

Research Note

Normative Power Europe and the Power of the Local*

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Abstract

In this article, the unfolding events surrounding the publication of the EU Guidelines prohibiting the allocation of funds to Israeli entities in the Occupied Territories are used to offer three observations about the impact of ‘the local’ on ‘Normative Power Europe’ (NPE). First, the case study reveals the growing influence of the power of ‘the European local’ on the decision of whether or not to deploy normative power. Second, it underscores the fact that local power relations in the target country often determine the reaction to NPE, while the reaction often produces the visibility of the normative edicts and thus helps empower NPE. And third, NPE’s visibility has an impact on the EU’s self-identification, but not necessarily on the policies it criticizes. These observations underscore the importance of analyzing the various levels of ‘the local’ and their relation to NPE in order to understand the latter’s political impact.

Introduction

The summer of 2013 was a difficult one for European Union–Israeli relations. Reiterating the Union’s longstanding position that Israel’s presence in the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights (the Occupied Territories, OT) is illegal according to international law, the EU published Guidelines prohibiting the allocation of funds to Israeli companies, public bodies and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) working within the Israeli settlements (European Commission, 2013). The prohibition included the new EU Research Programme ‘Horizon 2020’, which replaced the Seventh EU Framework Programmes for Research and Technological Development (FP7) in January 2014. A tug of war between Israel and the EU ensued, ultimately leading to a compromise on the implementation of the Guidelines and an agreement on Israel’s participation in Horizon 2020.

In this article we describe the unfolding events before and after the publication of the Guidelines and offer three observations about the impact of ‘the local’ on Normative Power Europe (NPE) (Manners, 2002). First, even though scholars have noted that normative power is always embedded in the local and influenced by ‘cultural filters’ (Kinnvall, 1995, pp. 61–71; Manners, 2002, pp. 245 and 247–48; 2013, pp. 318–19),¹ the Israeli case study suggests that after the empowerment of the European Parliament (EP) by the Lisbon Treaty the ‘power of the local’ within the Union increased. The decision when to *deploy* normative power is also propelled from below, at the level of European citizenry and Members of the

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¹ The cultural filter ‘affects the impact of international norms and political learning in third states [. . .] *leading to learning, adaptation or rejection of norms*’ (Manners, 2002, p. 245, emphasis added; see also Kinnvall, 1995, pp. 61–71).

European Parliament (MEPs), and is no longer the sole prerogative of the Council, the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (HR), the European Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS).

Second, we contend that since NPE operates through norm-setting, it is dependent on the *visibility* of its normative fiats to have an impact (Gordon, 2002). Accordingly, we suggest that the EU's normative power is determined to a certain extent by the resistance that it encounters, since without resistance the EU's normative agenda may withdraw into the shadows and lose its potency. We further claim that the resistance that renders NPE visible emerges from the local arena upon which the EU wishes to impose its normative stance. Moreover, the opposition is not always related to the EU's normative demands and often results from internal (unrelated) power struggles.

Third, we argue that the decision to issue the Guidelines has produced a paradox: on the one hand, the Guidelines reassert the Green Line (pre-1967 border), which Israel aims to erase, and in this sense they can be understood as successful, while, on the other hand, they did not take into account the *de facto* situation on the ground – which is yet another manifestation of the 'local' – and therefore, as we contend below, they will serve to legitimize EU research co-operation and trade ties with Israel, thus allowing Israel to continue the occupation as if business was usual. We claim, in other words, that the Guidelines may have a positive normative impact on the self-identification and self-conception of the Union population, but only a minimal impact on Israeli practices.

All three of these observations underscore the power of the local (albeit different locals: the European local, the Israeli local and the material local), and while a comparative analysis exceeding the length of this article would be vital to identify the precise way the local operates in each instance, the interactions we describe underscore the significance of the local for rendering NPE either effective or not effective.

We begin with a description of the political processes leading to the publication of the Guidelines. Based on a series of interviews with senior EU officials and MEPs, we show that the Commission and the EEAS were hesitant to issue the Guidelines, but ended up doing so as a result of pressure from MEPs and local (as well as international) NGOs, who were, in turn, responding to pressure from their own constituencies that wanted to create a linkage between Horizon 2020 and Israel's settlement policy in the OT. Next, we discuss the Guidelines' contents and show that they do not set a precedent since Israel had already signed similar research agreements with other countries that specifically limit funding to entities inside the 1967 borders. Having established that the Guidelines would not have a meaningful impact on Israeli institutions in the OT and that Israel had signed similar agreements in the past, we then describe Israel's furious reaction to the Guidelines, claiming that it was engendered by local cultural filters, informed by the broader context in which the Guidelines were issued as well as internal Israeli power struggles unrelated to the Guidelines. Israel's opposition, however, made the Guidelines visible, and in this way empowered NPE. Finally, we expose the significance of the local economic borders in order to highlight the paradox engendered by the Guidelines. By way of conclusion, we offer a few general observations on NPE and the power of the local.²

² Note that our 'power of the local' argument is different from the more common argument that the Union's norms and practices need carriers to travel to other locales, and that 'EU ideational diffusion often operates through local actors' (Lenz, 2013, p. 216; see also Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998; Grugel, 2006).

I. The EU Guidelines

In mid-2013 the EEAS presented the European Commission with the final draft of the Guidelines (European Commission, 2013), which stated that EU bodies (as opposed to the Member States themselves) can no longer fund or dispense awards and grants to Israeli companies, public bodies and NGOs working within Israeli settlements (Articles 5–8 and 14). Furthermore, the Guidelines originally specified that all Israeli applications must include a declaration stating that their planned activities do not take place in the OT (Articles 16–18). Excluded from the Guidelines are national public bodies (Article 11(b)), individuals (Article 14(c)) and Israeli entities working in the OT with the aim of benefiting Palestinians and/or promoting the peace process (Article 15).

In line with the 2010 *Brita* ruling of the European Court of Justice,³ the Guidelines make it clear that the Union does not recognize Israel's sovereignty over the OT irrespective of their legal status under Israeli law (Articles 2 and 3). Hence, the Guidelines 'codify the longstanding EU policy' that was formally instated in the 1995 EC-Israel Association Agreement (EU Ambassador to Israel, Faaborg-Andersen, 2013), putting 'the rules of the game in writing' in the context of the Union's foreign policy' (Deputy EU Ambassador to Israel De Waele, in Winer, 2013) and adding concrete conditions to any ongoing public funding of Israeli entities.⁴

II. The Power of the European Local

In preparing for the 2007–13 FP7 the European Commission focused on an informal 'practical arrangement' to filter out any settlement-based entity from participating in the programme (EMHRN, 2005, p. 37). It turned out that this new 'filter system' imposed an incredible administrative burden on the Commission, while its impact was negligible. Israel, it is important to note, is the first non-European country fully associated with the Union's FPs and is one of the most successful countries in terms of programme participation. As of January 2014, there were 1,861 Israeli participants in 1,536 projects of FP7, which together received about €782 million (European Commission, 2014).⁵ However, according to our calculations, the share of Israeli research in the OT financed directly by the FP programmes was about one-tenth of 1 per cent of all research grants awarded to Israeli entities between 1998 and 2013. Consequently, when the time came to prepare for Horizon 2020, the Commission and the EEAS appeared to be hesitant about issuing the Guidelines since the administrative strain that they would produce seemed to outweigh the financial and political benefit.⁶ In the words of the Union's ambassador to Israel: 'This was a fairly small problem, because there were not many applicants into the programme from the settlements' (Faaborg-Andersen, 2014).

³ In the *Brita* Case, the Court ruled that Israeli 'products originating in the West Bank do not fall within the territorial scope of that [European Community (EC)-Israel Association] Agreement and do not therefore qualify for preferential treatment under that agreement' (Case C-386/08 (2010), *Firma Brita GmbH v. Hauptzollamt Hamburg-Hafen*, 2010 ECJ, EUR-Lex LEXIS 63, 25 February; see also Pardo and Zemer, 2011).

⁴ Several scholars have analyzed normative power in the context of EU-Israeli/Palestinian relations, among them are: Pace (2007); Harpaz (2007); Harpaz and Shamis (2010); Pardo and Peters (2010; 2012); Huber (2011); Magen (2012); Bouris (2014); Del Sarto (2014); Gordon and Pardo (2014).

⁵ By virtue of the FPs, the EU is now Israel's second biggest source of research funding after the Israel Science Foundation.

⁶ Interview with senior Commission officials, Brussels, 13–14 November 2013.

The decision to draft the Guidelines was therefore a direct result of increasing pressure put on the Commission by MEPs and NGOs, who themselves were under pressure from their own constituencies (for example, Deas, 2012; Palestine Solidarity Campaign, 2013).⁷ One former MEP described to us how a Palestinian support group in her region urged her to visit the OT, and how the visit had influenced her opinions on the topic.⁸ A motion for resolution adopted in November 2008 by the EP Committee on Foreign Affairs called for

the Commission and the Member States to ensure that the participation of Israeli entities in Community programmes will be in line with the existing EC legislation and policy, with special regard to measures aimed at preventing the participation of settlement-based companies and organisations in the programmes concerned. (European Parliament, 2008, p. 5)

This motion for resolution was the first concrete step taken to codify EU policy regarding settlements within EU-Israeli research co-operation, but it did not have the desired effect since, at the time, the MEPs could not compel the Union's executive institutions to act.

However, following the Lisbon Treaty, the power relations changed, and while the role of the EP in EU foreign policy still remains limited, the exception is the Parliament's new major powers relating to international agreements (as well as budgetary powers). Not only has the EP a veto power over these agreements, but it now also has a power over the financial instruments with third countries – and, importantly, over the ratification of these agreements. Accordingly, the EP has structured itself so as to maximize its participation in crafting and developing the Union's foreign policy (Corbett *et al.*, 2011; Keukeleire and Delreux, 2014, pp. 85–8). Article 36 of the Treaty on European Union tasks the HR to work with the EP and to 'regularly consult the [EP] on the main aspects and basic choices of the common foreign and security policy and the common security and defence policy [CFSP/CSDP] and inform it on how those policies evolve'. Since the HR is now legally obliged to 'ensure that the views of the [EP] are duly taken into consideration' (European Union, 2010), the EP began using its new Lisbon powers, voicing its positions 'on foreign policy issues through a constant stream of own-initiative reports, resolutions and parliamentary questions' (Keukeleire and Delreux, 2014, p. 86).

Accordingly, several MEPs thought the Commission's reaction following the 2008 motion for resolution was too passive and, with the Lisbon powers in hand, insisted on a proactive normative position. In February 2011, MEP Diana Wallis re-launched the parliamentary questions procedure and demanded answers from the Commission on the value of the advantages enjoyed by Israel under the Association Agreement and especially under FP7 (Wallis, 2011). In July 2011, in response to another parliamentary question by MEP Keith Taylor regarding EU funding for Ahava Cosmetics, whose main activities are located in the OT, the Commission was forced to admit that its 'practical arrangement' and 'filter system' are simply *useless* and that Ahava 'were and are eligible for participation and funding' under FP5/6/7, which contradicts the EU's own policies (Taylor, 2011).

⁷ Also, see the campaigns conducted by Oxfam International (<http://www.oxfam.org>); the Council for European-Palestinian Relations – a Brussels/London-based NGO (<http://www.thecepr.org>); the Mattin Group – a Ramallah/Brussels-based research and advocacy organization; and the Coalition of Women for Peace – an Israeli-based feminist organization (<http://www.coalitionofwomen.org>).

⁸ Email exchange with former MEP, 15 December 2013.

In mid-2012, MEP Taylor continued to press the Commission, now with specific reference to Horizon 2020, and the Commission stated that the rules of this new research programme would specify ‘certain eligibility conditions in view of the place of establishment of participants’ (Taylor, 2012). From that moment on it was only a matter of time until the Commission formally and publicly committed itself to a proactive measure. Indeed, four months later, on 2 October 2012, in answering another parliamentary question by a group of MEPs, the Commission made a public commitment that ‘it intends to issue a reminder of EU policy together with precise operational guidance on this matter’ (Davies *et al.*, 2012).

The drama behind the scenes and the one that cannot be found in the official records of the EP is no less important to understanding the Union’s foreign policy in the age of the Lisbon Treaty. Around September 2012, a group of MEPs approached the Directorate-General for Research and Innovation with a clear demand: ‘Either you put an end to the participation of Israeli settlement-based entities in the FPs or the EP will *not* approve the regulations setting up Horizon 2020.’⁹ Fearing that lack of clear policy regarding Israeli entities in the OT could undermine the Union’s flagship initiative aimed at securing Europe’s global competitiveness, the Commission and the EEAS were now pushed to act immediately. According to a senior official at the EEAS: ‘the truth is that until 2012 the Commission and the EEAS did not really intend to issue the Guidelines’. Eventually, ‘it was really the EP that pushed us to issue these Guidelines’.¹⁰ We do not preclude the possibility that the Commission and the EEAS wanted to issue the Guidelines and that this MEPs initiative is something officials in these two institutions actually sought in order to force the insertion of certain clauses into the Guidelines while deflecting opposition from other factions in the EU. But such scenario does not alter our claim regarding the increasing power of the local in determining when to implement NPE.

By 10 December 2012, the Union’s foreign ministers debated the developments in the Middle East peace process, and stressed that ‘now is the time to take bold steps towards peace’. Expressing their ‘commitment to ensuring that – in line with international law – all agreements between [Israel and the EU] must unequivocally and explicitly indicate their implacability’ to the OT, the Union’s foreign ministers vowed ‘to ensure continued, full and effective implementation of existing [EU] legislation and bilateral agreements applicable to settlement products’ (Council of the EU, 2012, p. 8).

III. No Precedent

The Guidelines, it is important to stress, did not set a precedent. The September 1972 agreement between Israel and the US establishing the Binational Science Foundation (BSF) – the main body promoting and supporting collaborative research between the two countries – requires that research projects be based inside the 1967 borders. In a 1972 letter exchange, the Israeli government acknowledged that:

Cooperative projects sponsored by the Foundation may not be conducted in geographic areas which came under the administration of the Government of Israel after June 5, 1967 and may not relate to subjects primarily pertinent to such areas. (BSF, 1972)

⁹ Interview with a senior Commission official, Brussels, 13 November 2013.

¹⁰ Interview with a senior EEAS official, Brussels, 13 November 2013.

In a later agreement from March 1976 establishing the Binational Industrial Research and Development Foundation (BIRD) – the main body stimulating, promoting and supporting industrial research and development of mutual benefit to the US and Israel – the two countries used exactly the same wording limiting BIRD-sponsored projects to territory within the 1967 borders (BIRD, 1976).

In a similar manner, Israel and Germany have also limited the funding of their research co-operation. The German-Israeli Foundation for Scientific Research and Development (GIF), which was established in 1986, explicitly acknowledges that the Foundation does not support research projects in the OT. The joint agreement that was adopted and enacted by both the Israeli and German parliaments declares in Article 2 that ‘research in Israel supported the Foundation will be conducted only within the geographic areas under the jurisdiction of the State of Israel prior to June 5, 1967’.¹¹

Thus, the Guidelines are not only in line with the EU’s longstanding policy, but they also do not set any new precedent regarding Israeli research agreements. For these reasons, the extreme reaction of the Israeli government to the Guidelines is in need of explanation.

IV. The Power of the Israeli Local

Israel’s official response was one of fury.¹² Even though Economy Minister Naftali Bennett is well aware of the economic importance of the EU for Israel’s future,¹³ in a populist move he urged the Israeli government ‘to end all cooperation with the EU’ in response to the Guidelines (Lis, 2013). Bennett further described the Guidelines as a ‘financial terror attack’ (Ben-Zion and Rettig-Gur, 2013). Fellow party member and Housing Minister Uri Ariel charged that the EU’s decision on the Guidelines is tainted by ‘racism, anti-Semitism and discrimination against the Jewish people which is reminiscent of boycotts of the Jews in Europe over 66 years ago’ (Somfalvi, 2013). Ministers Bennett and Ariel were talking as much to their constituency as they were to the Europeans; their declarations emphasized their hawkish position in order to underscore their party’s unique role within the government coalition.

In a similar vein, Minister of Transport Yisrael Katz, who according to the Israeli press has his eyes on Prime Minister Netanyahu’s seat as the head of the Likud Party, called for the ‘annexation of East Jerusalem¹⁴ and other settlement blocs’ as the adequate response to the Guidelines.¹⁵ Defence Minister Moshe Ya’alon, who also sees himself as a possible future contender for Netanyahu’s position, decided to limit the movement of EU representatives in the OT. Ya’alon ordered the defence establishment to adopt a cold shoulder policy toward EU activities in the OT, while making it more difficult for the EU to transfer donor funds to Palestinian projects in the OT (Harel, 2013). Both Ministers Katz and

¹¹ Law of the German-Israeli Foundation for Scientific Research and Development, 1994.

¹² Note, however, that during the drafting period of the Guidelines the Israeli embassy to the EU was well informed of what was happening. Interview with a senior EEAS official, Brussels, 13 November 2013.

¹³ In 2013, 34 per cent of Israel’s imports (excluding diamonds) came from the EU and 32 per cent of its exports (excluding diamonds) were directed to the European market (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2014).

¹⁴ Minister Katz was wrong. Already in June 1967 Israel had annexed East Jerusalem to the municipal boundaries of West Jerusalem and imposed Israeli law there.

¹⁵ ‘Elkin: Foreign Ministry Caught Off Guard Over EU Guidelines’. *Jerusalem Post*, 17 July 2013.

Ya'alon were appealing to party members who vote for the party leadership and are known to be more militant than the average Likud voter.

The mildest reaction came from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who after a hasty and urgent meeting at his bureau released a statement criticizing the EU: 'We will not accept any external dictates regarding borders.' He further stressed that he 'will not let anyone harm the hundreds of thousands of Israelis living in Judea and Samaria, in the Golan Heights, or in Jerusalem – our united capital' (Azulay, 2013).¹⁶

Considering that the Guidelines were not a departure from the Union's longstanding policy towards Israel (or even the US, which may be even more surprising), that there were already a few precedents in place and that the actual financial impact of the Guidelines would be negligible, it seems safe to conclude that the Israeli reactions were a result of two kinds of pressures. The Guidelines were interpreted by Israelis as an integral part of the broader context of mounting external criticism, including the Palestinian boycott, sanctions and divestment campaign and other so-called international 'delegitimization' efforts. Simultaneously, though, the reactions were directed inward and were part of domestic political power struggles both between political parties forming the coalition and within the ruling Likud Party. Regardless of these reasons, it was Israel's furious reaction, rather than the Guidelines themselves, that really made the issue newsworthy. The dispute guaranteed that the Guidelines – which in this case denote a form of NPE – made headlines not only in Europe and in Israel, but all over the world, and thus empowered the normative stance they embody by rendering the European position visible.

V. The Material Local

In this case, the material local also helps shape the impact of norm diffusion. The Guidelines, we maintain, also have an (unintended) effect, which in certain respects contradicts the intention behind them. When issuing the Guidelines the EU did not seem to have taken into account Israel's *de facto economic* borders. Israel does not have two separate economies: one in the pre-1967 borders and another in the OT. In a research paper about Israeli banks, for example, *Who Profits* (an NGO that monitors investment in the OT) shows that the banks in pre-1967 Israel 'provide the financial infrastructure for all activities of companies, governmental agencies and individuals in the continuing occupation' (Who Profits, 2010). Moreover, the customs and monetary regimes are identical in pre-1967 Israel and in the OT.

By promulgating the notion that Israel has two separate economies (one in the pre-1967 borders and one in the OT) through the assertion of Israel's internationally recognized *de jure* border, the Guidelines have little if any impact on the economy or on local policies. They will not alter Israeli practices in any meaningful way. But, perhaps ironically, they do provide the EU with the normative legitimation to deepen its research co-operation and trade ties with Israel despite its displeasure with Israel's settlement project since the EU can accurately proclaim that it does not support Israeli research and industry in the OT. In other words, the implementation of the Guidelines, which will have

¹⁶ There were, to be sure, other voices within Israel, particularly those that agreed with the normative message informing the Guidelines about the illegality of the settlements. The level of media attention to these voices (coming from the liberal left) was relatively scant, but they helped draw attention to the Guidelines and thus rendered them visible.

no negative financial effect on Israeli entities in the OT and will not alter Israeli policies in the region, will provide the EU with a normative justification to continue business as usual with Israel. In this sense, the Guidelines create a paradox: on the one hand, they reassert the Green Line and bolster the Union's self-identification and self-conception as a normative power, while on the other hand they serve to legitimize EU-Israeli relations. All of which suggests that NPE may have an inbound impact – namely, coalescing the identity of the EU-28 – even if there has been no significant EU ideational diffusion in the target country (Diez, 2005; Gordon and Pardo, 2014; Risse and Grabowsky, 2008). Having said this, more research needs to be carried out on the impact of the EU Guidelines on EU identity, since as Thomas Diez (2013, p. 12) has recently pointed out, treating NPE as constituting the identity of the EU 'overrates the stability of the discourse and under-rates the contestedness of normative power as a core concept'.

Although the Guidelines assert an imaginary economic border, their implementation is part of a process (which includes the implementation of the rules of origin and the Brita ruling) that serves to legitimize a series of other actions (Gordon and Pardo, 2014). Not long after the publication of the Guidelines, companies and financial institutions in different EU countries began divesting from Israeli institutions that are complicit with the occupation. These include PGGM, the largest Dutch pension fund, who decided to divest from Israeli banks (PGGM, 2014), and Denmark's largest bank, Danske, that decided to pull its investment from Israel's Bank HaPoalim due to the latter's involvement in settlement construction (Ravid, 2014). While there is no causal relation between the implementation of the supranational Guidelines and the decisions of these private financial institutions, the Guidelines and the Brita ruling before them draw a legal distinction between pre-1967 Israel and the OT (suggesting also that Israel's presence in the latter is illegal) that is pertinent to all European institutions. In this way it serves both as the legal foundation and as a mechanism of legitimization for the decisions reached by these private financial institutions.

Conclusions

This case study highlights three crucial features about NPE. First, it underscores that currently the decision when to deploy normative power is also driven from below. If in the past, NPE was largely a supranational-based strategy used mainly by the Council, the HR, the Commission and the EEAS (Birchfield, 2013; Diez and Manners, 2007; Manners, 2002; Manners and Whitman, 2003; Whitman, 2011), following the empowerment of the EP by the Lisbon Treaty, the 'power of the local' has increased so that the decision when to deploy normative power is now actively propelled from the EP and by European citizens themselves. Pushed by initiatives emanating from European citizens and supported by public opinion judging the Israeli settlement project as illegal, MEPs grilled the Commission and the EEAS and demanded a more proactive normative position against Israeli research activities funded by the EU in the OT. By linking the Guidelines to the approval of Horizon 2020, the representatives of the peoples of Europe accentuated the significance of the 'power of the local' in the deployment of NPE and in the development of the Union's external relations.

We also maintain that the EP's new involvement in the deployment of NPE helps mitigate the 'democratic deficit' of the Parliament (Bickerton, 2011, pp. 99–117; Sjursen,

2011). The case study exposes how the Lisbon Treaty further strengthens the democratic legitimacy underpinning the Common Foreign and Security Policy/Common Security and Defence Policy and reveals yet another moment in which ‘a European public sphere [has become] visible’ (Risse and Grabowsky, 2008, p. 11). It underscores the fact that the ‘struggle over the EU’s global role does not, or at least does not only, take place between [the] member states’ and the above-mentioned supranational actors (Diez, 2013, p. 12).

Second, considering that visibility – in the sense of being seen and heard – is normative power’s condition of possibility (Gordon, 2002), it was Israel’s rejection of the norms embedded in the Guidelines – namely, Israel’s furious response – that bestowed upon the Guidelines their potency. Put differently, discursive practices – of which NPE are an example (Diez, 2001; 2005; 2013) – are actually created, reproduced and upheld through visible citation and repetition of their normative fiats (Butler, 1993); they become meaningful and remain so only insofar as they are corroborated in public and are visible. If the outside world does not attribute a distinct role to these discursive practices, if discursive practices cease to be articulated by constant repetition, they lose their power and may eventually disappear. Thus, devoid of visibility, normative power becomes powerless. In this sense, Israel’s rejection of the European norms embedded in the Guidelines, which was motivated primarily by local power struggles unrelated to the Guidelines and the broader context of the boycott/divestment/sanctions movement, actually empowered NPE because it helped render the Guidelines visible. Without Israel’s furious reaction, hardly anyone would have heard of the Guidelines and they would have had little, if any, impact on the political arena.

The visibility of the normative fiats serves, on the one hand, as an EU solidifying device since it helps produce a unified identity among the Member States. On the other hand, it puts pressure on Israel even if the norms are ultimately rejected. Building on Manners’ claim that normative power is informed by cultural filters, we add that the local is an extremely complex arena often informed by *contradictory* ideologies, cultural filters and identities and by ongoing power struggles among different domestic actors. Consequently, the diffusion of norms or lack thereof on the targeted country is also determined by internal struggles over hegemony.

Third, even while the Guidelines’ effect on ‘EU funding to Israeli institutions, companies and organizations will be minimal’ (Faaborg-Andersen, 2013), the Guidelines succeeded in reminding various publics of the existence of the Green Line and thus underscored the illegality of Israel’s occupation. This, we maintain, was their intended effect, and due to Israel’s rejection of the Guidelines, which rendered them visible for all to see, their introduction has been successful in the sense that they have reasserted, symbolically speaking, Israel’s internationally recognized border. As of yet there is no indication that the Guidelines will impact Israel’s policies and practices in the OT, but they seem to serve as a legitimizing mechanisms for private European actors that want to exert pressure on Israel regarding its occupation of Palestinian territories.

These three observations – the growing influence of the power of the local on the decision of whether or not to deploy normative power; the fact that local power relations determine the reaction to NPE, while the reaction often produce the visibility of the normative edicts and in this way helps empower NPE; and the visibility of NPE has an impact on the EU’s self-identification, but not necessarily on the policies it criticizes – all underscore the importance of analyzing the various levels of the local and their relation

to NPE in order to understand the latter's political impact. Examining the different dimensions of this relation is beyond the scope of this article, but we hope that the case study succeeded in exposing the local's significance.

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