# The evolution of EU's 'self – presentation': 1992-2016

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – This paper aims to investigate the ideological discourse in the EU's self-presentation, which will provide a new standpoint for scholars interested in analyzing the EU's foreign policy.

**Design/methodology/approach** – To understand how the EU perceives itself, the research investigates the Preamble of the Treaty of the European Union (Maastricht Treaty 1992) and its consolidated versions of 1997, 2002, 2006, 2008, 2010 and 2016. Investigation of the consolidated versions of the Maastricht treaty is important to understand how the Union came to develop the image of the Self throughout time and how the international context had affected EU's self-image. The preambles are analyzed using the socio-cognitive approach to critical discourse analysis to examine the ideological discourse of self-presentation.

**Findings** – It can be concluded that the discourse used in the preamble reflects an ideological discourse used by the EU to present itself in positive ways. Such an ideological discourse emphasizes the differentiation between the in-group and out-group identification. Thus, it can suggest some implications that the EU holds a negative portray of the "Other" who do not hold the same characteristics, activities, goals, norms and values.

**Originality/value** – Understanding the possibility of such an ideological discourse can help researchers to adopt a new standpoint to analyze the EU's foreign policy, which can help in providing new perspective for academic scholarly work.

**Keywords** European Union, Constructivism

**Paper type** Research paper

## Introduction

The European Union (EU) had become an important international actor since its creation in 1992. It had developed throughout the years (1958-1992) from being primarily a cooperation between Western European states to a Union made up of 28-member states, including previously communist states. Its official self-definition is always presented "as an integrating civilian, democratic and legal space for political norms and economic regulation" (Emerson, 2011, p. 46); and such a trend had dominated the academic literature as well. Thus, it is vital to understand how the EU came to perceive itself and if such a perception had changed through time. Self-image greatly affects the conception of the actor's foreign policies, internal dynamics and politics. Thus, it is crucial to understand its self-image as a starting point to assist in understanding and analyzing its policies.

## Approaches to analyzing European Union's foreign policy

The academic literature on the EU is enormous; however, the mainstream literature perceives "the EU as a neoliberal, state-like political system and that the Europeanisation is a one-way process" (Manners and Whitman, 2016, p. 3). The present literature on analyzing the EU, particularly its foreign policy, inclines towards falling into the "mainstream" category. Despite various attempts to present such scholarly work as "pluralist", it actually tends to be dominated by two approaches, which can be easily said to be "a clear political science hegemony" (Manners and Whitman, 2016, p. 3).

These two approaches are focusing mainly on the objectives of EU's foreign policy. The first framework is the "Civilian Power Model" (CPM) that highlights EU's capacity to "domesticate" relations among states within and outside the Union (Balfour, 2012, p. 2). For instance, Balfour (2012) suggests that the EU is capable of such domestication through establishing the sense of common responsibilities that is harmonizing between "home", i.e. within the state on one hand, and the EU on the other, and "foreign." This is done by encouraging a "built-in sense of collective action" based on internal "values" of equality, justice, and tolerance. The EU pursues a foreign policy, particularly towards its neighborhoods, that seeks to make them "more like us" – EU member states (Emerson, 2011, p. 55). The CPM suggests that EU's foreign policy is based on using the economic, diplomatic and cultural policy instruments (Smith, 2005). The EU promotes its objectives through civilian tools. However, this approach has been criticized for particularly examining the outcomes or the ends without taking into consideration the means by which the EU actually pursues its foreign policy or "civilian power" (Smith, 2005). Furthermore, Dunne (2008) suggests that the approach has two main defects; one is direct and the other is indirect. First, it emphasizes that the term "civilian" is the opposite of "military". Second, supporters of this approach are promoting for the exceptionalism of the EU, however, they are indirectly antagonizing moderate voices in the United States (EU's main ally) that are counter-arguing with the neo-conservatives who adopt the stand that "Europeans are not prepared to stand up for what they believe in" (Dunne, 2008, p. 14). Accordingly, the CPM is limited in its analysis.

The second approach is the "Normative Power Approach" (NPA) It argues that the special status of the EU, as of its history and political reality, influences the EU to act normatively on the international system, by spreading its principles through ideational interaction (Balfour, 2012, p. 3). This approach suggests that the EU had been conducting successful and effective foreign policy due to its ability to spread its values and ideas while interacting with the international society. However, this approach has been criticized as empirical evidence shows that the EU in various events had worked in contradiction to its own normative rhetoric, particularly that of human rights, and democracy, among others (Toje, 2011; Balfour, 2012; Emerson, 2011). The supporters of the NPA contradict the core of their suggested approach, as they believe that "a collective actor with diverse and extensive global commitments, interests and diplomatic relations will not simply pursue an idealist-based foreign policy" (Balfour, 2012, p. 2). Manners (2008, p. 45), for instance, highlights that there must be a differentiation between saying that "the EU *is* a normative power" for its political feature as a hybrid polity (supranational and international forms of governance) and to argue that the "EU *acts* in a normative (i.e. ethically good) way".

On the other hand, "dissident voices" of studying the EU "are seeking to actively challenge the mainstream" to argue that "another Europe is possible" (Manners and Whitman, 2016, pp. 3-5). These dissident voices range in their theoretical, ontological, epistemological and methodological standpoints (Manners and Whitman, 2016; Manners, 2014; Kolvraa, 2016). These voices are very diversified that cannot be properly presented in

this article due to spatial reasons. Therefore, it can be suggested that the present literature on analyzing EU's foreign policy is thus still limited.

The research can be considered as one of those dissident voices, since the mainstream approaches tend to focus on either the civilian or the normative nature of the EU. Besides, the approaches' standpoint assumes positive/normative/civilian actions of the EU. Therefore, they lack the ability to analyze the EU's actual/realistic role as an actor in the international community, which may entail different aspects as unethical or negative facets in the EU's foreign policy. Thus, it is important to examine to what extent the EU is a normative international actor. In doing so, it is vital to understand how the EU came to perceive itself as a starting point and how such self-presentation evolved over time.

## Discourse analysis

Discourse analysis is crucial to unveil ideologies in political discourse (Angermuller, 2013, p. 15). This is done through identifying the "ideological content of a discourse" in accordance to an explicit normative reference (Angermuller, 2013, p. 15). As Van Dijk (2006) argues, ideology and discourse have mutually constructed functions for each other. Ideologies are usually expressed in discourse (text and talk); while discourse functions as a mean to either create a new ideology or to confirm present ideologies (Van Dijk, 2006).

Discourse analysis has been criticized for various reasons. One of the most common criticisms is the validity of the analysis of situated meanings or the "frame problem," which Gee and Handford (2012) explain as context being indefinitely large. Context may include and range from simple body languages through people's beliefs, to historical, cultural or institutional settings. Therefore, studies interested in using discourse analysis, particularly critical discourse analysis (CDA), need to provide a clear and detailed picture of the context that the researcher comprehends. Analysis of the framework and context can provide a different understanding of the situation being studied. Thus, it provides a wider range of understanding the phenomenon studied.

However, CDA provides different tools to study how discourse produces meaning as well as how the knowledge produced by such a discourse connects with power, formulates actions, constructs identities, subjectivities, and specifies how certain things are represented, thought about, studied and/or practiced (Hall, 1997, p. 6). Discourse analysis gives special attention to history and emphasizes on the "regime" of representation (Hall, 1997, p. 6). It also highlights how those meanings "are deployed at particular times, in particular places" (Hall, 1997, p. 6). Thus, it provides researchers with the ability to focus on "historical specificity", as well as how representational practices take place (Hall, 1997; Gee and Handford, 2012).

Therefore, the research examines how the EU came to present itself on the international arena and how such self-presentation evolved over time. The study argues that the preamble of The Treaty on European Union (1992) and its Consolidated Version of the Treaty on European Union (1997, 2002, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2016) include ideological self-presentation, which contradicts with the mainstream literature on analyzing the EU's foreign policy. Such an ideological self-presentation reflects how the international context and socialization of the EU in the international system had affected its self-perception. Thus, the study concludes with the suggestion of a new standpoint that can assist future scholarly work in analyzing the EU's foreign policy from a different perspective.

## Theoretical and methodological frameworks

The research uses Wendt's (1999) social constructivist approach of international relations. This is to understand the context in which the discourse was created and how the international system came to shape the EU's self-identity.

Social Constructivism concentrates on intersubjective issues and social context, such as identity in world politics, domestic politics, as well as culture (Hopf, 1998). To use Constructivism, it is of vital importance to understand the concept of the constitution of agent and structure (Adler, 2013), which is based on ideas and their meanings, the socialization process, identities and interests, and how they can all contribute to the actor's/agent's understanding of anarchy.

Constructivism approaches social inquiry based on two basic assumptions. First, states/agents are interacting in a social as well as material environment (Checkel, 1998, p. 325). Second, such a perception of the environment would provide states/agents with an understanding of their interests, identity, and even with the concept of anarchy. Wendt (1999, p. 1) supports the primacy of shared ideas rather than material forces within human associations. Though material environments matter, however, their meaning largely depends on the shared ideas that are rooted within (Hopf, 2000, pp. 369-370). Wendt (1999, p. 78) simply presents that "ideas constitute social situations and the meaning of material forces".

Wendt (1995, p. 74) argues that the social practice of states is a process because "social structures exist, not in actors' heads nor in material capabilities, but in practices." He believes that the process of socialization is a two-way process, between the agent and structure. His argument is based on the view that the international system is a social construction that is primarily structured by culture (Hopf, 2000, p. 369). He also argues that social structures constitute actors with certain identities and interests (Wendt, 1995, p. 78). For constructivists, the world is socially constructed, whereby socially means that there is more weight given to the social context in which the process of interaction between agents (individuals, groups, states, non-state actors) and the structure of their broader environment takes place. Thus, there is a two-way process of interaction between agents and structure, which are present in a context defined by social norms or social discourses (Checkel, 2008, p. 72). Consequently, interaction between the agent and the structure can lead to change. This is due to the assumption that "agents and structures are themselves [on-going] processes" (Wendt, 1999, p. 313).

The "on-going processes" is explained by the symbolic interactionism, which focuses on the reproduction of agents, of their identities and interests. Through interactions, Wendt (1999) believes that states try to maintain the conception of Self and Other, which then produces the interests of the state. Identities and interests are an on-going outcome of interaction; they are always in process. How actors/agents interact allow them to identify themselves and others. This interaction, then, allows actors/agents to go through a process of interaction and socialization. Accordingly, their socialization enforces their identities and how they perceive each other. Based on this perception, their actions and preferences start to evolve. Once evolved, the "new" structure is then founded, or the old structure reformulated and/or reinforced.

In further explanation of how the world works, constructivists give norms and identities a great role. The interaction between agents and structures is taking place within the context of accepted norms or "global norms", whereby norms are defined to be "collective understandings that make behavioral claims on actors" (Checkel, 1998, p. 327). The effects of these accepted/collective understandings or norms reach deeper to the extent that "they constitute actor identities and interests and do not simply regulate behavior" (Checkel, 1998, p. 328). Norms, therefore, are considered to provide states/agents an understanding of their interests (Checkel, 1998, p. 326). Accordingly, "constitutive norms" provide a definition of an identity that will dictate actions by which Others can recognize such an identity and respond accordingly (Hopf, 1998, p. 173). Norms and practices are needed to identify an

actor's own identity as well as others' identities. Through the actor's choices, actions and interactions, its identity is formulated, interpreted and reenforced.

Constructivists argue that identities are necessary, both on the domestic and international levels, to speculate a minimal level of predictability and order since "the identity of a state implies its preferences and consequent actions" (Hopf, 1998, p. 175). Identities are, thus, a crucial element to determine an agent's interests and preferences. Identities help to understand one-self and to identify others, as well as to reproduce one-self's identity through daily social practice (Hopf, 1998, p. 174). Accordingly, it can be concluded that identities have three main functions in societies; they "tell you and others who you are and they tell you who others are" (Hopf, 1998, p. 174). Constructivists argue that the recognition of the "other" is essential to constitute the identity of "self" (Greenhill, 2008, p. 343). Constructivism treats the issue of identity as an empirical question to be analyzed within a historical context (Hopf, 1998, p. 175). Identities within such an analysis come to be considered as a variable, which is dependent on historical, cultural, political and social context (Hopf, 1998, p. 175).

Based on the agent's/state's understanding of shared ideas and their meaning, socialization process, and identity and interests, Wendt (1995, p. 73) suggests that they provide the actors with situations whereby the actors can identify the nature of their relationships, whether "cooperative or conflictual." Wendt (1995) explains that the social relations among the states/actors can define the nature of anarchy, which has different meanings for the different actors. Accordingly, anarchy can have different implications on different relations and core issues of international politics. Thus, "a continuum of anarchies is possible" (Hopf, 1998, p. 174).

The "continuum of cultures of anarchy" is divided into three types. The first type, on one extreme, is the Hobbesian Culture of Anarchy that is characterized by enmity. Wendt (1999, p. 260) argues that in such a culture the actors constitute each other as enemies, so the Other is presented as the enemy and "does not recognize the right of the Self to exist as an autonomous being" and "will not willingly limit its violence toward the Self." The second type of culture, which stands as a mid-point on the continuum, is the Lockean culture, that is characterized by rivalry, which assumes that the Self and the Other are less threatening to each other. They both act in a way in which they recognize each other's sovereignty, "life and liberty," as a *right*; and thus, they will not try "to conquer or dominate" each other (Wendt, 1999, p. 279). Third, the Kantian culture that stands on the other extreme of the continuum is characterized by friendship, which is observed by two simple rules: nonviolence and "the rule of mutual aid." Wendt (1992) concludes that "anarchy is what states make it." Anarchy is, thus, a state of how actors/agents get to be socialized in reference to other actors/agents.

This study will adopt the Social Constructivism approach of International Relations to answer the research question, since constructivists believe in "the power of knowledge, ideas, culture, ideology, and language, that is, discourse" (Hopf, 1998, p. 177). Constructivists also believe that "History matters" (Wendt, 1995, p. 77). Its core concepts are deliberation, discourses, norms, persuasion, identity, socialization and arguing (Checkel, 2008).

To understand how the EU perceives and presents itself in the international community, the research uses the socio-cognitive approach in examining and analyzing the preamble of the founding treaty on the EU and its consolidated versions. Van Dijk suggests that if a discourse is influenced by a certain ideology, it usually features information that typically answers a set of questions that reflect self-identity, activity, goal, norm and value, as well as resource descriptions. Thus, the questions that are expected to be answered through an ideological discourse are related to identity. They include: Who are We? Who do (do not)

belong to US? (Van Dijk, 1995, pp. 146-148). This self-identity description is usually done when a group is "self-or-other-defined," or in other words, through in-group or outgroup identification, by focusing mainly or exclusively on certain characteristics, such as ethnicity, religion, language, origin, among others. Activity related questions usually ask What do We do? What are Our activities? What is expected of Us? What are Our tasks? What are Our social/economic/political roles? (Van Dijk, 1995, p. 148). The goal description usually entails "positive" goals. "Thus, ideological discourse of groups will typically focus on the (good) goals of their activities." (Van Dijk, 1995, p. 148). It is very important to note here that these "goal descriptions are by definition ideological, and not necessarily factual: this is how groups and their members see themselves, or want to be seen and evaluated" (Van Dijk, 1995, p. 148). Norm and value descriptions are of crucial importance in ideological discourse, as they set the boundaries for what the group perceives as "good and bad", "right or wrong", and what their actions and goals are actually trying to respect and/or achieve (Van Dijk, 1995, p. 148). The research looks into the social and cognitive meanings associated by the constructed national image of the EU, as the West/Liberal/Normative/Peaceful. The researcher is interested in examining such meanings because social meanings, as cultural meanings "are not only 'in the head', they organize and regulate social practices, influence our conduct and consequently have real, practical effects" (Hall, 1997, p. 3).

To sum up, Constructivists argue that the recognition of the "other" is essential to constitute the identity of "self" (Greenhill, 2008, p. 343) and treat the issue of identity as an empirical question to be analyzed within a historical context (Hopf, 1998, p. 175); then, identities within such an analysis come to be considered as a variable. This variable is dependent on historical, cultural, political and social context. Therefore, to understand how the EU came to confirm its presence as an international actor, it is of crucial importance to investigate the Preamble of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU), which is the founding treaty of the EU. It is of equal significance to examine its consolidated versions that reflect and consist of the integration of its successive amendments and corrigenda. Investigation of the consolidated versions is important to understand how the Union came to develop the image of the Self throughout time. At the same time, analysis of the international context and the socialization process of the timeframe is important to understand how they influenced the discourse. The preambles are analyzed using the socio-cognitive approach to CDA to examine the ideological discourse of self-presentation. The ideological discourse in presenting the self usually has answers to the following questions:

*Q1.* Who are We? Who do (do not) belong to Us?

*Q2.* What do We do? What are Our activities? What is expected from Us?

*Q3.* What are the goals of these activities?

*Q4.* What norms and values do We respect in such activities?

*Q5.* To which groups are We related: Who are Our friends and enemies?

## Treaty on the European Union/Maastricht treaty 1992
To understand the context in which the European Union came to interact on the international arena since its creation, and throughout the study's timeframe (1992-2016), a diversified context needs to be presented. First, it is crucial to comprehend the relations among the Western states (the West). It is also important to extend our analysis to the aftermath of the Second World War. The West shared and presented the "free world", or in other words, the democratic, liberal and capitalist ideology against the "one party system",

"non-democratic", and "communist" ideology presented by the Soviet Union (Eastern Bloc). The West went through a socialization process that involved, and was based on, their shared ideological beliefs. Their unity was also based on their sense of insecurity inflicted by the presence of an ideological opponent. Accordingly, they came to ally in various ways. Namely, in the military sphere through embracing the idea of common security; therefore, the creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was possible. In the financial sphere, the West came to unite furthermore by creating the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. For more than 45 years, the West came to consolidate its identity through its enmity to the Eastern bloc, which was identified as the "Other." Thus, two cultures of anarchy were present, among the West, a Kantian culture has been the case, whereby they had friendly relations with each other, no violence but rather cooperation was the norm; while a Hobbesian culture was present between the West and the East. Therefore, the transatlantic relations and socialization process is of great importance for this study.

Then, among the Western European states, the socialization process that took place since the creation of the European Economic Community in 1958 allowed a shift from a Hobbesian culture of anarchy among these countries, which was culminated by Second World War. Thus, these countries came to realize and understand that the social context had changed and a possible Kantian culture is possible. By the end of the Cold War, the "liberal international order" (Riddervold and Newsome, 2018) was established by the fall of the Soviet Union. The early 1990s presented the international society, and particularly the European communities with new challenges and opportunities. Among the most prominent were the end of the Cold War, reunification of Germany, the Persian Gulf War (1990-1991), and the Bosnian War (1992-1995) (Hitchcock, 2008).

The treaty on the EU, or what came to be known as the Maastricht treaty, was signed in February 1992, to establish the European Union. It was signed by 12 states, which were Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Spain, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Portugal and Britain. The treaty came into force in November 1993 to create the new international actor in a time of uncertainty, only few months after the end of the Cold War and the fall of the Soviet Union. Thus, the prominent enemy, or Other, that was well established for almost half a century is no longer present. This was a time of uncertainty and a new meaning of anarchy was possible, not only for the EU but for the whole of the Western bloc.

The signatories of the treaty describe themselves as European nations that had worked on a European integration process, which had established European communities. They made sure to use an "in-group" identification, though, there had been no definition of what is European nor Europe in the preamble. It is important to understand that the concept of "Europe" had been changing throughout history (Oner, 2011). Yet, they had agreed on the need to work on constructing the "future Europe," based on their historical experience of the division of the "European continent." Yet, the uncertainty of what is Europe/European can also be expected because of the new form of an international actor that the treaty was about to establish. It is important to keep in mind that the new international actor was first of its character. Furthermore, it came to be in a time of shuffling in the international system due to the end of the Cold War and the fall of the Eastern Bloc.

The signatories were aware of an integration process that was taking place. Their main role was presented as to proceed with the process and their task as to reach "a new stage", which would be 'undertaken with the establishment of the "European Communities." Although the preamble did not specify what Europe/European mean, there is a determination among the signatories that the process of integration that had already started in the near past, is to be continued and further enhanced. This was based on their shared

knowledge and historical experience that economic cooperation and interdependence helped them to avoid conflict.

The goals specified in the preamble are of great importance. They are divided into two main categories. The first category is an attempt to draw on formulating an identity to the newly established entity, the EU. The second category promotes for a more solid economic integration.

The preamble indicates, among the identity formulation category, that although there might be differences between the peoples of Europe, they will all work on respecting "their history, their culture and their traditions." The preamble is suggesting a unity among the diversified members, who have a common goal of economic development. That being specified, it sheds light that there is no common history, culture or traditions among the peoples of "Europe" or the "European communities" (Oner, 2011; Kouparanis, 2013). This is a reflection that this goal is ideological in its nature, as it lacks factual and historical proofs. It also reflects that the new entity is building up a specific way on how it should be seen and evaluated. Therefore, the third goal of establishing a sense of common citizenship to the peoples of the Union is to further allow the sense of belonging to the newly created entity. The fourth goal is to "reinforce the European identity" that is suggested to "promote peace, security and progress in Europe and in the world." Thus, the signatories believe that the new entity is expected to have an international role in promoting peace, security and progress, not within Europe only. However, empirical evidence shows that the EU, in various events, had worked in contradiction to its own normative rhetoric, particularly that of human rights, and democracy, among others (Balfour, 2012). Fifth, the signatories perceive themselves as democratic entities that operate through democratic institutions. They adopt the idea that they would work on enhancing these institutions, which are being characterized as "efficient", to work in a "single institutional framework"; thus, promoting for democratic institutional integration among themselves. Building on the fifth goal, the signatories suggest the implementation of "the principle of subsidiarity" as the sixth goal. It is presented as a tool of deepening the democratic characteristics of the newly established entity that should enhance further "European integration".

The second category, which promotes for economic integration, is made up of three goals. The first goal is to "establish an economic and monetary union" that includes "a single and stable currency." This goal is a means to establish a clearer understanding of the Self. The European Union established by the treaty was a vague entity. However, such a goal of economic and monetary union works on enhancing the economic integration that had been taking place since the establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community (The European Union, 2017). Furthermore, it allows the participating parties to establish a sense of common identity. The second goal specifies the work on promoting "economic and social progress" on the basis of "the internal market", "reinforced cohesion" and the "environmental protection" to ensure advanced economic integration that would be paralleled with other fields. The signatories reaffirm "their objective to facilitate the free movement." This goal is a core element in the economic integration targeted by the treaty. Accordingly, more clarifications on the "justice and home affairs" are included in the treaty to ensure a clear and well-established foundation for the aimed economic integration. These goals highlight the importance of economic integration as a main target of the newly created entity. It can also be understood that such goals are based on the success of their experience in economic integration that led to the minimization of violent conflicts to arise till the present time. These set of goals have factual grounds, which had been evolving for decades and they present the basis of the "liberal international order" and the Western bloc socialization process.

The preamble presents the signatories as holding and "confirming their attachment" to specific principles, which are the norms and values that they hold as a common base for their unity/integration. "Liberty, democracy, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and the rule of law" are presented in the preamble as a given. It is worth noting that none of these principles is explained, defined, or given any solid characteristics. The type of democracy is different between the French and German models, for instance (Oner, 2011). Therefore, it is not possible to claim that the signatories are uniformly holding to them, but it reflects that they perceive them as the "good" and "right"; accordingly, they will be working on trying to respect and/or achieve them. It can also reflect their common understanding of these principles from a Western perspective based on their socialization process that had been going since the end of the Second World War.

Upon the creation of the EU, the entity itself did not have a clear-cut vision of what its identity is. Therefore, there was the stand to introduce certain goals to establish common characteristics for the new international actor that just came to be.Part of this ambiguity is due to the uncertainty on the international level; whereby the Cold War that the international system was accustomed to had ended. It is also clear that the signatories needed to focus on having a voice of their own in the international arena.

The preamble in general reflects a positive self-image of the EU. The new entity had been characterized as being a European entity (yet with no clear definition of what European and/or Europe is); its people as "peace-loving" nations; its members as adhering to the values of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law (with no specific definition of and/or clarification on any of these terms). The EU had been presented as a unit made up of members whom had learnt from the errors of the past and looking forward to building a better future for their people. Thus, presenting itself as a progressive entity that denounces the horror of war while working on and through "civil", "social" and "economic" common grounds. The exclusivity, yet ambiguity, of being European suggest a different image of the "Other" that is not a member of the group because of lacking such positive characteristics. Such an image would most probably be a negative one, since the discourse is ideologically based and focusing mainly or exclusively on certain characteristics.

## Consolidated version of the Treaty on the European Union 1997

Since TEU entered into force in 1993, numerous events took place that had influenced the EU's interaction on the international arena. The most prominent and revealing case was the Bosnian War, which was defined as the international crisis of the 1990s (Hitchcock, 2008, p. 67). The EU came to realize that the US was unwilling to get involved as its list of international commitments included other aspects as the economic recession and the demise of the Soviet Union (Hitchcock, 2008, pp. 67-68), particularly since Russia was being introduced to the NATO's Partnership for Peace program and welcomed into the G-7 group. This inaction by the US had raised doubts over the sense of purpose and confidence in the cross-Atlantic relations, it even "shattered the honeymoon" within the Western bloc (Hitchcock, 2008, p. 68). Therefore, the EU found itself solely responsible for the crisis, as it was in its backyard (Bislimi, 2010, p. 29). However, it was the US who had put an end to the conflict in 1995 by the Daytona Peace Accords (Babuna, 2014, p. 2), despite the EU's efforts and different policies. This crisis had revealed that the EU is incapable of assertive actions, development and implementation of coherent, effective foreign and security policies (Hitchcock, 2008, p. 71). Accordingly, the socialization process during these years among the Western bloc reflected a possibility of a different culture of anarchy that needed reassessment.

In 1997, after five years of the establishment of the EU, two years of the Daytona Peace Accords and the ongoing process of domesticating Russia, the Treaty of Amsterdam came to amend the TEU to build on and deepen the integration process. Therefore, some new goals were introduced to the preamble of 1997. While, the self-identity, the activity and the norms and values descriptions in the consolidated version of 1997 did not change.

The goals tackled economic and social aspects; however, the common foreign and security policy was present for the first time in the preamble. The first goal was specific to the social rights. The signatories did specify the reference to their attachment to the "fundamental social rights" to be "the European Social Charter singed at Turin on 18 October 1961" and "the 1989 Community Charter of the Fundamental Social Rights of Workers." The European Social Charter is a Council of Europe treaty that guarantees fundamental social and economic rights (Council of Europe, 2019). While the Community Charter of the Fundamental Social Rights of Workers, adopted in 1989, was to establish major principles to act as a guide for European labor law models (EUR-Lex, 2011). Accordingly, the signatories were very specific in highlighting the documents that guide the Union's understanding, and accordingly goal, in reference to social rights. There is no space for maneuvering or ambiguity in this regard. It also presents the Union's priorities to be mainly working on economic and social levels.

The second new goal was presented in the signatories' resolution to establish "an area of freedom, security and justice." This was an advanced move from the preamble of 1992, in which they mentioned that the Maastricht treaty to include "provisions on justice and home affairs." The goal again underlines the importance of economic and social integration among the member states. Furthermore, it presents the Union's understanding of itself to be a "free", "safe" and "just" space for the signatories' peoples. Therefore, the Schengen area, or Europe with no borders, was realized.

The principle of sustainable development was introduced as a framework, among "the accomplishment of the internal market", "reinforced cohesion", and "environmental protection", for the promotion of economic and social progress of the peoples of the Union. The goal endorses economic and social integration within a specific framework of work that builds on previous integration. This goal presents the Union as an entity that cares for the environment and works within the guidelines for maintaining it.

The fourth new goal focused on the common foreign and defence policies that the Union is to develop. The goal specifies the "progressive framing of a common foreign policy, which might lead to a common defence in accordance with the provisions of Article 17." The signatories specified article 17 so as to reduce the ambiguity and any possible confusion in regards to their previous commitment(s), particularly to Western European Union (WEU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

The EU's inability to act swiftly and coherently on the Bosnian crisis as well as its realization that the importance of its security is diminishing for the US resulted in a drift in the bloc. Such understanding motivated the EU to work on different levels to ensure its future ability to face possible crises. Working extensively on its internal dynamics, deepening economic and social integration, were seen as vital prerequisites by which it would be able to formulate a common foreign and a possible defence policy that can guarantee its members' security among other interests. However, the preamble of 1997 maintained the positive and ambiguous self-presentation, preserved positive and specific traits for its people, and highlighted the focus of the EU to be social and economic integration, as well as the need for a common foreign and (a might) defence policy.

## Consolidated version of the Treaty on the European Union 2002

Three main events between 1997 and 2002 had a huge impact on the EU. Primarily, the shift in the American foreign policy to be more engaging (because of the Bosnian war) in Europe. Due to the beginning of a steady process of rehabilitating the Soviet era in Russia under President Vladimir Putin, special attention was given to previously communist states in Central and Eastern Europe. Both the US and the EU came to realize that the Central and Eastern European states are of great importance for the security and prosperity of Europe. Thus, they both had a common vision of the importance of their collaboration and the need to look towards the east once more, although with a mindset of collaboration rather than enmity, despite and because of the Russian resistance to assimilate.

Second, the EU was preparing for the common currency or the euro zone, which came into force in 1 January 1999. The euro zone was a realization of the deeper and more coherent economic integration of the Union, and a mark of its economic and monetary union that it had been working on for decades. The EU's focus on eastern neighborhood required its hard work on its own economic and social functionality first, so it would be able to extend its membership to the interested candidates in the East. The Union understood that to be able to welcome and integrate those states, it will need to secure a specific level of economic and social integration for the present members; thus, the integration of any future member would be smooth and less-troubling.

Third, the 9/11 terrorist attacks gave no room for any shift or change to take place in the EU's self-perception. This was due to several interactions. Mainly, the American discourse had started to promote for "US-THEM" polarized discourse, not only between the Americans and the "terrorists" (Khalil, 2016), but more generally between the Americans and the rest of the world (Van Dijk, 1995, p. 150). Also, the EU had perceived the attacks, although distant, but it had caused striking harm to the US and horror across the Atlantic. Therefore, the EU had "the desire to reach out and help an old friend" (Hitchcock, 2008, p. 72).

Therefore, when the Treaty of Nice was introduced to reform the EU institutions to function more efficiently after the enlargement process, no changes were done in the preamble of the consolidated version of 2002. It remained exactly as that of 1997.

## Consolidated version of the Treaty on the European Union 2006

The Anglo-American invasion of Iraq in 2003 had caused a drift in the transatlantic relations, as well as within the EU itself (Hitchcock, 2008, pp. 71-72); yet, the EU perceived the terrorist attacks and the US initiated War on Terror as new international challenges to test its common foreign and defence policies. Among these policies, the enlargement policy, which was successful in attracting eight countries of Central and Eastern Europe – the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia – in 2004 to join the EU in full membership.

The internal dynamics of the EU and its institutions were shaken by the referendum "No" vote in France and The Netherlands on the Constitution of the EU (Constitution treaty) in 2005. The rationale behind the Constitution treaty was to make the EU more effective. The shock was mainly because these two states were among the founding states of the European project, thus the results of the vote signaled discontent and disconnection between the voters and the EU institutions (Jeffery, 2005).

On the international arena, there was no room to adjust the self-presentation that was already established in 1997. While on the internal level, the EU realized that the citizens, particularly in these two key states to the European project, were not ready to take further steps in this regard. Therefore, the preamble of the consolidated version of the TEU 2006 did

not introduce any new aspects. This version of the treaty adopted the same preamble as of the version of 1997, with 25 signatories.

## Consolidated version of the Treaty on the European Union 2008

Since the terrorist attacks of 9/11, there had been a rise of antagonism against Islam and Muslims that had been noticed in different parts of the world, particularly in the USA and Europe (Esposito and Kalin, 2005), a phenomenon known as Islamophobia (Khalil, 2016). The source of terrorism was identified differently across the Atlantic. The US perceive it as an external threat; while Europe tackled it as an interior matter (Hitchcock, 2008, pp. 71-72), by which the far-right parties started to attract more attention of the public through using Islamophobic discourse. The extent and intensity of this discourse were exaggerated further after the Madrid 2004 and the London 2005 bombings (Friesen, 2005). Right wing leaders explicitly convicted Islam and Muslims as the evil doer, and warned that other attacks would lead violence to erupt, which may run "the risk of sectarianizing or 'Balkanizing Western Europe'" (John J. Le Beau as cited in Tepfenhart, 2011, p. 62).

At its Eastern front, the EU had been hoping for Russia to follow its footsteps in modernization and democratization process, particularly that Putin had declared that he perceives Russia as 'part of the European culture' (Luhn, 2015); however, the European – Russian relations were facing various difficulties, the NATO expansion as well as the EU's extension towards the east was not welcomed by Russia, as it perceived this part of the world as its own backyard (Luhn, 2015). The Russian resistance to assimilation onto a Western model was heightened.

As a result of the enlargement process, the number of signatories increased to be a total of 27 states; Bulgaria and Romania were the last two to join the Union. The preamble of 2008 introduced new aspects related to the concept of Europe and its impact on the world.

The self-identity description remains ambiguous as that of 2006. However, the preamble advocates that the European "cultural", "religious" and "humanist" inheritance that have impacted and "developed the universal values of the inviolable and inalienable rights of the human person, freedom, democracy, equality and the rule of law" is the source of inspiration for the Union.Although there is still no clear reference to what is Europe or European in the preamble, such a belief reflects how the Union perceived its origin, impact on the world, and superiority on such issues as of human rights, democracy, equality and the rule of law, particularly that it was presented as an "inheritance of Europe." It also includes the notion of religion, in this case Christianity, in identifying the origins of what is believed/presented to be Europe. This self-identity description indicates that the Union is a group that is "self-or-other-defined," or in other words, through in-group or outgroup identification, by focusing mainly or exclusively on certain characteristics, such as religion, culture, origin, among others.

The activity descriptions in the preamble of 2008 did not change from that of the 2006. Yet, there was a reference to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, also known as the Treaty of Rome, in regards to strengthening and convergence of the economies of the member states to "establish an economic and monetary union." Accordingly, the economic integration is presented as the focal activity of the union along with the social integration as its complementary.

The goals descriptions presented in the preamble remain the same as of 2006. The only update is done to the reference to the common foreign and defence policy to be article 42 instead of article 17. Article 42 introduces the Union's ability to use its "civilian and military assets" in missions outside the Union, through the capabilities of the member states. This is

important in reference to the Union's goal to establish and reinforce "the European identity" and "its independence to promote peace, security and progress in Europe and in the world".

The Union needed to have a flexible, yet, strong means to implement an independent foreign policy that reflects its newly established identity as a powerful and resourceful international actor, particularly after the initiation of the War on Terror and its consequences on the international politics, as well as domestic politics (BBC News, 2011). This new approach was essential to maintain unity and cohesion within the Union and its member states, on the one hand; and to prove the Union's ability to act and influence the international arena, on the other hand.

## Consolidated version of the Treaty on the European Union 2010
The preamble of 2010 did not include any new aspects. This version of the treaty adopted the same preamble as of the version of 2008 However, it is of great importance to remember that the international financial crisis had hit some of the member states; therefore, an emergency summit of the European Council at the Heads of State Level took place in the autumn of 2008 (Székely and van den Noord, 2009). Thus, the Union's goal to work on economic and social integration came to be of great importance for its survival as an international capable actor.

## Consolidated version of the Treaty on the European Union 2016
The Arab Spring in 2011 had tremendous effects on the EU. The new refugee influx was considered to be the largest since World War II (Hard, 2015) and had resulted in the further rise of the right-wing political parties across Europe, who were not only skeptical of Muslims and the immigration influx, but of the European project as well. Such skepticism had also been shared by the general public, as per the referendum results of Brexit. The political, economic and social instability in the Middle East, and the higher risk of failing states in the region had imposed huge international challenge to the EU. In addition to the increasing Russian challenge, in energy, military and political involvement in Ukraine and Syria (Talalay, 2016), which had caused a change in the international arena. Yet, the EU was successful in including Croatia as a full member in 2013 – making the EU 28 states. Moreover, the election campaign of Trump was believed to cause a shift in the American orientation, foreign policy and even values. His campaign of "America First" and making "allies pay their fair share" (Gass, 2016) were a warning to the EU.

The events leading to the consolidated version of 2016 had caused ambiguity on the domestic and international arenas for the EU. Thus, to maintain its presence as an active international actor and a Union that worked for specific reasons, the EU found itself in a troubled junction that did not provide it with space to adjust. Therefore, the preamble of 2016 had no changes.

## Conclusion
It can be concluded that the EU started with a vague and ambiguous self-identity, yet it was presented in a positive perspective. Throughout the investigated timeframe, the ambiguity of what is Europe, European Communities, and/or European nations, provide the member states, particularly in later stages of the development of the EU, with a flexibility to include and exclude certain candidates to full membership of the Union (Oner, 2011). It is also obvious that the EU had developed its self-identity to reach a point where it gives credit to the "inheritance of Europe," with special attention to the "cultural," "religious" and "humanist" inheritance. These in-group characteristics had "developed the universal values of the inviolable and inalienable rights of the human person, freedom, democracy, equality

and the rule of law," as being a foundational inspiration to the Union. Therefore, it would provide a logical explanation to why values and norms as "liberty, democracy, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and the rule of law" are presented in the preambles as a given.

Such an elaboration was only done in 2008, after the largest wave of enlargement took place. Thus, the Union was, on one hand, trying to unify and set basis for drawing on common heritage of the member states, particularly by specifying the cultural and religious aspects, especially that Europe is culturally characterized by adhering to the Christian faith and Western values. On the other hand, it was trying to establish a more stable basis for its international identity and expected role of an independent actor that is capable of promoting peace, security and progress not only in Europe but also in the world.

The member states, which construct the Union, are described as "democratic" and their institutions as "efficient." The peoples of the Union are presented as "peace-loving" nations. The Union is portrayed as a result of a progressive learning experience of its member states that denounces war and works through "civil" and "economic" tools to build "a new stage" of European integration. It is, therefore, described as "an area of freedom, security and justice." The main activity of the Union had been emphasized in the preambles as economic and social integration.

The analysis suggests that the discourse used in the preamble reflects an ideological discourse used by the EU to present itself in positive ways. Such an ideological discourse emphasizes the differentiation between the in-group and out-group identification, particularly if international and internal context and socialization processes are well understood for each particular version of the preamble. The analysis suggests that the context and socialization processes had intimidated the EU to present itself in an ideological perspective, constructed how it came to see itself and the others. Accordingly, the EU holds a negative portray of the "Other" who do not hold the same characteristics, activities, goals, norms and values. Understanding the possibility of such an ideological discourse can, therefore, help researchers to adopt a new standpoint to analyze the EU's foreign policy, which can help in providing new perspective for academic scholarly work.

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