AI & EU – Ethical AI: A technological reboot for Normative Power Europe

European Strategic Sovereignty and Artificial Intelligence

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Abstract

An increasing body of literature predicts AI as a disruptive and transformative of society as we know it today. In this landscape of change the European Union has taken an initiative to push for the development of *"AI that corresponds to European Ethical Values and citizens' aspirations"*. This plan is ambitious and reflects the collective consciousness that if left behind Europe might lose its standing as global political and economic powerhouse. The Approach launched by the European Commission centers around the concept of Trustworthy and Ethical AI. This research will examine how the European Union, aware of its limitations, formulates an approach towards AI distinct from others and based on the concepts and values defining what it sees as inherently *European.* The thesis proposes that the *European approach to AI* is an exercise in *Normative Power* and a resurrection of the concept in a new digital age.

For this purpose discourse analysis is chosen as the best research method. The research material selected include key documents published by the European Comission process that both outline its core motivations and content, how the strategy is communicated by Comission representatives and in the documents making up the final version of the European Approach to AI. Conducting a discourse analysis from a critical perspective of the selected material to answer the proposed research question is an exercise in looking at how the EU wishes to represent itself. The analysis focuses on the European Commission in aiming to construct Europe as a global leader in the field of Artificial Intelligence. The research will focus on a specific social problem which has a semiotic aspect namely the relationship of role of discourse in the reproduction of different forms of power.

The central findings of the research are that indeed the discursive representations necessary for a European identity founded in normative power are present in all the literature that was reviewed and analyzed. Discursive representations are employed by the European Comission. the European Commission actively takes parts in the discursive enactment of Europeanness itself, by framing AI as a challenge that the EU has a better solution to than its rivals. It also engages in acts of positive-self representations and which turn effectively in to indirect negative-othering

The Research concludes on the notion that the original concept of Normative Power coined by Ian Manners has not disappeared from European political discourse and lives on in the multitude of policies and documents produced. More research is recommended in the field of Artificial Intelligence as the recommendations and strategies provided by the European Commission are taken from theory in to practice. The European approach to AI is as much defined by what is included in the above analysed documents as what is missing, but whether Brussels prefers the term or not, its AI Strategy is fast becoming a reboot for Normative Power Europe.

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1. Introduction

As the rapid advancement in Artificial Intelligence and related technologies take hold and find real life application, questions about the effect on society become ever more relevant. Artificial intelligence has been hailed as the most important technology of the 21st century (Jenkins & Pressman, 2020), and perhaps the most important technology in the whole of humanity's history by observers such as Yuval Noah Harari (Harari, 2018), Kai-Fu Lee (Lee, 2019) and Max Tegmark (Tegmark, 2017). It has been compared to such innovations as steam power or electricity. But in parallel with its proposed and in many cases already demonstrated benefits, critics quick to note a number of threats and challenges that such new technologies pose, as well as the need to collectively prepare for them. Indeed, many scholars and authors have likened the threats and opportunities posed by AI as akin to those faced by humanity at the dawn of the atomic age. As the late cosmologist and theoretical physicist Stephen Hawking put it: *"The rise of powerful AI will be either the best or the worst thing ever to happen to humanity. We do not yet know which.*" (BBC, 2016)

Utopian and apocalyptic future scenarios aside, it is without doubt that the coming of AI – regardless of its definition – will transform much of society as we know it today. And in fact it already has. From autonomous cars to hiring algorithms and AI doctors. These technologies are being rolled out across industries like never before. From international organizations such as OECD and the United Nations to Nation States and private companies, studies and reports on how Artificial Intelligence will transform our economies and affect the *Future of Work* are being conducted and published in a competition of who can best capture the rewards and dodge the costs of the oncoming disruption (Manyika & Sneader, 2018; OECD, 2018).

Together with the economic disruptions that these reports and studies predict a political upheaval is brewing among the bits. The 2016 US Presidential Election and the Brexit referendum of the summer of that same year are perhaps the most recent and dramatic demonstrations of how technology may affect both domestic and international politics and how societies and their governing institutions, as advanced we may think them to be, are caught by surprise and plunged in to crisis when I'll prepared. As successive accusations of

foreign influence on domestic political processes or the spread of misinformation to further political agendas, with the help of targeted campaigning often applied utilizing through the inbuilt algorithms of social media platforms and search engines, increase it is clear that the effects of new technologies is not only restricted to our economies. Rather one may question if and how contemporary modes of governance are relevant or can be relevant in the age of AI.

In this landscape of change and environment of competition the European Union has taken a strong initiative to push for the development of *"AI that corresponds to European Ethical Values and citizens' aspirations"* (European Comission, 2018b). In recent years Europe both on the national and EU level has woken to both the challenges and opportunities that this technology brings and with that the need to control and regulate it in order to maximize benefits and mitigate losses. The push for the development of this European AI is an ambitious one and reflects the collective consciousness that if left behind in the race for AI leadership Europe might lose its standing as global political and economic powerhouse. This is due to the fact that AI related technologies are predicted and to a large extent already affect and have applications within the economic (industrial) sector, defense, as well as influence both political and social/cultural spheres. This is why the European commission has called for both a Union wide strategy to be developed and adopted as well as strongly encouraged its individual member states to develop their respective AI strategies in line with the Commissions' proposals and support their pan-European initiative.

The European Approach for Artificial Intelligence launched by the European Commission in centered around the concept of Trustworthy and Ethical AI. This approach is built around the concept of Ethical and Trustworthy AI that is characterized as being laid and built on *European values* and norms, or ethical principles. This ethical and normative approach is being branded as distinctively *European* in an effort to distinguish it from those of the other major competitors, such as the US and China. Thus with efforts to retain its strategic autonomy the European Union has offered its alternative, but in contrast to its rivals the EU aims at positing itself as a different kind of competitor, a Normative Power and a force for good in the ever heating competition in the so called Age of AI.

Why is it so important for Europe to have its own brand of AI and to frame it as something that is distinctively European even as many of its core tenets, as we shall later see, would be both applicable and in in line with the interests of peoples outside the unions boundaries? As with all new and disruptive technologies, control over and a head-start in the development of Artificial Intelligence equals power on the political, economic and military stages.

"As nations compete around AI, they are part of the biggest battle for global power since World War II. Except, this battle is not about land or resources. It is about data, defense and economy. And, ultimately, how these variables give a nation more control over the world. This is not a cold war. It is an algorithmic war."

(Prakash, 2019)

AI related technologies are estimated to be adding up to USD 15 trillion to the world economy by as soon as 2030 (Anand & Verweij, 2017) and as to be expected there are no shortage of actors who want to have their share of the cake. European countries stand a good chance of staying in the race if they manage to take the right collective actions and pool their resource in the right way. This is demonstrated among other by the *Government Artificial Intelligence Readiness Index* by the UK based think tank [Oxford Insights](#) (2019). According to their 2019 report out of the top 20 countries 11 are European. The index measures and ranks national governments according to their capacity in applying and taking advantage of emerging AI technologies in their internal operations as well as in delivering public services (Oxford Insights, 2019). Altough positive news, and confirming the ability of the Europeans to count to some extent on their existing prosperity and level of technological development, such reports do not present the whole picture and one should be vary of painting a too optimistic picture. Whether we take a look at the overall investment in AI related technologies or the number of submitted patents in the field, and compare Europe (the EU) with other countries, we can see that there is either a significant need for improvement or change in strategy. According to the World Intellectual Property Organization, WIPO, only three of the top 30 AI patent applicants in the world are European companies; Siemens (11), Bosch (21) and Nokia (25) (WIPO, 2019: 60). According to the OECD private equity investment in AI start-ups is a fraction of the amount being invested in China and the US today, while still in 2016 EU and China were investing equal amounts (OECD, 2019). Additionally of the top universities and public research organizations producing scientific publications in the field of AI, only one in twenty is in Europe, with China and the US taking

first and second place respectively (WIPO, 2019: 64). Worse even when taken a closer look at the investments within the EU, the OECD estimates that up to 55 percent (%) of this investment took place in the UK – which as of the 1st of February 2020 seized being a member of the EU – followed by Germany (14%), France (13%) and the remaining 25 member states accounting for only 20% (OECD, 2019)[1]. All of the above is compounded by the fact that the EU with the introduction of GDPR in 2016 has perhaps the tightest laws on data protection and privacy that effectively restricts the space in which AI developers can maneuver (Chivot & Castor, 2019).

The ones that stand to both win and lose the most are the current frontrunners in the race, China and the US. But other countries have their visions of the future as well and even if they may not have the economic and technological muscle required for (technological) dominance in this field their actions may still have significant consequences on how a world in the era of AI will look like. Regardless of the apparent head start that the US and China have, the EU still has a few merits of its own. First, the EU is still the largest economy in the world with its 500 million consumers who's GDP per capita easily tops the global average. Second, It is also the world's largest trading block as well as the primary trading partner for 80 countries (European Council, 2019b). Such, rankings do not come without significant influence and power in the regulation and development of new technologies.

In addition to questions of economic power and dominance among international competitors as well as internal/domestic productivity and competitiveness. There are added interest equally for the EU, it's member states and the European citizens to control and regulate the development and application of such new technologies. In addition to data becoming a commodity on par with oil in terms of its value both in financial terms as well as a foundation/necessity for the modern economy (economic activities), the fact that code-driven systems are used by the majority of the world's population today through ambient information and connectivity applications and the same thing will happen to more advanced algorithmic-driven AI, will have fundamental effect on society at large (Anderson, Rainie & Luchsinger, 2018). For Europe this implies serious questions regarding the implications to its

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[1] See Fig. 2.3 in: OECD (2019), Artificial Intelligence in Society, OECD Publishing,
Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/eedfee77-en

democratic governance systems and the social values that the *"west"* have for so long held as its most defining characteristic.

> *"It is an aspiration of living in a natural and healthy continent. Of living in a society where you can be who you are, live where you like, love who you want and aim as high as you want. It is an aspiration of a world full of new technologies and age-old values. Of a Europe that takes the global lead on the major challenges of our times."*
> (von der Leyen, 2019a: 3)

These opening words – describing what the EU if for current and coming generations – of the new president for the European commission capture well what is at stake from an European perspective. Safeguarding the age-old values of our societies is contrasted against new and emerging technological challenges and it is up to Europe to take leadership in defining what the future holds. Von Leyden is of course not alone with such remarks. Algorithmically guided information online affects affects both purchases and mobility behaviour, as well as social interactions, and such changes to society are already visible (Helbing et al., 2019). And terms as persuasive computing and programmable people are becoming more common.

Such trends are already visible in social influence and political mobilization (Bond et al. 2012) as well the construction of public control mechanisms/infrastructure. One such example is the Social Credit System (SCS) in China. The Chinese initiative aims to *"manage, monitor, and predict the trustworthiness of citizens, firms, organizations, and governments"* by constructing a nation-wide surveillance infrastructure gathering data of citizens online activities (Liang et al. 2018). While still focusing largely on purely financial and commercial activities, the aim of the SCS ultimately aims at covering all of society and inevitably raises concerns with respect to human rights and freedoms, not least related to personal data privacy and security. While still implemented mainly within China other world powers are cautious about such initiatives and the standards accompanied by them being exported internationally as part of the "Belt and Road Initiative" that covers 65 other countries in Asia, Africa, and Europe having china create an ecosystem on which the rest of the world is dependent on (ibid.)

While China is predicted to be the de facto leader in AI by 2030 by its sheer size and its governments ability to act unrestricted and the US already being the dominant force with an industry valued at 150 billion USD, the EU does what it does best by launching its own AI strategy in the form of the Whitepaper Published in 2020 (European Comission, 2020x). Not by forcing others to adopt them but by reconfiguration of its internal landscape and regulating what is allowed in, counting on the interdependence that other have in relation to it.

In the face of global AI competition and the economic, political and social aspects related to it raised above, the European Union is asserting itself as a different kind of player in this game. As the executive body of the Union the European Commission (EC), responsible for proposing legislation, is at the fore front of ensuring Europe does not fall behind. Given this role of the EC, the thesis will be limited to official documents, speeches and statements that originate from the European Commission, relating to the development and formulation leading to the European White Paper on Artificial Intelligence: A European approach to excellence and trust, published on 19th of February 2020(European Comission, 2020x).

The analysis of these documents will examine how the European Union, aware of its limitations, formulates an approach towards AI, distinct from others and based on the concepts and values defining what it sees as inherently *European.* Throughout this process this thesis posits the hypothesis – elaborated on below – that the *European approach to AI* is once again an exercise in *Normative Power*, in where the (documents) demonstrate a specific (NPE) discourse at play shaping and reconstructing a distinct European identity by claiming ownership of *ethical and trustworthy AI*. It is through the practice of discursive representation that the EU's "normative Self" is constructed in contrast to the "non-normative others". In this sense it is possible for us to look at the European union as a Hegemony among its peers, exerting power over those who fall in to her influence as the EU creates "boundaries of normality and Europeanness" by claiming the exclusive right to define what its norms are and what they hold. (Haukkala, 2008) & (Vukcevic & Matic, 2019: 239)

> *"Europe needs to lead the way in promoting responsible competitiveness, distinguishing itself from others by building a trademark of trustworthiness. Only by doing so we can expect to be able to lead by example in this rapidly evolving environment."* (Ala-Pietilä, 2019)

Such ambitions of normative power can be observed from GDPR (Gur, 2020) to peace talks (Persson, 2017) and the goal of this research s to find out whether the new European Approach to AI fits this pattern or not.

2. Research Question/hypothesis – Research Tasks

Analysis in this thesis will be guided by the following research questions that aim to provide clarity to the validity of the hypothesis put forth below. The primary research question this thesis sets out to answer is: **How does the *European approach to Artificial Intelligence* represent the European Union as an actor on the global political stage?**

More specifically I put out the hypothesis that the framing of the European AI strategy around so called ***Ethical and Trustworthy AI effectively enforces the European Union as a normative power by constructing an European identity around the concept of Normative Power.*** *This NPE identity serves to strengthen European Strategic Sovereignty in an international environment marked by increased competition in the development of AI-related technologies, by aiming at safeguarding the EU from externally developed and defined technologies.*

My research will take a discursive approach to answering the question and trying to test the proposed hypothesis. As concept of *ethical and trustworthy AI* stands at the core of the new approach put forth by the European Commission, and it is set both as a guideline for a regulatory framework around these technologies as well as a guideline for member states to build their own national AI strategies around. The hypothesis above posits ethical and trustworthy AI as an European effort to distinguish itself from other major competitors such as China, and the US and is clarified further by the following assumptions that will be tested:

   i)   limiting access to its internal markets and safeguarding indigenous technologies, and
   ii)   by anchoring the guidelines of this new technology in the so called *European values,* and thus the moral and ethical foundation that is seen as the foundation of the Union, paints it as an European innovation.

iii)   By doing so Europe aims at strengthening its normative power on the international stage and safeguarding it's self-determination and autonomy with regards to AI related questions.

I will conduct a discourse analysis of existing material and publications from the European Commission and related sources, as well as analyze the way the European approach to AI is framed by its selected leaders. By deconstructing the way in which Ethical AI is constructed in language in the selected research material I aim to answer the research question put forth by testing the above mentioned hypothesis.

2.1 Structure of the research

The logic of the research for this thesis follows that of deductive reasoning (vs. inductive). A deductive approach usually takes a route from the more general to the specific. Such a ´top-down´ approach takes its cue from an existing theory or theoretical framework (outlined below) that is implemented to the topic of interest. Such a theory provides us with assumptions about phenomena, processes, motivations etc… that can be expressed in the for of hypotheses. Finally the formulated hypotheses will be tested by observations derived from analyzing a set of selected research material or data and by either confirming or falsifying (to various degrees) these hypotheses, additional conclusions about the nature of reality within a specific context can be drawn (confirmation or rejection of our original theory).

Following the formulation of the research question and hypothesis (above) the remainder or the thesis will take the following structure in order to best facilitate a logical way to both understand the research theme as well as the questions are posed and provide answers to the above defined questions and hypothesis.

THEORY: The theoretical section of this thesis seeks to outline and describe the theoretical framework for the following research, but also expand, explore and develop on the concepts or Critical Theory, Normative Power, Strategic Sovereignty and Artificial intelligence in the context of the previous. This is not just to find an existing framework in to which the research is situated but also an attempt to combine the above and develop a new way at looking at the researched theme.

METHODOLOGY: The methodology chapter will describe how the selected research material is going to be analyzed and what is the theoretical approach combined to the selected method.

DATA: The research data presents the selected material for this research along with providing a justification as to why such items were selected and other were left out. Due to the large amount of material that could have potentially been selected for such a research tasks it is of high importance to provide clear justifications to the limits of the research.

ANALYSIS: The analysis will consist of going through the research material with the help of both the selected methodology and the developed theoretical framework each a document selected for this research will be individually analyzed and findings will be summarized in the concluding chapter.

CONCLUSION: The conclusion chapter involves a discussion of the research findings, possible implications and recommendations for future research.

3. Theoretical framework and Key Concepts

As we aim not to analyze concrete policies, actions or historical events but rather examine representations through text and how power can be asserted, assumed, and conjured through the use of certain kinds of discourses, a reflective assessment of the phenomena in focus is needed. Our aim is to reveal and challenge the structures of power that the European Union effectively constructs through selected discourses.

3.1 Critical Theory

Broadly defined critical theory refers to the movement within social and political philosophy where the primary goal of philosophy is understood as examining and transcending the social structures that dominate and oppress people. Such a broad understanding is narrowed down according to the specific requirements of respective scientific disciplines. Within the social sciences and sociology to be specific Max

Horkheimer was one of the earlies proponents of critical theory and as a maeber of the first generation of the so called Frankfurt school form where the theory emanates, classified the goal of critical theories within social sciences as *"To liberate human beings from the circumstances that enslave them"* (Horkheimer, 1982: 224). According to this "narrow" view that is mostly associated to the Frankfurt School of philosophy and social science, the central feature of critical theory is in its emancipatory nature (Bohman, 2019), thus positing itself against the core philosophical tenets of determinism, where as humans as well as societal transformations are fundamentally bound by preceding historical events and surrounding environmental factors, tying them to inescapable chain of cause and effect. According to Bohman, Critical Theory as by Horkheimer needs to meet three distinct criteria to be adequate: *"it must be explanatory, practical, and normative, all at the same time. That is, it must explain what is wrong with current social reality, identify the actors to change it, and provide both clear norms for criticism and achievable practical goals for social transformation."(*Ibid)

As such Critical Theory defined according to Horkheimer *"has as its object human beings as producers of their own historical form of life"* (Horkheimer, 1993: 21)[i]. The focus of Horkheimer's inquiry was in the transformation of society, concentrating on the emancipation of humans from the constraints of capitalism whereas democracy could be seen as the only viable and rational (space/location) for this transformative activity:

> *"The normative orientation of Critical Theory, at least in its form of critical social inquiry, is therefore towards the transformation of capitalism into a "real democracy" in which such control could be exercised"* (Horkheimer, 1982: 250 in Bohman, 2019).

Democracies with their intricate power structures as well as recipients of praise in the for a of governance structures have long been a key focus of Critical Theory. Contrary to many other popular sentiments – as once echoed by Francis Fukuyama in his famous book *The end of history and the last man* - Critical theory does not see Democracy as the final form but rather as aa continuously evolving project an ""*the unfinished project of modernity"* (Habermas 1986: 11 in Bohman, 2019). It is a goal of critical theory to push for the transformation and development in to broader and more inclusive forms of governance from the local to the

global. In this sense it is not just a theory but also a normative endeavor where democracy can be seen as a form of social inquiry itself.

Thus Critical Theory is a broad concept and that may encompass any social scientific method as long as it is critical by nature. By engaging in such a critical endeavor it is worth mentioning that the researcher inevitably falls in to what Bohman (2019) calls "*dual methods and aims*". That is to say that any social inquiry that fall within the above framework will be "*both explanatory and normative at the same time, adequate both as empirical descriptions of the social context and as practical proposals for social change*".

As there are no specific methods that could be singled out exactly for Critical theory it must be coupled with a research methodology fitting for the selected research task. What is a critical perspective is largely decided and defined by the focus and content of the research. This is due to the changing nature of both scientific research as well as the structures of power.

A critical perspective for this thesis was selected due to the tools it offers for an ongoing interpretation of norms, their realizations as well as enactment – in this case translating to the European Union converting it's foundational norms, values and principles in to tools of power translated through a new technological opportunity (Linklater, 2001: 26-29). This combined with the hope that practical application of a critical perspective can assist in revealing how how political ideals that have informed institutions in focus still manifest themselves as expressions in identities reflective of these ideas.

Another reason is due to the fact that critical theory also lends itself to the review of technology and its relations and power in shaping society.

> "What human beings are and will become is decided in the shape of our tools no less than in the action of statesmen and political movements. The design of technology is thus an ontological decision fraught with political consequences. The exclusion of the vast majority from participation in this decision is profoundly undemocratic" (p.3)
>
> Feenberg, A. (2002)

The critical theory of technology was developed by Andrew Feenberg and has been cited as the most comprehensive theory looking at the politics of technological transformation. In his theory Feenberg focuses on what he calls instrumentalization theory that incorporates a social critique in to the examination of both technologies and their transformative effects on society. (Veak, 2006) This approach draw on the Frankfurt school of critical theorists in order to not only refute deterministic interpretations about the relation between society and technology but also to discuss how forms of domination can be *"democratically transformed"* (Kellner, 2001: 155).

In contrast to more deterministic views the Critical theory of technology asks how technology can serve more democratic and humane goals. Technology being the most important issue of our time and inherently linked to all that is political, economic, cultural and social (Veak, 2006), a democratic debate on the nature of technology itself and its possible reconstruction is one of the most pressing questions of today's politics (Kellner, 2001: 156). This is exactly what the European Comission is engaged in with the process of formulating its Union-wide approach and strategy towards a new disruptive technology.

For such a theoretical perspective to be relevant one of the first concessions that need be made is that a critical perspective inherently links technology as well as its forms and use to power. Thus technology becomes an essential part of modern *process of societal democratization"* allowing for "*technology itself* [to be] *restructured to meet basic human needs"* (Kellner, 2001: 157). In *Questioning Technology* Feenberg Argues that thechnology has become such an integral part of our reality that both technological change as well as democratic political change are dependent on each other and nether one can be re-visioned without a change of similar magnitude to the other (Feenberg, 1999). Thus his proposal is a rationality in which technology and serve as a tool or a catalyst in rationalizing society as an alternative to one where the power stemming from technology inevitably flows in a direction that centralizes control (Feenberg, 1999: 76). This includes the notion of excluding technology as a neutral aspect of our lives as its forms, designs, uses will inevitably be political of nature (Feenberg, 1999: 213). A democratic rationalization suggested above means that social hierarchies can be forced to acknowledge needs of the people that it has been ignoring previously as they are brought to the front by this new technology (thing social media and social mobilization), Such a rationalization in turn can help to undermine or even

take down existing social hierarchies, but may as well serve as the foundation for new ones (Feenberg, 1999: 76).

	AUTONOMOUS	HUMAN CONTROLLED
OBJECTIVE	Determinism	Constructivism
NORMATIVE	Substantivism	Critical Theory (Feenberg)

As we can see from the above table Feinberg's critical theory of technology along with other critical approaches is a value laden endeavor itself. By positing it on the opposite end of the spectrum than determinist approaches and allowing for assumptions of specific modes of technology and governance to have more value to the human condition, we have already embarked on a path of not critique but also proposal for alternatives, alternatives that according to whatever metric we choose are inherently "better" than those that we criticize.

3.2   EU as a Normative Power / Ethical Actor on the World Stage

Additional Sources

The notion of normative power is that the European Union is to be seen as an ideational actor among more traditionally conceptualized world powers. According to the Concept of a Normative Power Europe or NPE, the EU is characterized, driven as well as constituted by shared common principles – among its constituent members – and acts as if it sees as one of its primary roles within international relations to diffuse these (its core) norms. The concept of normative power was introduced by Ian Manners in his 2002 Article *Normative Power Europe: A contradiction in Terms*, as an effort to explore the international role of the European Union beyond the traditional conceptions of military and civilian power (Manners, 2002). According to manners a new concept was necessary to understand Europe as both civilian power and military power are driven by interests whereas normative power is bound to international norms and propagated through the force of ideas, a concept that is better suited in trying to understand both the role and the actions of the EU in a wider context (Diez, 2013: 197).

Manners ascribes normative power to actors when they have the *"ability to shape conceptions of normal"* i.e. to change norms in the international system. Despite NPE serving as an alternative for manners with respect to the two more traditional notions of *power(s)* within the international system, the author also notes the tension within the debate regarding normative power, with respect to the EU, as whether to focus on the Union as acting as an example to others by shaping its internal landscape or as an active promoter of its norms through its external policies within the international system. For example in the case of the EU through its regulative power and economic might in restricting market access for others. Responding to such criticism about NPD Manners (2008: 45) suggests the following: *"it is one thing to say that the EU is a normative power by virtue of its hybrid polity consisting of supranational and international forms of governance; it is another to argue that the EU acts in a normative (i.e. ethically good) way."* Corresponding to Manners original argument the EU cannot be seen as a true normative power without this *ethical action* as NPE, according to Manners (2002) presupposes that normative aims be pursued. What is described here as 'ethical action' is founded in the idea that the EU is fundamentally constituted as a set of normative principles and that the EU, as a collective actor, believes that pursuing or seeking to promote these norms are in line with it's interests. The notion of a collective actor and the distinction of how the EU is constituted as a whole is important here as its interests are not to be confused with the interests of individual member states, although they may be overlapping in many cases.

Manners (2008) approaches the question of the European Union as a normative power through a tripartite analytical method, combining principles, actions and impacts in order to make sense of the EU's normative power. Even though an account on ethical action per se, is not provided we are able to build on the virtue, deontological, consequentialist ethics that Manners includes in his article (2008: 56-58). Thus, ethical action would constitute actions that can be seen as i) contributing to consistency between internal and external policies and actions; ii) promote EU's constitutive principles within world politics; and iii) have impacts and outcomes that are in line with the goals set out by these constitutive principles.

The Normative foundations of European Union and subsequent policies, can be traced back to its founding document, the Maastricht treaty. Clear principles and values on which the Union is founded on – providing the back bone for the strategy as well as the Ethical Guidelines- are outlined in its Article 2of The Treaty on European Union (European Union,

1992). Building on those commitments, an elaborated foundation for the European approach to Artificial Intelligence and the subsequent strategy can be traced trough succeeding treaties such as the Lisbon Treaty, which reiterates and builds on the previous agreements (European Union, 2007). The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. And through these values the member states become part and parcel of a "society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail" (European Union, 1992)

These documents each commit the principles of the EU and its policies to the United Nations Charter. The normative principles promoted in these documents include: sustainable peace, freedom, democracy, human rights, rule of law, equality, social solidarity, sustainable development and good governance, and not just within the EU but on a global level as well. It is clear that while rested within the Unions foundational documents such values are not explicitly European. However as we shall see later they are actively and intentionally deployed in the construction of and European identity, an Europeanness that from within is seen and portrayed as inherently something apart from the non-European.

The European approach to AI branded as Trustworthy AI builds on the Ethical Guidelines set forth by the High-Level Expert Group under the auspices of the European Comission. This effort to link a specific vision of technology to ethical principles in the process of creating – or at least designing and imagining - an international regulatory framework can be seen as amounting to Manners posits as *Ethical action*. Ethical action, being an integral part of the toolkit of an aspirant normative power: *"is* [the] *application of normative principles to different realities that is central to the EU's normative ethics - sustainable peace, freedom, democracy, human rights, rule of law, equality, social solidarity, sustainable development and good governance"* – and in this case translated through technology (Manners, 2008: 60).

According to Manners (2002) EU's international role is primarily shaped by it's existence. Altough actions and words do carry weight within international relations, the author assigns the power of example most important role in defining normative power (Forsberg, 2011: 1185). This is due to the fact that the *normative difference* that such a (system) can bring to the political theater, regional or international, fundamentally stems from it's "*historical*

context, hybrid polity and political legal construction" that is different or differs fundamentally from other significant international powers.

This normative constitution, consisting of the core principles listed above, thus predisposes Europe to act in a normative way (Manners, 2002: 242). According to the original argument there are six separate mechanisms through which the EU can spread the norms that it seeks to promote. *Contagion* is perhaps the most clear of examples, where the EU serves as an example for other regional integration projects and it is used as a model to be copied as a blueprint for similar experiments and ambitions. *Informational diffusion* and *procedural diffusion* happen through intentional actions with the former mechanism operating via "strategic communications or policy initiatives" and the latter via EU's relationship with a third party.

What Manners describes as *transference* is norm diffusion through economic or transactional means where norms get exerted together with e.g. trade or economic aid and picked up by the receiving party. *Overt diffusion* in turn occurs when the union has a physical presence in institutions or countries through delegates, ambassadors, or representatives and finally a *cultural filter* that filters out possible modes of political expression and action wherever the EU is involved and subtly affects the social and political identities of those that fall under European norm diffusion. (Manners, 2002: 245-246)

Altough manners does provide with a range of examples for each of his six mechanisms of norm diffusion for the purposes of examining the discursive aspects of Normative Power Europe these mechanisms might turn out to be too vague and thus problematic. In addition, as Manners emphasizes the power of example in shaping the conceptions of what is seen as *normal* within international relations, for our purposes in examining Normative Power Europe it is worth distinguishing between what is *normative* and what is *normal,* as they may not always correspond 100%. To examine Normative Power Europe as a discursive representation a reconstruction of the concept is necessary. Forsberg (2011: 1183) proposes *"a distinction between ´normative´ and ´normal, and a distinction between ´power as a powerful actor´ and ´power as ability to cause effects".* Within this reconstruction of Normative Power Europe passing something as normal, as Manners would argue, may not be seen as normative at all as *"a norm is usually defined as a principle of right action that can be approached from various ethical perspectives"* (Forsberg, 2011: 1190).

This Framework also includes a set of mechanisms, similar but better fitting for a discourse analysis that those of Manners'. According to Forsberg normative power is exercised either by persuasion, by invoking norms, by shaping the discourse (of what is normal) or by leading through example (Forsberg, 2011: 1195-1198). While these four mechanism do to a large extent correspond to those proposed by manners, specifically the latter, which also Forsberg attributes as being perhaps the most '*normative*' of various forms of normative power, they do also better serve the purposes of a discursive analysis as we shall see. Forsberg's mechanism of *persuasion* (Manners Information diffusion) consists of the EU using rhetoric means, attraction and access to exclusive information to convince and persuade the target of this exercise. This mechanism can be witnessed at play in speeches, diplomacy, information campaigns and public appearances where a certain course of action of promoted by the EU and relevant parties are encouraged to follow suite. Propaganda and misinformation fall also under this category. Persuasion is an intentional action directed at the subject with a clear goal causing a desired effect. In contrast to such overt action, *Shaping discourses* (of what is normal) is a more subtle way of indirectly conditioning others to accept desired concepts and ideas, by for example cultivating a certain kind of language and ideas until they are accepted as the norm. Another mechanism is through activating or *invoking norms* that are tied to existing resolutions, clauses, commitments, agreements. These norms are tied to these commitments by parties and norms can be invoked in to action whenever needed by referring to these past agreements. As we can see there is a clear distinction between direct and indirect mechanisms in Forsberg's framework for norm diffusion and in contrast to Manners' it is possible to employ at least two of these for a discursive analysis of NPE. Persuasion and shaping discourses are the clearest mechanisms fitting such an analysis, with invoking norms following suite.

What we shall see is that the European Union (The European Commission to be more specific) engages in all four forms in the formulation of its Approach and strategy to Artificial intelligence:

i) **Persuasion:** The means by which the European union engages with both its members as well as its international partners and neighbors does not build on coercion (excluding economic sanctions) but rather a consultative process in where the objectives aims as well as potential benefits of all stakeholders are

made clear in a transparent process utilizing the rhetoric of friendship, cooperation and trust. Persuasion to whom is of course a debatable question as a supposedly pluralistic and democratic organization the EU and Its constituent member states see the citizen as a primary stakeholder.

ii) **Invoking and activating norms:** Effectively if successful the EU aims at setting the same fundamental values that guide all its operations and the heart of its own vision of how AI should be governed. Thus the norms embedded will be exported through all AI related trade and cooperation with both member states and partners.

iii) **Shaping the discourse (of what is normal):** By creating the Ethical guidelines and framing the societal questions around and through which technologies are approached a precedent is set for future discussions to come.

iv) **Leading through example:** While not being the fist to engage in such an initiative one of the main goals of Europe's AI strategy is to encourage and set an example and a standard for national strategies.

In addition to the above mechanisms, based on the existing debate following Manners' publications Forsberg's framework also provides us with criteria for what can be classified as a normative power (Forsberg, 2011: 1191-1195). Without having to fill all these criteria at once they can be used to examine actors or entities possessing qualities of normative power as well as serving as a prerequisite for the above described mechanisms. Thus Normative Power, depending of its use, can serve as a concept describing EU's actions and serving as an explanation for such actions without directly implying that the EU should be one or that it fills in all the various criteria put forth by one or the other author. Corresponding to Manners' (2002) claim that the EU is normatively constituted, that one of the criteria for a normative power is that it has a normative identity. What is meant by this is that the EU *"perceives itself as representing a normative power"*(Forsberg, 2011: 1192)*.* In the case of the EU, NPE can be seen as a "discursive self-construction" that can be witnessed by the self-authoring of the Union in its various documents, publications, speech acts by representatives and so forth. Such discursive practices are aimed at effectively producing a "normative self" that can and is, either consciously or by indirect means against an external "other". From the

point of view of the EU such others are effectively seen as "non-normative" as they do not fall within the EU norms and as importantly are not an active part and do not have a say in the process of discursive self-construction of said identity. (Vukcevic & Matic, 2019: 305).

Thus Forsberg's conclusio in the exercise of redefining and reconstructing normative power Europe- is that, whenever used it should be applied as a *tool of inquiry* rather than ascribing Normative Power to the EU as such. Rather we can use the five criteria described above and attribute one or more of them to the EU and ask to what extent such a criteria applies to the EU in specific contexts. In short, rather than simply saying the EU is a normative power, it's is more beneficial to specify in which way we use NPE to describe the EU as an actor.

Thus NPE should be seen as an ideal type, and although Forsberg presents it as an option alongside the above, when approaching NPE as a discursive self-construct of EU's such ideal types can actually prove to be quite useful in describing the actions and aspirations of actors. Ideal types were famously described by Max Weber as *"applying a purely analytical construct[s] created by ourselves".* These mental constructs can offer *"guidance t*o the construction of hypotheses"* (Weber, 1949: 90-96)

Weber's ideal types as interpret by Aronovitch (Aronovitch, 2012) Involve applying so called "purely analytical constructs". They are a combination of a variety of cognitive elements and social constructs such as faith, norms, laws and ideas (Weber, 1949: 96).These Ideal types serve as powerful heuristics present and operational as much in politics, economics as in our everyday lives. Such ideal types are necessary for constructing reality and the hypotheses we do construct even within this thesis are predicated upon them. The idea of and actor on the international stage that we define as an ethical actor or normative power, or the idea of a trustworthy and ethical artificial intelligence (not just the application of it) builds heavily on such ideal types. The ideal types need not be completely anchored in reality as we can set them up and use them as goalposts to guide our analysis and on a case by case basis decide to what extent the phenomena we are observing corresponds to this and that ideal type and to what extent the need to correspond to reality in order to serve our specific purposes (Weber 1949, 90)

So what do we mean when we say that we are going to analyze the possible normative power of Europe as a discursive representation rather than an objective category? First and foremost it is an exercise in looking at how the EU is constructed as a normative power – what is the practice and how does this alleged discursive representation plays out in the various documents, texts and speeches and the kind language they are carried out in, whether written or spoken. As second inquiry might be about the power that lies in the representation of EU as a normative power. Not to complicate things further but to say that the EU is a normative power is a value statement by itself – as opposed to saying it is acting like rogue state like North Korea. So the recognition itself of the EU as a normative power by us and others enables the discursive self-construction of the EU and legitimises its actions on the international political field (Vukcevic & Matic, 2019: 301)

Discursive representations not only construct the particular normative identity embraced by the EU, but also communicate to others about what is to come when engaging with the EU. They effectively serve as preconditions for other actors to agree to the norms set forth by the EU (Vukcevic & Matic, 2019: 293).
Through the discursive practices constructing the NPE identity, such as images, stated norms and values (Manners & Diez, 2007:174) are made evident in the selected documents the EU's normative self is constructed against "non-normative others" (Diez, 2005). And with the internal focus of these discursive practices a separate representation of the other is not necessary as it is simultaneously created as an actor with adversial characteristics against which the EU is contrasted. By binding this identity in to values that are framed as *European* inevitably invokes moral superiority of the European project with respect to others, allowing it to define itself through and construct its identity through differentiation. The implication of hierarchy also elevates Europe, seen from within, to a hegemonic power in terms of defining the boundaries between normality and Europeanness (Vukcevic & Matic, 2019: 298). The EU as a normative power is a discursive self-construction which establishes a distinctive EU identity by constructing the EU "normative Self" against the "non-normative others" and the "EU-norms" against the "non-EU norms". (Vukcevic & Matic, 2019: 305).

The construction of the normative self and the non-normative others is an important one as all identities are fundamentally relational and lose their relevance in a vacuum or a homogenous environment. Identities are always a representation of self that is broadcasted and thus dependent on the existence and (subsequent) construction of others. (Connoly, 1991)

Normative power along with Europe are both contested notions. And whenever engaging in an analysis over their properties this paper acknowledges taking part in the (re) construction of both as "to talk about Europe is to enter a field of discursive struggle", where reality is constantly being re-produced at the level of discourse (Schlesinger, 1992). Thus to come back to the question of about the power that lies in the representation of EU (as a normative power) the European commission (publications and statements, policies put forth) exerts this power through by conditioning the discussion we are able to have as well as the actions that both internal and external countries are able to take. Such significant power is also wielded through framing the discussion around Artificial Intelligence in European terms and tying the concept of *ethical Ai* to that of *Europeanness.* This logic follows a Foucauldian idea of power shaping the "possibilities of action", as discursive power becomes institutionalized in all interactions with the Comission and the European Union at large (Foucault, 2000). This form produces and defines in the form of discourses that pass the internal filter which in this case can be seen as the commission and the rules and procedures of associated with the EU's institutions.

Foucault set out to change our conception of power from something "repressive" a force that is able to construct, produce and define. (Bevir, 1999: 349). Within such a conception both external and internal factors play in as variables in constructing discourses and should ba seen as forms of power as well as not all actorhood in creating such discourses is necessary with the entity that produces them (e.g. by means of text or speech). Foe example we can consider such external controls as being forces that hinder one from speaking, due to shame, custom or safety. Perhaps such external forces would identify statements as opposite to the interests of the speaker – whether false or true. Internal controls again are things such the status of the speaker within a group that gives them certain role, authority, or responsibility and so forth.

Such factors along with historical experiences and environmental factors as well as relationship give actors, individuals and entities their identities and it is within this matrix that also the European Union has to be observed when considering it as constructing discourses about and formational for its own identity. Thus "to study politics becomes to trace the operation of power as it creates subjects, discourses, and institutions through time"(Bevir, 1999: 353).

Thus in examining the construction of NPE- identity of the European Union and the Comission in this case, we should avoid viewing the Comission (and other institutions within the EU) only as "*technical and legal institutions of expertise*" creating specific policies and instead follow the Foucauldian notion that the power of such institutions is (partly) hidden behind this veneer and of observable processes and that power also lies in discursive (action/construction) that is effectively placed in a category beyond political debate (Shore 1999).This is crucial to understand how the EU, through the Commission discourse, views itself with respect to such a disputed, longstanding candidate and constructs an identity for itself via its discourses on the country in question. Following Benedict Andersons concept of 'imagined communities' we can argue that the 'state' itself has no ontological status while it constantly (re)constructs itself through discourses of identity both with respect to the 'inside' and the 'outside' simultaneously (Anderson, 1983).

So if we see the EU also as an imagined community as - -any collective entity can be viewed - one in constant need of articulation and confirmation of its meaning. Then we can posit that within the international sphere the European Union is constantly trying to carve out a space for itself among other powers. And lacking the same capabilities as great powers, such as the US, China, Russia and other actual states, normative power Europe becomes this niche. It is de facto the identity that is sought after with defining political initiatives such as the European Approach for Artificial Intelligence.

Ethical AI is a construction of EU as a virtuous example in the pursuit for AI-related technologies and the simultaneous competition of mastering these technologies in a sustainable and competitive manner.

3.3 Strategic Sovereignty

What is Strategic sovereignty and what does it mean in the context of the European Union, instead of applying it to the traditional notion of a *nation state*?

The European Union is transnational by definition and thus any notions about its or its Member States' sovereignty has to be situated within this polycentric and pluralist framework that automatically follows. Thus challenges that are often directed at 'nation states' may not apply in the same manner as one would expect or… the strategic sovereignty of the European union is to be seen in relation to its main rivals with respect to the community being able to

navigate security concerns and take economic and political decisions that best further the interests of its members as seen part of a broader collective.

The interpretation of sovereignty as autonomy finds its origins in Jean- Jacques Rousseau's Social Contract, but it can best be understood by setting up an analogy with Immanuel Kant's account of individual autonomy (Geenens 2019, p.94) And sovereignty undoubtedly holds the title of the *"master concept"* of modern wester political thought and science, one that has traditionally provided a framework for *"the explanation, justification and organization of legal and political authority"*(Laijsenaar & Walker 2019, p.2-3).

Sovereignty is seen as the ability and power to govern oneself. This excludes interference and restrictions from external powers. Total individual sovereignty is of course a disputable concept but within political science and its theories Sovereignty is often seen as the concept given to a governing authority of a specific polity, where as this authority holds some kind of undisputed monopoly over executive power as well as violence.

Increasingly technology interferes with this traditional conception of sovereignty as noted by Laijsenaar & Walker:

> *"that the spread of governance technologies to which democratic input becomes increasingly remote has altered the political architecture in ways that challenge the centrality – and perhaps even the continuing relevance – of popular sovereignty."*
> (Laijsenaar & Walker 2019, p.2)

Geenens (2019) on his behalf gives us his three conditions of sovereignty, namely that of rational will, formation, Unity (in this case within the polity), and agency- which requires the capacity to act. In a case like the European Union Sovereignty is to be seen also as a form of *"collective autonomy"* there the polity at hand and together with its governing body is *"capable of transcending mere societal or economic mechanisms" "* (Geenens, 2019: 95). The understanding of technology – the laws, restrictions, and opportunities its presents – is paramount. As without such understanding sovereignty is susceptible to the deterministic tendencies of technology as well as blind adoption to technological forms that may undermine this sovereignty. So the related to technology the question becomes does a specific entity or actor see itself as *"capable of collective action"* and possess the necessary

knowledge to influence the technological variables and obstacles in to its favor. Or as Geenens would put it:

> *"the perspective of sovereignty cannot be assumed as a given. The presence of this perspective is conditional: it depends on whether the necessary infrastructure is in place to sustain this perspective."* (Geenens, 2019: 97)

Strategic Sovereignty:

The concept strategic sovereignty as it is applied to the organization of independent states we now refer to as the European Union that is used by the author for this thesis is taken form Sapiro and Leonard's 2019 Policy Brief with the European Council on Foreign relations. Here the authors introduce the concept of strategic sovereignty and propose to develop a doctrine for European strategic sovereignty as a response to ever increasing geopolitical competition where the EU members in their relatively limited powers as individual states expose new vulnerabilities and face ever increasing external pressures in the face of new threats and technological developments (Sapiro & Leonard, 2019a).

From a historical perspective threats to the European Union and the states that are now a part of it, have come from within the continent as well as the Union. Competition for dominance, challenges to integration and competing views have been the major source of conflict between European powers and still fuel debates about the future and legitimacy of the EU – with respect to nation states. But since the increased consolidation of bowers in Brussels the creation and existence of the Union as an European *polity* operating on the world stage has become more or less an indisputable reality. With the individual states often being represented as a collective. This has brought with it the notion of external influence on this block and with it questions of its sovereignty. Namely its capacity to act independently, defend its interests and values and have a voice in world affairs.

Acoording to Leonard & Sapiro the European a desirable world order form an European perspective, and one that the western powers have actively been promoting is based on three *crucial pillars:*

- A multilateral, rules-based order that insulates economic relations and global problems from geopolitical competition.
- A security alliance based on shared interests and values, with the US as the foundation of global order.
- Free and fair global trade that benefits everybody and that allows state policy to focus on consumer protection rather than the interests of producers.

The authors propose this concept as a combination of both Strategic Autonomy and European sovereignty (Leonard & Shapiro, 2019). **Strategic autonomy** according to the authors implies that Europeans want to act alone in the world and implies the desire to free Europe from the interdependent world it has co-created in the last few decades. **European Sovereignty** in turn means the transference of sovereignty form member state capitals to Brussels or in turn *" taming the destructive national sovereignty of its member states".*

Thus strategic sovereignty implies creating as situation where Europe defines a clear objective and actions for what they want their role to be in the world and also resolve whether they will be capable of achieving this goal. This means creating plans and strategies on a more broader level, by defining the relation to others and having along term temporal scope. This does not necessarily mean that all sovereignty be stripped from the Unions member states but rather that their sovereignty is seen as part and parcel of that of the EU's. If values and interests can be aligned and the necessary mechanisms for decision making guaranteed polling national sovereignty within the EU can be seen as a counterbalance to losing it to other great powers (Leonard & Shapiro, 2019).

In the case of the European union and especially in developing a response to a new disruptive technology it is of course the member states themselves that are the ultimate source of any kind of sovereignty, as without them the Union does not exist and it is through the member states that the Union ultimately has power over it citizens. Thus with the case of the European approach to Artificial intelligence it is in the interest of the member states to reduce competition over AI and forge a consensus that can be used as a defense against foreign implementations of the technology that do not correspond with the values or the interests of the Europeans.

Due to its fragmented structure the EU lacks the capacity to stand up to great powers such as china, Russia or the us without a clear strategy. This would undermine the ability for strategic decision making. Thus it is seen as detrimental for the strategic sovereignty of the European union to not being independent and on par in AI development with respect to its competitors. A key to preventing the loss of sovereignty is again the same reason as why the European Union Stands from the crowd. Its diversity and a sufficient degree of unity within this diversity. What this means is the ability to create, enforce and export common rules and regulations on applicable technologies that match external AI applications in their sophistication.

3.4   Briefly on Artificial Intelligence

For the purposes of this thesis it is worth briefly to define what is meant by Artificial intelligence. As we are analyzing the European Union's approach and subsequent strategy to AI and its development of Ethical Guidelines for this technology this thesis agrees with the definition set forth by the European Comission

The European Commission uses the following definition: "*Artificial Intelligence refers to systems that display intelligent behaviour by analysing their environment and taking action — with some degree of autonomy — to achieve specific goals.*" (European Comission, 2018b: 1)

This definition though flexible does need some more explanation and elaboration for the purposes of our research. When Referring to AI in this thesis I Intend to use it in the broadest sense and the analysis and selection of research material has been carried out accordingly. Thus Artificial Intelligence and AI when not quoting another source refers to technologies often related to Artificial Intelligence such as:

a. Artificial Intelligence,
b. Machine Learning,
c. Natural Language Processing,
d. Machine Vision,
e. Predictive Analytics,
f. Expert Systems,
g. Process optimization and Image recognition.

These are not relevant terms regarding the research but within the documents that have been subject to analysis not the phenomena in focus in sot always referred to as Artificial Intelligence but rather one or many of the above. Thus I will use Artificial Intelligence and AI as a catch all term for all the above.

A broader definition is offered by the By the High-Level Expert Group on Artificial Intelligence (European Comission, 2019: 36) as the following:

> "Artificial intelligence (AI) systems are software (and possibly also hardware) systems designed by humans that, given a complex goal, act in the physical or digital dimension by perceiving their environment through data acquisition, interpreting the collected structured or unstructured data, reasoning on the knowledge, or processing the information, derived from this data and deciding the best action(s) to take to achieve the given goal. AI systems can either use symbolic rules or learn a numeric model, and they can also adapt their behaviour by analysing how the environment is affected by their previous actions."

For the purpose of this thesis it should also be mentioned that when talking about So called trust worthy or ethcical AI the Commissions Definition set forth By the High-Level Expert Group on Artificial Intelligence (European Comission, 2019: 5) is the following;

> Trustworthy AI has **three components,** which should be met throughout the system's entire life cycle:
>
> 1. it should be **lawful**, complying with all applicable laws and regulations;
> 2. it should be **ethical**, ensuring adherence to ethical principles and values; and
> 3. it should be **robust**, both from a technical and social perspective, since, even with good intentions, AI systems can cause unintentional harm.

4. Methodology

Focusing on the formulation of an European AI strategy, conceived at the supranational / EU commission – level as guideline for national startegies and as the basis for a union-wide regulatory framework this thesis examines how the documents (around the AI strategy) import the language of EU as a normative power in developing this new technology. – Thus Discourse analysis. This thesis aims at looking at to what extent the discursive representation of NPE as a foundation for an European Identity is present in the formulation and development of the concept of Trustworthy and Ethical AI and the European AI stategy in general. For this purpose discourse analysis is chosen as the best research method to go forth with the presented task.

Past scholarly inquiries in to the discursive constitution of European identities have to a large extent focused on influencing discourses regarding EU intergration and enlargement (Wodak, 2018). Such constructions… of But in recent times, especially as the status of the European Union as an actor in international politics – be it as a partner or adversary – has been consolidated, this debate has been broadened to include a variety of external actions and new sectors. (*Crespy, 2015: 29*)

As previously mentioned/above discursive constructions of identity as identities by definition are at the core the result of acts of distiquishing between the self and the other. This dynamic has become more evident as the EU is increasingly seen as a unitary global actor either by trying to distinguish itself form or to imitate others. The significance of the above arises from the fact that such discourses that are constructed by and within the Union are increasingly seen as a means to legitimate European policies – both external and internal – as well as to advance European interests and to prepare and counter perceived threats to its interests (Tonra & Christiansen, 2004). This diversification has been accompanied by an increase application and mainstreaming of discursive approaches to these fields of inquiry as well. As Crespy (2015: 2) notes:

> *"The constitution of the EU as a polity is probably the most fundamental theme relating to the study of European discourses. It covers two basic research questions: how do national discourses about Europe impede or foster integration? And how is Europe represented as a unitary actor on the global political stage?"*

Conducting a discourse analysis of the selected material to answer the proposed research question is at the end of the day an exercise in looking at what is said about Europe, or in this case what the Comission says about Europe and its AI ambitions, and how and why. Here how refers to the way EU is represented in the discourse and why refers to its ambitions whether explicit or implicit.

A number of different *European Discourses* exist that equally aim at defining the nature and identity of the EU, explain and legitimize its actions and characteristics. Some explain, construct and deconstruct the European Union as a polity while others focus on how it presents itself as a global actor. Other research questions may ask how national discourses may impede or foster integrations while others focus on the constitution of the European Union as a public sphere, or the role of discourses in the Europeanization of policymaking either within the union or in countries that either are in direct contact or see the EU as a source for inspiration.

As this thesis is a study in to the relationship of discourse and power or rather the role of discourse in the (re)production of (different forms of power), Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is chose for the methodological toolkit to best answer the posed research questions. In addition to CDA there are a number of other approaches to discourse analysis in general, such as content analysis, framing and examining different narratives. But in contrast with the other forms CDA takes things a bit further by applying a decidedly critical stance to the analysis of the selected data. As such CDA is more that just a plain research method, rather it could be characterized more as a methodological and theoretical toolkit (Fairclough, 2001). So instead of just examining and explaining a specific social story taking place, or perhaps being constructed, CDA adds the question of why a specific actor(s) seeks to promote such a story. Thus is lends itself as an ideal tool in identifying and uncovering institutional change, various ideological movements and social change as well as the underlying motivations for such phenomena.

As noted Above I will first take a brief look in to the theoretical notions and implications of CDA before detailing the methodological tools and steps that will be applied to the selected research material for this thesis, along with explaining the stages and structures of my analysis.

Similarly to Critical theory CDA has a fundamentally emancipatory nature (Bohman, 2003; Horkenheimer, 2003). As Van Dijk (1993: 252) notes the aim of CDA more interested in emerging and *"pressing social issues"* than in contributing to existing theories and scientific schools. CDA seeks to understand how and what kind of power in embedded in the use of language, text, talk and other so called speech acts and what is sought by those using this power Thus it is important to understand the underlying structures of power that are at play in deploying the discourses (that are analyzed) and how these discourses contribute to the reproduction of such power structures (Van Dijk, 1993:254).

In our focus what is relevant is what is more general called social power. This Social power of ten comes from privileged and otherwise unhindered access to resources that are seen as socially valued and limited in their general access by other actors in the same arena. Such resources can include all from wealth and income but are often more in line and described as positions of power whether it be a certain status withing a society and belonging to a specific group that gives special advantages, having access to quality education and having access to specific and required information and knowledge. (Clegg, 1989; Lukes, 1986)

Such powers are often observed in language users, by looking at just the way they choose to deliver their message as well as what platforms they are free to use. Language users with more social power are also more free to communicate more freely, unrestricted by sometimes even invisible boundaries or just the lack of access or a platform. Knowledge and education play their part in the skill and choice of using so called "*special discourse genres or styles"* of communication as well as the opportunity to participate in specific events and contexts where to deliver their message (Van Dijk, 1993: 256). Reach and target audience can also be seen as either limiting or enabling factors of social power and power may be relative to the context and environment in which a specific message or discourse is to be communicated. For example a EU Commissioner may have more clout for their message when speaking among a group of industrialists who understand the system looking to curb new regulation than with a group of North European fishermen who's main priority is to continue with their traditional way of life without the overwatch or Brussels.

So, by creating and European identity around a certain concept such as NPE, such discourses effectively serve as legitimating strategies for control, if and when the identity is adopted. If the constituency and the institutions that are involved adopt a way of thinking that is

connected to the identity of Europe being a NPE it naturalizes the hierarchy between European and Non-European that is implied within. This also enforce and legitimate the control of those that produce and deploy such discursive strategies *(Van Dijk, 1993: 253)*. If successful the EU becomes an authority and a hegemony in the Gramschian (Van Dijk, 1993: 255) sense, regarding development and application of AI systems within the EU as well as employing this new technology in exporting its values to the outside.

When engaging in examining the production of discourse by speech or text and we thus deem this exercise as an exercise or show of their power, we ought to distinguish between various forms of how it is done, i.e. How the normative power identity of the European Union that we have hypothesized is produced and reproduced by such discourses? What are the discursive structures and strategies that are involved in the process.

First of all we need to recognize that enacting and exerting power in discourses is bound to be dependent on the control of the context and substance. The mere ability to produce and receive information in a free way is a prerequisite to also the wanted discursive structures and strategies. Such structures may include among others:

- Argumentation:
    - Issuing statements and reasoning in a systematic way to prove, support or disqualify some other argument, opinion, idea or theory.
- Rhetorical figures
    - So called figure of speech where the specific word choices separate the speech act from what is considered normal language and thus give it a special meaning and weight in the mind of the listener.
- Lexical Style
    - Storytelling in various genres, can be factual or fiction.
- Structural Emphasis
    - How the text or message is structured. Layering pieces of information in order to create a special effect.
- and Positive self-representations vs. negative othering.
    - By emphasizing or leaving out some key information about oneself or the other and actively creating an image through this method about the

other and the self. For example by emphasizing positive aspects about oneself it effectively creates a contrast to others.

The above structures and strategies are deployed to invoke images or *"preferred models"* within the mind of the audience to serve ones self-interests. *(Van Dijk, 1993: 264)*
The research for this thesis will follow the steps of selecting the relevant material to be analysed, along with defining and justification for a specific timeframe for the study.

The corpus selected for this analysis will include the following (see below) documents that have been produced as a part of the formulation of the European Commission's Approach to Artificial Intelligence. These documents are selected in order to gain a broad picture of both the process of the formulation and development of this approach as well as to include a broad number of sources so as to verify and test the hypotheses stated above. The material selected will only include official documents made public by the commission or mandated research groups such as the High-Level Expert Group on AI, in order to represent the official view and wordings/language used by the commission and not mix in individual commentaries that might not represent the commissions official position and opinion.

The research tasks in conducting a discourse analysis beging form the main task of:

1. Selecting the corpus or the bodies of text that are to be analysed. In the below data section I have listed the documents to be included in the research as well as their nature. Nature refers to the fact whether they are, visual, audio or text and in the case of this thesis they are all text comprising of bot official documents and transcripts of speeches.

2. Identifying the dimensions or the analytical categories of the analysis. The main analytical categories I intend to focus on are both vocabulary and structure. This means that we focus on words and phrases through their ideological and ideational associations and metaphorical content, how they are used to create additional meaning and construct identities and relationships of power. By structure we look at how both the above and the structure of the text can be analysed from the perspective of how it creates emphasis and builds desired narratives. Analytical categories include also who the producer of the discourse is and in which contect are they speaking.

3. The final step includes interpretation. At this stage we must cmpare and analyse to what extent the analytical categories that we have observed in the selected corpus correspond to the theoretical requirements we have set for ourselves as well as to what extent they actually confirm or nullify our hypothesis. This is to say that we want to look at to what extent the analytical categories contribute to the criteria of the actions fitting to the NPE-framework as set in the previous chapters, namely: Persuasion, Invoking and activating norms, efforts to shape discourse and leading through example. In this our assumption is that the narratives created follow four paths of:

      I.   **European** Exeptionality (negative othering & positive self representation)

      II.   **Anchoring the notion of Europeaness to its *Europeanness* to its norms and values**.

      III.   **Positioning EU as a global leader and Desire to set an example**

      IV.   Positionaing itself as a **"force for good"**

In addition this stage includes the observing of patterns and in case such patterns are found, what conclusion can be drawn from these?

In the analysis the research will focus among other on a specific social problem which has a semiotic aspect. Namely the Othering of knowledge from outside the EU, and within the EU with respect to the European commission. Thus, creating a hierarchy of actors that serves to elevate the aforementioned to a specific status of power with respect to competing actors. Or to be more specific the argument is that this is their goal as others have also observed a power competition withing the EU among the various institutions (Rauh, Metz, Hartlapp, 2014). With this respect the Comission is recognized in in the premise of this research thesis due to their centrality within the union and their undeniable and legal role in setting the agenda as well as producing knowledge. Within the European Union as well as interactions with outsiders this grants the Comission with wit authority control over their own actorhood tha can not be sidelined (Kreppel & Otaz, 2017)

5. Data

The research material complied for the analysis in this thesis are include a number of key documents published by the European Comission and subsequent bodies of the commission that have been involved in the process that both (start) the process for developing the European Approach to AI, Outline its core motivations and contents as well as the final documents that make up the final version of the Approach. In addition a number of press releases, staments, as well as speeches by European Comission representatives will be included in order to provide further insight on how the EU sees itself with regard to the AI strategy.

The document selected for this study will be limited to a two year period between 25.4.2018 and 30.10.2020. The starting date is defined by the first publication of the series of European Commission Communications later constituting the whole of the European Approach to AI, and the end date for the collection of the research material was set by the temporal limits of the thesis finalization, tha latest document being the latest reference to the European Ai startegy in the EC database. The material is collected form official websites of the European Union that host publications of EU and its subsequent bodies. Such sites include https://publications.europa.eu/en/publications and https://europa.eu/european-union/index_en as well as the European Commision home page https://ec.europa.eu/ Specific links for the referenced documents can be found in the references section at the end of this thesis.

Official European Commission communications Constituting what is more widely referred to the European Approach to AI:

1. COM(2018) 237: Artificial Intelligence for Europe Brussels, 25.4.2018
2. COM(2018) 795: Coordinated Plan on Artificial Intelligence, Brussels, 7.12.2018
3. COM(2018) 795 final – ANNEX: Coordinated Plan on the Development and Use of Artificial Intelligence Made in Europe – 2018, Brussels, 7.12.2018
4. COM(2020) 65: White Paper On Artificial Intelligence - A European approach to excellence and trust, Brussels, 19.2.2020
5. High-Level Expert Group on Artificial Intelligence Ethics Guidelines for Trustworthy AI

Speeches, statements and press releases by European Comission President Ursula Von Der Leyen: A total of 29 speeches and 13 statements and press releases were screened for

purposes of this research of which the following were selected due to content matching the research topic

1. A Union that strives for more – [My Agenda for Europe, Political Guidelines for the next European Comission](#)
2. 10 November 2019 – [Europe Address – Dr. Ursula Von Der Leyden President-Elect of The European Comission (](#)Speech)
3. 16 September 2019 – [Op-ed the European Way of Life (](#)op ed)
4. 27 November 2019 - [Speech by President-elect von der Leyen in the European Parliament Plenary on the occasion of the presentation of her College of Commissioners and their programme](#) (Speech)
5. 22 January 2020 - [Keynote speech by President von der Leyen at the World Economic Forum](#) (Speech)
6. 19 February 2020 - [Press remarks by President von der Leyen on the Commission's new strategy: Shaping Europe's Digital Future](#) (Press remarks)
7. September 16 2020 - [State of the union Address by President Ursula Von Der Leyden at the European Parliament Plenary](#) (Speech)
8. 28 October 2020 - [Statement by President von der Leyen at the roundtable 'Internet, a new human right' after the intervention by Simona Levi](#) (Stetement)

Speeches, statements and press releases by European Comission Executive Vice President Margrete Vestager: A total of 29 speeches and 13 statements were screened for purposes of this research of which the following were selected due to content matching the research topic.

1. 30 October 2020 - [Algorithms and Democracy](#) (Speech)
2. 26 October 2020 – [Speech to Munich Young leaders round the world](#) (Speech)
3. 2 October 2020 – [Keynote Address the 'Business, Big tech & Competition Forum in the Digital Age' Conference](#)(Speech)
4. 23 September 2020 – [Speech to the Abrosetti Club](#) (Speech)
5. 10 September 2020 – EC Press Release – [Comission and China hold first High Level Digital Dialogue](#) (Press release)
6. 30 June 2020 – [Openin Message for the European AI Forum](#) (Speech)

7. 26 June 2020 – [Competition in a Digital Age hanging enforcement for changing times](#) (Speech)
8. 5 March 2020 – [technology with a purpose](#) (Speech)
9. 3 February 2020 – [Shaping a digital future for Europe](#) (Speech)

These documents are selected in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the preparatory process for a European AI Strategy that is still under work and to understand how the EU is framed in this process with respect to this new technology. And how the approach is framed as distinctively European.

In addition to the documents listed above a number of other EU publications (namely the treaties) will be referred to as to give some context on the normative foundations of the Unions policy.

5.1   Contextual Background to the European Approach to AI

The European approach laid out by the European Comission in their communication in early 2018 cemented was cemented in three basic pillars:

   i)   being ahead of technological developments and encouraging uptake by the public and private sector;
   ii)   preparing for socio-economic changes brought about by AI; and
   iii)   ensuring an appropriate ethical and legal framework.

This was fueled by a general concern of being left behind by China, US and others as well as a stark realization that AI was no more a thing of the future but something that had already started to permeate the different sectors of society. AI was here to stay and the European Union Need a response. AI will affect future societies and the EU wanted to have a say in just how.

Additionally a number of member countries had already national strategies of their own by early 2018. Countries that had taken independent steps include Finland, France, the United Kingdom, as the most notable ones, Other member states had also began preparations prior to

the European Comission and some had integrated Artificial Intelligence in their other strategies e.g. on digitalization or Industry and Services (European Comission, 2018x).
At the time of writing this thesis out of the 27 EU member states a majority of 21 states have already published a national AI strategy, and the remaining 7 are currently in the process of developing one (Van Roy, 2020: 8).

Of these:

- Sixteen Member states have published their individual national strategies.
- Five have draft versions that may have been published or are in the preparatory phase.
- Seven Member states are in the process of developing their strategies.

The European Comission also received consultation and recommendations form other EU institutions most notably in the form of European parliament sponsored study European Artificial Intelligence (AI) leadership, the path for an integrated vision (Delponte 2018). In the study the working group set up by the European Parliament recognized the following obstacles, Recommendations as well as targets support an European approach to foster the development of AI in Europe:

Obstacles for the developing AI in Europe:

i)   *internal technical capacity (specify)*
ii)   *AI policy and regulatory risk (specify)*
iii)   *Early stage of development of AI applications in business and social acceptance (specify)*

Recommendations for EP:
- *Promote genuine progress in AI global governance and discussions about the societal risks of these technologies.*
- *Promote the development of a general ethical framework governing AI technologies' design in Europe.*
- *Prioritize AI applications that effectively address societal challenges.*
- *Ensure consistency in regulations and policies that are linked to AI, such as those affecting the access, use and storage of data.*
- *Ensure that EU support for AI leverages and complements actions undertaken in Member States.*

- *Finally, engage with Member States to prepare business and society for the upcoming transformations.*

Goals:

i) *Access to public sector data;*

ii) *Mitigation of the socio-economic challenges brought about by progressing AI-based technologies;*

iii) *Development of a legal and ethical framework for AI that is built upon EU fundamental rights and values, including privacy, protection of personal data and the principles of transparency and accountability.*

(Delponte, 2018)

5.2   Discourse Analysis of EU AI Strategy:

The social phenomenon focused on with the following data is the discursive construction European Exeptionality and Normative Power and in discourses of Artificial intelligence in Europe, both official policy documents and the discussion surrounding it, on the part of the European Commission and its representatives. The ways in which the need for European strategic sovereignty in the face of a global competition over a new technology forces a limited power to create such a narrative.

The analyzed examples have been selected because of their relevance to key issues in (AI EU, Its developments and discursive framing by EC representatives) and because these are the main communication tools by which the new agenda along with notions of above mentioned exceptionality and normative power are sold to both the wider European constituencies as well as foreign actors. In addition these were selected because of similarities between the way in which these discourses are articulated, carried across time and author.

More precisely the focus is on looking at how in discourses of an European approach to Artificial Intelligence a set of assumptions about Europe in contrast to other actors is constructed, and to what extend:

The first of there is that of an i) **European** Exeptionality (Maybe some sources here is time) and with respect to this **a need for an explicitly European response** to the challenges laid forth by this new technology; ii) **Anchoring the notion of Europeaness to its *Europeanness to its norms and values*.** Manners argues that these norms combined with its specific hybrid polity differentiate the European union from pother political entities as well as creating an incetive and inclination for the EU to act in a normative way (Manners, 2002: 240); iii) **Positioning EU as a global leader and Desire to set an example** (Manners 2002: 239); iv) Positionaing itself as a **"force for good"** (Dunne, 2008)

Analyzing the content of the selected documents for this research we are best to beging with those outlining the development as well as the final strategy itself. Thus we will establish a clear understanding of the objectives and language of official Commission Documents as a backdrop on to which subsequent communications can be reflected (Such as, speeches and statements)

The European Approach to Artificial Intelligence:

1. COM(2018) 237 final – **Artificial Intelligence for Europe** Brussels, 25.4.2018

As detailed above in the literature review for this thesis the order of analysis will beging with COM(2018)237 "Artificial Intelligence for Europe". This Communication by the European Comission proposed an prosed an European Startegy as well as a coordinated action plan for the development of "AI in Europe"(European Comission, 2018a). Endorsed by the European Council this communication laid both the pathway and setting up the framework for the work to come (European Council, 2018).

As Stated above the document sets out an ambitious "European initiative on AI" (pp.3) states as 3 goals of that are aimed at receiving a competitive advantage for the "*EU as a whole*" in the global rage for AI leadership (European Comission, 2018a: 3):

- *"Bosting EU's technological and Industrial Capacity and AI uptake across the economy.."*
- ***Prepare for socio-economic changes*** *brought by AI.."*

- and *"**Ensure an appropriate ethical and legal framework**, based on the unions values and in line with the Charter of Fundamental Rights of The EU."*

In these goals the coming AI strategy is firmly rooted in the belief that an explicitly European response is needed in contrast to other approaches developed by other leading powers in the field of AI, as the values and founding charters of the Union offer the "*appropriate ethical and legal framework for such*" (European Comission, 2018a: 3).

Laying the foundations for the European and painting the picture of AI as a technology, when harnessed by the right powers can lead to prosperity and success. Ai is describes as a technology that can *"beyond making our lives easier, **AI is helping us to solve some of the world's biggest challenges: from treating chronic diseases or reducing fatality rates in traffic accidents1 to fighting climate change or anticipating cybersecurity threats"*** (European Comission, 2018a: 3).

*"**Like the steam engine or electricity in the past, AI is transforming our world, our society and our industry**. Growth in computing power, availability of data and progress in algorithms have turned AI into one of the **most strategic technologies of the 21st century**. The stakes could not be higher. **The way we approach AI will define the world we live in**. Amid fierce global competition, **a solid European framework is needed**."* (European Comission, 2018a: 1). Although admitting the lag of EU's response to AI related technologies with respect to others the communication also does a decent job at trying to position the EU as a global leader as is evident form the following excerpts:

"Most developed economies recognise the game-changing nature of AI and have adopted different approaches which reflect their own political, economic, cultural and social systems." (European Comission, 2018a: 4)

Setting EU itself in to the above group is no remarkable statement but this highlights the need for an approach rooted in the Europeanness imbued in the political, economic, cultural and social systems. It also highlight the notion of EU being in a club of few that actually do have the ability to construct such a response as evident when describing international outreach:

> *"With AI being easily tradeable across borders, only global solutions will be sustainable in this domain. The G7/G20, United Nations and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development have begun to address the role of AI, including in the military domain. "* (European Comission, 2018a:18-19):

Here the EU is again positioned in the club of few (G20, OECD) framed as solution providers. Cooperation and shared as in *global* solutions are called for in saying that *"Together, we can place the **power of AI at the service of human progress"*** there is little question in the fact that these solutions are to be derived from an European framework.

> *"The EU can make a unique contribution to the worldwide debate on AI based on its values and fundamental rights.... **The main ingredients are there for the EU to become a leader in the AI revolution**, in its own way and based on its values"* (European Comission, 2018a:19):

The EUs contribution is described as unique as the foundational values and fundamental rights are seen as something uniquely European. To formulate an approach based on these is seen as different from those that others can offers and something that lays on the shoulders of Europe. For EU to become a leader in the AI revolution is framed as an universal good, something that all parties should and will benefit from. As is evident from the above citations the document begins to construct a vision of the European Approach that is deeply anchored in the notion of Europeanness, one anchored to its norms and values and that subsequently is positioning itself (the European Union) as a force for good.

> *"**The EU can lead the way in developing and using AI for good and for all**, building on its values and its strengths.*" (European Comission, 2018a: 2)

Further anchoring of technology to values and the way in which the EU can almost take a messianic role in delivering a good version of this technology is presented right in the beginning of the document.

> *"**New technologies are based on values (**...) This is where the **EU's sustainable approach to technologies** creates a competitive edge, by embracing change on the basis of the Union's values5.*" (European Comission, 2018a: 2)

> *"This is how the EU can make a difference – and be the champion of **an approach to AI that benefits people and society as a whole**."* (European Comission, 2018a: 2)

These values are of course those listed in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union, namely *"respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities"* (European Union, 1992). And while it is clear that such values are not unique to the European continent the European Union is framed as the actor on the international stage that is best suited for delivering this disruptive technology bound by such values. As is stated in the following paragraph:

> *"The EU must therefore ensure that AI is developed and applied in an appropriate framework which promotes innovation and respects the Union's values and fundamental rights as well as ethical principles such as accountability and transparency. The EU is also well placed to lead this debate on the global stage."*
> (European Comission, 2018a: 2)

As much as bound to its values and norms the idea notion of Europeanness and the further developed idea of a Normative power Europe is also bound to its political and governance structures as well as the following legal frameworks. Thus a core of the proposal of is the constructions of an *"An environment of trust and accountability around the development and use of AI is needed"* (European Comission, 2018a: 13)Anchoring the European approach not only to the Treaty on European Union but also the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union is set in the document as the *"first step to address ethical concerns,* [and] ***draft AI ethics guidelines…"*.** This follows the commitment of working for ethics at an international level but also asserts that the work *"must ensure that the regulatory frameworks for developing and using of AI technologies are in line with these values and fundamental rights"* (European Comission, 2018a: 14). The above if referring to the Ethics Guidelines for Trustworthy AI by the High-Level Expert Group on Artificial Intelligence set up by the European commission (source) that have been developed subsequently.

> *"… must ensure that the regulatory frameworks for developing and using of AI technologies are in line with these values and fundamental rights.*

The further development and promotion of such safety standards and support in EU and international standardisation organisations will help enable European businesses to benefit from a competitive advantage, and increase consumer trust." (European Comission, 2018a: 14)

The document gives EU the role as well as responsibility of "*preparing the society as whole*" for the coming socioeconomic changes heralded by this new technology and asserts itself as a buffer between the negative and the positive (European Comission, 2018a: 11). The sense of urgency is highlighted in the document signalling a increasing degree of worry to the loss of power by the EU in this field as ***"Without such efforts, the EU risks losing out on the opportunities offered by AI, facing a brain-drain and being a consumer of solutions developed elsewhere"*** (European Comission, 2018a: 6). Along with the highlights of professional gaps, lack in skills and a trained workforce the document also looks beyond the Unions borders and envisions the European AI Startegy as a tool for attracting a pool of international talent:

*"Europe should strive to **increase the number of people trained in AI** and **encourage diversity**. And it is not only about training the best talent, but also creating an **attractive environment for them to stay in the EU**."* (European Comission, 2018a: 12).

2. **Coordinated Plan on Artificial** COM(2018) 795 final - Brussels, 7.12.2018 – **Intelligence**

More than just a call for action the Coordinated Plan on Artificial Intelligence sets out an action plan with detailed steps on how to roll out the European initiative across a variety of sectors, including concrete measures, timeline and budget. As with COM(2018) 237 – Artificial Intelligence for Europe, The Coordinated Plan on Artificial Intelligence continues with the same themes of specific representations of the European Union. The proposed plan itself is laid out in the communication Annex, and the communications serves to a large extent as a continuation of COM(2018) 237 with refined points about the EU role in developing a regional AI strategy as a number of member states have already or are in the process of rolling out their own.

The document sets out to lay down the benefits of AI but in contrast to COM(2018) 237 (European Comission, 2018a). also notes European Shortcomings with respect to players such as US and China. Right from the beginning we are presented with an ambitious image of an European tool for global problems and more specifically by the European Commission itself:

> **"The Commission proposed an approach that places people at the centre of the development of AI** (human-centric AI) **and encourages the use of this powerful technology to help solve the world's biggest challenges**: from curing diseases to fighting climate change and anticipating natural disasters, to making transport safer4 and fighting crime and improving cybersecurity." (European Comission, 2018b: 1)

Admitting the urgency for EU to step up its game in an environment where *"international competition is fiercer than ever with massive investments in the US and China"* the strategy *"supports an ethical, secure and cutting-edge AI made in Europe" (*European Comission, 2018b: 1)

Where COM(2018) 237 left off the Coordinated Plan pics up the rhetoric as and narrative of *"collectively define the way forward to ensure that the EU as a whole can compete globally"*, highlight the need and urgency for an European Strategy to compete with those already on the international stage (European Comission, 2018b: 2)With similar calls and concerns about the brain-drain to places such as silicon valley the Coordinated plan calls for *"Europe [to] be able to train, attract and retain talent of this kind, and encourage entrepreneurship, diversity and gender balance"* (European Comission, 2018b: 5).

Introducing the language of trust the Coordinated Plan on Artificial Intelligence anchors this relationship between the citizen and the EU within existing regulation and legislation through the GDPR citing that "*The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)32 is the anchor of trust in the single market for data. It has established a new global standard with a strong focus on the rights of individuals, reflecting European values, and is an important element of ensuring trust in AI"* (European Comission, 2018b: 5).Again the GDPR serves not only as an example of the relationship between the EU and its citizens but as a global standard made in Europe, with similar intentions regarding European AI strategy.

The example of the GDPR is significant as prior to having a full fledged strategy at ahead the European Comission published its Ethics Guidelines for Trustworthy AI , that were also meant as a tool for influencing both external and internal considerations on the applications of AI. This is a key point as *"[f]or Europe to become a leading player in AI, it needs to build on its strengths and support the development of an ethical, secure and cutting-edge AI made in Europe."* (European Comission, 2018b: 9)

Within the Coordinated plan **"[E]thics guidelines with a global perspective"** (European Comission, 2018b: 7).as it is framed, calls for "*Europe* [to] *become a global leader in developing and using AI for good and promoting a human-centric approach and ethics-by-design principles."* (European Comission, 2018b: 8).Anticipation the publication of the Ethics Guidelines for Trustworthy AI there is no doubt about the ambition to *"bring Europe's ethical approach to the global stage"* and the Commission clearly states that *"The Commission is opening up cooperation to all non-EU countries that are willing to share the same values."* (European Comission, 2018b: 8).leaving little doubt about the outward ambitions of its strategy.

3. **Coordinated Plan on the Development and Use of Artificial Intelligence Made in Europe – 2018** - COM(2018) 795 final – ANNEX

Treated here as an individual document and referred to as by the following name the Annex to the Coordinated Plan for Artificial Intelligence was published by the European Comission to lay out the steps and actions to be taken in order to set Europe on its own course for the new digital age.

As stated in the annex *"The main goals of the coordinated plan are to maximise the impact of investments at EU and national levels, encourage synergies and cooperation across the EU, including on ethics, foster the exchange of best practices and collectively define the way forward. By working together the Union can maximise its impact to compete globally"* (European Comission, 2018c: 2). but in addition the Annex brigs out a few points that are of special interest regarding the idea of Europe using the AI strategy as a tool of Normative power. The Annex for the Coordinated Action Plan is first were we get a comprehensive picture of EU's ambitions regarding international cooperation. The ambitions regarding international cooperation are described in four points:

> *"✓ The Union will reach out to its **international partners and promote AI ethics guidelines** internationally in the course of 2019.*
> *✓ Member States and the Union are encouraged to align their international outreach efforts on AI and ensure that Europe sends consistent messages to the world.*
> *✓ The Union will organise **an international ministerial meeting on AI in 2019** with the aim of forging a global consensus on the ethical implications of AI.*
> *✓ The Union will contribute its expertise and dedicated financial means to anchor AI more firmly in **development policy**. A particular focus will be given to Southern Mediterranean countries and Africa. "*

(European Comission, 2018c: 22).

Based on these four points we are left with a picture lacking reciprocity. This is the language of an actor intent on promoting its own vision without broader consultation. As we have observed earlier both the strategy and accompanied ethics guidelines are firmly rooted in the idea of Europeanness and the above description supports the idea of exporting this vision. Another interesting fact to point out here is the incorporation of AI in to the EU's development policy. Few low or middle income countries have capacities to develop their own strategies and regulatory frameworks and thus the immediate Mediterranean neighbourhood is a natural place to start. The option of dialogue with external partner is left open but only if they do conform to criteria formulated by the EU as is evident from the following passage:

> *"The Union will promote the AI ethics guidelines internationally and open up a dialogue and cooperation with all non-EU countries and stakeholders from third countries that are willing to share the same values."* (European Comission, 2018c: 21).

It is noteworthy that it is still referred as a "*global consensus on the ethical implications of AI*" although spearheaded by the EU, with strong encouragement for the Union and its member countries to "*speak with one voice to third countries and the world at-large on this topic*" (European Comission" 2018c: 21). It is after all stated in bold that the "**Overall, the ambition is for Europe to become the world-leading region for developing and deploying cutting-edge, ethical and secure AI, promoting a human-centric approach in the global context.**" (European Comission" 2018c: 1)

4. COM(2020) 65 final - WHITE PAPER On Artificial Intelligence - A European approach to excellence and trust

On 19 February 2020, the European Commission published a the last and pehaps most important document defining what was set out 2 years prior as a path to and European Approach to Artififial Intelligence. The White Paper on "Artificial Intelligence: A European approach to excellence and trust" was born out of this two year process headed by two separate colleges of Commissioner's. As stated the White Paper is a part of a collection of documents all strategic in nature to guide the European Union and its member states successful to the so called digital age.

The White Papers goals are both to set and define policy options for the promotion adoption of AI in European member states as well as to look in to, address and suggest safeguards to some of the risks generally associated with artificial Intelligence. The Whitepaper discusses AI policy in more detail than previous documents as well as formulates the role of the Commission as one creating actual rules for a technology and its applications rather than vague statements about the future. Altough not engaging in legislation it has been described as a bold initiative (Digum, Muller &Thedorou, 2020)

The documents name itself *"A European approach to excellence and trust"* leaves few guesses about it's bold aspirations. This is a declaration for both friends inside and neighbour outside about the nature of the course that the Comission has set for the entire Union. From the get go the White paper Starts with acknowledging the competitive environment in which the European Union Finds itself and states the urgent need for such a strategy:

> *"Against a background of fierce global competition, a solid European approach is needed, building on the European strategy for AI presented in April 20181. To address the opportunities and challenges of AI, the EU must act as one and define its own way, based on European values, to promote the development and deployment of AI."* (European Comission, 2020a: 1).

Within this environment the commission calls for European unity in defining its way, retaining its values and seizing the opportunities. This is followed by a reference to President Leyen's Political guidelines (von der Leyen, 2019a:03)

1. *"It may be too late to replicate hyperscalers, but it is not too late to achieve technological sovereignty in some critical technology areas.*
2. *In order to release that potential we have to find our European way, balancing the flow and wide use of data while preserving high privacy, security, safety and ethical standards. We already achieved this with the General Data Protection Regulation, and many countries have followed our path.*
3. *We will jointly define standards for this new generation of technologies that will become the global norm."*

(European Comission, 2020a: 1).

President Leyens words set the tone for the rest of the document, setting it a side with a much braver rethoric and abitions language than the previous documents. Europe is described as an actor in the field of AI that can ensure trust between peoples and the technology, guaranteeing safety and the upholding of European values:

"As digital technology becomes an ever more central part of every aspect of people's lives, people should be able to trust it. Trustworthiness is also a prerequisite for its uptake. This is a chance for Europe, given its strong attachment to values and the rule of law as well as its proven capacity to build safe, reliable and sophisticated products and services from aeronautics to energy, automotive and medical equipment."(European Comission, 2020a: 1)

Within the white paper the role of European values take an ever more centre stage role wither it is related to developing the internal regulatory framework "*based on its fundamental values to **become a global leader in innovation in the data economy and its applications** as set out in the European data strategy.*" (European Comission, 2020a: 1) or international aspects such as *"exercise global leadership in building alliances around shared values and promoting the ethical use of AI."* (European Comission, 2020a: 8).

The main components of the white paper are 1) the policy frameworks that has been dubbed the **'ecosystem of excellence'** and 2) a future regulatory framework that in turn has been

dubbed **ecosystem of trust'** (European Comission, 2020a: 3). Such choices are no accident but a clear branding effort by the European Comission.

The White Paper again bring the international aspects of the AI Strategy anchoring the cooperation again around its values and the persuasive power invested in the ethical use of AI:

> "*The EU's work on AI has already influenced international discussions. When developing its ethical guidelines, the High-Level Expert Group involved a number of non-EU organisations and several governmental observers. In parallel, the EU was closely involved in developing the OECD's ethical principles for AI25. The G20 subsequently endorsed these principles in its June 2019 Ministerial Statement on Trade and Digital Economy.*" (European Comission, 2020a: 8).

This is a demonstration by the Commission of the power already used and exerted within those forums where the EU and its member states have a significant presence. Followed by a promise of "The EU will continue to cooperate with like-minded countries, but also with global players, on AI, based on an approach based on EU rules and values." (ibid.) But all this is cemented in a belief and an ultimate goal that international cooperation, action through such international organizations, will amount to *"an approach that promotes the respect of fundamental rights, including human dignity, pluralism, inclusion, non-discrimination and protection of privacy and personal data and it will strive to export its values across the world"* (European Comission, 2020a: 8). A failure to deliver a uniformm approach is not acceptable and the Whitepaper Expresses concerns about the *"real risk of fragmentation in the internal market, which would undermine the objectives of trust, legal certainty and market uptake"* (European Comission, 2020a: 8). Such risk are a threat to the EU on bot an practical as well as a fundamental level as the technology hold withn itself the power to dilute the very core values that the union in is built upon.

Ths fear of fragmentation is present across the Whitepaper Perhaps as a result of the realization of the speed of progress and general uptake around EU while the Union is still missing its plan:

> "*Europe cannot afford to maintain the current fragmented landscape of centres of competence with none reaching the scale necessary to compete with the leading institutes globally.*" (European Comission, 2020a: 6)

Thus the White Paper concludes on the following note reiterating the wish of the Commission to be seen as a force for good going into the new digital age and become a global "hub" both in theory and practice around which others convene.

> *"The European approach for AI aims to promote Europe's innovation capacity in the area of AI while supporting the development and uptake of ethical and trustworthy AI across the EU economy. AI should work for people and be a force for good in society."* (European Comission, 2020a: 25)

5. Ethics Guidelines for Trustworthy AI

The Ethics guidelines are the European Union's efforts at promoting what they have branded as Trustworthy AI. It is a set of non-binding recommendations and guidelines for developers, users and regulators within the EU that the European Comission hopes will help guide the development and formulation of National AI Strategies by EU member states as well as set the bar for others aiming to compete with the European approach. The guidelines are not a technical document explaining the governing principles of algorithms within any specific AI applications but rather a normative and political vision of how the Comission imagines so called Trustworthy AI within the European context and a description of its roots and foundations within the European Union and its core values and norms. In its opening pages the Ethics Guidelines clearly state the ambitions reaching beyond the European Union:

> *"This ideal is intended to apply to AI systems developed, deployed and used in the Member States of the European Union (EU), as well as to systems developed or produced elsewhere but deployed and used in the EU... However, these Guidelines also aspire to be relevant outside the EU"*. (European Comission, 2019a: 3)

Additionally it is added in the footnotes that *"The scope of these Guidelines however aims to encompass not only those AI systems made in Europe, but also those developed elsewhere and deployed or used in Europe. Throughout this document, we hence aim to promote trustworthy AI 'for' Europe."* This is no surprise of course due to the fact that products and services manufactured elsewhere need to comply to EU regulation but is another testament to

the EU's power and ambitions when it come to regulating others through its internal mechanisms. Combined with the Commissions vision of *"ensuring an appropriate ethical and legal framework to strengthen European values"* this enforces the image of the EU having ambitions far wider than its own borders. (European Comission, 2019a: 4)

With the formulation of a the idea (it is after all just an idea) trustworthy and human-centric AI the Guidelines paint a rosy picture of the future to come as a result of EUs regulatory weight. This serves as an invitation to embrace the normative and ethical foundations not just on which the AI Strategy will be based on but the whole of the European Union as a project:

> *"We believe that AI has the potential to significantly transform society. AI is not an end in itself, but rather a promising means to increase human flourishing, thereby enhancing individual and societal well-being and the common good, as well as bringing progress and innovation….. To do this, AI system need to be* **human-centric***, resting on a commitment to their use in the service of humanity and the common good, with the goal of improving human welfare and freedom."* (European Comission, 2019a: 4)

It is up to Europe to define this vision and that is exactly what the document set out to do. Again as this is seen almost as a duty or a calling for the European union as the virtues of fundamental rights, democracy and the rule of law among other are such an integral part of its very existence. If Artificial intelligence is to take sociaties to the next step of their evolution then who else to lead theis development and avoid the pitfalls that the European union:

> *"Europe has a unique vantage point based on its focus on placing the citizen at the heart of its endeavours. This focus is written into the very DNA of the European Union through the Treaties upon which it is built. The current document forms part of a vision that promotes Trustworthy AI which we believe should be the foundation upon which Europe can build leadership in innovative, cutting-edge AI systems. This ambitious vision will help securing human flourishing of European citizens, both individually and collectively. Our goal is to create a culture of "Trustworthy AI for Europe", whereby the benefits of AI can be reaped by all in a manner that ensures respect for our foundational values: fundamental rights, democracy and the rule of law".* (European Comission, 2019a: 35)

Representation by EC Leadership: Speeches By Ulrika von der Leyen and Margrethe Vestager:

In addition to the documents described above it is important to take a closer look at how Ai Strategy from its days of a call for a unified plan for **Artificial Intelligence for Europe** to **A European approach to excellence and trust** was represented.

As this research was insiperd by the Vond Der Leyden Commissions 6 priorities for 2019 – 2024 the below analysis will focus only on the current college of Comissioners and more specifically on both the President Ursula Von Der Leyden as the leader of the commission as well as its Executive Vice President Margrethe Vestager given the responsibility to deliver on one of the 6 priorities related to AI, A Europe Fit for Digital Age (von der Leyen, 2019a)

For this purpose speeches as well as official statements logged on the respective sites of each commissioner at the European Commissions' online home page   were all screened for mentions of AI and Artificial Intelligence. Following this preliminary screening in which a total of 6 texts for President Von Der Leyden and Margrethe Vestager 29 speeches & 13 statements on EC Website for Vestager of which the below AI is mentioned.

Ursula Von Der Leyden, President of the European Commission

As president of the European council it is of course apart of Mrs. Von Der Leyen's job description to promote European exceptionality and Greatness with relation to other national and international actors but as her Political Guidelines for The Next European Comission – A Union That Strives for More she describes the Europe for current and coming generations as "*an aspiration of a world full of new technologies and age old values. Of Europe that takes he global lead on the major challenges of our times*" (von der Leyen, 2019a:03)*. A stronger Europe in the world* together with *A Europe fit for a digital age* (encompassing the above discussed AI strategy) being two out of the six headline ambitions of von der Leyen's Agenda, this relationship between technological disruption and European strength needs warrants a closer look. In her address to the European Commission as President-Elect von

der Leyen Strongly brought out the need as well as tools by which Europe was to become a key player within the future direction of AI:

> *"Europe, however, has a long tradition of balancing the influence of government and the market and attaching special importance to the individual. This cultural feature is Europe's biggest advantage in shaping the digital age."* (von der Leyen, 2019b)

It is as she says and as noted in documents above that the strength of Europe lies not in hard means but in the *culture* of Europe, enforcing the idea of there being something immaterial and untouchable about being European that we can harness to guide what she calls here the digital age. In suite the notion of the way of Europe diverging form its competitors is also introduced in the following passage:

> *"I am absolutely convinced that Europe will remain an attractive place to live in the digital age, even in comparison with the US and China. It means we have to continue to trust in the strength of our shared idea and confidently go our own European way."* (von der Leyen, 2019b)

What she is of course talking about here is the notion of soft power introduced by Joseph Nye in 1990 (Nye, 1990) . but von der Leyen also admits that such an approach is not enough but rather the environment that Europe is to operate in has to be actively shaped by it:

> *"American political scientists have coined the term soft power for this."*

> *"The underlying idea is that political influence can also arise from cultural appeal. But this is only half the truth. For soft power is no longer enough in itself if we Europeans wish to assert ourselves in the world."* (von der Leyen, 2019b)

This assertion is exactly what we have earlier hypothesize as **a need for an European response** building up to the assertion of European normative power. Or as the president elect puts it in her address: *Europe must also 'learn the language of power'* (von der Leyen, 2019b).

*"This means building up our own muscles where we have long been able to rely on others – such as in security policy. It also means using our power in a more targeted way when European interests are at stake." (*von der Leyen, 2019b)

As will be referenced later the above also refers to the need to take action as the EU can no longer rely on technological muscle from its allies, mainly from the USA which is seen as too corporate driven. Rather the image that is constructed by von der Leyen is one where Europe becomes the sought after partner when it comes to digital transformation and disruptive technologies.

"The world needs our leadership more than ever. To keep engaging with the world as a responsible power. To be a force for peace and for positive change." (von der Leyen, 2019c)

*"Countries from East to West, from South to North, need Europe to be a true partner. **We can be the shapers of a better global order."*** (Leyden, 2019c)

The above excerpt from von der Leyen's (the still president-elect) speech for the European Parliament on presenting the new Commissions program also contribute to the narrative that the European AI strategy is not to be narrowly framed as an intra-European initiative but a wider tool of power that can be used to serve Europe's interests in relation to its neighbors. Europe here is painted as sitting in the middle with the world around it waiting for a responsible power to deliver positive change. The narrative of Europe as a responsible actor and a force for good is echoed in as von der Leyen described the above as: *"This is Europe's vocation. And it is what European citizens want."* (Leyden, 2019c)

The President Elect von der Leyden issued a clear message of a Europe in need of "***geopolitical Commission"*** (Leyden, 2019c), to lay a explicitly *"European path"* in to the digital age. Using the European values as a unifying force the president elect *is "confident that Europe will play a leading role in the digital age."* (Leyden, 2019c). This rhetoric is not about only shaping Europe's internal digital landscape when it comes to AI technology, but to reach out and carve a space the wider geopolitics of technology.

> *"This is about Europe shaping its own future. But to be more assertive in the world, we know we must step up in some fields."* (von der Leyen, 2020d)

As a previous example of such forces of normative power, using both the power of Europe's internal markets as indirect regulatory mechanism for external actors as well as setting an example for future trends the Comission Presidents presents the GDPR:

> *"With the General Data Protection Regulation we set the pattern for the world. And we have to set a similar frame for artificial intelligence, too. A frame that allows for progress and research, while protecting the citizens' privacy, autonomy and personal safety." (*von der Leyen, 2020d)

GDPR is presented here as a example of a regulatory framework by which Europe can influence external players, not only as they do business with Europe but also as a mechanism to export the norms and values that the EU wishes to incorporate in to such frameworks. Thus the European AI strategy will continue a "*long history of technological success and innovation*" where "we are caring very much for individual rights and our values."(von der Leyen, 2020e)

In her September 16th 2020 State of the Union address President von Der Leyen introduced a crucial concept for characterizing European ambitions with regards to the "digital age" and European Approach to AI, that of *Digital sovereignty.*

> *"Whether it's precision farming in agriculture, more accurate medical diagnosis or safe autonomous driving - artificial intelligence will open up new worlds for us. But this world also needs rules."* (von der Leyen, 2020f)

> *"None of this is an end in itself - it is about Europe's digital sovereignty, on a small and large scale."(*von der Leyen, 2020f)

Von der Leyden also cites AI as a "*prime example of digital sovereignty",* of a technology where to apply European values and standards and how "*Europe wants to lead the way on AI, with the individual at the centre."* (von der Leyen, 2020g)   It is exactly by these rules set out by the European AI strategy as well as the Ethical Guidelines by The High-Level Expert

Group on AI (AI HLEG) that are to govern and secure this sovereignty and by exporting these new *technology norms* can the ultimate goal of bringing Europe as a leader to the digital decade:

> *"We want to lead the way, the European way, to the Digital Age: based on our values, our strength, our global ambitions." (*von der Leyden, 2020f)

> *"As Europeans, we want to be the global leader of a digital transformation that puts people at its heart. We do not want to be dependent on technologies exclusively developed by others. We want to set our own standards where it counts. This is why we have to ensure and defend our digital sovereignty. Our goal is to ensure Europe keeps its digital leadership where it has it. And we want to keep control where it matters – most of all, where it matters to people."* (von der Leyen, 2020g)

Margrethe Vestager, Executive Vice President of the European Commission for A Europe Fit for the Digital Age

Vestager being tasked by the Comission President von der Leyen to usher the EU to the digital age ambitiously takes on this task by declaring soon after taking office that the Europe should be tone to set the boundaries for digitization:

> *"Part of that will be about fitting Europe to the demands of digitization. Making sure that Europeans have the right skills, or that businesses can find the funding and the data which they need to compete. But it's equally important that we do the opposite – that we fit digitization to our European values."* (Vestager, 2020a)

In contrast to the above Vestager makes no efforts in hiding the fact that a digital future by Europe is bound in Democracy. Despite the Executive Vice President's speech being titled *Shaping a digital future for Europe* the author is surely aware about the challenges posed by restraining strict geographical limits on broad definitions of technological fields. Democracies may even be at risk being confronted by shifts but – referencing to the EU's Ethics Guidelines for Trustworthy AI – *"our democracies have the power to protect themselves, with rules that make sure algorithms work the way that they should"* (Vestager, 2020i). Thus the following passage carries significance where an European digital future is one where a technology shaped by Europe is seen as a *force for good:*

> *"I's perfectly possible to build a democratic, European digital future. One where our whole society decides how technology should work; and where technology is what it should be – a force for good, and a contributor to society."* (Vestager, 2020a)

Vestager paints this need for the deliberate top-down regulation of technologies as something necessary for general up take and acceptance. Rather than e.g. having the market decide on the right applications, Vestager resorts to the following:

> *"...ultimately, digital technology won't have a future in our democratic society, unless it can win people's trust and acceptance. And you don't win trust with the latest and cleverest technology. You win it by showing people that you accept the duties that come with being part of a society."* (Vestager, 2020a)

Here the role of a good shepherd is given to the EU as one that may lead both citizens and those with less resources. Avoiding the pitfalls and risks of technological disruption and allowing them to reap both the economic and social benefits that only the European way can offer.

> *"But it's not enough just to say that we want Europe to lead. We need to know where we think it should be leading. And that has to start with the values and principles, with the democratic spirit that make Europe what it is. So we can build a digital future that's every bit as fit for Europeans as we are for it."* (Vestager, 2020a)

Setting in motion the creation of an European ecosystem of excellence and trust as referenced above the Vestager highlights the technological disruption brought by AI as almost messianic opportunity:

> *"Because AI has something to offer us that you don't always get in life – a second chance of success. Europe may not have been the leader in the last wave of digitization."* (Vestager, 2020b)

Second chances are seen as moments of redemption and according to Vestager this presents itself as an opportunity for Europe to set itself apart from its competitors and return to something more innately European, although she does not elaborate on this.

> *"And to make the most of that opportunity, we need to build on the things that make Europe strong. Not trying to be more like the US or China – but making Europe more like herself."* (Vestager, 2020b)

In the above examples Vestager succeeds in creating an allure of mysticism around Europe and this second chance offered by disruptive technologies. Talks about new (digital) ages, forces of good, second chances establishes the EU as a protagonist in a story emphasising the exceptionality and actorhood of the union in this time. In the below excerpt Vestager continues to distinguish between what she sees as the competitors in the AI domain and their characteristics':

> *"One of our greatest strengths is our diversity. We're not an economy that depends on a handful of monopolies, whether those are public or private. We have world-leading companies of all sizes, in every EU country, and in a huge range of different industries. And at a time like this, when innovation is the key to success, our diversity gives us a better chance of finding the best new ideas, which will transform our world."* (Vestager, 2020b)

This is equally signaled in the description and differentiation between the European Approach and that of for example China's. Or rather how they are seen from the European perspective, as in Vestager's comments during the first meeting of the High Level Digital Dialogue Between the EU (Commission) and China: *"The EU and China will both play a role in defining how global technological developments will go forward. The dialogue is therefore necessary to foster cooperation, but also to address divergences we have, like on reciprocity, data protection and fundamental rights."* (Vestager, 2020e) Technology in this sense becomes a source of power offering transformational abilities and future possibilities devoid of others implementing what Vestager sees as less diverse. And indeed she posits the user (in this case Europe) as the catalyst and the director of that power:

> *"The thing is, technology itself is just a tool. It doesn't have any purpose of its own… So if we decide to use it in the interests of our society – to make us happier and freer, to help us tackle climate change and live healthier lives – then it will do that. But if, as a society, we don't take control of the direction that digitization takes, then others will do it for us. We'll leave the choices about technology's future – and the future of*

our society – in the hands of powerful governments and big tech companies.”
(Vestager, 2020b)

Such sentiments are echoing strongly the concerns presented by von der Leyden about digital sovereignty. And it he commission takes as its priority to safeguard and strengthen this sovereignty by helping to "*shape the digital world in a way that works for Europeans.*"(Vestager, 2020c) This positioning of the European way marked by *diversity* according to Vestager is evident in the recent reflections of Europe's AI Startegy in relation to the recent COVID-19 pandemic.

> *"I am often asked if all the benefits that digital solutions have brought to us during the crisis have changed the Commission's digital policy. Have we been too critical of tech companies, too careful and bureaucratic when it comes to digital technologies? My answer to this is that our objectives are more relevant than ever. The more we use and depend on digital technologies, the more important it is that these technologies are in tune with our values, beliefs and rules."* (Vestager, 2020d)

Two forms of positioning Europe as a force for good both in the discussion and the strategy are the highlighting of the undeniable link between AI as a technology and the solutions it may offer for the most pressing challenge of our time, namely climate change. Vestager identifies this as what we call *"the twin transition" as our main strategic objective. An objective to promote the transition to both a green and a digital economy and society"* (Vestager, 2020d). Another way is by laying bare the risks that AI might be harboring but that the right stewardship brought but the European Institutions, treaties and norms can guard against. What are the risks of AI is of course a question that is dependent on the intentions and interests of those who pose it in the first place:

> *"For some areas it may be obvious – for example, when AI might be used for mass surveillance purposes. For other areas, this is more difficult.*
>
> *This question was also one of the key questions raised in our public consultation on the White Paper, which ended in mid-June. Close to 1200 people or organisations responded to this consultation – which shows how much people care about this issue."* (Vestager, 2020d)

The opaqueness of such answers as well as the questions themselves are only solved by bringing some clarity by introducing the author of the rules. With such rhetoric Vestager creates a space for the EU to occupy and provide this clarity as the risks can be inferred from negative effects to our fundamental rights. The European Union becomes an arbiter in*"...the tricky balance we have to strike is to facilitate the technology, while at the same time avoiding harm to our society and our values"* (Vestager, 2020f).

In her keynote address on the 2nd of October 2020, Vestager paints a rosy picture of the European landscape where the lead that the continent holds almost needs no encouragement. But asserts the choice and not the action as the responsibility of Europe. Thus acknowledging the inherent agenda setting power:

> With such obvious gains at stake, some might argue that all governments have to do is step out of the way and let it happen. That would be a big mistake. For us to reap the benefits swiftly and fully, we need to define what we want out of the technology: (Vestager, 2020g)

> Second, we invest in an ethical approach. People ultimately decide how much AI they will want, based on whether or not they trust it. A regulatory framework, which protects our values and addresses the risks, will give citizens the trust to embrace AI-based solutions. And it will give the industry a competitive advantage in the global context. (Vestager, 2020g)

Vestager positions digitalization promptly in the middle of international politics and thus necessitates European intervention. Addressed to the Munich Young Leaders Around the World annual meeting Vestager presents a clear choice between three very different options. Democracy, corporate power or authoritarianism, with Europe clearly representing the former and the two latter referring to USA and China respectively:

> *"There is no doubt that digitisation has taken root at the centre of geopolitics. It is now clear that in a world increasingly defined by great power competition, the race for technological supremacy will only accelerate."* (Vestager, 2020h)

> "...it will be fundamental to ensure that the key decisions that shape our digital future are taken in our European democracy, and not by authoritarian governments or corporate board rooms."(Vestager, 2020h)

Thus as in many other fields Europe is framed as a carrier of democracy in the field of AI and a global example of the freedoms it endows. Thus it is again on the shoulders of Europe to uphold the democratic values as well as promote them internationally promoting a model of technology that corresponds to these values:

> *"This assertiveness should fuel the EU's ambition in digitisation. This is not only essential to maintain European competitiveness, but it is also an asset the EU can offer to the rest of world, as an attractive model based on democratic values and the dignity of the individual."(*Vestager, 2020h)

> *"I am confident that if we keep strategic focus and show assertiveness and resilience, Europe can very much play a key role in shaping the digital world of tomorrow."*
> *(*Vestager, 2020h)

6. Discussion

Without replication what has been done above it is safe to say that the it is not secrets that the analyzed material is flush with *"metaphorical representations"* (McEntee-Atalianis & Zapettini, 2014) that confirm at least to some extent our original hypothesis.

> ***Ethical and Trustworthy AI effectively enforces the European Union as a normative power by constructing an European identity around the concept of Normative Power.***

It is quite clear from the above dissection of the strategy that the objectives of the startegy do correspond with the hypotheses set forth before engaging in this exercise. We can confirm that through setting up and initiating in building its own regulatory framework in the form the European Approach to AI the European Comission aims at reaching the following goals:

1. **Limiting access to its internal markets and safeguarding indigenous technologies**,

     In addition to this the analysis reveals that the objective of the strategy, in parallel with safeguarding indigenous technologies is to effectively control what these indigenous technologies will look like.

2. **Strengthening its normative power on the international stage and safeguarding it's self-determination and autonomy with regards to AI related questions.**

     As the guidelines and the strategy are anchored in the so called *'European'* values an there is a clear intention in exporting this product outside the union we conclude that this strong evidence of the European Comission directing the EU in to a direction that is characteristic by Manners (2002) original formulation of a Normative Power.

To select a few samples out of the analyzed data we can get a clear picture of the rhetoric that is used to describe Artificial Intelligence related technologies, the Ambitions of the European Union, Its offer to its partners, and the task that the commission has set forth for the EU. By these means the European Commission actively takes parts in the discursive enactment of Europeanness itself, by framing AI as a challenge that the EU has a better solution to than its rivals. It also engages in acts of positive-self representations and which turn effectively in to indirect negative-othering

Artificial Intelligence and related technologies are described as a force carrying a positive transformation if in the right hands:

- *"Like the steam engine or electricity in the past, AI is transforming our world, our society and our industry."*
- *"The way we approach AI will define the world we live in."*
- *"..the power of AI at the service of human progress"*
- *"New technologies are based on values"*

Such visions can be realized IF the ambitions of the European Commission are realized as well with EU at the helm of this change, with its signature approach:

- *"The main ingredients are there for the EU to become a leader in the AI revolution.."*
- *"The EU can lead the way in developing and using AI for good and for all"*
- *"New technologies are based on values"*
- *"EU's sustainable approach to technologies"*
- *"...an approach to AI that benefits people and society as a whole attractive environment for them to stay in the EU"*
- *"...an approach that places people at the centre of the development of AI".*

Its international and external ambitions are masked as an offer to its partners and those with less resources to:

- *Provide "[E]thics guidelines with a global perspective"*
- *Help and reach out to "international partners [for them to] promote AI ethics guidelines"*
- *"Europe to become the world-leading region" in human-centric technology.*
- *"...strive to export its values across the world"*

Finally but perhaps most importantly the task that the European Comission has set forth for the Union as a whole is marked by independence, autonomy and sovereignty:

- *"EU must act as one and define its own way, based on European values…"*
- *"...we have to find our European way"*
- *"and many countries have followed our path."*
- *"...we have to ensure and defend our digital sovereignty"*

Throughout the documents, speeches and statements analysed for in this thesis there is a strong presence of '**European Exeptionality'.** This is a narrative that The Commission uses to justify the need for an explicitly European response. A response that can benefit the world by benefitting Europe. The idea and subsequent identity of Europeanness is firmly rooted in the institutions, treaties and the supposedly European values of: the respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for the human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. This leads us to conclude that creating such a strategy the EU will also be inclined to act in a normative way. Nevertheless as

evident form the analysis this includes asserting its power more firmly among its competition. Albeit A force for good, Europe wants more power.

Persuasion is strongly resent in the discourses laid forth by the Comission and President and Executive Vice President. We can observe a clear pattern of trying to engage with stakeholders, both internal and external build a consultative process withn the Comission at its helm.

When taking a historical perspective to the process of formulating the strategy it is clear that the Comission is concerned on missing out on the opportunity of shaping the discourse and setting the agenda. Further research should focus on to what extent the Commissions strategy corresponds to national AI strategies already present prior to the European one. As well as to what extent the European Startegy together with the Ethics Guidelines for Trustworthy AI by The High-Level Expert Group have managed to shape the visions of member states yet to publish their individual visions.

In this sense the Comission is already engaged in Invoking and activating norms. By setting the example of what it sees being the right way for member states to take as well as effectively reminding them of the correct form of Europeanness. By beating the individual member states to it, which it clearly has in many cases already failed in, it can safeguard its own vision and create barriers and restrictions to its members. The departure from the military realm is a clear signal to both member states as well as partners that in visioning a future such applications preferably play a different role and the responsibility lies on the shoulders of states.

7. Conclusion

In contrast to what one might expect the European approach to AI is as much defined by what is included in the above analysed documents as what is missing. One cannot but that the central element that has been largely left out of the European Approach to Excellence and Trust as well as from the Ethics Guidelines for Trustworthy AI is security from the perspective of defence.

This clearly conscious choice to take as the EU knows it is not capable to compete as a collective with its rivals that are nation states. Rather the EU does what it is best at, it aims at setting itself as an example for others to follow and hopes that by means of *contagion* it can spread it's values and preferred way of live. Through *diffusion* it aims to export its regulatory framework outside its legal geographical and digital boundaries, and thus reduce friction in areas it sees as possibly harmful. The ultimate goal of incorporating Trustworthy AI in to the European Union's permanent regulatory framework will in the future serve as a form of transference in which all interaction with the Union and its constituent members will have taken in to account its vision of this new technology.

Manners (2002) set out for criteria for a normative power Europe in original formulation., that included Identity, interests, behaviour or actions as well as influence.
From these four, based on our research above it seems that the European Union is increasingly engaging and filling the first three criteria when it comes to the field of Artificial intelligence.

It effectively creates or recreates a normative identity for itself by anchoring the vision of AI in the idea of an European way of life, based on European rules and values. Thus, in the technological space the EU becomes normatively constituted. The normative interests are embedded in the documents and the language used to communicate it and the policy proposals put forth in the strategy are clearly in accordance with existing rules and norms. Whether it does fill the final criteria of actually using normative means of power is still to be seen. As the Startegy is fresh out of the oven and yet to be incorporated in to actions and legislation, concrete results a not something we are able to observe just yet. Whether its be in the form of non-European nations replicating the European model or member states adopting

parts of the text, or perhaps legal challenges for actors not complying with future regulation the means and results of influence need to be verified by future research.

Normative power is and will be a flexible and malleable concept which can serve us as tool or lens through which we can observe the actions of actors such as the European Union. It cannot be measured in the same sense as other forms of power but it does not mean it should not be used as an analytical category. And, whether Brussels prefers the term or not its AI Strategy is fast becoming a reboot for Normative Power Europe.

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