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

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The EU as an international actor and the ENP

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Abstract

This chapter discusses conceptualisations of the European Union as an international actor in the European Neighbourhood Policy, evaluating the concepts of EU presence, actorness and effectiveness for EU Studies more generally, and the ENP in particular. We argue that the concrete circumstances, measures and levels of power enabling the EU to act (effectively) as an international player are of particular interest to studies on the ENP, and that the underlying concepts of EU presence, actorness and effectiveness can be identified in a variety of related literature. Nevertheless, an increase in systematic analyses of EU presence, actorness and effectiveness in the ENP could be of considerable value to enhance the comparability and generalisability of findings. Moreover, making increased use of these concepts in a methodologically more rigorous fashion, and possibly extending the analysis towards novel concepts like EU performance might allow charting new waters in ENP research and contributing to some extent to theory-development in EU Studies more generally.

Introduction

Since its foundation, the European Community's (EC) role and impact in the international arena has been a subject of persistent debate among scholars of International Relations (IR). Classical IR theory faced a variety of issues in trying to conceptualise the EC/European Union (EU) and its external relations. Above all, the focus on statehood proved an inadequate starting point for analysis. To enable an analysis which acknowledges the EU's distinctive nature and

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significant differences from other international actors, scholars working on (the external dimension of) European integration quickly began to look beyond state-centric accounts.

Subsequently, a variety of studies emerged focusing primarily on the internal characteristics and processes that determine EU external policy, and shifted perceptions towards the conceptualisation of the EU as a new type of international actor *sui generis*. Consequently, accompanying this theoretical debate, different new concepts of the EU as an actor in international relations grew in prominence and importance in European Integration Studies. 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 emergence of the idea of the union as a civilian power (Duchêne 1972), portraying the EU as an actor with limited military and strategic power on the one hand, but significant economic power on the other, and being increasingly interested in exercising its influence in world politics. The concept of a civilian power Europe (CPE) remains influential in academic discourse (Orbie 2006), despite recent developments in the EU's security and defence policy somewhat undermining the perception of the EU as distinctive civilian entity in contrast to other actors (Smith 2000).

During the last decade the notion of normative power Europe (NPE) – conceptualising the EU's (assumed) 'ability to define what passes for "normal" in world affairs' – has come into vogue (Manners 2002: 236). NPE has prompted a lively debate in IR, and come in for its own share of criticism, for example concerning its alleged 'Eurocentricism' (Fioramonti and Poletti 2008), its lack of precision (Sjursen 2006: 236), and the relatively meagre findings of EU normativity in empirical studies (Niemann and de Wekker 2010). With neither the concept of civilian nor normative power Europe proving entirely satisfactory, recent debate concerning the role of the EU as an international actor has attempted to somehow reconceptualise the EU's role in international affairs – through notions such as 'integrative' (Koops 2011), 'small' (Toje 2011), or 'transformative' (Leonard 2005) power Europe. In addition, it has been suggested – given the plethora of studies contesting the legitimacy and impact of EU foreign policy – that the discussion about what "sort" of power or actor the EU is, first requires a more systematic analysis of EU presence, actorness (and effectiveness) in international relations itself (Niemann and Bretherton 2013: 5).

As for the European Neighbourhood Policy, the most prominent and important policy tool in the EU's dealing with its geographical proximity, the questions of EU presence and actorness seem of particular interest. Analysing EU actorness in the ENP process, and in particular extending the concept towards potential findings on effectiveness (and possibly

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performance), could provide a variety of outcomes and insights, improving the comparability and empirical underpinning of ENP research overall. The first part of this chapter will introduce important approaches and concepts surrounding the EU's role in IR. The second part of this chapter 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. Finally, we draw some conclusions from our analysis.

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

The concept of presence

Through the concept of EU presence, Allen and Smith (1990) analyse the role of Western Europe in the international sphere. They argue for an understanding of the EC not as a classic international actor, but rather a presence in international affairs with a considerable degree of variation. 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)

In their understanding presence is a feature of issue-arenas or networks of activity, which influence the actions and expectations of the relevant participants. A combination of factors defines a particular presence in the international sphere, 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 prominent feature of this approach. Allen and Smith (1990) argue that although the EC cannot fulfill many criteria of actorness, it has significant "presence" in the international system.

The concept of actorness

The debate concerning EC/EU actorness in international politics has attracted considerable scholarly attention in the past decades. Emerging from early debate about the potential international roles of the EC (Cosgrove and Twichett 1970), the first detailed and systematic conceptualisation of the Community's international actor capability was developed by Gunnar Sjöstedt. He defines it 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 confined 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 properties, requiring the Community to retain, at least to some extent, the processes and rules of the state-centric international relations in order to be successful. Despite remaining influential in the literature, Sjöstedt's approach has been criticized for focusing excessively on internal characteristics, which are also difficult to operationalize and apply to specific cases (Niemann and Bretherton 2013: 6). This has subsequently led to a variety of different approaches towards EU actorness in international affairs.

The first of these is the concept developed by Joseph Jupille and James A. Caporaso. Criticizing previous contributions to the debate for their lack of clear criteria determining the status of the EU as an actor, they develop four main indicators for analysing EU actorness: *recognition, authority, cohesion* and *autonomy* (Jupille and Caporaso 1998: 214). *Recognition* entails the EC's acceptance by other actors in the international system and the subsequent interaction with these actors. *Authority* concerns above all the 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* depicts 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 an internally consistent position as assessed in several dimensions (Jupille and Caporaso 1998: 215-219). Apart from being partly interconnected, the four indicators of actorness can be aptly operationalised for empirical research. The concept itself, despite being clearly structured, drew criticism for being relatively complex, given the fact that each of the four criteria contains several sub-criteria. Other critiques suggest that their framework is too narrowly focused, being excessively concerned with 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).

For scholars attempting to develop a constructivist analysis, 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 conceptualization informed by this line of reasoning. Their analysis focuses 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), that is to say 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. *Presence* builds upon the work of Allen and Smith (1990) and 'conceptualizes the ability of 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 described as referring 'to the internal context of EU external action – the availability of policy instruments and understandings about the Union's ability to utilize these instruments, in response to opportunity and/or to capitalize 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

To make more far-reaching claims concerning the EU's role and influence in international relations, it has been suggested that we have to go beyond the studies of actorness (or ability to act) and consider the effectiveness of EU action (Niemann and Bretherton 2013: 263). Effectiveness is understood in terms of several sometimes complementary characteristics, with the main focus on categories of "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 EU 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 addressed from a variety of perspectives. A prominent early example is the 'capability-expectations gap', from which the Community is supposed to suffer (Hill 1993), a contribution that has retained its relevance in the discussion on EU effectiveness also in the ENP. A contrast to Hill's rather pessimistic assessment was provided by the work of Ginsberg (2001) who analysed the EU's influence in the difficult case of former Yugoslavia. Recent analyses have tended to focus on "coherence", which has been referred to as '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 considered both complex and uncertain by many authors. This is perhaps unsurprising, 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. There have been several works addressing this issue, with Bretherton and Vogler (2008) distinguishing between vertical coherence (between internal actors) and horizontal coherence (across policy domains), while van Schaik (2013) argues that EU coherence is influenced by competence, preference homogeneity and socialization.

Thomas (2012) proposes a parsimonious approach for conceptualising 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). Highly determinate policies are likely to enhance the EU's effectiveness because they are viewed by others as reflecting a greater common commitment which is likely to be perceived as a solid basis for good relations. 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). Groen and Niemann (2013) conceptualize effectiveness as the result of actorness 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]

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

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 the original EU foreign policy literature, some relevant studies rely on the 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 distinct emphasis on the relevance of effectiveness as an indicator among others and the general understanding of the concept of effectiveness overall (Oberthür and Groen 2015).

The EU as an international actor in the ENP

To be able to present an appropriate overview of the EU as an actor in ENP, we will analyse the presence of the above concepts (and their sub-concepts) in the ENP literature, determine the extent to which they have been applied across topics and issues and try to highlight some possible short-comings and difficulties in an attempt to provide an evaluation of the general relevance and value of these concepts to ENP analysis.

The concept of presence and the ENP

Few works on ENP have explicitly drawn on the concept of presence. An example of such explicit use of the concept is the work of Bechev (2011). Assessing the EU's widely criticized ineffectiveness and exploring the sources and dynamics of EU influence in the ENP, he identifies two modes of interaction between the EU and its neighbouring countries, 'gatekeeping' and 'power projection', arguing that the finding that the EU acts as much as a gatekeeper as 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), directly citing the work of Allen and Smith (1990) in this context. He moreover refers to Hill's (1993: 310) notion of EU presence, implying that certain events would either not have occurred, or occurred differently without the EU's existence (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, Jones (2009) explicitly notes the relevant literature suggesting that the EU simply manifests different forms of international actorness and presence and states 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 more implicit application of the concept of EU presence is represented 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. In addition, they point out that the contradictory demands of negotiating order at the internal and external level both critically affect the ability of the EU to produce policy outputs which 'obtain a desired policy outcome that accord the EU "presence" and "actorness" in international affairs' (Jones and Clark 2008: 546). They conclude their argument, stating that for the Commission the promotion of its neighbourhood policy in the name of Europeanisation is central to EU actorness and international presence (Jones and Clark 2008: 567).

Different, rather general notions on 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

As with the concept of EU presence, the concept 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, the adequacy of the incentives offered by the ENP to transform the region is open to question, being circumscribed by the necessity of caution in the face of Russia. In the Mediterranean, as a replacement of similar predecessors, the ENP seems impeded by problems of consistency (Bretherton and Vogler 2006: 159).

Bechev (2011) draws on the concept of actorness and the need for more EU actorness in the ENP. He explicitly refers to the works of Sjöstedt (1977), Hill (1993) as well as Jupille and

Caporaso (1998), and defines actorness 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 can be found in 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, she argues that those elements contribute to the EU shaping its neighbours' perceptions towards the union and the ENP as well as to 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 possible potential to help the EU bridge its capability-expectations gap. Another direct reference to EU actorness can be found in Tulmets' (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 described as the EU's 'capability to lead a coherent external action' (Tulmets 2008: 108).

Other uses of EU actorness in the ENP literature are rather implicit, often mentioning the term actorness, but not necessarily referring to a concrete concept or the general debate. Gebhard (2007) assesses EU actorness in the ENP by focussing on the "policy appropriateness" of the ENP measures, but without directly raising the concept of EU actorness itself. In a different article, Gebhard (2010) links the discussions concerning the capability-expectations gap in the context of the credibility of EU foreign policy actorness to a perceived strategic inadequacy of the ENP, consequently developing the step from actorness to effectiveness, albeit without referring to an individual 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 2006; Dannreuther 2006; Tulmets 2008; Rynning and Pihlkjaer Jensen 2010; Missiroli 2010). Going beyond the standard use of coherence, Manners (2010) is concerned with EU value/normative coherence and Bosse (2007) utilizes the coherence 'of the policy discourse on the significance and substance of "shared values"' (Bosse 2007: 40) as one criterion to judge the ability of the Union to justify its policies on the basis 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. Making a similar argument by linking effectiveness to (normative) coherence, Tulmets (2007: 215) identifies a key determinant of the success of the ENP as ensuring a minimal internal consistency and 'to enhance its expertise about neighbouring countries in order to keep and increase its legitimacy and external coherence.' A similar argument can be found with Missiroli (2010).

The other sub-concepts of Jupille and Caporaso receive less attention in the ENP literature. *Authority* can be distinctly identified in some approaches on the ENP. Browning and Joenniemi (2007: 20) for example argue 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 most important dialogue partner by candidate countries in the latter (thus implicitly also referring to recognition and the Commission's autonomy in the process), the EU institutions lack similar authority in the context of the ENP. Other authors like Scott (2009) develop arguments on EU moral authority, but these approaches have very faint connections to the discussion on EU actorness.

In contrast to the previous sub-concepts, apart from 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, as a result of which it is not specifically discussed.

The concept of effectiveness and the ENP

EU effectiveness is a prominent and recurring point of interest for researchers in the ENP literature. This is hardly surprising, given that the ENP was explicitly introduced as an effective policy tool to establish stable and cooperative relations with neighbouring countries and to extend the momentum of the EU's recent 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 side of the EU, but also on

the side of the ENP countries. [2] In ENP literature, EU effectiveness, i.e. usually goal-achievement, is linked to ideas of coherence and capability, although recent concepts on institutional effectiveness and performance have attempted to widen the conceptual understanding beyond goal-achievement (Oberthür and Groen 2015).

A considerable number of articles evaluate the effectiveness of the ENP itself or aspects thereof (Balfour and Missiroli 2007; Bechev and Nicolaidis 2010; Börzel and van Hüllen 2014; Dannreuther 2006; Kelley 2006), both in terms of the Eastern Partnership (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 overall. However, most of these studies use effectiveness rather loosely and do not draw on a conceptually embedded/enriched concept of effectiveness. A notable exception is the work by Börzel and 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 describe the term effectiveness as problematic on its own, 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, different understandings and assessments concerning the ENP being effective (or not), 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 level of effectiveness can be expected, and vice versa (Tulmets 2008). 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. In contrast, Börzel and van Hüllen (2014) argue that the EU's ineffectiveness in its neighborhood policy does not result from a lack of coherence.

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[2] We will 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, that does not imply that any argument concerning EU effectiveness necessarily includes deliberations on EU actorness or presence.

Another link between actorness and effectiveness is the assessment of the relation between the concrete capability of the EU in the ENP and their own expectations and 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 capability to act according to the EU's own expectations and those of their 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 the gap between the EU's political rhetoric on shared values and its capability to enforce these values is widened rather than reduced through the ENP (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).

Conclusions

As elaborated in this chapter, the concrete circumstances, measures and levels of power enabling the EU to (effectively) act as an international player are of particular interest to studies concerning the ENP and the underlying concepts of EU presence, actorness and effectiveness can be identified in a variety of ENP-related literature. These concepts (and their sub-concepts) are present in ENP-related literature, albeit to a varied extent, with some publications explicitly referring to the conceptualisation and the respective authors and making use of their operationalisations, while others – in fact the majority – chose a more implicit approach to 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 it seems difficult to identify an overall trend with regard to both concepts and points of interest in the reviewed ENP literature, there is an observable focus towards questions of effectiveness and coherence. Especially effectiveness 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, only a minority of studies explicitly refer to a specific concept or definition of EU presence or actorness; or link effectiveness to either one

of them, with Hills' (1993) related concept of the 'capability-expectations gap' representing an acknowledged and adopted exception.

Hence, there remains room for improvement. An increase in systematic (theory-driven and carefully operationalised) analyses of EU presence and actorness in the ENP could be of considerable value to ENP scholarship and enhance for instance the 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 for instance in Huigens and Niemann (2011). The relationship between coherence/cohesion and effectiveness has been skilfully specified and operationalised by Thomas (2012) as well as da Conceição-Heldt and Meunier (2014). Other works that indicate 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 concepts – such as presence, actorness and effectiveness – in a methodologically more rigorous fashion, and possibly extending the analysis towards novel concepts like EU "performance" might allow charting new waters in ENP research and contributing to some extent to theory-development in EU Studies more generally.

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