The EU's Development Policy: Empirical Evidence of "Normative Power Europe?"

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Introduction

The European Union is the world's largest aid donor to developing countries purportedly spending 500 million euros per month on assistance projects that span the globe from its neighbors, to the Middle East, Africa, Asia and Latin America. Collectively, EU Member States and the European Commission provide more than half of all official development aid and yet there has been only scant attention paid to this area of EU policy. The vast majority of scholarship on the EU's external relations tends to focus primarily on the construction (and often the weaknesses) of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP), but both development aid and humanitarian assistance represent a significant area of EU external action. As this paper seeks to illustrate, the existing scholarship misses an important dimension of European power and influence in the world by neglecting its role in foreign aid and development. Both internally and externally the EU has undergone a major transformation in the way conducts its development policies. Internally, the European Parliament has recently offered a strong critique of this policy area and as a result, attempts are being made to close the gap between rhetoric and reality by offering a more coherent vision of development that is based on partnership with the receiving countries and by improving the quality and efficiency of the various funding instruments and designing new mechanisms to work more closely with each country and their own particular strategies to reduce poverty. I argue that this capacity for reflexivity and policy change derives from and affirms its unique nature as a normative power in world politics.

Externally, the EU has projected its norms and values by emphasizing the humanitarian and civilian nature of its external relations and linking its development policies to the broader aims of promoting fundamental freedoms, consolidating democracy and strengthening the respect for human rights and the rule of law. The EU has demonstrated significant collective leadership and commitment to the UN Millennium Development Goals and in May 2001, for the first time, the EU hosted a major United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries. While these examples may be mostly symbolic, this paper will attempt to offer a more systematic investigation of whether or not the EU's record on development constitutes an area of external policy that approximates Manners' formulation of the EU's international identity as one of a normative power. Examining both the normative discourse and specific policy actions allows a more comprehensive answer to the following question: Is the EU approach to development consistent with its values and norms as well as effective and beneficial to the goals of development and global poverty reduction? A normatively grounded, empirically supported answer to this question may have significant implications for the theoretical debates regarding the usefulness of the concept of 'Normative Power Europe' as well as policy debates and strategies for combating global poverty and growing inequality between the North and South.

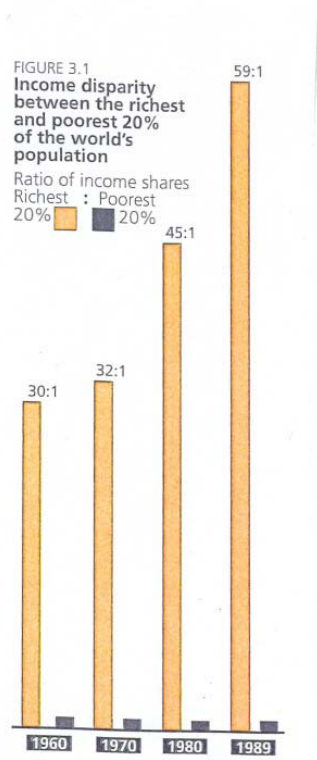
The European Union and the North-South Economic Divide

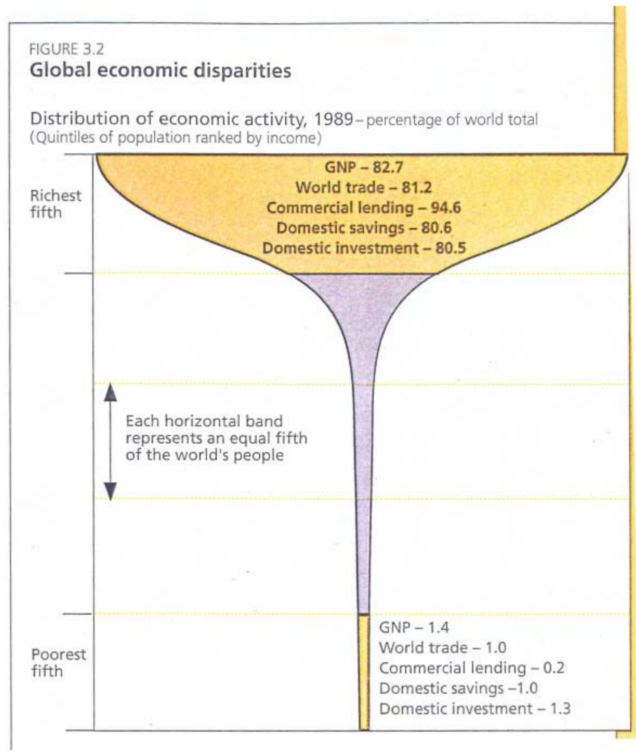
Well over three decades have passed since the Pearson Commission proclaimed the widening gap between the developed and developing countries to be the 'central problem of our times.' Today global inequalities in income and standards of living have reached obscene proportions. The following stylized facts presented by Timothy Garton Ash capture the scope of the divide between the 'rich North' and the 'poor South.'

> In round figures, roughly 1 billion of the world's 6 billion inhabitants are rich. They have an average income of approximately $70 a day. They live mainly in Europe, North America, Japan, and a few other prosperous countries. In the mental geography of development rather than geopolitics, the West of the free is the "North" of the rich. (Thus Australia, though in the Southern hemisphere, is part of the "North.") At the other end, in the poor "South," more than 1 billion men, women, and children live on less than $1 a day. Only slightly better off are another 1 to 2 billion people living on less than $2 a day. According to U.N. figures, between 1999 and 2001, some 840 million people went hungry; one in every seven people in the world. At the same time, nearly one-third of Americans suffer from the serious health problem of obesity. Who needs a parable? In the South, men women, and children are dying because they don't have enough to eat; in the North, they are dying because they eat too much (2004: 149).

Extremes in private, individual wealth accumulation is further illustration of the inequities and the fundamental distributive malfunctioning of the global economic system. In 1999, it was estimated that the assets of the world's three richest people, Bill Gates, Warren Buffet and Paul Allen, "exceeded the total annual gross national product of all the world's least developed countries with a combined population of some 600 million (Ash 2004: 150). The tough questions arising from comparisons such as these is whether or not the driving factors behind such explosive wealth accumulation among certain individuals and in specific regions are inherently related to increasing impoverishment elsewhere in the world? In other words, is what makes the rich richer also making the poor poorer? Though I do not attempt to answer such a complex, age-old question here, attention to the growing divide and the attempt to establish how the North's foreign economic practices and development policies may be contributing to it, is an important first-step.

In the final decade of the 20th century, distribution of the world's wealth was dramatically captured by this image on the cover of the *Human Development Report*.





Source: *Human Development Report* 1992;
http://hdr.undp.org/docs/publications/occasional_papers/oc32b.htm#part2

The champagne coupe shows that the richest 20 % of the world's population possesses 82.7 5 % of total world GNP while the bottom quintile has only 1.4%. The 1999 *Human Development Report* claimed that the gap in per capita income (GNP) between the richest fifth of the world's population and the rest had widened from 30 to 1 in 1960, to 60 to 1, in 1990, to 74 to 1 in 1995. (1999: 104-105). Though the simple measure of GDP per capital reveals a great deal about overall income differentials in the North and the South, the rationale behind the concept of human development is much deeper and more comprehensive than a single statistical indicator. The Human Development Index (HDI) examines basic human capabilities as measured through life expectancy, educational attainment and income. Of the 174 countries for which the HDI had been constructed, 45 are in the high human development category, 94 in the medium and 35 in the low human development category. 16 countries experienced reversals in human development since 1990 due to the HIV/AIDS pandemic (mostly in sub-Saharan Africa and Eastern Europe and the CIS. (HDR 1999: 128) The growing polarization of income is starkly captured in the following statistic: over a four year period (1995-1999), the world's richest two hundred people doubled their wealth to over $1 trillion, while the number of people living on less that one dollar a day has remained steady at 1.3 billion. Finally, according to World Bank data, the average income in the twenty richest countries is 37 times the average in the poorest twenty, doubling the gap over the last 40 years.

However, the data also illustrate that human poverty is not confined to developing countries nor are all countries traditionally considered to be in the global South among the lowest development category.   Among the 17 industrialized countries, Sweden has lowest human poverty with 7% followed by two other EU countries, The Netherlands and Germany, and the United States has the highest level of poverty with 16.5 % closely followed by the United Kingdom (HDR 1999: 131).

This leads us to the question of what role the European Union, as a major economic bloc, exercises in the global economy. First of all, the European Union ranked as the second largest economy in the world (after the US) with an aggregate gross domestic product of $11.65 trillion in 2004. It is obvious that such economic strength provides a huge opportunity to project and wield power in the international system and one aim of this paper is to investigate how the EU uses its economic prowess and the political leverage flowing from it to the betterment or detriment of the developing South.

Considering the history of European colonialism during the 19th century, no historically conscious claim could be made that such wealth accrued in splendid isolation or without long-term repercussions for the subjugated, exploited or acquiescent societies brought into the web of the foreign economic relations of Europe.

To conclude this overview of the basic facts of the North-South divide and the economic weight of the European Union, it is important to underscore the extreme concentration of wealth. To refer again to the famous 1992 HDR champagne coupe, one-fifth of the planet's population controls almost 85 % of the world's economic activity and wealth. In addition to the world trade flows that are significantly North-North, Boyer and Drache have presented evidence indicating roughly 85 % of foreign investment flow is between the industrial core of Europe, North America and Japan (1996: 2). Now, we will turn to how the EU has addressed this situation both in rhetoric and policy discourse as well as actual trade and aid policies.

Discourse and Development Policies in the European Union

The effort to precisely and explicitly define a common European identity has proved quite elusive to say the least and the problem is even more challenging when speaking about an EU foreign policy identity. Obviously the EU is a single actor when it comes to trade policies as the 27 members negotiate as a single bloc within the World Trade Organization, but a coordinated multilateral trade policy has not prevented the individual member states from having bilateral relations with other countries of both the North and the South. Furthermore, the emphasis here is on both trade as well as development policies such as aid and humanitarian assistance where the EU does not exercise exclusive EU competence as of yet. For this examination of normative discourse, however, it is critical to identify how development policy fits into EU external relations and what the EU has projected as their common policy goals in this area. When we examine some of the empirical data it will be necessary to disaggregate the member states from the EU as some of the data are necessarily based on the individual policies as opposed to a common EU policy.

Ian Manners (2002) has argued that the EU is a unique entity whose identity in world politics is based on normative, ideational values that transcend narrow national interests—whether civilian or military. The EU's approach to development may be an important confirmation of this conceptualization of "normative power Europe" as well as a significant pillar of the EU's external policy. Whereas bilateral aid policies of each Member State may still be associated with elements of national interest that are pursued through forms of economic blackmail and political coercion, collectively the EU is much less susceptible to such charges. For instance, the most recent OECD report that scrutinized EU development policies, did not make any such accusations, though they did not fail to mention that Commission aid practices are slow, bureaucratic and incompetent—though improving.[1] The very fact that an international organization like the OECD is assessing the EU's collective effort at development policies indicates this is an area that warrants greater analysis by scholars interested in exploring various forms of the EU's international 'actorness.' What is particularly compelling about the need to more carefully consider the EU as an actor in the field of international development is the opportunity to evaluate both the normative and empirical dimensions of its commitments. Addressing the critique of Diez (2005), Manners claims that his original articulation of

[1] See Alan Beattie's "EU has a mixed record over trade and aid" *Financial Times*, March 27, 2007.

normative power Europe was “ a statement of what is believed to be good about the EU; a statement which needed to be made in order to stimulate and reflect on what the EU should be doing in world politics” (2006, 168). Development assistance appears to be a solid case for what the EU should be doing as it also serves as a strategy for promoting the norms and values of international cooperation, human security, and sustainable development beyond its own borders. An examination of another concept that has been used to characterize the nature of the EU as it engages in world politics will lend further support to my attempt to apply Manners’ construction to the EU’s development policies.

As Calypso Nicolaidis notes, Europeans know all too well the significance of power in world affairs and the EU increasingly represents and shapes Europe’s role in the world. She goes on to claim that: “The rest of the world, far from being Hobbesian is attuned to the European choice because both power and purpose matter in international relations; legitimacy translates power into effectiveness. In such a world, the promise held up by the “European difference” is great and lies in the legitimacy of the narrative of projection that the European Union seeks to deploy that is the consistency between its internal and external praxis and discourse. EU-topia is relevant beyond the shores of its own paradise” (Nicolaidis: 2005: 96). This narrative of projection conceptualization appears to be congruent with the “normative Europe” perspective and helps us to make sense of the EU’s complex, ever evolving, identity as a global actor.

In direct relation to how this narrative of projection image help us to theorize the EU’s legitimacy and capacity to act collectively in the area of development policy and relations with the South, it is significant to consider the following argument made by Nicolaidis:

> How can its narrative of projection be reconciled with the post colonial character pf the EU project? In part by systematically banishing the kind of dual standards that underpinned colonialist thinking....The European Community both inherited the postcolonial guilt of its member states and provided an institutional venue to assuage that guilt, a venue that would be less vulnerable to accusations of neocolonialism than individual member states' diplomacy (Nicolaidis 2005: 101).

For Nicolaidis, this narrative of projection requires that Europe--and presumably scholars seeking to understand EU foreign policy identity in these terms-- define power as "the capacity to empower others" (p. 114). In defending this view of power, Nicolaidis points out that while the U.S. may outspend the EU on the military by factor of 4, the EU and member states combined outspend US on development aid by factor of 7[2]. Thus, I would argue that this is a felicitous way to examine the question of EU policies towards the developing world.

But what are the legal basis and the institutional parameters within which the EU operates in the area of development policy? As Martin Holland (2002) has pointed out, Europe's formal relations with the developing world are as old as the EEC and Treaty of Rome (1957) and the European Commission has provided international development assistance since its founding. The Lomé Conventions (1975-2000) preceded by Yaoundé and succeeded by Cotonou in June 2000 was long considered a hallmark of the EU's policy with the developing world or more specifically the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries (ACP) representing the former colonies of Western Europe. The foundation of these agreements was the recognition of partnership and preferential trade arrangements. For a variety of complex reasons, these conventions had severe limitations. Some critics suggest that they perpetuate neocolonial dependencies and studies have shown they have

[2] See Nicolaidis (2005) Footnote15, page 119.

done little to ameliorate the economic situation of the ACP countries. Furthermore, the treaty-based, contractual nature of the relationship also clearly discriminated against other developing states and violated GATT/WTO principles of non-discriminatory practices in an open trade system. But trade is only one aspect of the EU's development policies. Article 130 of the Treaty on European Union states the Community policy in the development sphere is complementary to the policies pursued by Member States and should: (1) foster sustainable economic and social development; (2) facilitate the integration of the developing countries into the world economy; and (3) fight poverty in the developing world (Holland 2002: 2-3).

The rising and independent role of the European Parliament has led to a thorough and reflexive evaluation of the EU's 50 year history of development policies and essentially obliged the Commission to fundamentally revise its policy and elaborate a new framework for development policy of which the principal aim is the eventual eradication of poverty. Reflecting this change in discursive terms, the most important and recent joint statement by the Council and the Commission issued in July 2005 declared that Community development policy was grounded on the principle of sustainable, equitable and participatory human and social development. Promotion of human rights, democracy, the rule of law and good governance are also an integral part of the EU's development policy strategy.

One of the remaining issues on the reform agenda is better coordination between the member states and the EU commission and among the four Directorates-General that deal with development. One thing is clear: the EU member states are incrementally channeling a growing proportion of their total aid programs through the EU up from 13

% in 1990 to 17% of development assistance now transferred from the member states to the EU itself. These pooled resources alone make the EU assistance efforts among the world's five leading donor programs managing approximately $6 billion of development aid annually, roughly the same amount of assistance managed by the UN and the Office of Development Assistance (ODA) of the World Bank and the IMF (Lennon 2001: 127).

In 2005 the European Commission issued its latest statement regarding the reinvigorated commitment and the collective or 'community' approach to development. The following four fundamental concepts define the EU's new development policy:

- Harmonization: Seeks to harmonize aid procedures with other donors and partner countries
- Results-orientation: Evaluates success in terms of concrete achievements not inputs and particularly those measured against the UN Millennium Development Goals
- Ownership: Aligns EU aid with the national budget process and its implementation mechanisms. Encourages recipient countries to "take ownership" of the assistance program.
- Coherence: Ensures coherence with other policy areas with a view to reaching MDGs—environment, climate change, security, trade, fisheries, agriculture, research, information society, transport and energy.

Source: *EU Focus*: September 2005, p. 6. Publication of the European Commission Delegation to the USA.

What is most striking about these concepts underlying the EU's development policy (in addition to succinctness, which is altogether rare for any EU policy) is that two of the four principles imply the alignment of the EU's values with those of the United Nations and more specifically, the UN Millennium Development Goals. Of course, it remains to be seen whether or not the discourse is consistent with the actual practice and policy commitments, which we will evaluate in a subsequent section.

It is interesting to note that Europeans are fully cognizant and supportive of the leading role their societies play in development assistance. Europeans now provide more than 50 % of all civilian development assistance in the world and 47 % of humanitarian assistance in the world (Rifkin 2004: 304-305). The trend to move foreign aid policy under the purview of the EU, thus to the supranational as opposed to the national level, seems to make sense given the gradual coordination of more foreign economic and commercial policies. Though there may remain difficult issues to resolve regarding further enlargement, protecting cultural identities, and the harmonization of immigration and taxation policies, European citizens show firm support for a growing European foreign policy identity of which an important pillar is strengthening humanitarian and development assistance.

Empirical Evidence of Congruence between Discourse and Policy

The Doha Development Round

After more than five years of negotiations, the Doha round of trade talks launched in 2001 has reached what appears to be an intractable impasse. Officially labeled as the "development" round, the talks were intended to lure developing countries as well as globalization backlashers back to the table after the collapse of the WTO talks in Seattle in 1999. Responding also in part to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, rich countries were sending a message of solidarity with poorer countries by addressing the root causes of terrorism--the poverty and lack of economic opportunity that purportedly breeds it. The talks were also meant to pick up where the Uruguay Round left off--mainly further liberalization of agricultural and service sectors. The conflict over the agricultural sector specifically has come to symbolize all of the contradictions and hypocrisy behind all of the grandiose declarations about "aid for trade" and eradicating global poverty. Not only does agricultural trade represent the biggest area of conflict between the European Union and the United States (in the form of competing export interests as well as protecting domestic producers) with each blaming the other for not compromising or making adequate concessions to developing countries, it has also revealed divisions among the developing nations who would have very uneven benefits from new trade rules and true liberalization of the sector.

Large developing countries such as Brazil and Argentina clearly stand to gain from deeper cuts in EU and US farm tariffs and subsidies but these very cuts would certainly harm the poorest countries, particularly those that currently benefit from preferential treatment for their imports in EU markets. Unfortunately, but not surprisingly, both the Cancun (2003) and the Hong Kong (2005) ministerial meetings ended in stalemate. No easy conclusions can be made about whom the biggest culprit is or whose practices are more harmful to the larger cause of promoting economic development and ending practices that are so directly inequitable to the global South. At the Hong Kong meetings, the United States made a vague pledge to reduce its domestic cotton subsidies after being embarrassed by the EU and painted as an enemy of the poor --especially those of West Africa. In retaliation, the United States charges that protectionist policies of the EU's Common Agricultural Policy pit the narrow interests of a small number of European (mostly French) farmers against the economic well-being of the vast majority of population in the developing world. Brazil, leader of the Group of 20--the group of developing nations negotiating agriculture--has aligned with the United States to paint the EU as the real roadblock to progress. Brussels has made a commitment to reduce farm tariffs by only 39 % compared with the Group of 20 with a proposal of 54% and the US's proposed cut of 75%. In return, the rich countries are also demanding that the big emerging economies such as India and China drastically cut their industrial tariffs and this is where the rubber hits the road so to speak as these countries refuse to budge on market access and tariff reduction unless greater progress is reached on agriculture.

Though the European Union has been cast as the biggest obstacle, the joint World Bank and IMF Global Monitoring report of 2004 judged the EU both as the most open major market for exports from developing countries and the trading partner, which has made the greatest efforts to reduce its average protection levels in their favor. Ironically, a recent study by Thomas Hertel has found that a reduction in poverty as a result of full liberalization of agriculture and goods trade would only be half or a third of previous estimates and the limited package presently offered under Doha would lift only 20 million out of 1.1 billion living in destitution rather than the initial estimate of 127 million[3].   Such findings reinforce the need to consider development dilemmas and the North-South economic divide from multiple perspectives.

[3] The study was conducted for the World Bank and discussed in the *Financial Times*, November 16, 2005, page 11.

United Nations Millennium Development Goals

In September 2000, at the dawn of the new millennium, the General Assembly of the United Nations unanimously adopted the United Nations Millennium Declaration that vowed to make considerable strides towards eradicating global poverty. More specifically, the declaration contained eight proposals to cut the proportion of people in extreme poverty by half by the year 2015[4]. One calculation puts the cost of meeting the non-environmental targets at $40 to $70 billion a year above the current $50 billion in development assistance. Another estimate puts costs of environmental goals over a longer period at $25 billion per year. The 2002 conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey confirmed the need for more aid, trade and debt forgiveness by industrial countries and the European Union made lofty statements about living up to their pledges to meet the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). So how well has the EU fared six years into the campaign?

EU undertakings

Presently, the European Union (Commission + Member States) accounts for 55% of world aid. As President Barroso has publicly stated: " to achieve the MDGs, it is necessary "to do more, better and faster. The European Commission has made and will make proposals to strengthen the level of ambition and to consolidate its world leadership in Development Policy[5]."

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[4] The eight goals range from eradication of hunger and poverty to combating HIV/Aids and achieving an environmentally sustainable, global partnership for development. For more information on the goals, see www.un.org/millenniumgoals/.
[5] http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/05/314&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en

Net value of the ODA (official development assistance) provided by the EU, in million € (current rate)

	1990	1995	2000	2002	2003
EU	22,313	24,023	27,497	31,875	33,036
Commission	2,255	4,130	5,330	5,781	6,349

Source:http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/05/314&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en

At the UN World Summit 2005 Commission President Barroso challenged others to match European Union's commitments on Development goals such as the firm determination to reach the long-standing target of 0.7% of GNP to official development assistance (ODA) by 2015. The EU has set itself the interim target of 0.56% GNI/ODA by 2010. These EU commitments translate into 20 billion euro more ODA per year by 2010 and 45 billion euro more per year by 2015. Half of the increase is earmarked for Africa, the continent most in need of additional support in their efforts to reach the MDG's.

Overall, the OECD study has found that while aid as a share of GNI has declined over the period 2001-2003 in most countries, and most notably in Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States, ODA shares have increased in Belgium, Luxembourg, Spain, Switzerland and the United Kingdom and, from low initial shares, Austria, Greece and Ireland. Only Denmark, Netherlands, Norway and Sweden have consistently met the United Nations 0.7% target over the whole period covered in the table, but Luxembourg has been meeting the target since 2000. Since ODA shares of GNI reached their low point in 1997, 15 of the 22 DAC members have increased their shares and 11 have committed to remain at or to attain the 0.7% target[6]. Louis Michel, the EU's development commissioner has requested that "road maps" be drawn up for

[6] http://caliban.sourceoecd.org/vl=827800/cl=29/nw=1/rpsv/factbook/09-02-05-g01.htm

individual countries to ensure that each EU Member State meets new targets and another Commission official also underscored that even without including debt-relief, overall EU aid increased by 6.1 percent this past year.[7] The EU has pledged to lift aid to 0.5 percent of GNP by 2010 and the UN-recommended level of 0.7 percent by 2015. Unlike in the United States or Canada, the Europeans experience the additional layer of pressure to bolster contributions to development. The EU Commission and particularly the passionate current commissioner, Louis Michel, former Foreign Minister of Belgium, acts as a sort of external conscience on Member States to live up to their promises. Unlike other aspects of external relations, this policy area does not require a significant loss of national sovereignty but rather a shifting of resources from national to community level efforts.

Commitment to Development Index

It is not just the amount but the quality of the assistance that matters for producing positive change in economic development. The Center for Global Development and *Foreign Policy* (the periodical) may provide the best assessment tool for understanding the North-South economic divide in that it acknowledges that more holistic analyses of development policies are necessary to get at the sources of the growing disparities and persistent global poverty. In 2003, the organizations jointly published results of the first study ranking the world's riches countries according to how much their assistance helps or hinders the economic and social development of poor countries. The CDI is designed

[7] This is a significant point given that the recent one-off debt relief to Nigeria and Iraq represents a quarter of the total 48 billion Euros in reported aid. See Andrew Bounds "EU must increase giving to meet development aid pledges" *Financial Times*, April 2, 2007.

to examine a range of factors beyond foreign aid programs and generosity of aid, to other practices such as immigration policies, peacekeeping operations as well as FDI in developing countries. The index penalizes financial assistance to corrupt regimes, environmental harm, and barriers to imports from developing countries. Sixteen of the top nineteen countries are all European. Nine European nations rank in the top ten countries in the index.

The Commitment to Development Index shows that helping to fight poverty and address the disparity between the developed and developing worlds involve more than giving money. The Index ranks 21 rich countries according to their policies in seven areas: (1) Quantity and quality of foreign aid; (2) Openness to developing-country exports; (3) Policies that influence investment; (4) Migration policies; (5) Environmental policies; (6) Security policies; and (7) Support for creation and dissemination of new technologies. Scores on each component are scaled so that an average score in the CDI's first year, 2003, is equal to 5.0. A country's final score is the average of those for each component[8].

Though this is only a cursory analyses here, the CDI shows promise for offering a more comprehensive empirical yardstick by which we might gauge the effectiveness and fairness of policies that link the North and the South. Based on the 2003 findings, it appears the EU is fulfilling its ambition to become a leader in the realm of development

[8] See http://www.cgdev.org/section/topics/aid_effectiveness, See http://www.cgdev.org/section/topics/aid_effectiveness for the raw data and summary rankings.

policy despite its remaining shortcomings in the trade arena. The Commission however has recently begun a new campaign of trade assistance measures such as customs improvements and support for infrastructure. Combined the Commission and Member States have promised a billion euros annually by 2010 to entice poorer countries to sign trade agreements. The current average is 840 million euros from the EU level and an average of 300 million euros from national governments. This attempt appears less altruistic than other forms of assistance such as debt relief and direct aid and it may contradict or blur the line between the EU's normative goal of promoting human development and the actual practice of coercion and promotion of its own economic interests. These new trade tactics alongside the strict hygiene and product standards that some criticize as unfair and protectionist trade barriers coupled also with the complicated "rules of origin" restrictions point to a less than clear success story of the EU as a benefactor of developing countries. More rigorous and systematic empirical investigations that link both aid and trade practices would be needed to fully substantiate the claim that overall the EU acts in a consistent and normatively principled way when it comes to its vision and implementation of development policies.

Conclusion

The paper has sought an empirical validation of the concept of Normative Power Europe by examining one often neglected area of the EU's external relations: development policy. The question set forth at the beginning of this paper was whether or not the EU approach to development is consistent with its values and norms as well as effective and beneficial to the goals of development and global poverty reduction. With the exception of two areas, the need for greater efficiency in aid delivery and new trade assistance measures, overall the bulk of the empirical evidence suggests a tentative affirmation of the congruence between the notion of the EU as a normative power and the execution of its development policies.

The Europeans have undergone self-critique and concrete reform, by virtue of gradually transferring development policies to the supranational level away from the temptations and perils of pursuing narrow national interests that may come at the expense of the broader interest of sustainable human development consistent with the values enshrined in the EU’s founding treaties. Though these changes are still incremental and incomplete, the energy and commitment shown by the Directorate-General for Development and the growing interest and involvement of the European Parliament bode well for greater coherence and oversight which should produce more efficient and effective development policies in the near future.

As Maxwell and Riddell (1998) point out the European model of development is explicitly couched in terms of “partnership”. Partnership denotes equity and cooperation (Lister 2003), which directly challenges the notion of hierarchy. The 2000 Cotonou Partnership Agreement (and its predecessors) with 79 African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) countries is a prime example, combining aid, trade, and political dialogue. Inter-regionalism denotes agreement between distinct but equal regions based on promotion of good government and development through dialogue going beyond economic governance to embrace political and institutional reform and social inclusion. In this regard, EU aid is tied to institutional reforms and the recipient country’s own long-term development goals and achievements. Thus, the EU sees ownership by EU partner countries as pivotal for the efficiency and sustainability of its initiatives. At the same time this strategy seeks a discursive mediation of inequalities between Europe and the South. From this perspective it is arguably the case that EU development policies represent the normative form and the empirical function of the theoretical concept as well as the practice of a “Normative Power Europe.”

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