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To cite this article: Özlem Terzi, Trineke Palm & Seda Gürkan (2021) Introduction: emotion(al) norms in EUropean foreign policy, Global Affairs, 7:2, 93-102, DOI: 10.1080/23340460.2021.1953394

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/23340460.2021.1953394

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Published online: 21 Oct 2021.

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Introduction: emotion(al) norms in EUropean foreign policy

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ABSTRACT
This Special Issue examines the nexus between emotions and norms in EUropean foreign policy. Theoretically, building on the existing IR-literature on emotions, the Special Issue distinguishes between “emotion norms” (which refer to the appropriate emotional expressions) and “emotional norms” (which refer to the norms that trigger emotional responses). Empirically, the Issue illustrates the different ways in which emotion(al) norms are used at different levels of EUropean foreign policy, i.e. EU, state and subnational levels. The collection of articles aspires to study the ways in which emotions shape the EU’s external relations focusing on the actors (who mobilize emotions, who are constrained or contested by emotion(al) norms), processes (through which various feelings are produced internally or transmitted externally) and the content of norms linked to emotions. Methodologically, this Special Issue illustrates how emotion(al) norms can be studied through the use of different discourse methods.

ARTICLE HISTORY
Received 30 December 2020
Accepted 3 July 2021

KEYWORDS
Emotion norms; European foreign policy; emotional community; European Union external relations

Introduction

From the early 2000s, the distinctive role of emotions in international relations was increasingly recognized.1 With a seminal piece, Crawford (2000) set the contemporary research agenda on the role of emotions in world politics. Mercer (2005) challenged the traditional dichotomization of emotions and rationality, in which emotions were merely addressed as a bias. He introduced the concept of “emotional beliefs” to underscore that emotion and cognition are closely intertwined: “emotions influence how and what one believes, adding value to facts” (Mercer, 2010, p. 6). With a Forum in International Politics, Bleiker and Hutchison (2014; see also 2008) further developed the research agenda for studying emotions in international relations. Several key issues were addressed, such as the collective dimension of emotions (Mercer, 2014; see also Hall & Ross, 2015; Sasley, 2011), both their institutionalization (Crawford, 2014) and their changed meaning (Linklater, 2014), and the relationship between emotions and intentionality (Fierke, 2014; see also Ross, 2006). Most of this research takes a sociological
approach towards emotions which emphasizes the intersubjective and collective nature of emotions, rather than a focus on affects (bodily expressions) and feelings (personal experiences) (Clement & Sangar, 2018, p. 5). More recently, the research has shifted the attention from how, why and whether emotions matter in IR to the methodological challenges of studying emotions in international relations in general (Clemens & Sanger, 2018) and in terms of discourse in particular (Koschut et al., 2017). Other IR-scholars contributed to the field by studying the role of particular emotions in specific cases, including, for example, the role of humiliation in the US response to 9/11 (Danchev, 2006; Saurette, 2006), the collective fear orientation of Israeli society (Bar-Tal, 2001), the diplomacy of anger in the Taiwan Straits crisis (Hall, 2011; see also, Hall, 2015), and the role of emotions in the Cuban missile crisis and Gulf conflict (Markwica, 2018) and the conflict in the Balkans (Petersen, 2011).

In parallel to these developments in IR literature and against the backdrop of the 2008 financial crisis, 2015 migration crisis and its thereafter, Brexit, and most recently the coronavirus crisis, European studies scholars have developed a burgeoning academic interest in “emotions” to search for alternative explanations to several unprecedented challenges the EU faced in the last decade (Capelos & Katsanidou, 2018 Curtis & Nielsen, 2018; Manners, 2018;). In the “age of crisis” (Dinan, Nugent, & Paterson, 2017), scholarly interest in emotions in European studies is not surprising. In some cases, these crises mobilize strong sentiments in the society, in other cases, they are instrumentalized by the political elite, and in some other cases, they condition institutions’ policy responses. Yet, despite this recent interest in emotions in European studies, little research has been done on the role of emotions in EU foreign policy. The fact that there has been little interest so far in the study of emotions in EU foreign policy may result from the fact that the EU has been seen as a project of emotion management via depoliticization and bureaucratization. In an attempt to fill this gap, Karen Smith (2021) shows how emotions feature internally in the EU’s decision-making process and externally as a foreign policy instrument of emotional diplomacy. In addition to the well-known capability-expectations gap, she highlights that there is an emotions-action gap in EU foreign policy, i.e. a mismatch between the emotional rhetoric with respect to particular international events and the concrete action taken by the EU in response.

Building on this growing literature on emotions in IR in general, and in European studies in particular, this Special Issue addresses the role of emotions in EU foreign policy by focusing on the interconnection between norms and emotions in the EU’s foreign policy. To this end, we distinguish between emotional norms, as first defined and conceptualized by Gürkan (2019), and emotion norms as defined by Koschut (2014). While emotional norms refer to the emotional connotation of particular norms (see Gürkan, 2021 in this Issue), emotion norms refer to the norms about what emotions are deemed appropriate. Of particular relevance to the latter is Koschut’s (2014) work on NATO as an emotional security community. He shows that emotion norms, i.e. the expression of appropriate emotions, serve a critical function to the stability of a security community, both in relation to fellow members of the security community and those outside.

Despite the fact that these norms (or their violation) are usually loaded with emotions, norms literature, in both IR and European Studies, neglected the emotional side of
norms. The extensive research on the EU’s normative power as developed by Manners’ (2002), emphasized the EU’s ability to “shape conceptions of what is normal”, i.e. the ability to set norms. Others have examined the EU’s norm-setting power in the context of enlargement (Grabbe, 2014; Schimmelfennig & Sedelmeier, 2004), the neighbourhood policy (Lavenex & Schimmelfennig, 2010), the promotion of human rights (Sjursen, 2017), external trade (Drieghe & Potjomkina, 2019), environmental negotiations (Poletti & Sicurelli, 2012), and across different policy domains (Bradford, 2020). Moreover, this norm-setting power has been critically assessed as well, arguing that rather than a normative power the EU’s norm-setting power turns it into an empire (Zielonka, 2006; Panke, 2019). The contestation about this norm-setting power points at the emotional underpinnings of the EU as a normative power. This Special Issue further develops this research-agenda by bridging the normative power Europe literature and emotions research agenda in IR.

In addition to the research on the EU’s norm-setting powers, as discussed above, we also build on studies that examined the processes of socialization in the setting of EUropean foreign policy, such as the Council and the EEAS. For example, Juncos and Pomorska (2014) and Natorski and Pomorska (2017) have analysed the way in which trust features as an emotion norm in EU foreign policy decision-making. In this Special Issue, we take a more institutional approach of emotion norms, examining how institutional discourses by the EU or within the EU contribute to the (re)construction of what emotional expressions are deemed appropriate or not, and how they impact EUropean foreign policy.

The contribution of the Special Issue

In this Special Issue, the articles examine how emotions in different issue areas of EU foreign policy interact with norms both within the policy-making process and in the outcome of the EU’s external policies. The Special Issue aims to make a four-fold contribution to this debate by focusing on the emotions-norms nexus, the level of analysis question in the study of emotion(al) norms, the methods that can be used for this type of research and last but not least through its empirical findings.

First, the Special Issue intends to contribute to the conceptualization of the nexus between emotions and norms in EUropean foreign policy. All the articles in this Special Issue engage with the question how emotions feature and what role they play in the normative conceptualization of European foreign policy (on norms in EU foreign policy, see Manners, 2002, 2013). In this respect, the Special Issue employs two separate but interlinked concepts, “emotion- norms” (which refer to the appropriate emotions and their expressions); and “emotional norms” (which refer to the norms that trigger emotional responses on the part of the recipient of these norms). Building on this distinction, all the contributions in this Special Issue address and conceptualize the interlinkage between emotions and norms from a different empirical and theoretical perspective. In some articles (Gürkan and Palm), “emotional norm” is defined as an emotionally contested norm on which there is no consensus between different groups, i.e. in this specific case the EP on the one hand and Turkey, as a third country, on the other hand. This divergence in the perceptions of the norms derives from prior emotional connotations attached to the norm.
An emotion norm is an emotional state of being that is appropriate and actually even required to exist in a certain relationship according to the article by Terzi on the EU’s institutional discourses on EU enlargement. For articles by Gürkan, Palm and Tonra, “emotion-norm” refers to a norm whose violation triggers an emotional reflex. For Özer and Kaçar Aşçı, an emotion norm is an appropriate emotion defined by a political party to be displayed towards co-nationals and towards “outsiders” to the nation.

Based on the above definitions of “emotion norms” and “emotional norms”, the Special Issue can be seen as constituted of two types of articles, the articles that focus on emotion norms (Terzi, Tonra, Özer and Kaçar Aşçı) and those that employ both on a carefully drawn line between the two concepts and their interaction (articles by Gürkan and Palm).

Second, a major issue all of the papers in our Special Issue had to tackle was the level of analysis in the conduct of research on emotion(al) norms of EUropean Foreign policy. European politics has always been a multi-level game. National and sub-national politics have always influenced European level decisions (Hix & Høyland, 2011). EU governance is often labelled as multi-level governance (Hooghe & Marks, 2001). Moreover, the EU’s external action is based on a distinction between exclusive and shared competences (Keukeleire & Delreux, 2014) between the EU and its member states. This is why in our efforts to analyse emotions and their relationship to EU-level norms, keeping track of the level of analysis of the emotion(al) norms is significant. Further research is required for understanding the nexus between emotions and norms, in particular with a focus on the interaction between different levels within the EU foreign policy process, i.e. how at one level of analysis (e.g. national party level) feeds into EU level policies and discourses.

The sequence of the articles in the Special Issue has been determined according to the level of analysis employed in the articles. The first three articles focus on the EU institutions European Parliament (Gürkan and Palm), the European Commission and the European Council (Terzi). Tonra’s article focuses on a member state level, Ireland and its relationship to the UK, during the Brexit process with a focus on Brexit’s impact on the EU induced norms on the emotional relationship between these two countries. Özer and Kaçar Aşçı focus on one actor, a political party, within a member state, i.e. Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) in Germany and how its own understanding of emotion norms concerning immigration policy feeds into EU level policies on immigration through an enabling process. With this last article, this Special Issue would like to open the path towards further research into the interaction of these emotion norms across the sub-national, national and EU levels and their mechanisms of influence.

All five articles demonstrate that regardless of at which level these emotions are being expressed, they are in some way connected to prevailing norms in EUropean Foreign policy. The denotation of “EUropean Foreign Policy” instead of “European Foreign Policy”, which would imply national foreign policies of European states, or “EU Foreign policy”, looking at only the external relations of the EU signifies this multi-level character that the Special Issue employs in its case studies.

Third, in this special issue, we devote a particular attention to the methodological considerations in the study of emotions in IR, in particular to the linkage of emotions and discourse analysis. Drawing on the existing literature on emotions in IR, we argue that discourse analysis is the best-suited method for studying emotions (Hutchison & Bleiker, 2017; Koschut et al., 2017). Emotions are inner feelings, subjective, intangible
sentiments that cannot be measured or quantified, even less so at the collective level (Bleiker & Hutchison, 2008). Therefore, emotions become observable only through their utterances. Building on Parker (1992), we define discourse as “an interrelated set of texts, and the practices of their production, dissemination, and reception, which brings an object into being”. In this social constructivist understanding, the discourse constructs and gives meaning to the social phenomena, practice or reality (Lindekilde, 2014). More importantly, this definition puts the emphasis not only on the immediate meaning inherent in the individual text but also on the broader social context where the meaning articulated in the text is being produced or conditioned. This aspect of the definition is in line with the social constructivist understanding of emotions as they are studied in this issue since all the articles consider that emotions and their utterances are shaped by the society, culture or social setting in which they are articulated. This is why analysing discourses is a way not only to unpack these social, cultural processes that produce emotion(al) norms, but also to reveal the hidden meaning of these norms in agency’s perception or consciousness, which is ultimately determined by the agent’s lifeworld. In this sense, discourse emerges as both the main, and probably the only, manifestation of emotions, and a mean to decipher the peculiarities of a particular context that produces/shapes a certain emotion or emotion(al) norm.

The observation that emotions are represented through discourse renders the EU and its institutions an interesting laboratory for studying emotions through discourse as the EU and its institutions issue several texts and rely on deliberation when justifying foreign policy decisions or EU’s stance on a given foreign policy dossier. Furthermore, there is a close connection between norms/norm promotion, emotions and discourse. As noted by Mercer (2006), if norms play an important role in relations between states, then the violation of these norms is expected to trigger emotional reactions that would be manifested in emotional language. Therefore, by studying the emotional language in EU/European foreign policy, we might expect to find out which norms matter for the EU and whether / how the EU responds to their contestation from within or in its external relations.

In light of these considerations, discourse analysis is the main methodological tool in all papers in this issue for analysing the articulation of emotions. Nevertheless, this Special Issue intends to go beyond the widely accepted observation in the literature that “discourse matters for researching emotions”. Instead, the majority of articles seek to concretely respond to the question of how to study emotions through discourse by illustrating the usage of different methods. Discourse historical analysis is used in the article by Terzi, to analyse the power relationship between context and the emotion discourse of the European Commission over the fate of the enlargement process as reflected in the communicative discourse of the European Council decisions. Özer and Kaçar Aşçı employ multimodal discourse analysis on the party campaign materials of AfD to display emotion norms as envisaged by this party among its supporters. A process analysis of (re-) Europeanization and de-Europeanization of discourse and significance of emotions triggered by them is made by Tonra. Gürkan introduces claims analysis as a tool for analysing the usages of emotional norms in parliamentary debates. Terzi uses a discourse historical approach. Articles by Gürkan and Palm offer an original analytical framework for analysing the interaction of emotional norms with the normative actorness of EU or examine the emotional (de)legitimation of fundamental norms.
Fourth, empirically, this special issue illuminates some of the complexities of emotions in the study of EU’s external relations. Hence, the Issue studies the actors (who mobilizes emotions, who is constrained or contested by emotion(al) norms), discursive processes (through which various feelings are produced internally or transmitted externally) and the content of norms linked to emotions. While the actors addressed in European foreign policy range from the EU institutions to member states and political parties, emotions that are studied vary from amity/enmity, solidarity, resentment, and fear, to feelings of belonging and (in)justice. In this Issue, the processes where emotions are constructed and transmitted include intra-EU (inter-institutional) and national settings (Ireland), as well as international frameworks regarding Turkey and the UK, whereby the EU and/or its member states transmit emotional norms to the third parties. The articles Palm and by Terzi focus on the resilience of emotion norms in intra- and inter-institutional discursive processes within the EU (within the EP and between the European Commission and European Council, respectively) and in the article by Özer and Kaçar Aşçı through an enabling process for emotion-norms at a sub-national level to be carried forward to EU level.

**Structure of the Special Issue**

This special issue is the product of a collective endeavour. While the articles reflect the diversity of methodological approaches in discourse studies and the empirical focus of contributors, they all converge on the close interaction between norms and emotions. As mentioned above, the sequence of articles in the Special issue follows the level-of-analysis distinction between the papers starting with the EU-level and ending with a political actor, a political party, within an EU member state. The Special issue starts with two articles that included both the concept of emotional norm and emotion norm in their analysis of the European Parliament.

In her article on debates of the Armenian genocide in the European Parliament, Gürkan investigates the reasons behind the European Parliament’s (EP) motivation to promote emotional norms vis-à-vis third states. By drawing conceptually on the literatures on emotions in IR and parliamentary diplomacy, and methodologically on claims analysis, the article maps the legitimizing arguments put forward by the Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) in promoting a highly emotional norm vis-à-vis Turkey, namely the recognition of the Armenian genocide. The empirical part demonstrates that while this emotional norm largely limits the EP’s normative actor-ness vis-à-vis Turkey, internally it is a shared (emotion) norm within the EP, which transcends national and ideological cleavages within the Parliament. The article concludes that at the collective level (EP), the MEPs aspire to render the genocide recognition an essential constitutive element of the “emotional community” at the EU level.

Palm examines the way in which emotion(al) norms (de)legitimize the EU as a security community, by analysing the debate in European Parliament on one of the most salient domains of its security policy: external border control. It shows how the debate revolves around four emotional norms (responsibility, solidarity, sovereignty and effectiveness) which are discursively (de)legitimated with different combinations of emotional vocabulary with negative and positive valence. In addition, the article examines the
valence attached to the policy process, which points at the contested nature of one of the constitutive emotion norms of a security community: trust.

Terzi looks at how the emotion norms determine progress in the enlargement process. The “emotion norms of enlargement” is detected through a discourse historical analysis of the 2004 enlargement round. The article focuses on the (non-)compliance by the European Commission’s coordination discourse with these emotion norms of enlargement in the case of the ongoing Western Balkan enlargement, which then feeds into the communication discourse of the European Council. It finds out through a periodical differentiation between times of progress and regress – that when there is an overlap of these two institutional discourses with the identified “emotion norms of enlargement”, progress in the enlargement process is facilitated.

Tonra analyses the significance of the Europeanized emotion norms in the Irish-UK relationship through a periodical analysis of Brexit and the Irish border issue in this process. In particular, it aims to show how EU-membership has reversed emotional stereotypes that had long defined the bilateral relationship, how Brexit strained these new EU-induced emotion norms in the UK-Ireland relations, and how Ireland responded with a re-Europeaized approach to the post-Brexit relations with the UK.

Özer and Kaçar Aşçı focus on how the right-wing populists present their emotion norms on the issue of immigration. The article particularly identifies the obligation to show solidarity with the “pure nationals” and enmity towards the immigrants as the appropriate emotion expected by the AfD. The article argues that this party level input to the domestic politics of an EU member state feeds into the immigration policy of the EU. This input may not necessarily go through a causal mechanism to bear an influence on EU level policy, but an “enabling” one that extends the limits of what is possible to be articulated and feeds into the definition of ontological security of both the European Union and its member states.

The concluding article by Manners summarizes the main findings of individual chapters and highlights the main contribution of the Special Issue by situating it in the broader emotions literature. Manners’ article critically analyses the contributing articles to his Special Issue from a political psychology perspective and seeks to understand how emotions such as fear, anger, hate, and passion fuel the construction of emotional norms in foreign policy, and why this is important to understanding contemporary EU foreign policy. The article highlights the Special Issue’s empirical and theoretical contribution to the field. In this regard, Manners concludes that the Special Issue marks a significant stage in the political psychology of emotions from international relations to the European Union over the past 50 years. Moreover, according to Manners, theoretically, the ensemble of the articles in the Special Issue, by using the political psychologies of individual cognitive psychology, social psychology, social construction, psychoanalysis, and critical political psychology allows for engagement with the broader inter-discipline. The article concludes that the Special Issue has made an original contribution in terms of empirically multileveled, theoretically emotional, and methodologically discursive approaches to understanding the political psychologies of emotional norms in EU foreign policy.

Note

1. For a long-term review of the role of political psychology in IR, see article by Manners in this Special Issue.
Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all contributors to this Special Issue. We also would like to thank the anonymous reviewers of the Global Affairs journal for their valuable comments on the individual articles. We would like to thank VU Interdisciplinary Centre for European Studies (VICES) for facilitating the VICES workshop on “Emotions on European Foreign Policy in Populist Times”, and the University Association for Contemporary European Studies (UACES) for supporting this workshop by a small event grant.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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