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Conceptualising and Analysing the Contestation of the EU as an Actor in the ENP: Actorness, Effectiveness and Beyond

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Abstract

This chapter reviews conceptualisations of the European Union as an international actor in the context of the European Neighbourhood Policy, evaluating the concepts of EU presence, actorness and effectiveness for EU studies in general, and the ENP specifically. It places particular emphasis on analysing the contestation of the EU as an actor in the ENP. We argue that our understanding of the ENP would benefit from identifying the concrete circumstances, measures and levels of power which enable the EU to act (effectively) as an international player, and that the underlying concepts of EU presence, actorness and effectiveness can indeed be found in a variety of related literature. Nonetheless, the comparability and generalisability of findings suffers for a lack of systematic analyses of these abstractions. Moreover, delineating these concepts in a methodologically more rigorous fashion, and possibly extending the analysis to include novel concepts such as EU performance, might open new avenues in ENP research and contribute to some extent to theory development in EU studies more broadly. In terms of contestation, the literature on EU presence, actorness and effectiveness has mostly paid attention to patterns of horizontal contestation over the EU's role among different national elites at EU level. Studies that dig deeper into the layers of contestation within the member states are largely absent. The same goes for accounts that take aspects of vertical contestation, i.e. the role of the public, into consideration.

Introduction

Since its establishment, the subject of the role and impact of the European Community (EC) in the international arena has drawn considerable attention from scholars of international relations (IR). The conceptual integration of the EC/European Union (EU) and its external relations into classical IR theory poses a variety of conceptual issues. Most significantly, the place of the state as the primary referent for analysis has been proven to be problematic. To accommodate the EU's distinctive nature and significant differences from other international actors, analyses of (the external dimension of) European integration have been obliged to look beyond state-centric accounts.

Consequently, a number of studies, focusing primarily on the internal characteristics and processes that determine EU external policy, have gone some way toward developing a conceptualisation of the EU as a new type of international actor *sui generis*. As a product of this theoretical debate, the field of European integration studies has seen the introduction of a variety of new concepts of the EU as an actor in international relations. A key facet of the discussion has remained the question of what type of power the EU constitutes in international relations. The 1970s saw the introduction of the idea of the Union as a civilian power (Duchêne 1972), highlighting the EU's limited military and strategic power, but emphasising its increasing willingness and ability to exercise its significant economic power to influence world politics. The concept of a "civilian power Europe" (CPE) remains influential in the academic discourse (Orbie 2006), despite the EU's evolving security and defence policy somewhat undermining its categorisation as a purely civilian entity in contrast to other actors (Smith 2000, 2005; Moravcsik 2003).

During the last decade, the notion of "normative power Europe" (NPE) – stressing the EU's (presumed) "ability to define what passes for 'normal' in world affairs" – has come into vogue (Manners 2002: 236). NPE has kicked off a lively debate in IR, and attracted a fair share of criticism, on the basis of alleged "Eurocentricism" (Fioramonti and Poletti 2008), lack of precision (Sjursen 2006: 236), and the relatively meagre findings of EU normativity in empirical studies (Niemann and de Wekker 2010). With neither civilian nor normative power Europe proving entirely satisfactory, competing conceptualisations of the EU's role in international affairs have proliferated – with notions such as "integrative" (Koops 2011), "small" (Toje 2011), or "transformative" (Leonard 2005) power Europe being posited in the literature. In addition, it has been suggested – given the plethora of studies contesting the legitimacy and impact of EU foreign policy – that a more systematic analysis of EU presence, actorness (and effectiveness) in international relations itself is necessary to underpin the discussion about what "sort" of power or actor the EU is (Niemann and Bretherton 2013: 5). Such will be the emphasis of this chapter.

In the case of the European Neighbourhood Policy, the most prominent and important policy tool in the EU's dealing with its near-abroad, the questions of EU

presence, actorness and effectiveness seem of particular interest, not least because the EU's role as an international actor is frequently contested in the debate overall and in the ENP in particular (cf. introduction to this volume). In the context of the EU as an actor in the ENP, patterns of contestation have been addressed particularly with regard to horizontal contestation over the EU's role among different national elites at EU level. The analysis of EU actorness in the ENP process, in particular looking to integrate potential findings on effectiveness (and possibly performance), might generate a variety of outcomes and insights, improving the comparability and empirical underpinning of ENP research more broadly. The second part of this chapter will introduce important approaches and concepts surrounding the EU's role in IR, as well as the conceptualisation of contestation underpinning our analysis. The third part evaluates the potential, relevance and impact of these concepts by presenting selected literature either explicitly or implicitly, referring to the arguments and measures of the respective concepts, while examining the contestation of the EU as an actor in ENP. Finally, we draw some conclusions from our analysis.

Conceptualising the EU's role in international affairs and its external relations

The concept of presence

In their 1990 analysis of the role of Western Europe in the international sphere, David Allen and Michael Smith invoke the concept of EU presence to argue that the EC's participation in international affairs is not that of a classical international actor, but rather a persistent presence whose role is characterised by circumstantial variability. Their central argument is that the EC is

> neither a fully-fledged state-like actor nor a purely dependent phenomenon in the contemporary international arena. Rather, it is a variable and multi-

dimensional presence, which plays an active role in some areas of international interaction and a less active one in others. (Allen and Smith 1990: 20)

According to Allen and Smith, presence is a feature of issue-arenas or networks of activity, which influence the actions and expectations of the relevant participants. The nature of this particular presence in the international sphere is governed by a combination of factors, including credentials and legitimacy, the capacity to mobilise resources, and the place the EC is able to occupy in the perceptions and expectations of the relevant policy makers. The separation of presence from actorness is a key feature of this approach. Allen and Smith (1990) argue that although the EC does not always meet many criteria for actorness, it nonetheless has significant "presence" in the international system. Charlotte Bretherton and John Vogler (2006) later build on the notion of "presence" in their conceptualisation of the EU as an international actor (see also below).

The concept of actorness

The question of EC/EU actorness in international politics has been the focus of substantial scholarly deliberation in recent years. Building on the early debate about the potential international role of the EC (Cosgrove and Twichett 1970), the first detailed and systematic conceptualisation of the Community as an international actor was developed by Gunnar Sjöstedt. He defines actor capability as the "ability to function actively and deliberately in relation to other actors in the international system" (Sjöstedt 1977: 16), recognising the ambiguous nature and circumscribed capabilities of the EC, manifesting some characteristics of classical actors in IR while lacking others. Actorness still presumes the possession of a substantial degree of state-like attributes, requiring the Community to adhere, at least to some extent, to the processes and rules of state-centric international relations in order to be successful. Despite remaining influential in the literature, Sjöstedt's approach has been criticised for excessive preoccupation with internal characteristics, which remain difficult to operationalise and apply to specific cases (Niemann and

Bretherton 2013: 6). A variety of different approaches towards EU actorness in international affairs have since sought to address these problems.

Among the first to turn their attention to this question were Joseph Jupille and James A. Caporaso. Identifying the lack of clear criteria determining the status of the EU as an actor as a deficiency in previous efforts, they develop four main indicators for analysing EU actorness: *recognition, authority, autonomy* and *cohesion* (Jupille and Caporaso 1998: 214). *Recognition* measures the extent to which other actors in the international system accept and interact with the EC. *Authority* is principally the question of the EC's legal competence to act on a given subject matter. The Community's authority can be viewed as the authority delegated by the Member States to EU institutions. *Autonomy* denotes the distinctiveness of the EC's institutional apparatus during international negotiations, and the degree of discretionary goal formation, decision making and implementation, independent of that of other actors. Finally, *cohesion* describes the ability of the Community to formulate internally consistent positions as assessed in several dimensions (Jupille and Caporaso 1998: 215-219). These four indicators of actorness, despite a degree of interdependence, can be more aptly operationalised for empirical research. Yet despite being clearly structured, the concept has drawn criticism for its relative complexity, given the fact that each of the four criteria contains several sub-criteria. Other critiques suggest that the framework is too narrow, focusing unduly on internal factors and leaving aside other important questions of EU influence, in particular those associated with the intersubjective processes that construct or constrain the exercise of power and authority in international politics (Niemann and Bretherton 2013: 7).

To those scholars approaching the issue from a constructivist perspective, intersubjective processes are essential to an understanding of EU actorness. Bretherton and Vogler's approach (1999/2006), which straddles the boundary between "actorness" and "effectiveness", seeks to arrive at a conceptualisation informed by this line of reasoning. Their analysis draws on the three inter-related concepts of *opportunity, presence* and *capability*. *Opportunity* "denotes factors in the external environment of ideas and events which constrain or enable actorness"

(Bretherton and Vogler 2006: 24), which here can be taken to mean the structural context of EU action in international relations. This context is seen as a dynamic process that incorporates external perceptions and expectations of EU actorness. Building on the work of Allen and Smith (1990), Bretherton and Vogler make use of the idea of *presence* as that which allows "the EU, by virtue of its existence, to exert influence beyond its borders" (Bretherton and Vogler 2006: 24). Representing an indication of the EU's structural power, it combines understandings of the nature and identity of the EU and the consequences of the Union's internal priorities and policies. Finally, *capability* is understood as "the internal context of EU external action – the availability of policy instruments and understandings about the Union's ability to utilise these instruments, in response to opportunity and/or to capitalise presence" (ibid.). While *capability* was originally understood in terms of three categories – consistency, coherence and the availability of policy instruments – more recently Bretherton and Vogler (2008) have focused particularly on coherence.

The concept of effectiveness

For a more comprehensive understanding of the EU's role and influence in international relations, however, it is necessary to look beyond studies of actorness (or ability to act), and also to consider the effectiveness of EU action (Niemann and Bretherton 2013: 263). Effectiveness can be measured in terms of several sometimes complementary characteristics, falling into categories such as "goal-achievement" or "problem-solving" (Young 1994; Groen and Niemann 2013). Effectiveness is notoriously difficult to analyse and assess – a problem that is by no means confined to the study of EU external policy. Debates about the EU's effectiveness have been particularly intense, however, reflecting a belief held by (many) IR scholars that the EU is particularly *ineffective* (Smith 2002: 6).

The effectiveness of EU action has been examined from a number of perspectives. A prominent early example is the discussion of the Community's (supposed) "capability-expectations gap" (Hill 1993), a concept which resurfaces

regularly in the discourse on EU effectiveness in general and in the context of the ENP in particular. A contrast to Hill's rather pessimistic assessment can be found in the work of Roy Ginsberg (2001), who examined the EU's influence in the difficult case of the former Yugoslavia. Of late, scholars have accorded particular importance to the idea of "coherence", currently "one of the most fervently discussed" factors associated with the effectiveness of EU external policy (Gebhard 2011: 101). It reflects the common-sense notion, frequently reiterated by EU officials, that effectiveness is enhanced when the EU "speaks with one voice".

The relationship between coherence and effectiveness is generally seen as both complex and uncertain, given that the pursuit of coherence can result in outcomes reflecting a lowest common denominator consensus and accordingly ineffective policies and actions. In contrast, a distinct level of coherence can enhance or even trigger third-party resistance, and thus likewise result in low effectiveness. Bretherton and Vogler (2008) further break down the concept of coherence by distinguishing between vertical coherence (between internal actors) and horizontal coherence (across policy domains), while Louise van Schaik (2013) examines how EU coherence is influenced by competence, preference homogeneity and socialisation.

Daniel Thomas (2012) proposes a parsimonious approach to assessing the degree of coherence by drawing on policy determinacy (reflecting how clearly and narrowly an EU policy defines the boundaries of acceptable behaviour) and policy implementation (reflecting how rigorously EU actors comply with and support the agreed policy), arguing that the EU's effectiveness is greatest where it settles on highly determinate policies which signal a greater common commitment, which is in turn taken by third parties as a secure basis for collaboration. In addition, when determinate policies are also regularly implemented, collective material resources and persuasive powers are deployed on behalf of common objectives (Thomas 2012: 460). Lisanne Groen and Arne Niemann (2013) describe effectiveness as the product of actorness as conditioned by the opportunity structure that enables or constrains EU actions. They argue that actual effectiveness is the function of the internal factors

(such as coherence and autonomy) which determine actorness, as conditioned by the constraints of the external environment.[1]

Moreover, concepts of effectiveness represent an important part, or even indicator, complementary to others in a variety of recent studies on EU performance. With limited theorising of performance in early EU foreign policy literature, some relevant studies rely on international regimes and organisational performance literature for their conceptualisation of performance (Jørgensen, Oberthür and Shahin 2011). There is a debate concerning EU performance in multilateral institutions, with a distinct emphasis on the relevance of effectiveness as one indicator among others, and on the general understanding of the concept of effectiveness overall (Oberthür and Groen 2015).

Contestation and politicisation

For the purposes of this chapter, contestation is best understood in terms of the EU (foreign policy) being a multilevel contestation system, in which (particularly) the EU and the Member States may play different roles (cf. König 2016; Cantir and Kaarbo 2016; on role theory in IR more generally: Holsti 1970). Role conceptions tend to be derived domestically and to be contested both in the domestic arena horizontally between political elites and vertically among elites and the public. Four different types of relevant role contestation have been distinguished: (A) horizontal contestation over the Union's role among different national elites at EU level; (B) horizontal contestation over the Union's role between domestic elites within its Member States; (C) horizontal contestation over the national role in EU contexts between national elites in the Member States; and (D) vertical contestation over the national role in EU contexts between national elites and the public within the Member States (Koenig 2016: 160). Furthermore, as role conceptions are not only contested domestically, but also by external actors, another type of role contestation can be added: (E) horizontal

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1   The importance of such opportunity structure was first conceptualised by Bretherton and Vogler (1999) and acknowledged by other authors, such as Thomas (2012).

contestation over the EU's role between the elites of the EU (and its member states) and those in the neighbourhood countries. In addition, we know from the disputes between the EU's central institutions (notably the Commission) and the member states regarding the Union's foreign policy competences (Meunier and Nicolaïdis 1999) that there tends to be horizontal contestation between the elites of the EU (and its supranational institutions) on the one hand, and member states' elites on the other (F).

With regard to the above concepts, type A role contestation can be expected to have the greatest relevance: EU actorness and effectiveness are especially contingent on the level of contestation between Member States' elites in the EU arena. Although this contestation may be reinforced through (and originate in) the other types of contestation, research on the EU as an international actor rarely digs deep enough to investigate (horizontal and/or vertical) contestation within the Member States. This is also why politicisation – understood as the growing salience of the EU in domestic debates and the increasing polarisation of opinions/interests; a concept that is used in this volume to further untangle the process of contestation (cf. introduction of this volume; de Wilde 2011) – will be of lesser relevance in the context of this chapter. By contrast, type E role contestation may be relevant when it comes to effectiveness, given the fact that the neighbourhood governments/elites form an important part of the so-called "opportunity structure" (see above).

Finally, when analysing the contestation of the EU as an actor in the ENP, one also needs to pay attention to the role of the norms that the EU promotes in its neighbourhood. Contestation is inherent in international norms and their legitimacy (Wiener 2014: 3). Norm promotion can be seen as "ideologically diverse and conflicting". Conflict and contestation between the promotors of clashing norms can be severe, and may cut across institutions and borders, turning norm promotion into political conflict (Bob 2012: 5). As we know, for example from the literature on normative power Europe, the more contested (and inconsistently applied) the EU norms, the lesser their external impact.

The EU as an international actor in the ENP

In order to present a broad overview of the EU as an actor in the ENP, we will consider the use of the above concepts (and their sub-concepts) in ENP literature, determine the extent to which they have been applied across topics and issue, and try to highlight some possible shortcomings and difficulties in an attempt to provide an evaluation of the general relevance and value of these concepts to analysis of the ENP. Attention will be paid to patterns of contestation and politicisation in this context, particularly in terms of horizontal contestation over the EU's role among different national elites at EU level.

The concept of presence and the ENP

The concept of presence is employed in comparatively few studies on the ENP, but one example of its explicit use can be found in the work of Dimitar Bechev (2011). Seeking to account for the EU's widely criticised ineffectiveness, and exploring the sources and dynamics of EU influence in the ENP, Bechev identifies two modes of interaction between the EU and its regional neighbours, "gatekeeping" and "power projection", arguing that his finding that the EU acts as much as a gatekeeper as a proactive agent is in line with "certain strands of the literature stressing the power of the Union related to its presence in the global and regional economy and politics" (Bechev 2011: 424), with direct reference to the work of Allen and Smith (1990). He moreover refers to Christopher Hill's (1993: 310) notion of EU presence, implying that certain events either would not have occurred, or would have occurred differently, in the absence of the EU (Bechev 2011: 424). The occurrence of and distinction between the two faces of EU presence, passive traction and proactive engagement with its neighbours are central to his argument (ibid.: 415). Similarly, Alun Jones (2009) draws attention to literature suggesting that the EU simply manifests different forms of international actorness and presence, stating that "the EU's international actorness and presence more often than not reflect the spread of contradictory 'EU'ropean interests and

activities, with a diversity of actors and processes involved in the construction of EU 'international policy'" (Jones 2009: 83).

A less explicit application of the concept of EU presence is evidenced in the work of Jones and Clark (2008). Focusing on the role of the Commission in the external projection of Europeanisation towards the Mediterranean, they concentrate on the concept of Europeanisation, defining it as a "legitimizing process through which the EU strives to gain meaning, actorness and presence internationally" (Jones and Clark 2008: 545). They argue that the European Commission holds a substantive role in the promotion of agreed European interests, ideas and identities and in the delivery of EU policy narratives, norms, practices and procedures on terms that are favourable for the Union. However, they point out that Europeanisation "is characterised by an ongoing internal tension and interplay between the drive to act collectively on the world stage and the desire by EU Member States to retain national autonomy over foreign policy goals and actions", thus highlighting the contestation over the nature and direction of Europeanisation between the Commission and the member governments (Jones and Clark 2008: 546). In addition, they point out that the contradictory demands of negotiating order at the internal and external level both critically affect the EU's ability to produce policy outputs which "obtain a desired policy outcome that accord the EU 'presence' and 'actorness' in international affairs" (Jones and Clark 2008: ibid.). This is noteworthy, given the institutional design of the ENP and the mixed range of actors engaged, especially at the EU level, and the corresponding variety of interests that influence the Europeanisation process and EU presence and actorness in the ENP accordingly. Jones and Clark argue that the "European Commission is at the centre of this internal-external Europeanisation dynamic, actively mediating between the contradictory demands of EU Member States in search of European solutions to external events and problems and at the same time managing, negotiating and coordinating relations between the EU polity and a diverse range of global political space". For the Commission, the effective promotion of its neighbourhood policy in the name of Europeanisation is central to EU identity formation, actorness and international presence (Jones and Clark 2008: 546, 567).

Other, more generalised notions of EU presence can be found in several other works related to the ENP that, however, have no substantial connection to the actual concept (e.g. Korosteleva 2011; Wolff and Peen Rodt 2010; Echeverria Jesus 2010).

The concept of actorness and the ENP

Much like the concept of EU presence, the idea of EU actorness has somewhat influenced the literature on the ENP. Concerning EU actorness in relation to neighbouring countries, Bretherton and Vogler (2006) themselves describe EU actorness as problematic. In the eastern neighbourhood, despite achieving a significant presence, questions remain over the adequacy of the incentives offered by the ENP to transform the region, being circumscribed by the necessity of caution in the face of Russia. In the Mediterranean, as a replacement for similar predecessors, the ENP seems to be hampered by its own inconsistency (Bretherton and Vogler 2006: 159).

Bechev (2011) explicitly refers to the works of Sjöstedt (1977), Hill (1993), and Jupille and Caporaso (1998) in highlighting the need for more EU actorness in the ENP, and defining the concept as "the capacity to articulate and put forward, in a coherent manner, a set of material stimuli and normative demands, to reward alignment, and, possibly, to win the loyalty of elites and citizenry in 'third' countries" (Bechev 2011: 419).

Another explicit reference is provided by Laure Delcour (2007: 127). Referring to Bretherton and Vogler's (2006) understanding of actorness as being constructed through the interplay of internal political factors and the perceptions and expectations of outsiders, Delcour argues that elements such as policy reception and third countries' expectations contribute to shaping policy in the ENP as well as the EU's influence. Elsa Tulmets (2007: 199f) also acknowledges the debate concerning EU international actorness, discussing the discourse on EU "soft-power" and its potential to help the EU bridge its capability-expectations gap. Another direct reference to EU actorness can be found in Tulmets's (2008) article on EU coherence

and the ENP, where the discussion concerning actorness is mentioned as a consequence of the creation of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the debate accompanying this development, and the concept itself is described as the EU's "capability to lead a coherent external action" (Tulmets 2008: 108).

Other references to EU actorness in the ENP literature are rather less overt, often making use of the term without explicating a concrete concept or context. Carmen Gebhard (2007) assesses EU actorness in the ENP by focusing on the "policy appropriateness" of ENP measures, but without directly raising the concept of EU actorness itself. In a later article, Gebhard (2010) links the discussions concerning the capability-expectations gap in the context of the credibility of EU foreign policy actorness to the ENP's perceived strategic inadequacy, consequently developing the step from actorness to effectiveness, albeit without referring to any specific or concrete concept of actorness.

To assess the relevance of the concept of EU actorness to the scholarly debate on the role of the EU in the ENP, it is helpful to identify a variety of sub-concepts (or variables) of actorness. In the context of this chapter and this section, we will focus on the sub-concepts presented by Jupille and Caporaso (1998). *Cohesion* (or coherence) is a very prominent point of interest in ENP literature (Balfour and Missiroli 2007; Tulmets 2006a, 2006b; Dannreuther 2006; Tulmets 2008; Rynning and Pihlkjaer Jensen 2010; Missiroli 2010; Casier, Korosteleva and Whitman 2013; Lehne 2014). Rosa Balfour and Antonio Missiroli (2007), for example, argue that the degree to which the Council and Commission succeed in ensuring coherence between their respective foreign policy strategies will be important in determining the success or failure of the EU's neighbourhood policy (Balfour and Missiroli 2007: 21). Accordingly, Tom Casier, Elena Korosteleva and Richard Whitman (2013) point out that the EU's neighbourhood approach (in their case focusing on the Eastern Partnership (EaP)) would benefit from a greater level of internal coherence, referring to the division of responsibility between the EEAS and the Commission in EU foreign policy (Casier, Korosteleva and Whitman 2013: 86), while Stefan Lehne (2014) criticises the lack of coherence between collective efforts under the ENP and the politics of the Member States, particularly in the field of regional conflict resolution

(Lehne 2014: 11). Julia Koenig (2016) uncovers a lack of EU coherence resulting from (horizontal) contestation between Member States elites (here: France, the UK and Germany) in her analysis of the EU as an actor in the Libyan crisis. For example, regarding the most divisive issue in the EU's crisis response, the use of force, the three EU states that were members of the UN Security Council at the time voted differently on the UNSC resolution 1973: while France and the UK supported the resolution, Germany abstained. This outcome has been explained by diverging and contested roles among the elites of the "big three", which raised doubts concerning the EU's very actorness in the ENP and ESDP (cf. Koenig 2016: 162ff).

Somewhat counter-intuitively, Michal Natorski (2016) argues that crisis, which tends to be accompanied by a deeply politicised crisis discourse (Hay 1999), has enhanced the ENP's overall coherence. Analysing the development of the ENP in the context of the Arab Spring, he contends that actors sought to avoid epistemic uncertainty by reconstructing a sense of coherence. Thus, "coherence becomes an epistemic social convention (…) around which a sense of order can be negotiated and (re-) established".

Likewise going beyond the standard use of coherence, Ian Manners (2010) deals with EU value/normative coherence, and Giselle Bosse (2007) utilises the coherence "of the policy discourse on the significance and substance of 'shared values'" (Bosse 2007: 40) as a criterion by which to judge the Union's ability to justify its policies in terms of its values, in order to assess the extent to which the ENP can improve existing policies towards neighbouring states. Interestingly, this approach implicitly links EU actorness to EU effectiveness. Arguing along similar lines, Tulmets (2007: 215) links effectiveness to (normative) coherence, identifying minimal internal consistency as a key determinant of the success of the ENP, required "to enhance its expertise about neighbouring countries in order to keep and increase its legitimacy and external coherence". A similar argument is made by Missiroli (2010).

The other sub-concepts introduced by Jupille and Caporaso receive less attention in the ENP literature, though Christopher Browning and Pertti Joenniemi (2007: 20) make distinct reference to concept of *authority* arguing that "the ENP enhances the imperial characteristics of the EU, with governance and authority

becoming centred on the core and power and subjectivity being dispersed out to declining degrees in a series of concentric circles". Lehne (2014: 11) contrasts the role of EU institutions in the ENP to the enlargement process, arguing that whilst the Commission was accepted as the most important dialogue partner by candidate countries in the latter (thus also implicitly ascribing a degree of recognition and autonomy to the Commission in the process), the EU institutions lack similar authority in the context of the ENP. Other authors including James Scott (2009) develop arguments on EU moral authority, but these approaches are only tangentially related to the discussion on EU actorness. Unlike the previous sub-concepts, with the exception of a few implicit references (Lehne 2014, see above), neither *recognition* nor *autonomy* are particularly prominent as explicit notions in the reviewed ENP literature. As for *recognition*, i.e. the acceptance of and interaction with the EU by third countries, this can probably be explained by the fact that the EU's recognition is taken for granted in the literature, and consequently not explicitly discussed.

The concept of effectiveness and the ENP

The question of the EU's effectiveness arises frequently and prominently in the ENP literature. This is hardly surprising, given that the explicit goal of the ENP was to effectively foster stable and cooperative relations with neighbouring countries and to extend the momentum of the enlargement process, consequently building on the experiences from it. Accordingly, several publications ask the key question of how effective (or ineffective) the ENP is, mostly in terms of goal achievement on the part of the EU, but also from the perspective of the ENP countries.[2] In ENP literature, EU effectiveness is regularly linked to ideas of coherence and capability and is usually

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2   Here we focus on EU effectiveness, in particular when it is explicitly or implicitly linked to EU presence, actorness or coherence. As outlined above, effectiveness in some respect builds on actorness, meaning that there needs to be a certain capacity to behave actively and deliberately in order to enable the EU to act effectively (Groen and Niemann 2013, p. 4). However, this does not imply that any argument concerning EU effectiveness necessarily includes deliberations on EU actorness or presence.

taken to mean goal-achievement, although recent concepts of institutional effectiveness and performance have attempted to widen the conceptual understanding somewhat (Oberthür and Groen 2015).

Appraising the effectiveness of the ENP itself or aspects thereof has been the subject of a number of articles (Balfour and Missiroli 2007; Bechev and Nicolaidis 2010; Börzel and van Hüllen 2014; Dannreuther 2006; Kelley 2006), in terms of both the EaP (Korosteleva 2011; 2013; Popescu and Wilson 2009) and the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) (Aliboni and Ammor 2009; Yildiz 2012). The discussion on effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the ENP, its measures, design and impact, is one of the most prominent questions raised in ENP literature. However, most of these studies use effectiveness rather generally and do not draw on a conceptually embedded/enriched concept of effectiveness. A notable exception is the work by Tanja A. Börzel and Vera van Hüllen (2014), who argue that it is the ENP's substantive inconsistency in seeking to promote effective and democratic governance that undermines the EU's external effectiveness.

Others consider the term "effectiveness" to be inherently problematic, particularly referring to the debate on empirical measures of what effectiveness actually implies. Moschella (2007: 160) suggests, for example, that the term "EU effectiveness" in relation to the ENP is "used to indicate the range of domestic transformations that occur in the partner countries and that can be associated with EU leverage and incentives".

Due to the variety of problems, divergent understandings and assessments concerning the ENP (in)effectiveness, we will focus on the instances explicitly or implicitly illustrating the conceptual linkage from actorness to effectiveness in the reviewed literature. Some authors connect coherence to effectiveness, with the former facilitating the latter, meaning the higher the level of coherence, the greater the level of effectiveness can be expected, and vice versa (Tulmets 2008). Roland Dannreuther (2006), for example, suggests that the ENP is the EU's attempt to promote greater coherence and consistency in its neighbourhood policy, due to a lack of effectiveness in previous policies and programmes. Lehne (2014), however, criticises the Member States for "outsourcing" the promotion of values to the EU while

taking care of their strategic and economic interests on their own, thereby contesting and undermining the EU's efforts instead of backing them up more consistently, and thus lacking the coherence necessary in order to enhance EU effectiveness in its neighbourhood policy (Lehne 2014: 10-11). Browning and Christou (2010) add another dimension to this argument. They maintain that diverging preferences and horizontal contestation among the Member State elites at EU level not only destabilise attempts to present a coherent EU position towards the country's ENP partners, but also provide strategic opportunities for its neighbours to use these ambiguities in advancing their own agendas. This approximates the horizontal contestation over the EU's role between the elites of the EU and its Member States and those in the neighbourhood countries identified above (cf. section 2.4). In contrast, Börzel and van Hüllen (2014) argue that the EU's ineffectiveness in its neighbourhood policy does not result from a lack of coherence.

Börzel (together with Julia Langbein) also argues that the effectiveness of EU policy transfer vis-à-vis the neighbourhood countries does not depend on the level of "politicisation" of a particular policy field. For instance, Ukraine's convergence with ("high politics") foreign policy issues is greater than with EU ("low-politics") state-aid policies (cf. Dimitrova and Dragneva 2013; Langbein and Börzel 2013: 571, 575f). [3]

Another link between actorness and effectiveness is the assessment of the relationship between the EU's concrete capability in the ENP and its own expectations as well as those of the neighbouring countries involved, the "capability-expectations gap" (Hill 1993; Bretherton and Vogler 1999/2006). Here, the question of effectiveness is conceptually linked to the EU's capability to act according to its own expectations and those of its partners in the ENP. The specific relevance of questions concerning the incidence and specifications of the EU's capability-expectations gap in the ENP is presented in several publications. For example, Bosse (2007) argues that

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3   It should be noted, however, that the usefulness of the "high politics"/"low politics" dichotomy is contested (Dalton and Eichenberg 1998). As for this particular context, we know that that foreign policy issues often do not provoke strong domestic preferences either, in terms of (economic) interest groups (Moravcsik 1993) or concerning public opinion (Knecht 2010: 46).

the ENP exacerbates rather than ameliorates the disparity between the EU's political rhetoric on shared values and its ability to enforce these values (Bosse 2007: 59). Analysing the ENP's effectiveness in bridging the capability-expectations gap, Delcour and Tulmets (2009: 522) reach a similarly negative conclusion, arguing that the way the ENP has been designed and implemented so far is rather aimed at fulfilling the EU's own expectations than those of their neighbouring countries. Comparable assessments can also be found in more recent reviews on the issue (e.g. Nielsen 2013).

Finally, when analysing the effectiveness as well as contestation of the EU as an actor in the ENP, one also needs to pay attention to the role of the norms that the EU promotes in its neighbourhood. Part of the literature on normative power Europe that deals with the EU's neighbourhood suggests that the norms put forward by the EU are contested, in the sense that the EU applies double standards in terms of what it expects from its Member States and what it asks of its ENP partners, and norms may also be applied inconsistently across ENP countries. This tends to weaken the normative impact/effect of EU policy (e.g. Niemann and de Wekker 2010).

Conclusions

As elaborated in this chapter, the concrete circumstances, measures and levels of power enabling the EU to (effectively) participate in international affairs are salient considerations for the study of the ENP, and the underlying concepts of EU presence, actorness and effectiveness (and their sub-concepts) can be identified in a variety of ENP-related literature to a greater or lesser degree. Some publications refer explicitly to these conceptualisations, making use of their operationalisations, while others – in fact the majority – are less explicit, but implicitly introduce the ideas in their derivations or line of argument. Accordingly, the topics and issues they have been applied to vary as much as the literature on the ENP itself.

Although any identifiable overall trend with regard to both concepts and points of interest in the reviewed ENP literature remains elusive, there is an observable focus

on questions of effectiveness and coherence. The former is represented explicitly in several analyses, but infrequently conceptually underpinned and/or linked to specific concepts of EU presence or actorness. Similarly, in the literature, coherence is not necessarily related to actorness or effectiveness, respectively. Moreover, specific references to the concept or definition of EU presence or actorness are found only in a minority of studies, and only a few link effectiveness to either one of them, with Hill's (1993) related concept of the "capability-expectations gap" representing an acknowledged and adopted exception.

There thus remains room for improvement. ENP scholarship might benefit considerably from an increase in systematic (theory-driven and carefully operationalised) analyses of EU presence and actorness in the ENP, especially in terms of comparability and generalisability of findings. Useful operationalisations of the various sub-concepts of actorness, including the type of reference points and questions to be asked, can be found in Huigens and Niemann (2011), for example. Thomas (2012) as well as Eugénia da Conceição-Heldt and Sophie Meunier (2014) provide skilful specification and operationalisation of the relationship between coherence/cohesion and effectiveness. Other authors indicating how effectiveness may be studied with substantial sophistication include Hegemann et al. (2013) in terms of IR more generally, and Ginsberg (2001) with regard to EU foreign policy. Such steps could prove useful to mitigate the criticism concerning the somewhat descriptive nature of ENP literature in general and of ENP effectiveness in particular. Making increased use of such concepts as presence, actorness and effectiveness in a more methodologically rigorous fashion, and possibly extending the analysis to include novel concepts like EU "performance", might open new avenues in ENP research and to some extent contribute to theory-development in EU studies more generally.

As for aspects of contestation and politicisation, the literature on EU presence, actorness and effectiveness has mostly paid attention to patterns of horizontal contestation over the EU's role among different national elites at EU level. In addition, some (few) works have also engaged with the horizontal contestation between the elites of the EU (and its supranational institutions) on the one hand, and Member

States' elites on the other, and the horizontal contestation over the EU's role between the elites of the EU (and its Member States) and those in the neighbourhood countries. The latter dimension deserves more attention, and would also imply that the ENP countries are brought more into the debates on EU actorness and effectiveness. Accounts that dig deeper into the layers of contestation within the Member States are few and far between, as are works that take aspects of vertical contestation into consideration (but see Koenig 2016: 172). In view of the growing politicisation of EU politics (including EU external policy making), future scholarship on EU actorness and effectiveness will have to embrace this dimension more seriously.

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