to diffuse them around the world, with a clear yes. Thomas Diez asks for being more cautious and more self-reflexive.\textsuperscript{64} The power question in the normative power approach includes a shift from Weberian relationship that actor A has the power to force actor B to a model Diez associates with Lukes.\textsuperscript{65} The Lukes’ version can be lumped together with Manners’ hint towards Galtung. Shaping the normal in a normative way might need also an Arendtian twist that the political power to act jointly rests on the free decision of individuals to act together and thereby form a community.\textsuperscript{66} Taking his considerations from the postmodern awareness towards constructing a self through Othering processes, Diez calls for caution. He addresses the problem that the “narrative of ‘normative power Europe’ constructs the EU’s identity as well as the identity of the EU’s others in ways which allow EU actors to disregard their own shortcomings.”\textsuperscript{67} Sympathetic with the norms of Europe, Diez argues that such a self-reflexivity “would by no means undermine, but rather rescue, normative power from becoming a selfrighteous, messianistic project that claims to know what Europe is and what others should be like.”\textsuperscript{68} However, a simple “download” of European norms as Bicchi rightly criticized will not do the job.\textsuperscript{69} This is particularly true towards the Mediterranean as the EU is engaged to create such a region in the first place. It is disputed if the Mediterranean should be understood “as a ‘region’ (with subregions) or […] as an interface between coherent regions.”\textsuperscript{70} However, both concepts are rather in constant flux than settled. In the perspective of the Greater Middle East Initiative Michelle Pace shows how fluid and continuously in the making the Mediterranean concept is and “how the EU persistently struggles to define the Mediterranean and to fix meaning and delineate borders around

\textsuperscript{63} Ibid., 252
\textsuperscript{65} Diez, 2005, p. 616
\textsuperscript{67} Diez, 2005 626-627
\textsuperscript{68} Diez, 2005 636
\textsuperscript{70} Michelle Pace, The Politics of Regional Identity. Meddling with the Mediterranean (Oxon: Routledge, 2006), p. 1.
Nevertheless, the classical divide of Orientalism has pretty clear dichotomies with damaging consequences: For Michelle Pace “[t]he challenges marked out by the EU with regards to the Mediterranean include: a cultural divide (Christian Islam mainly); an economic divide (rich EU/poor Mediterranean); social divide (demographic trends, nutrition, housing, health care, literacy, etc.); political divide (democracy versus authoritarian or quasi-authoritarian regimes); irregular and not intense patterns of interaction as well as the absence of regional identity and ‘we’ feeling in the Mediterranean. Consequently, the context in which the EU recognizes this ‘Mediterranean’ entity is fear or risk stemming from ‘insecurity’ and ‘instability’ emanating from this area (that is through process of securitization).”

Pace rightly started her list of dichotomies with the cultural divide between Muslims and Christians. It is not the only one but the one which resists a purely functionalist or neoliberal economic approach to tackle these divides. If this is hammered home Manners list of European core values has to be reopened. Firstly, it seems obvious that his version of European norms has a clear left-wing liberal interpretation insofar as social solidarity is expressed but not economic freedom and wealth. Core values are certainly peace but also security. Liberty is mentioned but it does not focus on the single market four freedoms and the fact that as soon as the Schengen Areas is left, the freedom of movement is blocked by the wish of security and defending one’s own wealth against others. For the questions of a secular blend of these values the questions of non-discrimination are particularly important. The religious norms for instance do not support the non-discrimination of women. The scarf, or rather the enforced ban of the scarf, is one of the hottest issues in current debate about religions laws from France to Turkey. Europe as a whole has no position on this. However, the tendency of the narrative Ian Manners is pushing for seems to be quite clear. The problem gets worse if one focuses on the dilemma that human right and democracy do not always come together. There is a real fear of an Arabic population from Algeria to Palestinian Territories voting for a fundamentalist version of Islamic parties not in line with the liberal norms of the EU. Thus, the EU faces the dilemma that it cannot spread human right and democracy at the same time, not to speak about anti-discrimination. In the case of these elections the EU had the tendency to argue that it was opting for human right instead of democracy. However, given the good relations with Saudi-Arabia it probably opted more for peace in the sense of stability and security rather than peace connected to justice. The torture record of the secular regime supported to defend their societies against Islamic versions of politics underlines the problem that not only democracy was postponed but also human right and due course of law for the sake of stability. The secular blend of the liberal normative power approach was thus very fast on joining an imperial project. Religion is understood as so dangerous

71 Ibid p. 161-162
72 Ibid. p. 158.
that these actors soon join the more realistic camp of non-imperial empire with teeth and boots which cares not too much about religion but very much about stability. This secular shortcoming has to be corrected. Manners is aware of the threat securitization can pose to the normative power project.  

The securitization of religion in general and that of Islam in particular, however, is not seen.  

When Manners applies his approach to the European Neighborhood Policy religion plays no role.  

As Adler and Crawford argued “region building in the Mediterranean means engaging the Muslim world, that a large majority of Muslim people are bitter and resentful, and that they do not want to ‘converge’, if by convergence we mean the adaptation of liberal ways.” Adler and Crawford argue for a “new multicultural space that does not come at the expense of national cultures and religions.” A new beginning they argue already in 2006 “will require the development of shared narratives and myth.” If they take the first caveat towards religions seriously this narrative cannot be secular, it has to be postsecular. This can build on the Alliance of Civilizations and the Anna Lindh Foundation but has to develop these rather secular approaches to religion into a postsecular project.

From this debate one has to draw home the insight that there “are of course always more or less powerful agents in any community, starting with the EU itself. But the very notion of regional community cannot be credible without at least a formal fiction of symmetry between its members. A community cannot be founded on the division between subject and object of power.” To continue the Arab spring and its politics of becoming, the winter philosophy of European secularism has to be abolished.

Post-secular imperialism: a new narrative?

The argument here is not to develop the cooperative empire on a more sophisticated term than Ian Manners has managed to do, thus to measure up to the imperial burden the American man had with

---

77 Ibid. 23.
78 Ibid. 23.
80 http://www.euromedalex.org/
Europe. Times and places are changing. What worked out for European and Americans does not need to work out for both side of the Mediterranean. The American seize might not fit us – to paraphrase Bicchi’s point. The idea is rather that the critique Diez expressed against Manners which was followed by Bicchi in her more balanced and sophisticated reformulation of normative power made it clear that a fresh start is needed which directly addresses the secular bias that is the main obstacle for a common project in the Mediterranean. To overcome the orientalist legacy religion and culture have to be addressed directly without immediately attaching the attributes of risk and clash as Huntington did.

The basis for this approach is Jürgen Habermas' understanding of a post-secular society. For him it is obvious that the secularization thesis expecting religion to disappear as modernization makes its way through the world has been falsified. As Peter Berger has shown, the world is as religious as it ever was. On this sociological base, Habermas favors a new dialog between secular and religious citizens. The former should accept the later as substantial part of civil society not exposing restraints on their way of arguing in public, even when it contains religious terms which are not acceptable to everyone. However, these debates should be part of the public sphere but not part of the political state institutions where language and arguing should kept secular. In this institutional aspect, Habermas is quite restrictive. However, he has an additional interest in religious language. For him religious semantics might contain notions and concepts of political and moral thinking and motivation which can foster a secular liberal politics as soon as these ideas are made accessible by translation to a public that is not restricted to the community of the faithful who usually use these semantics to constitute their realm of sense and life. It is this expectation which gave Habermas' idea of a more open public its genuine depth. It is not just about taking in as many citizens as possible but the idea that these citizens can really contribute something which can be accessible and beneficial even for the most fierceful atheist. On the basis of this expectation the restriction of the institutional secularism is still contestable but seems less harsh. It is not the idea that religious citizens can just say what they like but do not change anything as their arguments are again excluded from the start as soon as the institutional sphere of power is reached. Habermas has in mind that in a

---

83 Berger, Peter, 1999.
public debate religious arguments might show at least sometimes a convincing illustration or a new thought or perspective which can convince others, as the idea of deliberation generally does. The postsecular approach can be used to re-conceptualize the secular/religious dichotomy. It does not ignore it like in a liberal version of secularism and it does not redraw the line between different cultural-religious Weltanschauungen in terms of conflict as in Huntington. Instead it enables a positive engagement between two fragments of a society and can thus be applied to the task of carefully altering the self-other-construction from Orientalist legacies as Stetter argued for. The Habermasian approach of deliberation is already put forward in the debate about the Mediterranean, unfortunately with the usual secular bias and without taking note of the developments Habermas suggested.

Applied to the general problematic of imperial rule export such an approach would allow Europe to engage with its Mediterranean neighbors without focusing one-sidedly on the notion that Europe has to have the ideas and solutions. In addition, the secular/religious citizen split would enable a replacement of the orientalist notion of East and West, Christians and Muslims. More religious and more secular people are part of both societies. Moreover, understood in post-secular terms of mutual learning and not in a confrontation of religious and secular extremists, the lines between religious and secular citizens are fluid. This move would overcome the secular short-coming. However, as seen above, postsecularism has its dark side too. The proof of the pudding is in the eating and the persuasive power of postsecularism will depend on whether it is able to offer a concrete constructive narrative for Europe.

**Pilgrimage: a post-secular narrative beyond empire**

From the post-secular view endorsed in the section above, one cannot only learn to avoid a secularist shortcoming in supporting authoritarian over democratic rule but one can also use the semantics of religious notions as a resource for a fresh look on old concepts. The notion of pilgrimage might be a fruitful metaphor in this respect. First of all, the idea of pilgrimages is common to many religions. Particularly the three monotheistic religions of the Mediterranean shelf depend heavily on it. In Islam the Hajj to Mecca is one of the five columns of a pious Muslim life. Judaism favors also the idea of a

---


pilgrimage to Jerusalem. In Christianity, Catholic and Orthodox traditions are very much in favor of pilgrimages in general whereas the Protestant legacy tends to take pilgrimages to certain holy places as rather unnecessary, no matter how nutritious the idea of pilgrimage as an attitude towards life was in the American founding story of the Mayflower pilgrim fathers or the famous novel of Pilgrim’s progress. A secularist conception of pilgrimage is also widely spread. Whereas some use religious routes of pilgrimages for this-worldly experiences others invent their own holy places like Jim Morrison’s grave at the cemetery in Paris or Lenin’s mausoleum in Moscow. Life as a journey seems to be a common feature in many cultures. The interesting aspect here is the trust in a project which depends on a process of “being on the way,” leaving home for the unknown and hoping for a change through the experience of this journey when coming back home. In addition, it has a strong combination of individualistic and communitarian aspects. Pilgrimages depend on the decision of the individual pilgrim to undertake it. However, destinations are not of a complete free choosing but depend on narratives of the community which offers paths and places. In addition, the individual’s decision to undertake a pilgrimage carries also a strong impulse to strengthen his or her ties with the community or find new comradeship along the way. Turner and Turner have provided a classical study which highlights liminality and community as central aspects of pilgrimage. Liminalitas (from the Latin limes (border)) means the experience of transcending a limit, an experience that takes the pilgrim out of his or her usual social space and places him or her somewhere else. This state of being “betwixt and between” enables the emergence of a new or renewed community. Communitas is for Turner and Turner characterized by “lowness, sacredness, homogeneity and comradeship.”

This essentialist approach has been subject to criticism in Eade and Sallnow’s work. Their critique stresses the point that this new comradeship is not without frictions. That way it becomes clear that not only a homogenous communitas is in the making but that different interpretations compete against each other. Pilgrimage entails consensus and communitas, but also divisiveness and discord. Through its contested community building this process shapes identity. People with experiences of a pilgrimage tend to reintegrate this story in their daily life enabling thereby the emergence of a new narrative or the deepening of old ones. This has been used for political purposes in history from a local kingdom with its shrine to the project of the crusade as a pilgrimage in weapons to enforce the entry to the holy land. Nowadays, the crucial role Saudi-Arabia plays in the Middle East depends not


92 Ibid, pp. 2-3.
only on its oil resources but also very much on the Mecca and the Hajj. Also Osama Bin Laden’s terrorism against the west had its initial momentum when the Holy Land of Saudi-Arabia was opened by its government for “infidel” US-troops to prevent the Iraq threat. Not to speak about Jerusalem which is sacred to each of the three Abrahamic religions and thus in the centre of competing claims of access and domination. The possibility of a new and wider community enabled by the *liminitas* of the pilgrimage has also the potential to end up in discord. However, it becomes also clear that the concept of pilgrimage does not need to be translated into politics from scratch. It is a well established concept of political theology. Applied in a postsecular version to the task of fostering a common Mediterranean identity it has to serves several tasks: 1) it should avoid the bias of a European project being sold to the Southern neighbours. It should not be about norm export but common generation of norms, 2) it should foster the idea of a departure into the unknown but guided by some common principles and targeted to agreed destinations. These points of direction become important when difficulties arise and stamina is needed. After all, the journey is more about going to Jerusalem or Mecca by food than by airplane, 3) crucial is the idea of a new community in the offing which can be aimed at through individual beginnings and committing oneself to a common project open to process of change.

The idea of shaping its neighbourhood by cultivated attractiveness of a normative power or the power projection of a non-imperial empire has to be abandoned by Europe all together. Translating the pilgrim concept to the Mediterranean question would bring in a new perspective of equality. All partners are pilgrims departing from their homes, being prepared for a long journey with obstacles and quarrels along the way, and aiming at a common future. This common future of a community in the offing can be informed by heavenly visions of paradise however, it is not paradise itself. The pilgrim’s community is always one of contestations. Particularly given the historical record of pilgrimages in arms, the Mediterranean pilgrim’s project is prepared to face past and current conflicts. However, it should be prepared also to address them in the spirit of a new pilgrimage. It is not about levelling different tradition and places, but to bring them together in their distinctness but also in their openness to common aims and values. Thus, it is not blind to history but prepared to address it directly for the sake of a common destiny. The metaphor of pilgrimage could thus foster the trust in a departure for a new project. This is very much demanding but maybe up to the task of addressing demanding times of change.

**Jerusalem or the pilgrim’s capital of the Mediterranean**

Nicolaides and Nicolaides conclude their summary of the volume on the convergence of civilization with a rather unexpected suggestion: “Why not literally construct a capital for the Mediterranean region that would host its meeting, serve as the focal point for its cultural events, and provides a
visible symbolic embodiment of the idea of a future Euro-Med community?” Their suggestion comes pretty close to the pilgrim’s essential of being on a journey, being on the move: they suggested to choose a ship as a capital. “And why not share this ship among the many overlapping communities of the region by having it journey around the Mediterranean, anchoring every six month in a new harbour. Why not make it the expression of the human and social roots of this region by having it attract, every time it departs from its temporary anchor, a great pan-Euro-Mediterranean festival exhibiting the arts and folklores of all the peoples and communities that would recognize themselves in it?” Indeed this postmodern idea is tempting, and pretty close to a secular version of the pilgrim being on the way to a common destiny. However, it is not only far from reality, it is also far from addressing the postsecular point. Translating the pilgrim into a cruiser might not prevent him from becoming a crusader. Instead of addressing the underlying problems of an Orientalistic mind-set, the bet is on forgetting it via a multicultural festival. But we have already one which is like that, sometimes big fun, sometimes rather cheap. It is called Eurovision song contest! The winner of this year is also participating in the European Neighbourhood Policy despite its rather remote location in the Caucasian end of Europe: Azerbaijan. Turkey is participating also here as well in the UEFA European Football Championship. Both are very nice events but unfortunately not a solution for the European or Mediterranean problems. Turkey is still far from being accepted as an equal European like any other. Orientalism still wins the day as soon as the cultural evening program is over and the daily push comes to shove. Culture is not where the fun is but where pain can be addressed, contemplated, and may be healed. To fade more smoothly out from fun and into pain, one can mention that Israel is participating in the Eurovision Song Contest, too. It has to because the Arab nations are not very keen on celebrating with Israel and vice versa. This pain of the crucial conflict of the Middle East has not been addressed in this article because it became too long anyway. However, it has to be addressed at least in the conclusion.

There is a religious, potentially postsecular narrative which has been suggested to Europe by John Paul II which some now call the Great. In 1999 he declared among others Edith Stein, the Jewish-catholic martyr in Auschwitz, a patroness of Europe: “What we see in her is the anguish of the search and the struggle of an existential “pilgrimage”. John Paul is keen on keeping the focus on the Jewish heritage: “Edith’s encounter with Christianity did not lead her to reject her Jewish roots; rather it enabled her fully to rediscover them. [...]In particular, Edith made her own the suffering of

94 Ibid., 375
the Jewish people, even as this reached its apex in the barbarous Nazi persecution [...] Following this narrative, the pilgrim’s capital cannot be a cruise ship. It has to be Jerusalem. If the problem of Orientalism should be targeted it has to be a whole-hearted enterprise. Europe cannot replace enlargement with neighborhood policy as Patton planned to keep on projecting its norms elsewhere. In a sense, Europe has to transform itself into a wider Mediterranean instead of integrating the Mediterranean into a wider Europe. This has to integrate Mecca and Rome, with the latter not only meaning Rome in Italy but also Istanbul/Constantinople and Moscow, the third Rome. Orientalism has also do to with the East in a broader sense. However, its capital has to be Jerusalem, where the mess is and the glory, too. A non-imperial empire has to project its center elsewhere, not its power. A normative power has to transform itself to transform others, not the other way round, as Diez rightly criticized. The postsecular narrative that prevents all wannabe crusaders has to include Jerusalem and exposes itself there instead of conquering it.

An old German map has Jerusalem as the center of the world. I am not quite sure if the evangelical interpretation of the end of times which focuses very much on Jerusalem as the center of the world would endorse the capital proposal or not. In any case, it should be clear that this is not a call for an international status of an open city. Jews and Palestinians have to come to terms somehow, like the Flams and Walloons with Brussels and its suburbs. The task of Jerusalem as a capital for the wide Mediterranean is an additional one. To drive the point home maybe one can come back to Edith Stein and the Pope: “Today's proclamation of Edith Stein as a Co-Patroness of Europe is intended to raise on this Continent a banner of respect, tolerance and acceptance which invites all men and women to understand and appreciate each other, transcending their ethnic, cultural and religious differences in order to form a truly fraternal society.”

96 Ibid. No. 9
98 Neumann, Iver B., Uses of the other. “the East” in European identity formation, Manchester Univ. Press : 1999