

Mars and Venus in Action? The US and EU's foreign relations strategies in academic discourse

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Abstract. This article reviews the existing academic literature that compares and explains the differences between the US and the EU's external actions. An analytical matrix is devised to group publications by level of analysis (micro-, mid-, and macro) and by theme of comparison criteria. The key findings are that in the macro level of analysis, authors tend to compare the role actors have in international relations before claiming either that the EU is a different kind of power due to its peculiar historical experience, or that the EU is weak due to its complicated structure and lack of military capacities. Furthermore, authors conducting their analyses at the micro level tend to find more similarities between the EU and the US's external actions than those working at the macro level. The article concludes by making a point in favour of further comparisons as an essential tool to better understand the EU and other actors in international relations.

Keywords: EU, US, actorness, regionalism, security studies, democratization studies

Introduction

The European Union (EU) often pictures itself as different (i.e., more normative, civilian, or, generally more benign) than other traditional powers, especially in its relations with developing countries. This self-assessment is related to the Normative Power Europe (NPE) concept coined by Manners (2002). According to Manners, "Not only [was] the EU constructed on a normative basis, but importantly this predisposes it to act in a normative way in world politics" (2002, p. 252). As Diez observes (2005, p. 621), this vision of EU normativity and exceptionality, is based on its supposed differences from a specific nation that had traditionally wielded hard power: the US.

Authors from a variety of subfields in international relations (IR) ranging from regionalism (Grugel, 2004; Escribano, 2007; Hettne and Ponjaert, 2014) to security studies (Cox, 2003; Kagan, 2002) observe similar differences between the EU and the US. Some claim that these actors not only prefer different models of cooperation with other countries and regions, but also represent

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completely different approaches in their logic of interaction in the international system. Sometimes the EU's model of cooperation with other countries and regions is seen as more ethical or just (Escribano, 2007; Grugel, 2004; Hettne and Ponjaert, 2014). Yet, various studies refute claims regarding the EU's normativity (Tocci, 2008; Hamilton, 2008; Diez, 2005), or observe that the EU and the US behave in a somewhat similar manner across various cases (Durac and Cavatorta, 2009; Huber, 2017).

Therefore, while the EU is indeed a unique actor—or even an “unidentified political object” according to Jacques Delors (1985)—it is less clear how this characteristic difference from other actors is reflected in the EU's foreign policies, especially when it is compared to more traditional actors. Although comparison best highlights exceptionality, there are still doubts regarding whether it is fair to compare the EU with other states (Wright, 2011).

Recent tensions among Western allies following the election of the new the US administration renewed discussions regarding the differences between the *modus operandi* of the EU and the US. Kupchan claims, “During previous rifts, they [the EU and the US] parted company over means ... This is the first time they are parting company over ends” (Johnson et al., 2018). The re-emerging debate presents an excellent opportunity to look at how claims about the EU's exceptionality, in comparison to the US's, were being tackled in academia.

The purpose of this article is to review literature¹ that compares the EU and US's external actions and their foreign policy goals and instruments, to shed light on what I argue became a subfield in various IR disciplines. This review is concerned with three key lines of exploration: 1) How can we compare the EU's foreign policies to those of the traditional actor—a state—in IR? 2) When comparisons are made between the EU and traditional actors, what differences and similarities do we find and how do we explain them? 3) What do existing comparisons say about the EU as an actor in IR?

These questions structure this article. The first part of the article is dedicated to an overview of strategies authors use to address challenges related to the EU not being a traditional actor, resulting in comparison problems. In the second part, I examine comparative works, arranging literature thematically and by level of analysis. Existing literature is structured in four broad groups, each group is labelled according to the main topic of inquiry: regionalists, Atlanticists, security studies, and democratization studies. While presenting each group, I discuss differences and similarities identified by the authors and the arguments they use to explain them. This article concludes by claiming that comparing the EU to traditional actors is not only possible, but very necessary and fruitful for EU studies and also for other sub-fields of IR. Furthermore, while academic discussions show that on many occasions the EU acts similarly to traditional actors, it also exhibits exceptional characteristics. Finally, the article concludes with suggestions for further research.

¹ Due to the object of this inquiry—foreign policy—the selection of articles was restricted to the field of political science. The primary criterion for the selection of articles and books was topic: comparisons of the EU and the US's external actions (in different spheres, but usually towards developing countries). While this comparison was a central goal for the majority of articles, in some cases it was more implicit, often with a purpose to explain the exceptionality of the EU, or (in the case of security-related literature) to understand a so-called “trans-Atlantic rift”. This article presents a sample of over 60 publications, published from the mid-1990s to 2017.

1. Comparing Apples and Oranges: Considering comparability

Before exploring relevant literature, I would like to address the issue of comparability as the EU is not a state and foreign policymaking is primarily in the hands of its member states. Given this, whether the EU can be considered an actor in IR at all is questionable.

Sjöstedt set forth the first concepts related to attempts to define the EU's (the European Economic Communities until 1993 (EEC)) role as an actor – the actorness.

He defined an actorness as two characteristics necessary for an entity to be considered an actor: "It must display a minimal degree of both internal cohesion and separateness from its internal environment" (Drieskens, 2017, p. 1536). The more recent, and by far the most popular, approaches of Bretherton and Vogler (1999, 2006) and Jupille and Caporaso (1998) argue for considering also the external constraints and opportunities posed by the EU's structural environment (Klose 2018) and expand the number of characteristics necessary for an entity to be considered an actor.

The concept of an actorness itself has been criticized for its lack of clarity and for being too attached to the case of the EU; many authors mix and match different elements of popular definitions of an actorness and apply them to various aspects of the EU's external governance (Drieskens, 2017). Despite criticisms, actorness can still be considered a helpful heuristic device for studying relevant elements of the EU's capacity to act (Drieskens, 2017, p.1537-1538). Another, somewhat less strict concept used to define the EU as an actor in IR, is presence. This approach gives priority to being over acting, and holds that the EU has an international impact because it is different from state actors (Drieskens, 2017, p. 1541). The separation of presence from actorness is a prominent feature of this approach (Hoffman and Nieman, 2018). Allen and Smith (1990) argue that although the EC could not fulfil the criteria to be considered an actor, it has significant presence in the international system. The argument of presence is strongly related to the NPE concept as, according to Manners, "The most important factor shaping the international role of the EU is not what it does or what it says, but what it is" (Manners, 2002, p. 252).

To recapitulate, there are different ways to define an actor in IR and, as a consequence, to justify its comparability with other actors. Paradoxically, a majority of works analysed in this article do not refer to the question of comparability at all, they merely proceed to compare official US and EU documents or specific policies (see Berenskoetter 2005; Bridoux and Kurki, 2015; Coffman, Wites and Youngs, 2009; del Biondo, 2015, 2016; Durac and Cavatorta 2009a, b; Huber, 2008, 2017; Lavenex et al, 2017; Omelicheva, 2015; Zyla, 2015). This lack of concern can be attributed to the object of study: the majority of publications following this strategy focus on democratization policies or trade-related issues (where it is easier to discuss EU-level decisions), or analyse official EU-level documents.

The second most common strategy is observed predominantly in, though not limited to, literature dedicated to the analysis of the so-called transatlantic rift (see Balibar, 2003; Buzan and Gonzalez Velez, 2005; Cox 2003; Heiduk, 2011; Kagan, 2002). Given that the majority of publications in this second group focus on disagreements between Europeans and Americans after the Iraq war, they tend to use the concepts of Europe, Europeans, and European countries as synonyms. So-called Europe is seen as a unitary actor with specific shared characteristics reflected in its foreign policy. This view is illustrated by Cox, who claims that "the world is fast changing not because of

terrorism ... but because two of its key players—the United States and Europe—are increasingly diverging on how to deal with these key security problems” (Cox, 2003, p. 529). Meanwhile, the EU has become a part of this wider and less defined Europe.

Significantly fewer works belonging to the sample refer to existing definitions of actorness (Bretherton and Vogler, 2006; Caporaso and Jupille, 1998) to justify the comparison (Börzel et al. 2015a, 2015b; Brattberg and Rinhard 2012; Murau and Spandler, 2016; Powel, 2009). In various cases, these authors also apply the concept of actorness to other actors analysed. Brattberg and Rhinard (2012) compare the actorness of the US and the EU as both of are complex, multilevel systems. Meanwhile, in her study of democratization efforts, Huber (2015) compares the actorness of the EU, the US, and Turkey, and concludes that although the EU lacks some aspects of actorness in foreign policy, it is comparable to other states in the field of democracy promotion. In their comparison of the EU, Turkey, Russia and the US’s reactions to so-called “arabellions” in North Africa, Börzel and colleagues (2015 a, b) employ a modified definition of actorness by Jupille and Caporaso (1998). Finally, Murau and Spandler (2016) analyse the EU, the US, and ASEAN’s actorness in IMF reform negotiations within the G20 framework and observe an unexpectedly high degree actorness exhibited by the EU.

The concept of presence is common in the works of regionalists (Hettne and Ponjaert, 2014; Telo, 2014), who emphasize the EU’s economic size and strength as its primary source of power. Finally, some authors base the comparison between the EU and the US on specific shared characteristics. For example, Fabbri and Sicurelli (2008) maintain that the EU and the US are comparable as they both are compound democracies. Lavenex and colleagues (2017) refer to both the EU and the US as “global regulators,” and Zielonka (2011) references them as “kind of empires.”

To conclude, despite being a somewhat non-traditional actor in IR, and despite debates regarding the EU’s actorness, in practice, the EU is compared to states. While concepts like presence or actorness often help to establish a common ground for comparison, certain characteristics (including the size of its economy, EU-level policy-making procedures in certain fields, and perceptions of the EU as a part of a broader concept of Europe) allow authors to proceed with the comparison between the foreign policy of the EU and other states without recurring to these concepts.

2. Analytical matrix of comparative literature

To understand how different authors perceive similarities and differences between the US and the EU’s external actions, I arranged the literature into four groups according to emerging themes and level of analysis: the regionalists, the Atlanticists, security studies and democratization studies.

Three different levels of analysis are distinguished. Macro level works consider the place of the EU and the US within the international system; mid-level literature deals with regional cooperation, relations with specific geographical regions, or broad sectorial strategies in various countries; and micro-level literature analyses and compares cases with a single country and sector. Table 1 illustrates the analytical matrix.

While the first two groups focus mostly on the macro- or mid-level analysis by analysing the most general features of the EU and the US as international actors, the third and fourth groups focus on mid- and micro-levels are comprised mostly of country or sector case studies. Themat-

cally, the first group of literature, written by the regionalists, includes works featuring different regionalism models promoted by the EU and the US. The second group of literature, authored by the Atlanticists, is comprised of works concerned with the current and future transatlantic relations. The works in the third group, security studies, compare security strategies, and the literature in the fourth group, democratization studies, compares the EU and the US's democratization efforts.

Table 1: Analytical matrix of comparative literature groups

Group	Macro	Mid	Micro
Regionalists <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyse the regional orders promoted by the EU and US. Analyse the ways that the EU and US export their rules. Try to define the EU's role in the regionalist processes. Majority of works – macro level. Mid-level works concentrated on NAFTA and EU comparison. Few micro-level studies, focusing on precise cases of EU and US's interaction with emerging economies or comparison of EU and US's actorness in multilateral negotiations. 	+ (majority)	+ (NAFTA and EU comparisons)	+
Atlanticists <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyse differences in security cultures and the state of Transatlantic relations, their works are strongly influenced by Kagan's (2003) claim about different security cultures in the US and Europe. Analyse different aspects of the EU and US's foreign policy through the lenses of realism and often refer rather to „Europe“ as a unitary. Majority of works – broad macro level studies. 	+		
Democratization studies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyse how differences (both observed by the Regionalists and the Atlanticists) are reflected in the praxis of democracy promotion (in some cases – development aid or relief policies). Majority of works – country level case studies. 		+	+ (majority)
Security studies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyse if/how the claims made by the Atlanticists are reflected in security documents/praxis. Majority of works – micro level analysis of documents or security policies in different contexts. 			+

While this proposed classification is not flawless, not all of the authors' works fit neatly into a group, it relates the main interrogations behind existing comparisons of the EU and the US's foreign policies in different fields and generates new observations regarding the role of the EU as an actor in IR.

2.1. “The Regionalists”: Representatives of different world orders

2.1.1. Comparing NAFTA and EU as models of integration

The end of the Cold War and accelerating different regional integration processes stimulated discussions about the creation of a new world order. At the time, the EU and the US were compared as promoters of integration processes: In North America, the North American Free

Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was established and in Eastern and Central Europe the Eastern enlargement was underway (Gamble and Payne, 1996; Bruszt and McDermott, 2011; Bruszt and Greskovitz, 2009).

One line of investigation on this topic attempts to conceptualise regional orders formed around different regional powers. Gamble and Payne (1996) employ an international political economy perspective and a world order approach to distinguish three modes of regional block formation: American, European, and Asian. They base their ideal types in three regional organisations: NAFTA, the EU, and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). The precise differences between regional models are not clearly defined. Nevertheless, the authors state, "Although regionalist projects have certain assumptions in common ... they are also quite different from one another. This diversity reflects the different historical structures which exist within each region, as well as the uneven impact of globalisation" (Gamble and Payne, 1996, p. 253). This work forged a path towards defining and explaining differences among these regional formations.

The mid-level analysis works in this group focus mostly on economic integration and rule transfer, and their consequences within NAFTA and the EU. Bruszt and Greskovits (2009) analyse how differences in capitalism that emerged in peripheral regions relate to interactions with neighbouring hegemonies. The authors attempt to explain how different economic and regulatory integration modes affect political and economic regimes in third-wave democracies. They observe that the EU's policies towards potential members-states in the East helped to strengthen domestic demand for policy change and inclusion. Bruszt and Greskovits observe, that "while the EU empowers the diverse public and private actors, not simply via resources but particularly by enhancing their political and functional participation in institution building efforts, the emphasis on economic incentives in NAFTA provide weak bottom up pressure for altering the properties of regulations and of the regulative state" (Bruszt and Greskovits, pp. 34-42).

Similarly, Bruszt and McDermott (2011, 2014, 2016) compare NAFTA and the EU in order to understand how international integration regimes affect the formation of national regulatory institutions in developing economies. These authors observe that the US is less willing to strengthen political integration and prefers to limit itself with economic cooperation under its own rules. Meanwhile, the EU pays more attention to deeply diffusing its standards and is consciously trying to diminish existing asymmetries between current and potential member states. Risse (2015) and Sbragia (2007) observed similar trends.

Analyses of both mid- and macro-level approaches in the literature indicate differences between regional integration models promoted by the US and the EU. The authors belonging to the first group claim that the model proposed by the EU is: (a) significantly different from the US's, both in its principles and in its implementation; and (b) that the model preferred by the EU was deeper and more transformative.

Furthermore, they relate differences in how the EU and the US view trade (free trade vs. strategic trade) and ideas behind integration mechanisms (technical approach, related with precise, most often economic questions vs. ideas-based approach with an emphasis on socialization and the creation of joint mechanisms of managing integration).

Finally, the authors compare NAFTA and the EU as examples of different integration processes. As a consequence, the peculiarities of the EU integration model, in that it transforms neighbour-

ing countries into member states, often explain why the EU's model is so different. Nevertheless, these studies led to a broader comparison of the EU and the US's external governance models.

2.1.2. Qualitatively different model of EU cooperation?

As the EU integration process gained depth and intensity, regionalists shifted their attention towards the interrelations between regional hegemons (including the EU and the US) and other states. In their analysis of the EU and US from a regionalist perspective, Hettne and Ponjaert (2014) conclude that they represent two different world orders: Pax Americana, marked by unilateralism, dominance, and asymmetrical relations; and Pax Europea, based in multilateralism, partnership, and dialogue. The authors second the Gamble and Payne's main arguments and explain the difference in models through historical experiences. They note that, at the moment, both sides of the Atlantic Ocean represent two different world orders (Grugel, 2004; Escribano, 2007).

Common among these authors is recognition of the EU as an independent regional actor, capable of proposing different cooperation and integration stimuli and models that are not limited to the possibility of membership. They claim that the principles of the EU's international governance are rooted in its integration process, and this is the crucial difference between the experiences of the EU and the US.

Telo (2007, 2014) observes that unlike the US, the EU promotes regional cooperation and fosters regionalisation processes by helping to create regional organisations. Meanwhile, the US prefers to forge bilateral agreements directly with other countries. In assessing the EU and the US's relations with Latin American countries, Escribano (2007) claims that the EU not only qualitatively differs from other actors in international relations, but also proposes an alternative model for organising the international community in the face of globalisation (Escribano, 2007, p. 19). Many authors explain the EU's so-called exceptionalism by claiming that the EU's history of integration and the principles of its foundation affect its external policy.

Somehow different from the rest of the group, nevertheless very interesting, are two recent mid-micro level studies dedicated to the global rules expansion and actorhood of the EU and the US. The first is a special edition of the *European Foreign Affairs Review* dedicated to the analysis of the EU and the US's attempts at norm transfer with emerging economies (Lavenex et al., 2017). Meanwhile, the other study compares the actorhood of the EU, the ASEAN, and the US in the IMF's reform negotiations within the G20 framework (Murau and Spandler, 2016). While both studies have different goals, they both emphasize the similarities between compared actors, in this manner they distinguish themselves from the rest of the work in the group.

To summarise, the turn of the century marked a shift from the analysis of EU's integration processes (or integration as a tool of its foreign policy) to that of its relations with other countries and regions. Regionalists have become more enthusiastic about the fundamental differences between the integration models and world orders created by the US and the EU; they highlight examples aligning the US with unilateralism and the EU with multilateralism intertwined with inter-regionalism. Furthermore, in some cases, sometimes following the logic of the NPE concept, the EU's cooperation model is seen as more normative and democratic than that of the US. Therefore, while works before the aforementioned shift, see the EU as unique merely due to its structure in that it was born and grew due to regional integration processes, later works see

the EU positively, as not only as unique entity but also as an advocate of an alternative mode of integration and regional cooperation.

Although it is not always expressed, it often seems that in comparison to the US, the EU represents a less selfish and more normative cooperation model. Nevertheless, at the same time, the many authors participating in the NPE debate (Diez, 2005, Hyde Price, 2006; Martin-Maze, 2015; Tocci, 2008) espouse a more critical than positive view of the EU. Studies (Youngs 2004; Barbé and Johansson-Nogués, 2008) show contradictions between the goals and instruments in the EU's foreign policy, especially in its neighbourhood, and a deep interrelation and complementarity between norms and interests in general. Furthermore, various authors observe that the US's foreign policy is not less value-driven than the EU's (Diez, 2005; Hamilton, 2008).

Finally, regionalists are more interested in the economy and values. They are less interested in power, especially military power, and power asymmetries between the EU and US and other players in the international system. The question of power, as a preponderance of military and economic means—and, as an extension, of weakness—is far more interesting to the scholars in the second group, the Atlanticists.

2.2. “The Atlanticists”: Representatives of different planets

The events of September 11, 2001 and the US's subsequent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq triggered what can be considered a renaissance in analyses of the US and EU's relations and their foreign policies. The unilateralism of George W. Bush's administration and the resistance of some Western European countries like France and Germany to support the military operation in Iraq, prompted interest in the future of transatlantic relations. One of the most famous works discussing the different views of Europeans and Americans towards the international system, is Robert Kagan's *Of Paradise and Power* (2003). The author states, “On major strategic and international questions today, Americans are from Mars and Europeans are from Venus: they agree on little and understand one another less and less” (2003, p. 3). Kagan's central assertion is that the EU and the US, due to differences in their historical circumstances and material resources, not only act differently in the international system, but also approach the international system completely differently. Kagan's work and this statement have become a framework for academic discussions of international relations and foreign policy analysis.

According to Kagan, differences in American and European approaches to security can be attributed to the resources they have and are willing to use to achieve their goals. Americans solve problems using all of the resources available to them, including military resources, while Europeans give priority to instruments that brought prosperity after 1945: negotiations, trade, and multilateralism. Kagan's core ideas are based on a realist perspective and emphasize the notion of power. In his article, *Power and Weakness*, (2002) he argues that unlike the US, Europe deliberately chose to abandon Hobbesian politics; as a consequence, the EU's foreign policy instruments are soft “weapons of the weak”. Kagan argues that the main source of tensions between the two sides of the Atlantic lies in Europeans not wanting to admit that their post-war economic miracle was supported by the US, which, was the *deus ex machine* that led to world order and guaranteed European security (Kagan, 2003, pp. 58-59).

Kagan's ideas were not new, but, perhaps due to very appropriate timing, his arguments were widely discussed in the fields of international relations, foreign policy analysis, and security studies.

The majority of authors concurring with Kagan's are concerned with transatlantic partnership and with describing foreign policy differences seen on either side of the Atlantic. In some cases they seek to explain these differences and propose guidelines for transatlantic cooperation (Andrews 2005; Buzan and Gonzalez Velez, 2005; Cox 2012; Parsi, 2006; Pond, 2004). Most of these authors agree with Kagan's main ideas about the differences between the US and the EU. Nevertheless, many of them are unclear in communicating whether they are analysing the objectives, measures or specific instruments used by both powers (Berenskoetter, 2005). Interestingly, many authors analysing the EU and US "strategic culture" prefer discourse or historical analysis to a thorough examination of the specific actions of each actor and strategic documents.

Seeking to explain differences between the EU and the US's strategic cultures, many scholars mention the EU and the US's different historical experiences and the EU's unique institutional setting. Zielonka summarizes this argument well, "Europe's polycentric system of governance is more suited to creating institutional structures and setting up the rules of legitimate behaviour than to swift and bold power projection abroad ... the EU's system of governance is conducive to the type of foreign policy advocated by Hugo Grotius or Immanuel Kant, but ill-matched to the type of policies advocated by Thomas Hobbes or Niccolo Machiavelli." (2011, p. 297).

Nevertheless, the realist group ignores most types of power assets such as economic power and asserts that the primary factor for the EU and the US's different security cultures and foreign policies is their differing military capabilities (Balibar, 2003). While realists' emphasis on military power is in general typical, this emphasis could be related to the fact that most of the realists' works rely on the analyses of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars and their aftermath.

While regionalists tend to favour the EU, realists often seemed to side with the US, which they depict as more capable of properly responding to the contemporary security challenges like terrorism or rogue states. They portray Europeans, in turn, as attempting to avoid these challenges. Often, these arguments turn into an open critique of so-called anachronistic Europeans who are actively avoiding real-world commitments.

Asmus and Pollack (2002), Cavatorta and Durac, (2011), Kissinger, Summers, and Kupchan (2004) propose more nuanced views of the differences between the EU and the US's security cultures. This group of scholars argue that Kagan's arguments are simplistic. Though they agree that there are some fundamental differences between the EU and the US due to differing historical experiences power resources, they point out that most of the differences between the two powers are reflected in tactics more than strategy, and are related to rather specific cases of Iraq and Afghanistan.

Concluding, the events that marked international politics at the beginning of the 21st century sparked a security-lens analysis of EU and US relations. Kagan and others' main proposes that the EU and the US view security and international relations in fundamentally different ways. Authors worry about what these differences mean for the international system, primarily regarding security. Most authors consider the US and the EU as actors in international relations solely through the lenses of realism; they perceive power mainly as military power and pay less attention to other types of power such as structural power. Most of the works analysed in this paper are from the field

of international relations, and the analysis conducted therein is macro-level analysis, dealing with the US and the EU's responses to international political events and their roles in the international system. His works, tackling differences between the EU and the US, have been cited more than 4,000 times in Google Scholar, JSTOR digital library and Scopus reference database.

Insights about the differences of EU and US foreign policy have become a starting point for micro-level empirical research looking at US and EU's actions in different regions or issues in the same thematic areas (e.g., security policies) (Berenskoetter, 2005; Garlicki, 2014; Rees, 2011; Zyla, 2015).

2.3. Into the details: Security studies

The Mars and Venus narrative and the changing international security situation framed further analyses of the EU and US's security strategies. For example, Daalder (2001, p. 553) argues that fundamental differences between the two actors contribute to a divergent definition of threat. According to him, the US puts an emphasis on new security threats like emerging terrorist groups, or the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The EU, in turn, is focused on global challenges such as climate change, migration, poverty, and human trafficking.

Garlicki (2014) draws similar conclusions in his comparison of the US and the EU's security approaches. Garlicki writes, "since the end of the Cold War, there have been two different approaches to security in transatlantic relations: the American one and the European one. The first one has been focusing more on military issues, while the latter one on civil aspects of security." Furthermore, he points to an EU preference for multilateralism and an US preference for unilateralism. However, his work, like the works preceding it, focuses on the cases of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and is not concerned with an analysis of relevant security documents. Nevertheless, various authors undertake the task of comparing the actual security strategies of both powers. In this article, this particular school of work is referred to as the security studies group.

Berenskoetter (2005) compares the US and the EU security strategies during George W. Bush's presidential term. Berenskoetter addresses the shortcomings of more general-level works as he observes a lack of clarity regarding what was compared: objectives or strategies to achieve objectives. In examining the EU and the US's security strategy documents Berenskoetter distinguishes between their: (a) realm of responsibilities, (b) assessment of threats, and (c) the tasks and instruments identified as necessary for addressing threats.

Berenskoetter asserts that semantically the two strategies are very similar in that they have similar goals and obligations (e.g., development of democracy, defence of human rights,). On the other hand, he notices differences, both confirming and denying the Kagan's "Mars and Venus" argument. Berenskoetter claims, "At first glance, the major fault lines fit familiar stereotypes: here, the USA, the self-appointed global defender of the liberal ideal, with a strong tendency towards unilateralism and forward-leaning militarism; there, the EU, primarily concerned with the process of European integration, favouring multilateralism and non-military tools" (2005, p. 88).

On the other hand, the author also notices that contrary to expectations, the US's security strategy is far less realistic and more normative than the EU's security strategy, which, Berenskoetter states, relies more on non-utopian ideas about the ideal world order (Berenskoetter, 2015,

p. 89). Besides, Berenskoetter does not find any differences in the threat perceptions of the two actors. While the Mars versus Venus argument holds that the United States is more interested in hard threats—like terrorism or aggressive states—and the EU is more concerned with soft threats, the definition of threat in their respective strategies is mostly the same.

Benjamin Zyla (2015) compares the US and the EU's security strategies during the Obama presidency, seeking to understand the security culture of both actors. He notes that while the US and the EU share beliefs and ideals about goals, prefer common instruments in international security policy, and favoured the same forms of international cooperation, they have completely different approaches to the structure of the international system, the role of international organisations, and how to respond to emerging threats. The US sees itself primarily as a world hegemon and pursues this position, while the EU sees the international system as consisting of sovereign, interconnected states, whose cooperation is needed both to deepen trade and to open borders.

Oliverio (2008) compares the attitude of the US and the EU towards international and domestic terrorism, he argues that Europeans respond to the threat of terrorism very differently than the US. Oliverio (2008) writes that after the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, Americans began to see the fight against terrorism as a moral crusade, and the media contributed to existing public perceptions of Iraq as a terrorist state. The EU, says Oliverio, which has a longer experience of tackling terrorism (and has a large and often poorly integrated Muslim community), tends to regard terrorism as a crime. The EU is not prone to launching preventive strikes or pursuing military intervention in response to terrorism, relying instead on intelligence and targeted actions.

Most of the authors from security studies group compare the EU and the US's documents and discourse. Although these scholars discuss how the EU and the US perceive their foreign policy and security issues, they do not analyse how both actors implement their strategies. In an attempt to do analyse implementation of strategies, Heiduk (2011) compares the US and the EU's approaches to strengthening the Afghani police. Departing from the Mars and Venus argument, he analyses whether Europeans are more likely to train democratic, civilian Afghani police, while Americans aim to transform the police force into an auxiliary military force for the Afghan army. His findings are contradictory, "These differences between the strategic cultures of Europe and the US - between Mars and Venus - seemed to have been most apparent on a macro-level concerning the 'no' of most EU member states to the Iraq invasion in 2003. They also seem to become distinct on the micro-level, that is when comparing EU and US approaches to police assistance in Afghanistan" (2011, p.363). Heiduk observes that both powers contributed equally to the militarization of the local police.

To conclude, a micro-level analysis of discourse and behaviour shows a more nuanced picture of differences between the EU and the US compared to macro or mid-level works. The majority of authors from the security studies group are interested in testing whether the Mars and Venus argument is reflected in the EU and the US's strategic documents and actions. While some of the scholar's arguments have been confirmed (e.g., the US's preference for unilateralism), others—such as the two powers holding differing definitions of threat or the EU's aversion to militarization—have been refuted. The authors in this group are not interested in the sources of differences; their primary goal is to test macro-level constructions.

2.4. Into the details: democratization studies

As both the EU and the US are the most prominent development aid donors and promoters of democracy, democratization presents another field in which comparisons of their policies proliferate. Del Biondo (2016, p. 11) states that the “EU and the United States are very different foreign policy actors, and this is also reflected in their development policies.” Various authors in democratization studies test macro-level theories regarding these development policy differences, thus the majority of these works are micro-level analyses of the strategies, instruments, and goals the US and the EU use to promote democracy and human rights in specific countries or regions. The Middle East and North Africa get most of the spotlight, reflecting an increased interest in these regions and growing links between security, democratization, and development aid in the twenty-first century.

One of the main goals of the democratization studies authors is to identify a guiding influence—such as security interests or defence of values perceived as universal—on the actions of both actors. One group of authors argues that the US is more proactive, or even aggressive, than the EU in defending and promoting democratization and human rights, by actively advocating its policies and building on bottom-up strategies. In turn, these scholars assert the EU frequently cooperates with undemocratic governments; they view the EU as more pragmatic, suggest the EU prefers stability to radical change (Huber, 2008; Khana, 2004), and argue that the EU favours cooperation over conflict (Stahn and van Hüllen, 2007). Another sub-group of democratization studies’ authors, on the other hand, emphasizes that the US’s support is more politicised and instrumental to its strategic objectives. Furthermore, due to processes within the EU, the EU’s support is much less dependent on political processes within the Union (Del Biondo, 2016), and its democratization strategies are much more holistic and robust than those of the US (Holden, 2009; Börzel et al., 2015).

The second discussion within this group is centred on the kind of changes the US and the EU are promoting. Some authors claim that the US is more likely to seek the radical transformation of a given regime and provide support to civil society rather than support undemocratic states; these authors argue that the EU is more focused on long-term state-building and social development processes even in non-democratic states than the US (Bridoux and Kurki, 2014; Kopstein, 2006). This argument, however, does not always hold. Durac and Cavatorta (2006, p. 7) observe that in the case of the US’s Middle East Partnership Initiative, despite declared objectives, over 70 per cent of US aid was devoted to programs that directly reinforced Arab state agencies or government training and only 18 per cent of all funds went to non-governmental organisations.

Nevertheless, other democratization studies’ authors argue that there are more similarities than differences between the US and the EU, taking into account their goals and their strategies. According to Cavatorta (2009), when analysing the US and the EU’s objectives and instruments in North Africa, it is clear that these actors are more similar than different. He writes that the images of the EU as a good cop and the US as the bad cop are not due to fundamental differences, but due to the EU’s ability to present itself better than the US does.

Durac and Cavatorta (2009, p. 3) analyse the US and the EU’s democracy promotion policies in North Africa and conclude that both actors pursued similar objectives with similar restrictions and suffered from the same contradictions and policy gaps. Similarly, Huber (2017) observes that

in North Africa, the EU and the US's policies towards youth are very similar; both powers promote a neoliberal economic and social model. Likewise, both actors seem to prefer a particular—and to a certain point, shared—understanding of democracy rooted in their experiences and ideals, ignoring the context where the policies are implemented (Omeličeva, 2015). Furthermore, Börzel and colleagues (2015a; 2015b) in their study of external actors' reaction to so-called Arabellions, observe that as an agent of democratization, in some ways the EU is similar not only to the US, but also to non-democratic countries like Russia or Turkey.

Finally, even those authors, who distinguish specific differences in the policies of the EU and the US (Holden 2009; Huber, 2008; del Biondo, 2016) agree that the goals and strategies of the EU and the US, over time, are becoming more and more alike.

The majority of authors in the democratization group publish micro-level, country, or policy-based case studies. The only mid-level work belonging to the democratization studies group (Magen et al. 2009) is a comparative study of the EU and the US's democracy promotion policies in different regions. After analysing the democratization policies of both powers in the Middle East, Latin America, North Africa, the Southern Caucasus, and Indonesia, the authors of this mid-level analysis conclude that the US and the EU are not very different: they share the same goals, promote a very similar set of values, and use similar instruments to achieve those goals.

As Magen and colleagues state, "One could even argue that the democracy promotion policies of the EU and the US resemble those of 'civilian powers' in the sense that non-military means and cooperative practices are far more prominent than the use of force and sanctions" (Magen et al., 2008, p. 250). They add, "the use of the various instruments of democracy promotion does not so reflect the characteristics of the promoting agents (the US vs. the EU), but depends more on the geostrategic context and the political circumstances of the target countries" (Magen et al., 2008, p. 250).

Like the scholars in the security studies group, the authors analysing democratization policies are less interested in the roots of the differences between the powers. Nevertheless, when they try to explain them, they turn to either to differing historical developments or to the structure of actors, where they encounter the actorness dilemma (Magen et al., 2008; Börzel et al. 2015; del Biondo, 2016). For example, some claim that the EU's history of EU integration and the different approaches of the EU and the US to post-Soviet democratization processes have shaped their cooperation (Kopstein, 2016, Magen et al., 2008).

3. Overview of the comparison

The main divergence between the regionalists and the Atlanticists lies in their respective views of the role the US and the EU play in international relations. The regionalists, often mirroring the NPE debate, tend to have a rather positive assessment of the EU as a qualitatively different power—one that is more democratic, bases its interactions on the principles of multilateralism, and is more willing to bind itself with international agreements. On the other hand, the Atlanticists claim that while the EU's foreign policy goals and instruments differ from those of the US, this is not due to the EU's normativity, but to its lack of military power and the EU's aversion to power politics. Thus, Atlanticists often perceive the EU as weaker than the US, and they perceive the

latter more positively due to its capacity to assume international challenges. In turn, the security studies group and the democratization studies group propose a more nuanced analysis, arguing that in different contexts and different fields, both actors can act rather similarly.

Although both macro-level groups generally agree about the roots of differences between both actors (different decision-making processes, levels of actorness, power assets, and historical experiences) they give priority to somewhat different elements. The regionalists emphasise the multi-layered structure of the EU and its experience of integration, the Atlanticists prefer different power capabilities and the conflictive history of the European continent as explanatory variables.

Finally, it can be observed that the most important research themes in both macro-level groups are related to two dichotomies—power versus weakness and normativity versus pragmatism—found in broader debates in the fields of EU studies and international relations. The question of norms and interests has already been touched on in this article, there is no simple way to separate one from the other. As for the discussion of power versus weakness, it mirrors broader considerations of the importance of hard and soft power. How important is military power in the power politics of the twenty-first century? Moravcsik (2017) asserts, “[Europe] ... manipulates economic power with skill and success unmatched by any other country or region. Also, its ability to employ ‘soft power’ to persuade other countries to change their behaviour is unique.”

Conclusion

Different, nevertheless, related academic discussions presented in this article lead to the following observations regarding the particularities of the EU’s external actions and the utility of comparison. Firstly, comparisons of the EU to the US have become more common. Many authors do not feel a need to justify comparability, and this shows that the EU has managed to become an international relations actor and is, at least to some point, comparable to more traditional actors. Judging from the number of studies, the main areas where comparisons can be made between the EU and the US are related to the fields of democratization, (economic) regionalism, and development policy.

Within the analysis of the macro-level security-related topics, the concept of Europe prevailed over the EU. Nevertheless, these studies were mostly written in the first decade of the twenty-first century. In the after-the-Lisbon-treaty context, and bearing in mind the push for better coordination of EU’s response to rising security threats, do the claims made by the Atlanticists still hold and if yes, to what extent? The realists are somewhat sceptical of studies of the EU’s foreign policy, as their primary object of interrogation is a state. Nevertheless, neoclassical realism might be a useful paradigm for questions regarding the EU’s security culture.

Secondly, the tension between macro-level works (observing significant differences between two actors) and mid/micro-level works (painting a more nuanced picture) shows that despite its particularities, in many ways, the EU acts similarly like other actors. Hence, more attention should be paid not to differences between the EU and other actors, but to their similarities. This type of comparison could enrich not only EU studies but also other IR sub-fields like the studies of (regional/great) powers or hegemony. Diez (2013) and Haukkala (2008, 2017) have already proposed solutions to problems of the NPE debate by naming the EU as a (normative) hegemon. How does this “hegemon” compare to others in the IR?

Thirdly, while many authors have criticised the NPE concept, there is one repetitive claim in regionalists' works, which signals the EU's exceptionality. Since the early comparisons between EU and NAFTA as integration models, there have been recurring claims about the fact that unlike the US, the EU is trying to diminish the existing asymmetry existing between it and its partners. Various authors, studying European Neighbourhood Policy, claim that the EU might act in neo-colonial or even imperialistic ways. Nevertheless, the comparison with neighbourhood policies of other regional or great powers (or, referring to the abovementioned discussion, hegemons) would help in understanding if the EU's "hegemony" can be considered exceptional.

Finally, the concept of effectiveness, is more and more salient in EU studies and has been absent from the comparisons discussed. Many authors seem to agree that the EU's foreign policy lacks effectiveness. Nevertheless, the US's inability to tackle the situation in Central America or democratize Iraq does not tend to lead to such damning conclusions about the US. Hence, the comparison could be helpful in corroborating whether the EU is "exceptionally ineffective." Even more, the comparison with the EU might lead to new insights into the limitations of other, traditional actors in international relations.

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