

IS THE EU ATTRACTIVE?

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ABSTRACT: *This article introduces the EU as an attractive actor. It aspires to classify approaches shaping the current debate about various aspects of the EU's relations towards other international actors (Europeanisation, soft power, civilian power or normative power) and derives two dimensions of attractiveness: 1) attractiveness leading to issue adoption and 2) attractiveness leading to the adoption of these issues on various levels and combination of these. This scheme is applied on EU governance mechanisms and value paradigms and helps to identify reasons behind the EU's external attractiveness.*

KEYWORDS: European Union, attractiveness, actorness, Europeanisation, power, governance

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this text is to introduce the term *attractiveness* in its relation to the European Union (EU) *actorness* concept. While there is a voluminous body of literature dealing with the EU's relations to other international actors, a systematisation of these various approaches is lacking. Concepts such as “soft power,” “civilian power,” and “normative power” have a lot in common but also differ in some characteristics and in this ability to explain the sources of power and therefore focus mostly on descriptions of their qualities. Deriving from the concept of actorness we emphasise that there are two basic dimensions of attractiveness: 1) attractiveness leading to issue adoption and 2) attractiveness leading to adoption of these issues on various levels and in various combinations. In both cases we try to introduce specific EU models of attractiveness and illustrate these with some examples.

Firstly, the actorness concept, its particular types and dimensions and their specifics, are described. Then we try to map the existing debate about both the actorness and especially attractiveness including concepts of power and the possible transfer of such debates into concrete political steps. This can assist in identifying why the EU internal mechanisms and value paradigms are or are not

interesting for actors (countries or regional groupings) outside the EU, and what could promote the EU's attractiveness. At the same time this overview can reveal weaknesses of EU governance as well as its strengths as seen externally. The attractiveness of the EU can have many interesting dimensions: the model of EU governance functions as a source of inspiration for various regional groupings, national and global governance and in some cases even local governance, while specific values contained in EU policies influence other actors in environmental, human rights and good governance issues. But first let us introduce several important concepts which serve as a starting point for our text.

ACTORNESS OF THE EU

Actorness (of the EU) can be generally defined as the ability to express (the EU's) interests and defend those interests internationally. Over the past 50 years the EC/EU has formed a foreign policy and established itself as an important international actor. In this article we work with the conception of actorness introduced by Kratochvíl (et al) in "The EU as a "Framing Actor:" Reflections on Media Debates about EU Foreign Policy.¹ In this paper the authors distinguish four basic types of actorness which are schematised in the following table:

TABLE I. EU ACTORNESS – DIFFERENT FOCI OF ACADEMIC DEBATES

	Inside the EU	Outside the EU
EU internal governance	EU as a legitimate actor	EU as an attractive actor
EU external policies	EU as a framing actor	EU as a recognised actor

SOURCE: Kratochvíl (et al) (forthcoming).

As argued by Kratochvíl (et al.), the three types of actorness are already the focus of academic debates from various angles – attractiveness, legitimacy, recognition. The ability of the EU to frame the debate about its external policies within the EU itself is the fourth type suggested by the authors to complete the three former ones.

We shall now proceed to briefly introduce all four dimensions of actorness.

Legitimacy: This type of actorness is examined as a topic with high resonance and the debate involves different views of the ability of EU institutions to govern in accordance with public opinion and support. The question of legitimacy is deeply interconnected with the further integration of the EU and with the strengthening of its position compared to the member states. While national states are perceived as actors with an established legitimising structure (elections on various levels, interdependence of legislative, executive and judicial power, integrated public sphere), international organisations, including the EU, seem to be lacking some of these channels of legitimacy and thus suffer from a democratic deficit.² Without legitimacy, the position of EU institutions (internally and externally) is weakened and remedies seem hard to find.³

Recognition: Dealing with this type of actorness, scholars tend to identify the position of the EU in relations to other actors, especially among other great powers.⁴ Recognition can be understood as the ability of the EU to be accepted as an independent actor by other actors and to take part in international relations and pursue its own policies. Two basic views concerning this type of actorness are visible. Firstly, that the EU is overestimated by external actors and that there is a consensus-expectations gap, 'a gap between what the member-states are expected to agree on and what they are actually able to consent to'⁵ while, secondly, the EU, as an underestimated actor attributed with only low expectations, including e.g. relations to Russia or building democracy in Iraq and Afghanistan.⁶

Framing: This more recent type of actorness understands the EU as an influential actor regarding the internal debate about external policies of the EU. According to Kratochvíl (et al) this characteristic of actorness is marginalised in current debates about the EU. As Kratochvíl (et al) note, the EU is a framing actor when it is able to 'convince the national governments and societies that a policy or a relationship with a country is primarily a task for the EU.'⁷ Thus, the EU as a dominating actor ("reference point") in the debates, is able to influence the external policies of member states and the Union itself.

Tomáš
Rohrbacher
& Martina
Jeníčková

Attractiveness: Although all of the dimensions of actorness deserve attention, this article focuses on the EU as an attractive actor because this focus can significantly contribute to the identification of source of influence of the EU towards external actors. The EU (despite many criticisms on its democratic deficit⁸) and its internal mechanisms, values and norms are apparently attractive to various actors outside the EU. This is obvious especially in some areas, such as environmental and human rights protection but also in specific models of member states cooperation in the age of new regionalism (or rather neo new regionalism⁹) (e.g. multi-level governance).

It is necessary to add that all the aspects of actorness influence each other and are therefore interconnected. Thanks to the unique internal governance and value paradigm (the EU is an attractive actor) the EU has the potential to be a self-confident actor in relations with others (the EU is a recognised actor). And, vice versa: the acceptance of the EU by actors outside (the EU is a recognised actor) can promote its “gravity field” (the EU is an attractive actor). Also, the fact that the EU is a recognised actor can support the EU’s ability to frame internal debates about external topics (the EU is a framing actor) and thus obtain a greater legitimising boost from member states’ societies (the EU is a legitimate actor), because successful international actions of the EU strengthen the internal legitimacy and vice versa.¹⁰

ATTRACTIVENESS

But let us now leave the general debate about different types of actorness and concentrate only on one of them. After the fall of the iron curtain, the magnetism of the EU appeared clearly. Countries of Central and Eastern European (CEE) entered into negotiations with the EU during the 1990s and later became members. The Balkans followed although at a slower pace and with more complex negotiations. The process of accession attracted the attention of scholars and was labelled as Europeanisation. Although this concept dominated (perhaps) the debate, other concepts explaining the attractiveness of the EU also received attention. In this part of the article we try to summarise

the current debate about the EU as an attractive actor. We focus especially on these three areas:

1. various concepts explaining the appealing force of the EU;
2. dimensions of this appealing force
 - a) issues which are spread by the EU;
 - b) levels on which these issues are spread;
3. sources of this appealing force.

*An Attractive
EU?*

Concepts Explaining the Appealing Force of the EU

In this part we discuss some concepts which define the EU as an actor concerning its internal and external image. Although these concepts are developed by scholars, they are based on the EU's self-presentation towards both internal and external publics. According to a constructivist approach to actorness, the EU defines itself as an actor with specific qualities and aspires to be recognised as such.¹¹ This self-definition also affects dimensions of attractiveness and therefore we will briefly discuss these concepts to find possible sources of the EU's appealing force towards external actors.

One frequently discussed concept concerning the diffusion of EU norms and values is *Europeanisation*. This concept focuses on the description of the process of adoption of the EU legislature mostly by the member states (internal Europeanisation¹²) and less often by the states outside the EU (applicant states or other; external Europeanisation¹³). The latter one has recently come in scholarly focus and includes the European Neighbourhood Policy and the EU's policy towards Central Asia.¹⁴ The Europeanisation research area studies two basic topics:

1. the creation of European governance through
 - a) a hard transfer (incl. formal and informal rules, procedures);
 - b) a soft transfer (styles, beliefs and norms) and
2. adoption of European norms by domestic governments.¹⁵

The direction of Europeanisation is not simply top-down (the EU influences domestic policy while the norms are adapted by member countries after either a certain pressure or voluntarily) but also bottom-up¹⁶. We see the importance of this concept mostly in its focus on emerging multilevel European governance and its mechanisms and specifics which can help to explain the attractiveness for

the actors outside the EU. Also, EU enlargement and external Europeanisation itself is a consequence of the EU's gravity force. And finally, deeper Europeanisation strengthens the ability of the EU in its role as an international actor.¹⁷ The weakness of this concept of the EU's attractiveness consists of its dominant concern with the EU member states or acceding countries (CEE states or the Balkans). Thus the ability of this concept to reveal the motivation of countries outside the EU or even Europe to converge to a European model is limited and refers above all to the direct material benefits of membership.

Another approach dealing with the EU seen from the outside is Emerson and Noutcheva's *gravity centre* concept.¹⁸ They argue that there are certain centres of democratic gravity, each representing a slightly different model, the EU being a prospective 'major world centre of democracy.' Generally, gravity centres are characterised by 'the tendency for other states to converge on the democratic model of the centre' and it 'depends on the reputational quality and attractiveness of that democracy, its geographic and cultural-historical proximity, and its openness to the periphery.'¹⁹ Europe is one of these gravity fields and belonging to Europe (not only the EU, but also e.g. Council of Europe) has a symbolic value. Also this concept can help to define the sources of EU attractiveness, but while Europeanisation studies mostly focus on EU member-states or acceding countries, this concept deals with the transfer of European (not necessarily EU) norms e.g. to the Balkans or the Caucasus where Russia's military and energy power competes with European normative power.²⁰ Or, as in Central Asia, the EU's liberal-democratic model challenges China's authoritarian regime.²¹ This demonstrates that the gravity centre concept is more useful in explaining the attractiveness of various models or types of power, including the European one, because it suggests that the EU is attractive for its democracy-based political arrangements.

Similarly, in the *normative power* concept, the EU is seen as a source of civilian and democratic standards²² and an actor using primarily the "export" of ideas and values instead of other forms of power.²³ The identity of the EU is built on strengthening peace, justice, human rights protection and security in the world and that creates its normative power.²⁴ As a consequence, norms and values are unintentionally spread from the EU to other political actors

(e.g. MERCOSUR) which adopt these values voluntarily. This unintentional diffusion of norms and values can be understood as evidence of their own, and the attractiveness of the EU itself. According to Manners,²⁵ attractiveness is caused by the uniqueness of the EU and its dissimilarity to pre-existing political forms (and thus can be weakened by deeper integration towards a European state).

Similar approaches may be seen in the works of Telo or Moravcsik who see the EU as a *civilian power*²⁶ (or civilising power).²⁷ Also, in this conception, the EU is given attributes of 'international political responsibility' but some new characteristics are added to distinguishing it from the normative power approach. The EU's importance relies also in its "smart" and "soft" power (as well in economic power and institutional uniqueness) and thus the attractiveness of the EU is embodied in its specific ability to understand and learn from its history,²⁸ the EU having been able to 'tame and civilise the state sovereignties of its members.'²⁹ This common historical memory is, accordingly, the reason why the EU does not aspire to act as a politico-military power. Nevertheless Larsen argues that the EU has shifted from its position as a civilian power and accepted some military elements into its discourse.³⁰ Still, the EU is seen as an important contributor to democratisation using rather persuasion than force and building on its historical experience and success in learning from it.

In the conception of *soft power*³¹ the influence of an actor on the behaviour of other actors is based on attraction and seduction: 'Ideas and policy have a power of attraction that facilitates their diffusion between polities at different levels.'³² The original concept is ascribed to Nye who highlighted the importance of argument as the key role to attract: 'in behavioural terms soft power is attractive power' (quoted by Jones). In terms of force or military power the EU is (relatively) weak but in terms of soft power, in attracting others to its "way of thinking" it is quite the contrary.³³ In other words, using both hard and soft power, the EU's advantage lies more in its ability to attract outside actors thanks to its internal value paradigms and institutional scheme. But most importantly this happens using subtlety; rough the non-coercive way employed by the EU.

The *EU's actorship* introduced by Hettne³⁴ is the 'ability to influence the external world' in three dimensions: regioness, presence and actorness. Regioness describes the processes of regionalisation

Tomáš
Rohrbacher
& Martina
Jeníčková

on five levels and the EU is a unique regional bloc which has reached the highest level of “institutional society.” Presence is understood as an ability to influence external subjects e.g. by size, military or economic power and thus create expectations of these subjects. Finally, actorness is the ability to act externally and results of such acts are accepted voluntarily by the other actors. Thus the EU is portrayed as an attractive actor with inspiring unique structure, non-military power and the ability to unintentionally shape other subject’s policies.

All the aforementioned conceptions have a lot in common concerning the EU. They state that the EU has profiled itself as an actor whose power is based on economic and institutional power rather than military power. That would support the thesis that the EU gains external recognition through its attractiveness. According to the current debate, the power of the EU seems to stem from the ability to persuade or to (unintentionally) spread its values and ‘ways of thinking and doing things.’

The final theoretical concept in which the EU plays an important role and which we intend to present here is the concept of *regionalism*. This concept differs from the above mentioned because it does not explicitly work with the reasons for the creation of the specific kind of power and attractiveness of the EU. It rather represents one of the areas (multi-level governance) and levels (regional level – see below), and probably the most important ones, in which the EU functions as a source of inspiration. For this and because there is still some ambiguities surrounding the use of the term regionalism, we seek to first theoretically introduce what is implied by our use of regionalism.

Examining the EU, Kratochvíl suggests distinguishing between two concepts of regionalism –from the point of view of political science (connected with multilevel governance) and regionalism from the point of view of international political economy (as a tendency to create integration blocs).³⁵ Both could be useful for this article though we deploy the latter in order to illustrate the examples of the EU as a source of inspiration to other integration blocs from the position of the most developed regional grouping. The basic starting point of theories of regionalism is a classical model developed by Belassa in the 1960s who developed ‘the term of “economic integration” to refer to the creation of formal co-operation between

states and the progressive movement towards the free trade area, a customs union, a common market, monetary union and finally total economic integration,³⁶ which is sometimes replaced by the term political union. Since the 1980s, international relations (IR) have changed significantly and one of these changes consisted of a rise in the number of regional initiatives or the renewal of existing ones; in the EU this process started with the White Paper and the Single European Act.³⁷ These shifts were reflected by a rethinking of the regionalism concept and have led to the rise of new regionalism. The new regionalism differs from more traditional approaches for three main reasons:

1. the multipolar context of IR,
2. 'the dominant role of hegemonic actors (regionalism from "outside" and "above") in the creation of old regionalism as opposed to the "autonomous" nature of new regionalism (from "within" and "below"), and
3. the comprehensiveness and multidimensional nature of new regionalism as opposed to the narrow and specific focus of the old.'³⁸

New regionalism includes a wider spectrum of actors, and greater influence of non-state actors.³⁹ For this reason the term "regionalisation" (that describes the more spontaneous process of the formation of regions led by different actors, e.g. the private sector) should be distinguished from regionalism (which refers to state-led projects).⁴⁰ Although the role of new actors, such as international organisations, rises the role of states and their active participation in shaping IR remains important. 'Regional integration though describes how states are persuaded to make *voluntary* concessions on sovereignty in order to realize collective goals.'⁴¹ One of the most important conclusions of early new regionalism is that the economic dimension of relations cannot be separated from other dimensions (political, social, cultural etc.) characterised by aspects: 'a) deep economic integration plus political elements; b) multi-level governance; c) devolution within states; d) strong international legal framework; e) cooperation along many dimensions.'⁴²

After years of developing of new regionalism, some authors tried to identify new aspects of this phenomenon and asked if contemporary new regionalism should rather be classified as 'neo' new regionalism because the initiatives of new regionalism (what Van

Langenhove and Costea call second generation) were based on the neo-liberal policies of the Washington Consensus, policies strongly influenced by the US and multilateral economic institutions (e.g. International Monetary Fund).⁴³ As these policies have been mostly abandoned (e.g. in Latin America), the EU, with its socio-economic model, represents an attractive alternative.

In this part we intended to introduce several conceptions which we find crucial for understanding the attractiveness of the EU for external actors. All of them, more or less, implicitly outline various areas in which the EU can be inspiring for others but what we find insufficient is the analysis of how this is achieved – where the sources of this attractiveness stem from. We aspire to answer this question in the following part.

Dimensions of the Appealing Force of the EU

The overview of specific theoretical conceptions should now assist in describing some reasons for EU attractiveness as seen by **exogenous actors**. Attractiveness then can be one of the sources of external Europeanisation, of the EU's external power, e.g. transfer of EU norms or values to non-member states, in this case concerning internal EU mechanisms. In our view, the academic debate lacks deeper focus on these issues and limits itself to merely stating the relevance of the attractiveness and the EU's soft power. Even when factors of the attractiveness are further examined, the "idealistic" approach focused on the magnetism of ideas and values seems prevalent.

Based on the presented concepts portraying the EU as a power of various qualities and the specifics of regionalism, we suggest that the EU functions as a model in two dimensions:

1. in specific issues, methods or processes. We call this **issue dimension** and it includes values, the socio-economic model or the multi-level governance model of the EU and
2. on various levels. In this **level dimension** the EU and its issues are adapted on a local, national, regional or global scale.

The following table shows some concrete examples of these issues which are an important part of the EU's discourse and levels on which they are adapted above all due to the attractiveness of the EU.

TABLE 2. ISSUES AND LEVELS

Case	Issue	Level(s)
African Union	governance	regional
Mercosur	values, governance	regional, national
European Neighbourhood Policy	human rights	national
Genetically modified organisms	environment	global, national (China)
Turkey/Kurds	human rights	local, national

*Tomáš
Rohrbacher
& Martina
Jeníčková*

Issues which are Spread by the EU

The EU functions as an ideal-type or as a model⁴⁴ in various important regards not only intentionally but as well ‘by example-setting and unintended policy transfer.’⁴⁵ This example-setting is further strengthened by the external civilising role of the EU, meaning worldwide activities in supporting peace, human rights and environmental stability.⁴⁶ It should be noted that the EU is not a homogeneous subject and therefore the below described models have to be accepted on a certain level of abstraction and generalisation.⁴⁷ We distinguish two basic branches of thought about the EU as a model that can be identified as follows:

1. the EU as an example for internal governance of particular states, regional groupings and global governance (multi-level governance) or as an example for integration elsewhere;
2. the EU as a value leader, including the EU’s socio-economic model.

The EU’s internal mechanisms are in many respects unique or at least the EU has the longest experience with their usage. The architecture of the European institutions and projects of integration, monetary union and sharing political power both inside and outside the EU serve as an example for other regional groupings. Multi-level governance lay-out with the elements of network interlock across various levels brings possible innovations for local, national regional and global governance. Not only scholars see an inspiration in the EU.⁴⁸ According to official materials published by the African Union Commission, ‘the vision of the African Union is that of an Africa integrated, prosperous and peaceful, an Africa driven by its own citizens, a dynamic force in the global arena.’⁴⁹ The inspiration by the EU, at least in the discourse, is obvious. The

institutions of the AU reveal clear fingerprints of the EU: the legislative body is represented by Pan-African Parliament, the executive body by the Commission (with similar functions as those of the European Commission), judicial power is represented by the African Court of Justice and the structure of committees copies in some respects EU structures. Although there are also other bodies (Assembly, Executive Council) the inspiration in internal setting of this regional group is evident so when it comes to declared values: peace, security, solidarity, human rights protection (although here the similarity probably cannot be simply credited only to the EU).

Also, in the case of Mercosur which is along with the EU considered as an example of deep integration,⁵⁰ the inspiration can be traced. Mercosur was founded in 1991 with the 'desire to create a common market on the model of the European Community'⁵¹ which was already reached at this time.⁵² The inspiration of European values is reinforced.⁵³ Due to the conquista, colonisation and also the persisting influence after gaining independence, the (West-)European culture and values have become an integral part of Latin-American culture, e.g. the principle of democracy and the protection of human rights.⁵⁴ The importance of strengthening democracy was formally expressed in Mercosur and its member countries in 1996 when the democracy clause was adopted by the *Common Parliamentary Commission*.⁵⁵ This clause enables the suspension of a state's membership if it violates democratic principles and institutions. In practice this clause was used in 1998 to help to settle the crisis in Paraguay. This leads us to another parallel between Mercosur and the EU; democracy as a condition for membership of the regional bloc. In case of the EU, Spain and Portugal were admitted to the European Community only after regime change.

Despite the inspiration of the EU, the institutional structure differs in some key points. The integration initiative is based on the intergovernmental principle without supranational institutions.⁵⁶ This is illustrated by the extremely high respect for state sovereignty and nationalist tendencies in the region. But similar to the EU, in 2006 the Parliament of Mercosur was added into the institutional structure as a consultative body with a perspective of strengthening it. Unfortunately, solutions to regional disputes are still weak and there is no permanent court for this purpose (which is also the

consequence of unwillingness to build the bloc on the supranational principle).

Besides the internal application of specific values the EU builds its external image on exporting them abroad. This happens through universal human rights advocacy, humanitarian aid, environmental protection etc. But as Falkner put it, more can be done to bridge the gap between verbal support and concrete political action.⁵⁷ In this case, the attractiveness of the EU's values needs to be supported by recognition and active external policies. One of the particular areas in which the EU confirms its importance and aspires to be a value leader lies in environmental policy. The long-time tradition of this policy (since the 1960s⁵⁸) predestined the EU. Firstly, the EU uses its recognised actorness to push multilateral agreements, such as the Kyoto Protocol on climate change or the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.⁵⁹ Secondly, based on its soft power (including economic power) and attractiveness the EU influences through diffusion the environmental standards not only of its members but of applicants and neighbouring countries as well. The EU's approach to genetically modified organisms (GMO) has an impact on decisions on using this technology in China and India.⁶⁰

In another case of EU values diffusion – the European Neighbourhood Policy – countries involved are in bilateral relations with the EU to realise a 'zone of stability, security and prosperity.'⁶¹ The partnership involves the closest EU neighbouring countries (e.g. Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Morocco, Egypt, Israel and Syria) and cooperation takes place in various areas: politics, security, economics, environment etc. Again the basic values of the EU and their diffusion are subject to this relationship: democracy, human rights, rule of law as well as pro-market measures and economic cooperation. This clearly shows the necessity of shifting the debate about Europeanisation more outside the EU.

Finally, we will mention the socio-economic model of the EU. Although it can look strange to put together values with an economic model, it is relevant. The European social model,⁶² despite certain features, seems not so different from the other welfare state systems; the difference lies in the value paradigm. While the roots of the welfare system are seen in France,⁶³ the EU is labelled 'as a world's Scandinavia'⁶⁴ regarding the social policy regime based on values of freedom, social justice, solidarity and democracy. And, at

*An Attractive
EU?*

the same time, the socio-economic model of the EU is important for its internal social cohesion and quality of democracy.⁶⁵

As an example we can again use Mercosur. After serious crises in Mercosur's strongest economies (Brazil and Argentina) in the first years of the new millennium, and due to persisting social problems and the incapability of neo-liberal policies to solve the situation, both countries abandoned the Washington Consensus and tried to cooperate with a more diverse set of partners including the EU. Moreover, the EU as an important player in multilateral IR, and cooperates with the whole region bilaterally (e.g. EU – Chile, EU – Mexico) and also on the EU-regional blocs (EU-Mercosur or EU-Andean Community) level. The EU is considered a strategic partner of Mercosur, which participates in solving regional problems. For both, this cooperation means support of multilateralism in IR and is part of the solution of the 'need for a more balanced international system in which they will depend less on the United States.'⁶⁶ In addition to such channels of cooperation, interregional summits are organised, such as the EU – Africa or EU – Latin America summit. These summits are not substantial for decision making but do represent 'general transregional relations which could become more institutionalised with time and thus take a more formal interregional form.'⁶⁷

Levels on which these Issues are Spread

After mapping the debate on two major topics which represent European models perceived as attractive outside the EU, we discuss various levels in which the model of governance can be, or, already is being applied. To simplify, we distinguish four basic levels in which this happens: 1. the local level, 2. the national level, 3. the regional level and 4. the global level.

1. As the governance model of the EU is defined as a multi-level governance model, it also includes the local level on which some Union issues can be applied. Casier describes the case of the Kurdish minority in Turkey whose rights have been constrained for many decades.⁶⁸ For them, the EU serves as a model and helpful ally and through the transnational networks they were able to improve their outlooks on equality and thus strengthening democracy and human rights protection in all of Turkey.

2. Also on the national level the inspiration taken from the EU lies in its multi-level setting and network governance which interlinks various actors on various levels (municipal, regional, state level). The EU contributes to the stabilisation of democratic regimes inside, between applicants and elsewhere, including e.g. Mercosur countries.⁶⁹ It is necessary to admit that this works better when membership comes with promises of economic opportunities. As an example we can mention the inclusion of civil society actors into decision-making processes or public-private partnerships. On the other hand, the EU lacks some political channels developed in national states and therefore the inspiration could be reciprocal.
3. There are many factors in today's interconnected globalising world leading to regional cooperation. Integration is perceived as one reaction of states to globalisation and EU member states were probably the first to react this way (the integration started already before globalisation was so widely discussed). Telò suggests that the EU model is not intentionally exported but rather spontaneously adopted by other regional groups.⁷⁰ Of all regional actors the EU seems to have gone the furthest and thus the EU functions as a model of regionalism around the world. The actions are intentional, e.g. supporting arrangements and agreements through which 'the civilian power of the EU supports regional cooperation elsewhere.' The EU tries to persuade other regions to integrate by technical and political support (e.g. Mercosur).⁷¹ With Mercosur, the EU develops a strategic partnership based also on the spreading of values of democracy and human rights.⁷² Unintentionally, the EU works as an example of 'both the importance and the limits of regional parliaments' but also of regional citizenship and regional civil society and identity.⁷³ These are obviously supported from above by the EU and have a strong "top-down" character. The EU also promotes interregional partnerships as part of transnational relations between civil societies.⁷⁴
4. While the EU aspired to be a regional actor,⁷⁵ the situation seems to have changed. After the fall of the iron curtain, cosmopolitanism, which has its roots in Europe, returned (or its

*Tomáš
Rohrbacher
& Martina
Jeníčková*

new version, neo-cosmopolitanism⁷⁶ and in this new constellation the EU can be not only an example for other regional integrations but also as a global governance system. Rifkin⁷⁷ mentions polycentric governance, Castells⁷⁸ proposes network settings, both of which are already employed in the EU and are seen as viable ways of governing in a globalised world. At the same time the EU can act as a source of global bottom-up democratisation because the uniqueness of the EU inheres in its ability to 'coordinate diverse national democracies in a manner which is complementary to a transnational and supranational public sphere'⁷⁹ Telò calls this a "mirror effect" of the EU.⁸⁰ The values of social justice (as noted above), solidarity and democracy can be used to democratize global governance although their acceptance can't be expected to be really global (more likely in Latin America than in USA etc.). But the more the EU tries to appear like a superstate in the making, the less appealing it is for the actors abroad.⁸¹

Despite the possibilities of applying of the EU internal mechanisms on different levels of governance, it is obvious that the EU still has to improve itself. Apart from the institutions' lack of legitimacy; we should mention the need for higher accountability, a stronger public sphere and civil society on the European level. Reality often differs from words and thus 'the internal democratic governance of the EU needs to be better translated into consistent policies.'⁸²

Sources of the Appealing Force of the EU

After mapping some issues which are typical for the EU and reflect its internal governance and value paradigms and are therefore transmitted to other parts of the world, we should be able to state some reasons for this phenomenon. Some of them are instrumental, others based on ideas and values.

Firstly, the EU was able to prevent conflict and stimulate and strengthen democratic regimes in former authoritarian countries and was able to secure internal peace within a growing number of countries while securing economic stability in the post-war period.⁸³ The EU thus works as a good example and its appealing power

stems from its own experience of two cruel wars in the 20th century and the ability to bridge this experience and create a successful socio-economic model.⁸⁴ Secondly, the EU simultaneously works as an engine of a global multilateral system, because it is a novel type of international actor – ‘its model of power is innovative in terms of legitimacy and effectiveness.’^{85, 86} Whether this power is civilian, normative or soft, the European political culture is based on a refusal and criticism of war and participates in the creation of multilateral institutions.

Thirdly, the internal democratisation processes in new countries, such as the formation of civil society, public spheres and political parties are an important part of the European integration experience. The EU enables the participation of citizens on various levels of its governance system and strengthens the role of civil society.⁸⁷ This participation produces legitimacy within the EU and thus supports the civilian power of the EU.⁸⁸ Fourthly, Europeanisation can be understood as an alternative to Westernisation (Americanisation) or neoliberal globalisation which has been strongly influenced by the US.⁸⁹ The European social model and the European welfare state are seen as alternatives to the American liberal economic model.⁹⁰ Also, the external policy with an accent on democracy and human rights based on soft power rather than military power seem to be well perceived. To sum up, the EU’s value paradigm – cosmopolitan values, global consciousness and the ‘commitment to defending mankind’s common interests’⁹¹ – represent the unique character of the Union. However in all of these aspects the EU’s attractiveness can be rather an unintended consequence.

But there is always the risk that the attractiveness of the EU is overestimated or seen too idealistically. Regionalism or multi-level governance can be perceived as attractive ways of governing and the inspiration by the EU can be unintended and the similarity in some cases accidental. Moreover, from the instrumental point of view it seems that this attractiveness is not based on the governance mechanisms (multi-level governance) or specific values but rather on material advantages coming with being part of the West or Europe (symbolised by the EU) or which can lead to an imitation of the successful European economy. The EU has a lot to offer: trade and association agreements, aid and diplomatic recognition.⁹² But in the current debate the instrumental approach seems to be

used to a lesser degree although the EU is also attractive for what it can materially offer: financial resources, business opportunities, security agreements etc. At the same time, not only does the EU foster its legitimacy through various campaigns with internal scope but its attractiveness is also created with the help of material or financial resources and supported through campaigns from above. So the EU combines hard economic power with soft power which lends more effectiveness to its external policies.⁹³ It is obvious that these sources of attractiveness can be camouflaged. For example, when a government needs to execute certain policies these can be used as arguments to persuade the public and thus get legitimacy for political steps undertaken which does not mean that values are irrelevant.

There are also reasons why the EU is unattractive for some states (e.g. Russia, being a member of the Council of Europe and Belarus, which is part of the European Neighbourhood Policy). Like the EU, Russia as a former great power represents a gravity centre on its own.⁹⁴ Therefore, for Russia, the EU is recognised but not attractive, as these two gravity centres compete in the same area but with different means. The consequence is that in the area of Eastern Europe, the Balkans and the Caucasus both the EU and Russia seem to be recognised and attractive actors, but in different ways and ratios.

To conclude this part, if we look at the consequences of the reasons for attractiveness, it seems clear that actors outside the EU perceiving it as an attractive actor want to:

1. be members;
2. not become members but belong to Europe (e.g. Council of Europe, common market, free trade zone) in order to be “in the club” and also to contribute to the European image. The EU’s attractiveness can be used as political marketing of elites outside the EU;
3. imitate the governance models of the EU (democratic gravity centre, socio-economic model) not necessarily because these systems work but because of the EU’s reputation (e.g. African Union) and concrete material benefits.

It is difficult to determine whether and when the instrumental or idealistic motives prevail concerning the EU’s attractiveness. It is likely that the combination of both causes the EU to have many followers on the European continent but also elsewhere; and the

overview of the current debate shows the EU has a lot to offer in both cases.

CONCLUSION

In this article we introduced one type of EU actorness and presented the EU as an attractive actor in the sense that it functions as a model for external actors even without the intentional use of military or economic power. The EU is rather labelled as normative, civilian or soft power, creating a gravity centre through its actorship and being the most important inspiration for new regionalism. Based on these theoretical concepts and some concrete examples we suggest various reasons for the EU's attractiveness. These can be divided into two basic groups: ideal (values) and instrumental (material benefits). The ideal ones present the EU as a "good example" – concerning democracy, human rights protection, violent conflicts prevention, environmental responsibility, global consciousness (etc.) – and thus the EU functions as an important actor for global agenda setting. In the case of instrumental reasons, the European socio-economic model and good relations with the EU are perceived as a source of material advantages. All these reasons cause that the EU has many successors in various issues and on various levels and the EU's internal value paradigm, governance mechanisms and discourse spread around the world. We have mentioned various issues including governance models and typical European values which are being accepted and applied on different levels: local, national, regional and global. We tried to highlight the EU's role in new regionalism, especially in the Mercosur, where the inspiration by the EU seems to be both evident and voluntary as well as in the case of the African Union where the institutional similarity to the EU is even higher. Despite these examples, the aim of this theoretical text mapping the current debate about EU attractiveness is primarily to serve as a methodological background for further research, and needs to be complemented by deeper empirical case studies which would focus on particular areas of the EU's attractiveness and its reasons.

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Tomáš
Rohrbacher
& Martina
Jeníčková

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