

GOOD NEIGHBOUR BAD NEIGHBOUR? COMPARISON OF US AND EU SOUTHERN NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICIES

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This paper analyses the EU and US's southern neighborhood strategies, both coined after the migration crisis of 2014, seeking to understand the extent to which the differences between their preferred "world orders" are reflected in their neighborhood policies. Building upon the literature dedicated to the strategies of regional powers, this paper offers an alternative approach to the debate about the exceptionality of the European model of interaction with other countries and regions. Drawing on S. Destradi's conceptualization of regional power strategies (ranging from empire to leadership), it analyses the content of strategic documents with regard to how both actors define a) goals of regional cooperation b) means for their achievement. It concludes that both strategies during the period of analysis were somewhat similar and could be labeled "Intermediate Hegemony" as they emphasized goals of regional powers (security and migration management) and foresaw material inducements for cooperative neighbors. Furthermore, against the common claim that the EU is more likely to support regional integration and multilateralism than the US, its regional strategy for Central America, makes a strong emphasis on both elements, making it one of the cornerstones of its strategy. Hence, at least during the last years of Barack Obama's administration, both the EU and the US shared a similar understanding of regional cooperation goals and principles, and had similar preferences for the instruments to achieve them.

INTRODUCTION

Despite being seen as a part of "the West" or "the Global North," for some the EU and the US represent very different approaches to the desired world order. The clashes about the mandate of the UN, Iran deal or free trade agenda in general, that are taking the place after the election of Donald Trump, revived the debate about these differences, with some claiming that both sides of Atlantic are parting in the understanding of how the world should be arranged (see Johnson et al. 2018).

Nevertheless, the discussion about differences between the ways how Americans and Europeans approach different global issues is not new, and it has already been particularly loud at the beginning of the 21st Century in the context of the War on Terror. Different authors from the fields of security studies (see Cox 2003, 2012, Kagan 2002, 2003) to regionalism (see Escribano 2007, Gamble and Payne 1996, Grugel 2004, Hettne and Ponjaert 2014) observed differences between how the EU and US view questions of power, cooperation and decision making in the global area, claiming that there are "profound constitutive differences that exist on the two continents that lead the EU to prefer soft diplomacy, constructive engagement, and multilateralism, while the

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US prefers to stamp its authority on world affairs more forcefully and unilaterally.” (Durac and Cavatorta 2009, p. 4) Curiously, various micro-level studies, applying these frameworks on the EU/US engagement or promotion of rules in different countries, observe a more nuanced picture, and some (see Durac and Cavatorta 2009, Magen et al. 2009, Tomos Powell 2009) claim that in reality both powers “behave” somewhat similarly.

While comparative works looked either at the general characteristics of the US and the EU as global actors or at their engagement in precise countries or regions (often where they do not share the same level of interest) and policy fields (for comparison on democratization see Birdoux, and Kurki 2015, del Biondo 2015, Durac and Cavatorta 2009, Huber 2008, Magen et al. 2009; on development policies see Huber 2017, disaster relief, Brattberg and Rhinard, 2012, and on trade norms see Oehri 2015), the comparison of neighborhood policies is rare. This can be explained by the fact that the US for a long time did not have any regional strategy towards its neighbors, preferring bilateral engagement. 2014 marked a change, as reacting to the pressures of migration and insecurity from the South, the US presented its first Strategy for Engagement in Central America (from here on CEN Strategy), complemented by Central America and Mexico Regional Development Cooperation Strategy 2015-2019 (from here on CAM RDCS). In 2015, in the context of somewhat similar pressures, the EU made public its Revisited Neighborhood Policy (from here on Revisited ENP). The neighborhoods, regions where both actors are entangled in the interdependent relations, have all the instruments possible and are invested into the stability, are the perfect places to study the principles guiding their actions. As observes Lesser “whatever the challenges emanating from the South, US and EU approach to their respective southern peripheries say as much, or more, about the evolution of societies in the prosperous and relatively secure North” (Lesser 2005, p. 60).

This paper explores the extent to which the differences between the EU/US preferred “world orders” are reflected in their neighborhood strategies, focusing on their goals and instruments as defined in the official documents. Few observations should be made before the comparison. First, due to the emphasis on document analysis, I do not address the questions related to the EU actorness. Official frameworks, such as the Revisited ENP or European Neighborhood Instrument (from here on ENI) are European level endeavors, thus can be comparable to the ones elaborated by the US. Another

problem is more complex, related with the fact that none of the strategies is clearly expressed in one document, but rather in a set of them; thus the key documents (Revisited ENP and CEN Strategy) are complemented with additional ones.

Moreover, while I seek to provide a balanced assessment, with the use of accompanying sources and paying attention to what has not been said, the comparison has its limits. First, there are differences in texts analyzed in terms of depth and length, as revisited ENP is much longer than CEN Strategy, which, in its turn is more precise and detailed. Moreover, as it covers the Neighborhood-wide actions, the focus on Southern Neighborhood is not always clear in the Revisited ENP. Further, there is a political context of documents, as both Strategies are corresponding to specific moments on both sides of Atlantic, related with the rise of discontent with the foreign policy and strong reaction towards perceived border insecurity; thus they are addressing both national and international audiences with specific messages. Finally, and that is important for the US case, D. Trump presidency changed US policy towards Central America. Nevertheless, he had not changed one of the official documents and had not adopted any new strategies.

The first part of the paper is dedicated to a brief presentation of comparative literature on what we could call the world orders preferred by the EU/US. In the second part, I discuss the framework used for comparison and in the third one I apply it to the EU/US Southern neighborhood strategies, focusing on the goals they want to achieve and the instruments they prefer to use. I conclude that both strategies during the period of analysis were somewhat similar and could be labeled “Intermediate Hegemony” as they emphasized goals of regional powers (security and migration management) and foresaw material inducements for cooperative neighbors. Hence, at least during the last years of Barack Obama’s administration, both the EU and the US shared a similar understanding of regional cooperation goals and principles and had similar preferences for the instruments to achieve them.

1. THE EU AND THE US AND THEIR PREFERRED “WORLD ORDERS”

The debate about different world orders preferred by the EU/US in the early 21st Century was framed by the “War on Terror” and growing EU external actorness. The first one revived the discussion about so-called “American empire” (see Cox, 2005; Fergusson, 2004; Gilderhus, 2005), focusing on such features of America’s engagement

with the world as its readiness to act alone and use military force, some claiming that the US belongs “to a Hobbesian world where international laws and rules are unreliable” (Kagan, 2003, p.1). The second one was reflected in the concept of “Normative Power Europe,” coined by Ian Manners (2002, 2006, 2008), which marked an intensification of discussion about the EU’s global role. 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). Various authors have analyzed the EU’s foreign policy, focusing on its instruments and emphasizing their “civilian” characteristics (e.g., Damro 2012 calls the EU a “market power”; Meunier (2006), a “trade power”). Some commentators have discussed the EU’s goals, observing its defense of multilateralism and international norms (e.g., Manners 2002). Others have even asked if the EU can be called “a force for good.” (Aggestam 2008, p. 1)

These discourses have been gladly accepted on both sides of Atlantic. While one senior advisor to President Bush claimed, “we’re an empire now, and when we act, we create our own reality,” (Suskind 2004), the EU’s High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton, argued that the EU could offer its partners “something special: post-imperial partnerships for a post-imperial age.” (Ashton, 2011) Similarly, six years after Ashton’s discourse the EU Commissionaire for development Neven Mimica strengthened the positive EU image calling it a “force for good in a changing word.” (Mimica, 2017)

These studies of the US and the EU “exceptionalism” paved way to the comparison. Some of the works, usually macro-level, emphasize differences. Analyzing the security cultures on both sides of the Atlantic, Robert Kagan argues that we should “stop pretending that Europeans and Americans share a common view of the world or even that they occupy the same world. On the all-important questions of power – the efficacy of power, the morality of power, and the desirability of power – American and European perspectives are diverging.” (Kagan, 2003, p.1) In this line of inquiry about the security cultures, the EU is seen as a weak, while the US as strong and “pragmatic” actor, capable to respond to “real-world” challenges.

From regionalist perspective, Hettne and Ponjaert (2014) conclude that both actors represent two different world orders: Pax Americana or “unilateralism oft-decried as imperialism” and Pax Europea a “multilateralism intertwined with interregionalism

offered as a novel international phenomenon.” (p. 115) As a consequence they prefer very different sorts of regionalism: a neo-Westphalian understood as state-centric and rooted in hierarchical power relations in the US case; and post-Westphalian, more functional in nature as it is centered on multilateral governance efforts in the EU case (Hettne and Ponjaert, 2014, p. 115). Hettne and Ponjaert observe “a clear pattern in the EU’s external policy, namely one seeking to shape the world order in accordance with Europe’s (more recent) experience of solving conflicts through respect for ‘the other’, dialogue, multilateralism based on international law, and institutionalized relations” (Hettne and Ponjaert, p. 125). Similar position is held by Grugel, who after the comparison the EU’s and US engagement in Latin America, claim that the EU attempts to diffuse and embed European norms outside of Europe in this manner reflecting specifically European perspectives on region-building and development, “built up through years of patterned and regular engagement under conditions of *nominal equality with the developing world*. In this, it draws on ideas embedded in the EU of ‘*responsibility*’ for the developing world” (Grugel, 2004, p. 621, emphasis added) going beyond economic governance, embracing political and institutional reform and social inclusion and seeking a discursive mediation of the power inequalities between Europe and the South. In this manner, the EU distinguishes itself from the US “market-led pattern of new regionalism and endorses a North-South model of global cooperation in which ‘the North’ assumes *some responsibilities for the development* of ‘the South’” (Grugel, 2004, p. 608, emphasis added).

Hettne and Ponjaert (2014, p. 125) recognize that, especially bearing in mind the EU’s relations with its Mediterranean neighbors, its policies could also be called “soft imperialism” as they might be seen as an imposition on its partners. Nevertheless, it distinguishes itself from the American one by strengthening regionalism and by the fact that the EU deals with the external world differently than “an ordinary great power driven by geopolitical interests.” (Hettne, Söderbaum and Stålgren, 2008, p. 53) While the EU’s interests are not hidden, it has “a pattern of governance with its own distinctive characteristics and the potential of contributing to a world order <...> that would be multipolar, plurilateral, regionalized and compatible with established international law; in contrast to the unipolar, unilateral and national interest-based model which remains at the core of US foreign policy (ibid. 135-136).

Based on the discussion above, one can conclude, that the EU and the US differ in their understanding of preferred rules and outcomes of world order, as one attempts to strengthen regional formations, in this manner increasing their bargaining power and other tends to weaken them. Moreover, while both seek to transmit their values and achieve preferred outcomes the US is more prone to subordinate its interaction to narrowly defined foreign and security policy goals. Similarly, their preferred instruments are different, as the EU masters soft power (economy, trade), promotes regional integration outside its borders, the US prefers unilateral decision-making mechanisms, pressure, and, if necessary, military instruments.

Concluding, in the 21st Century some authors (and the EU itself) has been picturing it as a “fairer,” “softer” Western cousin, offering for other countries, a model of interaction based on partnership, responsibility and nominal equality. Such a positive vision has been criticized by various authors, calling out the underlying “ideal power Europe metanarrative” (Cebecchi 2017, p. 58), and the “silent disciplining power” of its Neighborhood policy (Waever 2000, p. 261). However, how all these practices look in comparison with those undertaken by other actors? How much of “nominal equality” can an actor demonstrate bearing in mind historical relations, differences in socio-economic development levels and, sometimes very pressing security challenges? The following chapter will analyze how strongly these Pax Americana and Pax Europea images are reflected in the US/EU neighborhoods. An old Mexican proverb state that the misfortunes of the country are strongly related with it being far from God, and close to the US. Despite the criticism, can the EU pride itself for being a “comparatively” better neighbor?

2. EMPIRE, HEGEMONY AND LEADERSHIP: FRAMEWORK FOR COMPARISON

The preferences for regionalism modes or different principles of engagement are broad concepts whose operationalization is tricky. Thus, in this article I look at the EU and US as regional powers – actors who belong to a region, dispose a superior power capabilities, and exercise an influence on regional neighbors (Destradi, 2010, p. 929) and focus on their strategies – namely how they act (or, in case of this article, how they plan to act). This allows concentrating on precise spheres and periods, in this manner observing change and, potentially, creating a framework for comparison.

The departure point of the analysis is the conceptualization of regional power strategies proposed by Destradi (2010). According to her, each regional power might adopt different strategies towards their respective regions depending on time or issue in question. Author claims that regional powers can adopt five different strategies of engagement: imperial, hegemonic (distinguishing three different types: hard, intermediate and soft), and leadership. Following features help to identify each ideal type from another:

1. *Ends of regional strategy.* An attempt to realize regional actor's own goals distinguished all strategies from the leadership, which is marked by a genuine attempt to achieve commonly decided objectives important for majority states of the region.
2. *Means used to achieve them.* While the imperial strategy is distinguished by the reliance on the military intervention (or a threat of it), different hegemonic strategies rely on a broader spectrum of instruments ranging from sanctions and political pressure, to economic inducements and normative persuasion/socialization).
3. *Self-representation of regional power* (e.g., in its documents, speeches of leading politicians) might vary from aggressive/threatening (typical to imperial strategy) to a cooperative (typical to leadership).
4. *A discrepancy between the real actions and self-representation* reflects the tension between the discourse and the actions of regional power. The higher discrepancy is more typical to hegemonic strategies when the regional power “pretends” to be softer than it is than to full-fledged imperialistic engagement.
5. *Legitimation*, which in this model is understood using the definition of Habermas, claiming that “in a hierarchical interstate relationship the dominant position of the stronger state is legitimated if, the weaker states share its values and goals, that is, if a ‘consensual normative order that binds ruler and ruled’ is established” (Destradi 2010, pp. 912). Thus, while in case of imperial and harder hegemonic strategies there would no or low-level of legitimization, in case of softer hegemony and leadership they would be legitimate
6. *Subordinated states strategies* according to Destradi as well depend on the strategy of regional power. In case of “harder” strategies countries either intent to resist either obey out of the sheer calculation. In case of softer hegemony or leadership, they either comply due to changed values, either willingly follow its lead.

7. *Change in subordinate's states' normative* orientation due to the dominant state's policy. Paradoxically, in case of harder strategies, the change of normative orientations is rarer as states tend to resist. Nevertheless, in the case of soft hegemony and leadership, this process might be successful.

Destradi observes that when it comes to operationalization, a reduction in the number of dimensions could be appropriate. According to the author, two key dimensions allowing distinguishing different ideal types from one another are a) the commonality or divergence in the goals pursued by the regional power and neighboring countries and, b) the means employed by the regional power in its relations with these countries.

Thus, the imperial strategy could be distinguished from hegemony, based on the use of military power, or on the threat of military intervention through an ultimatum. Taking into consideration the means employed allows us to differentiate between hard, intermediate, and soft hegemony since hard hegemony is necessarily based on coercive measures, intermediate hegemony on different kinds of incentives and side-payments, and soft hegemony on normative persuasion and an effort at initiating a socialization process in subordinated states. A more in-depth analysis of soft hegemony and leadership would imply considering the discursive processes taking place in the relations between the regional power and subordinate countries. (Destradi, 2010, p. 928). Due to that, this article focuses on these two dimensions. The analytical matrix guiding the empirical research is reflected in table no. 1.

Empire		Hegemony			Leadership
		Hard	Intermediate	Soft	
Ends	Self-interested	Self-interested	Self-interested	Self-interested	Common
Means	Military, Intervention, threat of intervention	Sanctions, threats, political pressure	Material benefits/ inducements: economic side-payments, military support	Normative persuasion, socialization (for example, through joint working groups or committees on contentious issues)	Normative persuasion, socialization process

Table 1 Potential strategies that could be employed by the regional power. Source: Destradi (2010)

Though this article focuses on two key documents, CEN Strategy and Revisited ENP, seeking to support the findings it also looks at CAM RDCR, US National Security

Strategy presented in 2015, and European Global Strategy, presented in 2011. Similarly, I also consulted the reviews of both strategies (elaborated in 2017) to contextualize their discourse. The list of documents used for my analysis is presented in table 2.

Key documents:	US Strategy for Engagement with Central America 2015; USAID strategy for Central America and Mexico, 2015-2019;	Reviewed European Neighborhood strategy 2015;
Supplementary documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Security Strategy 2015. • U.S. Strategy for Engagement in Central America: Policy Issues for Congress, Congressional research services, 2017; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European Global Strategy 2016 • Report on the Implementation of the European Neighborhood Policy Review, 2017; • Regulation (EU) No 232/2014 establishing a European Neighborhood Instrument; • Programming of the European Neighborhood Instrument (ENI) - 2014-2020 Regional South Strategy Paper (2014-2020) and Multiannual Indicative Programme (2014-2017); • Programming of the European Neighborhood Instrument (ENI) - 2014-2020 Strategic Priorities 2014-2020 and Multi-annual Indicative Programme 2014-2017 European Neighborhood-wide measures;

Table 2 Documents consulted for this paper

3. EU, US AND THEIR NEIGHBORS

As observes, Lesser (2005, p. 61), “Europe and the United States appear to face similar challenges in relations with the relatively poor and insecure societies to their south. In both cases, it is possible to look beyond the immediate neighborhood to a wider region embracing the ‘broader Middle East and Africa’ on the one hand, and Latin America as a whole on the other”. Nevertheless, for a long time, both actors seemed to have different approaches to the engagement with their neighbors. While the EU was building the Mediterranean space with its Mediterranean Policies since the 70s, with the most important initiative being the Barcelona process started in 1995, the US preferred bilateral engagement except trade issues. In 1994 its first ‘regionalist’ experiment, the North American Free trade agreement NAFTA entered to force.

With the enlargement and discontent with the results of the Barcelona process, it has been incorporated into the overarching framework of Neighborhood policy. As the

progress in the neighborhood failed to materialize, in 2008 with a strong push from French president Nicolas Sarkozy, the Union for the Mediterranean was launched, with a more explicit goal of region building through the big regional projects. However, the financial crisis made it less relevant (Khader 2015, p. 200) and “Arab springs” forced the EU to review its over-optimistic neighborhood policy. The first Revision of the ENP took place in 2011, followed by another in 2015. The last one was fostered by conflict and disarray in South, assertive Russian politics in East and J.C. Junker’s impetus for more political Commission (Carp and Schumacher 2015, p. 2). While each revision modified principles of engagement, it still demonstrated the attempt to keep alive the concept of “neighborhood” instead of dividing it into a set of bilateral relations.

When the EU was expanding eastwards and launching its neighborhood-wide policies, the US was busy with the implementation of its political vision: the spread of free trade, together with globalization and its influence in Latin America. Free Trade Area for Americas (FTAA), which was supposed to expand NAFTA to Argentina, was a signature project of G.W. Bush. Nevertheless, it was frustrated by left-wing governments coming to power and by growing influence of Venezuela and Brazil, forging plans for another type of regional integration. The attempts failed, and the only non-bilateral agreement that came out of that endeavor was Dominican Republic-Central America- US Free Trade Agreement (DR-CAFTA), signed in 2004. However, the pressing security changes emanating from Mexico and Central America forced the US to expand broaden their approach: some of the Central American countries were included into the framework of Millennium Challenge Corporation, intended to fight poverty through the improvement of productivity, and, since 2010, the Central America Regional Security Initiative was launched seeking to respond to the worsening security situation. So-called an “unaccompanied minor migrant” crisis in 2013-2014, forced to change the approach once more.

Thus, in 2014-2015 both Western powers had to attend troubles of Southern neighbors, which were quickly becoming internal problems. Military conflicts in Libya and Syria, together with advances of ISIS, pushed migrant flows to the EU. Together with terrorist attacks, these flows threatened to affect the elections taking place in the key EU states. Similarly, violence in Mexico has spilled over to the Central American countries, mostly to Northern Triangle, which became the most dangerous countries in the world according to the intentional homicide rates. Insecurity together with sluggish economic

growth and notorious corruption, triggered a migrant movement, which raised heated debates in the US presidential election campaign. The strategies discussed in the following section represent the attempts of both actors to grasp with these challenging realities.

3.1. ENDS

GENERAL TRENDS

Both approaches laid out in sets of different documents look like holistic strategies encompassing various aspects of political, socio-economic and security development and aiming at the regional transformation to ensure the stability of the neighborhood. Moreover, both are motivated by the attempt to attack the “root causes” of violence, migration, and instability that are seen as a danger for the bigger neighbor. They both state, that the US and the EU seek to achieve changes in the governance (from finance management to justice reforms), to boost economic growth and social inclusion (diminishing poverty and creating opportunity, especially for young people), improve the security situation, tackle climate change, and increase energy cooperation. Another US priority, tackling HIV/AIDS epidemic seems to be very region-specific and is not reflected in the EU’s review of the Neighborhood policy. Hence, the “prescribed” recipe for the regional stabilization and prosperity is pretty much the same: regional integration, deeper security cooperation to reduce violence and conflict (gang/ drug related in Central America and terrorism-related in the Southern Neighborhood), and provision of finances and technical assistance to promote good governance and fiscal management.

Curiously, it seems that the EU and the US have a different approach to migration. While the overarching *raison d'être* of both strategies at least partially is migration-related and documents repeatedly mention attempt to transform their neighborhood to keep the people there, in the US strategy, the migration is discussed only as a problem to solve. The lack of positive engagement was one of the criticisms towards B. Obama, who, according to the partners from the Southern state failed to promote comprehensive migration reform. Moreover, he deported more illegal immigrants than any other president before, as the so-called removals reached their peak in 2014 when, compared to 2005, 3,6 times more people were removed from the US (US Customs and Border Protection). The Revisited ENP, also states that “the policy should help make partner

countries places where people want to build their future, and help tackle uncontrolled movement of people on its side” (European Commission, 2015, p. 4).

Moreover, it precedes a hardening stance towards illegal migration in the EU: for example, since 2016 member states heightened the requisites for Maghreb countries demanding to accept migrants involved in criminal activities. Between 2015-2017, only in Germany deportations grew from 57 to 450 per year (Schafer, 2018). Nevertheless, migration and mobility in the document are discussed among the priorities for cooperation, foreseeing legal mechanisms for the mutually-beneficial migration and mobility.

SECURITY ORIENTED

Both strategies begin contemplating the interdependencies existing between the neighbors. As stated in the Revisited ENP Strategy, “the EU's own interdependence with its neighbors has been placed in sharp focus. Growing numbers of refugees are arriving at the European Union's borders hoping to find a safer future. Energy crises have underlined the EU's need to work with neighbors on energy security.” (European Commission, 2015, p. 2) Similarly, CEN Strategy starts with the claim that U.S. security is intimately linked to the security and prosperity of Central America (US White House, 2015, p. 1).

As a consequence, both strategies are openly framed by and subordinated to the security objectives of both regional powers. CEN Strategy and Reviewed ENP start from explicitly defining the goals of engagement in their corresponding neighborhoods in terms of the EU/US security goals. As stated in the CEN Strategy “it is therefore in the national security interests of the United States to develop an integrated U.S. strategy for engagement in Central America” (US White House, 2015, p.1, emphasis added). Similarly, the CAM RDCS claims that it addresses “the U.S. foreign policy priorities and correlated development challenges in the region” (USAID, 2015, p.3), and emphasizes that “a more prosperous, democratic, transparent, and peaceful Western Hemisphere is in the direct U.S. national interest.” (USAID, 2015, p. 9) Both strategies linger on implications for the bigger neighbor of lack of development and stability in the neighboring countries. If the “stabilization” is a buzzword in the Revisited ENP, CEN Strategy observes that “the implications are stark for the United States if the aforementioned Central American becomes a trend.” (US White House, 2015, p. 2)

Both strategies consider that this stability is threatened by processes far from the security field alone. As CEN Strategy plainly states, “more than five million Central Americans are expected to join the workforce over the next decade, many of them in Guatemala and Honduras. If economic prospects remain poor and the crime rate remains high, migration and organized crime may present challenges for the United States and Mexico.” (US White House, 2015, p. 1)

Similarly, the Revisited ENP observes, that “the causes of instability often lie outside the security domain alone. The EU's approach will seek to comprehensively address sources of instability across sectors. Poverty, inequality, a perceived sense of injustice, corruption, weak economic and social development and lack of opportunity, particularly for young people, can be roots of instability, increasing vulnerability to radicalization.” (European Commission, 2015, p. 3) As a consequence, all development-related activities (which comprise a bulk of supported projects in many cases) are framed as security related.

COORDINATED AND IN REGIONAL SETTING

Another interesting similarity between the regional strategies is related with their emphasis on shared agenda and shared goals both with their neighbors, and with a wider group of stakeholders. While words like “partnership” and “joint commitment” might be understood as diplomatic pleasantries, the preparation of both strategies was uncommonly inclusive. The process towards a new ENP was different than before as the consultation was organized with every willing stakeholder (NGO's, citizens and national governments). Moreover, the committee dealing with foreign affairs in the European Parliament has elaborated a position paper on their view of the ENP, and ministerial level inputs were received from Barcelona Informal Ministerial meeting. The latter, with the participation of Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia, as well as the Secretary General of the secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean, Fatallah Sijilmassi, was especially conveyed for the discussion of the ENP review and was first such a level meeting since 2008². In general, for the review, more than 250 papers were received and a separate document discussing them was released.

² Gobierno de España, Informal Ministerial Meeting in Barcelona with the Southern Neighbourhood Countries, <exteriores.gob.es/Portal/en/SalaDePrensa/NotasdePrensa/Paginas/2015_NOTAS_P/20150413_NOTAO77.aspx>

On the other side of Atlantic, a similar process was taking place, though without such an open call for the participation of the citizens, as in July 2014 B. Obama conveyed a meeting with three presidents of the Northern Triangle to discuss the minor migrant crisis. All three presidents publicly criticized US response as too focused on border security and pleaded to attend the “root causes” of migration: drug violence and lack of economic opportunities. Their demands were at least partially heard as at the end of the same year under the guidance of the Inter-American Development Bank (IABD), they elaborated so-called “Plan Alliance for Prosperity” (PAP), establishing main lines for their countries. Despite being criticized for its speedy preparation and exclusion of civil society from the process (Pineda and Matarmoso, 2017, p.p. 38-39), PAP was aligned with Northern Triangle priorities and national development plans. It also became a source for alignment for the US policy (as stated both in the CAM RDCS and CEN Strategy), showing that the US government was at least officially hearing the proposals formulated by the governments of the region.

As have been observed in this paper, the EU’s documents are often framed in terms of partnership and cooperation. Similarly or even more, the Revisited ENP repeatedly confirms that the EU “will offer more flexibility where possible, with lighter options, going beyond existing preferential or non-preferential trade agreements for those who choose not to engage across all sectors at the outset.” (European Commission, 2015, p. 8) In different parts of the document the emphasis is made on the cooperation with those willing and in those terms that can be agreed, between the EU and its partners. Similarly, the EU pledges to expand its outreach to the “civil society and stating that in many neighborhood countries ethnic, religious and cultural identities and traditions play a crucial role as regards the way society functions” (European Commission, 2015, p. 7) and claims that it is “ready to discuss the possibility to jointly set new partnership priorities, which would focus each relationship more clearly on commonly identified shared interests.” (European Commission, 2015, p. 4) The set of new priorities for bilateral cooperation was being negotiated since with each partner.

Curiously, similar while not that strong approach is seen in the CEN Strategy, where cooperation with Central American governments, civil society, regional banks and other donors is repeatedly mentioned as key for the success of the strategy. The CEN Strategy foresees working closely not only with Central American governments and the governments of Mexico, Colombia, and Canada; but also other actors like the EU, to

establish a shared vision and develop concrete plans for realizing that vision. Moreover, it states that the U.S. support should be geared toward promoting Central American ownership of both the challenges and the solutions.

However, the US takes a stronger emphasis on somewhat different aspects of this shared responsibility. According the CEN Strategy “the (success) of strategy will depend far more on the readiness of Central American governments to continue to demonstrate political will and undertake substantial political and economic” The latter and repeated demand for the Central American states to “demonstrate results” can be related rather with the debates taking place in the US Congress about if the higher financial injections to the unpredictable neighbors is a good idea. As will be discussed in the following chapters, the “ownership” of the solutions also led to clear cut conditionality.

Concluding, the goals themselves and how they are formulated can be considered representing the security and stability goals of bigger neighbors.

3. 2. MEANS

SOFT

Both strategies are based on soft-power instruments like diplomacy, technical expertise, and socialization, development aid, trade. CEN Strategy vaguely mentions the military cooperation, stating that the US will cooperate with countries of region in order to professionalize and improve the competence, capability, and accountability of military institutions, and will assist partner militaries to develop long-term plans and postures that, when appropriate, transition them from their current roles of supporting internal security to other missions. Specific mention is made talking about the support for the transition of military forces from ensuring internal security to other tasks (CEN Strategy, 2015, p. 7) which can be attributed to the preoccupation about the militarization of civil spaces fostered by the creation of military police units in the majority of the countries. Similarly, the EU foresees to step up “the outreach to partner countries' authorities who deal with matters related to security. <...> such cooperation may include strategic and policy advice, institution and capacity building activities, dialogues with civil society, and support for community security programmes” (European Commission, 2015, p. 13). Much attention in both strategies is given to non-military other security threats like organized crime, with emphasis on gang activity in

Central America and terrorist networks in the EU Neighborhood. Nevertheless, the proposed approaches also share their emphasis on prevention and community involvement. Thus, though the EU's Global Strategy affirms that it "focuses on military capabilities and anti-terrorism as much as on job opportunities, inclusive societies and human rights", claiming that despite being proud of its soft power, the EU is not exclusively a "civilian power" (European Commission, 2016, p. 5), "military power Europe" image is in no way reflected in its neighborhood strategy.

For both the EU and the US, trade and economic cooperation seem to be the first tool of neighborhood transformation. As stated in the CAM RDCS, "strong, stable economies in the region are in the direct interest of the U.S. to stem the flow of illegal immigration." (USAID, 2015, p. 14) One of the EU's proposed joint priorities for cooperation is titled "economic development for stabilization." Both strategies foresee fostering trade and exports (though through different means as Central American countries already have a free trade agreement with the US), economic modernization, strengthening the private sector and transport/infrastructure integration. Both strategies also make emphasis on youth (CEN Strategy even aims to diminish youth unemployment under 40% in the next decade) and inclusion of the private sector.

Finally, both documents make an emphasis on socialization and exchange of experiences in term of governance reforms, economic cooperation, tackling security challenges. The US pledges to increase technical assistance to fiscal reforms, to the modernization of regulatory systems, diversification of countries energy matrixes, and facilitation of investment in energy-related projects. The projects funded included the Treasury Department providing technical assistance, intended to improve treasury management operations and develop investment policy, to Guatemala's Ministry of Finance; or the State Department providing training and technical assistance to different actors in justice sector of El Salvador.

Similarly, the EU makes an emphasis on the training for public administration workers, judicial and cooperation in fields of democracy-related issues, including electoral processes, pledges to promote scientific and business exchanges and capacity building in the governance reforms. Nevertheless, the EU makes a stronger emphasis on more holistic exchange in other spheres like research and innovation, pledging to increase the participation of neighborhood countries in EU initiatives, such as the Enterprise Europe

Network, Horizon 2020 and COSME EU programs, connection to GÉANT and to foster the development of a Common Knowledge and Innovation Space. The EU pledged to align and integrate joint research and innovation priorities through joint programs such as the Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean.

REGIONAL AND COOPERATIVE

Though the promise of internal market (as an extension of integration) has been considered a typically the EU's instrument, as, in words of Hettne et al., "Europe is trying to shape world order by means of inclusiveness, by treating the external as if it were internal, a political innovation which marks a significant departure from traditional realist power politics." (Hettne, Söderbaum and Stålgren, 2008, p. 53) While the US is a nation-state, and there can be no discussions about the integration of Mexico or Central America into it, the CEN Strategy makes a particular emphasis on regional integration and bi-regional (Central and North America) cooperation. The document foresees promoting border and custom integration via Pacific corridor logistics project, deepening Central America's integration with North America through the strong Mexican cooperation with Guatemala, helping for a deeper regional integration through the existing free trade agreements. Similarly, the EU strategy emphasizes trade negotiations, with a sight of future integration of partners into the EU market. Special attention in the document is made to the negotiation of Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements, making an emphasis on a progressive and asymmetric approach based on mutual priorities in the South and support for internal reforms necessary conductive to the implementation of those agreements (European Commission, 2015, p. 8).

Peculiarly, countering to what has been said about the US, a regional dimension is very important in both strategies – the Revisited ENP has a chapter dedicated to it (ant ENI has a separate document for regional projects in the South), in case of the US, the regional dimension of cooperation is laid out in a separate document, CAM RDCS. It foresees four overarching development objectives: regional economic integration, regional climate-smart economic growth, improving regional human rights and citizen security and containing HIV prevalence.

Both actors foresee local regional organizations - Central American Integration System in case of the US and the Union for the Mediterranean in case of the EU - as their key

interlocutors. Moreover, both make an emphasis on the inclusion of other actors. The EU claims that it should step up cooperation with the International Financial Institutions, like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund and relevant international organizations and other donors. The Revisited ENP introduces a new instrument for cooperation, called thematic frameworks. These ad hoc meetings of interested parties, bringing together the Member States, neighborhood countries, International Financial Institutions, international organizations, and other donors, would be arranged to tackle different common issues, with the priority given to energy security and migration. Similarly, the US foresees multilateral approach in nearly all sectors of engagement, claiming its intents to involve not only financial institutions, and other donors like the EU, but also other American countries from Canada to Colombia. CAM RDCS presents detailed donor landscape under each objective foreseeing potential lines of cooperation.

CONDITIONALITY

Though none of the documents directly mention it, both strategies were accompanied by the increase in the financing for the regions in the exchange of implementation report. Although the EU's cooperation activities were still financed in the framework of ENI, extra finances were found to tackle rising challenges. The budget of 2015 was amended eight times and the transfer of different fund unused before, to the budgets of 2015-2017, allowed increasing available funds by EUR 1.36 billion in commitments and by EUR 10 million in payments (Savage and Siter, 2018, p. 132-133). Similarly, the US pledged to increase financing for its Southern Neighbors, with B. Obama soliciting an extra billion for the implementation of CEN Strategy. While in the case of the US, the ongoing debate about the financing is somewhat reflected in the conditions and obligations of Central American countries. The EU takes a markedly different approach, which might be considered as weakening of the conditionality. (Delcour, 2015)

In the Revisited ENP, the EU's interests in a curious way are matched with its values, claiming that "the EU will pursue its interests which include the promotion of universal values. The EU's own stability is built on democracy, human rights and the rule of law and economic openness." (European Commission, 2015, p. 2) The "values" are mentioned in various places in the document, defining the fundamental values, as democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and

claiming that the EU should uphold and promote universal values through the ENP (European Commission, 2015, p. 5). Nevertheless, the flexibility, another buzzword repeated in the communication indicates that instead of one type of conditionality there rather might be “*different conditionalities*” according to the priorities agreed with each partner. This higher flexibility is seen as a departure from the “more for more” principle established in the 2011 review and weakening of conditionality at all.

Meanwhile, the US does not make any mention of values on which it is based, rather shaping the debate in terms of needs and technical development-interested engagement. Moreover, even the document seems to be stronger in terms of conditionality. This can be understood as a reaction to internal discussions taking place in the US. Seeking Congressional approval for growing expenditures, the CEN Strategy was presented as a conditional agreement rather than a development plan. A commitment of Northern Triangle countries to the reforms was mentioned in various discourses presenting CEN Strategy (e.g., Biden, 2015). For its part, Congress has placed strict conditions on the aid. A 75% was conditional to the implementation to specific policies ranging from the management of migration flows (including the cooperation with the US agencies in the repatriation of illegal migrants proceeding from these countries) and improving border security to the transparency of governance and persecution of human right abusers (Consolidated Appropriations Act 2016, p. 554-555). The State Department was responsible for checking the fulfillment of a long list of conditions, which delayed the disbursements (Meyer 2019: 11); nevertheless, until 2018 all of the disbursements have been approved. Thus, while the possibility of withdrawing the support was real and it delayed the implementation, it has not materialized.

3.3. HEGEMONS, BUT OF WHAT KIND?

The comparison shows, that, both strategies are based on self-interest, as, directly and indirectly, they attend the question of migration and instability, and demonstrate a belief in development (social and economic) as a stabilizer helping to create societies “to stay.” Furthermore, both prefer soft power instruments, mostly financial aid for targeted reforms in line with the goals foreseen in their documents.

The US has a stronger wording in terms of “obligations” of Central American countries to comply, and the EU in the last revision of the ENP softens its tone. However, in the case of the US, while leading to delays, until 2018, the financial conditionality has

never led to the loss of any funds. Meanwhile, for the EU, the alignment to its rules and standards it is still among the priorities, where the ENP is seen having an added value. Moreover, the EU still has a mechanism of conditionality in cases where budget support modality is applied, and support is delivered to the partner's budget only after the achievement of specific, agreed in advance thresholds.

Thus, one can conclude that both strategies more or less corresponded to intermediate hegemony as both powers tried to solve the problems in the South, using financial support for targeted reforms as a key instrument for leverage. However, the emphasis that EU makes on regional level exchanges, diffusion of practices through civil society, scientific cooperation and acceptance of migration and mobility realities and weakening "one size fits all" approach regarding the conditionality, indicates that its strategy is leaning towards the "softer" side. The summary of the comparison is presented in table 3.

	US	EU	Strategy
Ends	Self-interested Management of migration flows (migration reform is not mentioned in any of the documents) Security situation (drugs and gangs) ⇒ Development stabilizer as	Self-interested Management of migration flows Stabilization of the neighborhood (terrorism, wars) ⇒ Development stabilizer as	Hegemony
Means	Economic cooperation (development aid, trade opportunities); Socialization (training, expertise, sharing good practices); Technical assistance; Stronger emphasis on the conditionality (delays but never cancelled);	Economic cooperation (development aid, trade opportunities); Socialization (technical, training, exchanges, sharing good practices); Technical assistance; Stronger emphasis on the socialization, in wider areas;	Intermediate (towards the softer side by the EU and towards harder)

Table 3 Summary of comparison

CONCLUSIONS

Returning to the question posed at the outset, what this mid-level analysis of regional strategy documents tell us about the EU's treatment of its neighbors in comparison with the one of the US? First, the strategies seem to be more similar than the initial ideas about different world orders might have indicated. Both the EU and the US rely on their

development models and offer carrots (with relatively small sticks) seeking to “transform,” and “shape” neighboring regions according to their most pressing security needs.

The emphasis on socialization, exchange, and “creation of common spaces” (for science, political and security cooperation, trade among others) was stronger in the EU approach, confirming its attempt for region-building. However, the US showed similar, though weaker attempts both to formulate the goals of regional strategy and to foresee their implementation together with Southern countries and other partners. In that sense, the EU is not more or less “benign” than the US. However, the US seems less “domineering” than it might have been expected based on the literature discussed. Thus, paraphrasing R. Kagan seems that at least in 2015 both the EU and the US were still living on the same planet.

If neighboring regions might be considered as spaces where, due to proximity, interdependencies and strong interests, regional powers intent to “recreate” their preferred world orders, this analysis shows that Pax Americana might be closer to Pax Europea than might be considered looking at their interactions with other countries and regions, for example, Latin America or the Middle East. While the differences in their actions might be attributed to their internal arrangements and/or history, their similarity might be related to the essence of the dynamics of North-South relations. Both the EU and the US are economically, politically, and even in a military sense more powerful than their Southern neighbors. As a consequence, they both tend to shape them according to their worldviews and their necessities. In that sense, the neighborhood of any strong power is going to be challenging for the smaller/weaker ones. While the EU looks like a comparatively “softer” neighbor, in essence, its 2015 ENP, looks pretty similar to the one of the US.

From the reports on the implementation of both strategies, it seems that the EU is adjusting its financial instruments to its Revisited ENP; meanwhile, the US is moving away from the initial ideas, despite not changing the official documents. Thus, their neighborhood strategies are potentially diverging. The framework used for this analysis allows capturing these dynamics and evaluating change. Similarly, it enables expanding the comparison to other regional powers, like Russia or China, who, especially the latter one, currently are taking the flag of representatives of Global South, sometimes

proposing a “more just” model of engagement. By doing that we might bridge studies of different “exceptionalisms” and understand better not only the regional actors, but also the region orders that are being created around them.

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