

# **EU MODEL OF REGIONAL INTEGRATION FOR EXPORT? THE EU AND REGIONAL INITIATIVES IN ITS WIDE NEIGHBOURHOOD**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Scholars of European Union (EU) external relations argue that fostering regional cooperation is one of the key objectives in the EU's cooperation with third countries. Further, it is held that the EU aims to promote its model of regional integration in other parts of the world. What exactly constitutes 'the EU model' is, however, contested: institutional set-up (Wallace 1997; Costa and Foret 2005; Bilal 2004), governance pattern (Farrell 2005a, 2007; Grugel 2004; Rosamond 2005; Myrjord 2003), or economic regime (Noutcheva and Emerson 2005; Telò 2001; Hartler and Laird 1999). Moreover, the scholars posit the unique normative foundations distinguishing the EU as a polity (Manners 2002; Nicolaidis and Howse 2002; Bicchi 2006).

The profusion of different conceptions of the EU model defies scholarly attempts to ascertain the impact of the EU on the shaping of other regional groupings. According to some authors, after the end of the Cold War the EU ceased to be an example for the rest of the world (Wallace 1997; Rosamond 2005; Sbragia 2008). Other scholars maintain the opposite, pointing to the expansion of the EU's regulatory framework beyond its borders (Farrell 2007; Myrjord 2003). Further, depending on perspective taken by a researcher, the EU appears either as a 'moral' role model for other regional initiatives (Pogge 1995: 1; Söderbaum and Van Langenhove 2005: 252) or as a strategic actor advancing its foreign policy objectives (Farrell 2005b: 266; Adamiec 1993 and Körmendy 1992 as cited in Smith 2005: 351-2). On the whole, in this debate three questions remain contested: what constitutes the EU model of regional integration, whether the EU actually seeks to promote it, and with which effect.

This paper addresses these controversial issues by testing the major theoretical perspectives on the EU model of regional integration and its impact on other regional initiatives. In the first step, I take stock of the existing studies of EU external relations, regional integration and governance to determine what constitutes the EU model exportable to other regions. Two major models of EU regionalism are elaborated as regards the properties of formalized cooperation on a regional scale: the institutional and governance models. I

further distinguish between two paths to the adoption of EU model(s) by other regional groupings: top-down, due to the EU's efforts to promote its model externally, and bottom-up, in the absence of EU endorsement.

In the second step, I investigate the influence of the EU model(s) on the shaping of regional cooperation in the wide neighbourhood of the EU. This macro-region has been selected for two reasons. First, it offers rich empirical material for exploring the impact of EU integration on other regional groupings. Since the beginning of the 1990s, about thirty regional initiatives have been established by the countries of East-Central and South-Eastern Europe, former Soviet Union and the Mediterranean area to promote regional dialogue and enhanced cooperation. Second, EU wide neighbourhood, as compared to Asia, Africa and Latin America, appears to be the most-likely case for the adoption of the EU model. According to the gravity theory, geographical proximity of cooperation parties is one of the key determinants of the intensity of interaction between them (Greenaway and Milner 2002; Paas 2002: 6-12). Further, the likelihood and effects of diffusion increase with structural and cultural immediacy (see, for instance, Strang and Soule 1998; Kirat and Lung 1999) so that they are uppermost within one region (Baptista 2000). As such, one can expect that both EU efforts to shape other regional groupings and the latter's orientation on the EU will be the highest within one macro-region, i.e. wide Europe.

Empirical data reveals three main findings.<sup>1</sup> First, the EU widely supports regional initiatives in its neighbourhood, but this does not automatically translate into the promotion of EU institutional or governance models. Moreover, EU support is not correlated with specific design features or rules pertaining to external regional groupings. Second, *de jure* independent regional initiatives pushed into existence by the EU – such as regional sectoral markets demanded by the EU as a precondition for subsequent integration into EU markets – are in fact controlled by the EU despite their formal independence, which explains why they also tend to copy the EU in their institutional design features and governance rules. By contrast, initiatives aimed to support integration of its members to the EU but established bottom-up do not display such striking similarity to the EU models. Finally, EU-neighbouring countries in general tend to form functional rather than political cooperation fora, developing sectoral cooperation of varying quality of regulatory governance but rarely seeking to emulate the EU as such. The concluding part considers implications of the empirical analysis for the studies of regional integration and the EU's relations with the neighbouring states.

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<sup>1</sup> The empirical part of this paper only discusses some preliminary findings.

## I. THE EU AND EXTERNAL REGIONAL INTEGRATION

### *The role of external actors in fostering regionalism*

After the establishment of the EU, the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century witnessed the burgeoning of regional economic agreements in various parts of the world. The academic literature on regionalism, i.e. formally or informally institutionalized cooperation among geographically proximate countries (Smith 2005: 348; Hettne and Söderbaum 2000: 457) offered a conceptual framework for analyzing these processes.<sup>2</sup> However, due to the exceptional progress in the development of the EU as an integration project, the literature on non-European regional cooperation largely concentrated on the question of the likelihood that these groupings repeat the success story of the EU (Nye 1965; Beeson and Jayasuriya 1998; Scott 1999; Cameron 2005; Malamud and Schmitter 2007; Moshirian 2009). By contrast, new regionalism that emerged after the end of the Cold War, shifted the focus of research to area studies, having discarded the EU as a natural yardstick for measuring success of regional integration (Sbragia 2008: 31; Mansfield and Milner 1999: 601; Wunderlich 2007). New regionalism perceives increased efforts at formal region building as a response to the challenges of globalization (Hettne *et al.* 1999; Keating and Loughlin 1997) and is strongly associated with cooperation that goes beyond economic liberalization (Söderbaum and Van Langenhove 2005). Thus, it is increasingly speaking in terms of functional regions (Väyrynen 2003).

Despite the rejection of Eurocentrism, new regionalism recognizes the role of external actors, not in the least the EU, as exogenous triggers to region-building processes. For one, external actors provide legitimacy to regional groupings by recognizing them as lawful cooperation partners (Hettne and Söderbaum 2005). Interregionalism – that is, cooperation between formal regional arrangements – is *inter alia* believed to facilitate the transformation of geographically defined regions into transnational political actors capable of formulating and pursuing regional interests (Hettne and Söderbaum 2000: 461). Formalized cooperation of the EU with other regional groupings that strengthens intra-regional ties and supports integration is considered an instance of interregionalism (Aggarwal and Fogarty 2004; Doctor 2007). Second, external actors may directly or indirectly influence design choices made by regional initiatives (see, for instance, Pogge 1995; Myrjord 2003). Here, too, the borrowing from more established settings serves as compensation for the lack of legitimacy (Radaelli

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<sup>2</sup> The term ‘regionalism’ is broader than ‘regional integration’, as it equally describes cooperation that leads and does not lead to integration. In this paper, however, I use the two terms interchangeably, since I assume that the EU model of regional integration may impact on both integrative and non-integrative regional cooperation fora.

2000; Börzel and Risse 2009: 8). In this paper, I am primarily concerned with the second kind of influence exerted by the EU. The question of legitimacy, however, is only latently present in this study insofar as it is one of the reasons why nascent, young or weak regional initiatives may seek to borrow from the successful EU model of regionalism.

### ***EU support for external regional integration***

The EU is often described as the driving force behind regional integration in different parts of the world (Schimmelfennig 2007: 9). The most frequently invoked cases in this respect are the EU's region-building efforts in Latin America, Asia and Africa (for example, Söderbaum *et al.* 2005; Smith 2008: 83-98; Börzel and Risse 2009; Farrell 2005a; Alecu de Flers and Regelsberger 2005; Adler and Crawford 2004). Some authors believe that such a policy approach is the expression of the EU's 'propensity to reproduce itself' (Bretherton and Vogler 1999: 249; Smith 2003; Farrell 2007; Bicchi 2006). It is claimed that through providing other regional initiatives with political, financial and administrative support the EU aims to export its integration experience.

This argument, however, remains largely speculative. Unlike the EU's overall support for external regional groupings and interregionalism (see, for example, Börzel and Risse 2009; Smith 2005), it is rather weakly grounded in the evidence from EU external policies. Moreover, it is often almost taken for granted that the EU's support for external regionalism entails the export of the EU model. Federica Bicchi, for instance, argues that 'much of the EU's action can be characterized as an unreflexive attempt to promote its own model *because institutions tend to export institutional isomorphism as a default option*' (Bicchi 2006: 287, emphasis in original). Kalypso Nicolaïdis and Robert Howse define the EU model through its external projection as 'the propensity of the EU to seek to reproduce itself by encouraging regional integration around the world' (Nicolaïdis and Howse 2002: 768). Likewise, Tanja A. Börzel and Thomas Risse investigate the diffusion of the EU model understood as the *idea* of regional integration (Börzel and Risse 2009: 6-10, emphasis added). Defining the EU model as regional integration *per se* is, however, fraught with the danger of inflating the actual impact of the EU on the formation of other regional groupings. Therefore, there is need for a more nuanced understanding of the EU model of regionalism and a more careful approach to assessing EU role in shaping other regional groupings.

This paper puts to a test the thesis about the EU's tendency to export its model through providing support for external regionalism. I argue that the output of EU region-building efforts varies: EU support for other regional initiatives may produce regionalism isomorphic,

partially isomorphic, or non-isomorphic.<sup>3</sup> Isomorphic regionalism requires that external regional initiatives borrow the entire EU template, whereas semi-isomorphic regionalism is characterized by the adoption of some, but not all features of the EU model. From this perspective, any narrow definition of the EU model talks to semi-isomorphic regionalism. Finally, regional cooperation that does not embrace the EU model is considered non-isomorphic. Empirical studies of EU foreign policy acknowledge that as a rule the EU does not try to impose itself onto other regional groupings (Smith 2008: 79, 99); instead, it ‘encourage[s regional] cooperation schemes as the parties have themselves set up’ (Smith 2003: 70). Furthermore, the EU actively supports regional groupings modelled on other international fora (for an overview of the relevant studies see Schimmelfennig 2007: 13).

At the same time, the EU may wield influence on external regionalism without direct engagement with other regional initiatives. Even scholars who deny the EU the role of a model (or counter-model) of regional integration argue that it remains a ‘reference for new regionalism elsewhere’ (Telò 2007: 7; also Bilal 2004: 4). Due to its very presence on the international scene as a successful integration project, the EU is deemed capable of shaping integrative efforts in other parts of the world (Pogge 1995). To distinguish bottom-up isomorphism based on the EU model of regional integration from that compelled by the EU, I call the former emulation and the latter adoption proper. Table 1 summarizes the possible role of the EU in the shaping of other regional groupings. On the whole, the role and place of the EU in the age of enhanced regional cooperation can be considered positively: ‘[t]he new regionalism – which, to some extent, resulted from copying the EU model – is [...] a promising trend for the EU, as long as it produces regional groupings willing to strengthen cooperation both within the grouping and with outsiders’ (Smith 2008: 110). In exploring the prospect of full or partial adoption of the EU model by other regional initiatives, the essential question is, under which conditions this is likely to happen. In the next section I turn to factors that may facilitate or hinder successful export of the EU model of regional integration.

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<sup>3</sup> Isomorphism is understood here, following Paul DiMaggio and Walter Powell, as homogenization, or the process by which some organizations become akin to other organizations (DiMaggio and Powell 1983: 149-50). This process has been labelled elsewhere in the literature as transplantation (De Jong *et al.* 2002), emulation (Jacoby 2002) and diffusion (Strang and Meyer 1993).

		<b>Adoption of the EU model by other regional groupings</b>		
		<i>Full</i>	<i>Partial</i>	<i>Absent</i>
<b>EU role</b>	<i>Active (promotion)</i>	Isomorphic adoption	Semi-isomorphic adoption	No adoption, failed promotion
	<i>Passive (existence)</i>	Isomorphic emulation	Semi-isomorphic emulation	No emulation

Table 1: *EU role in shaping other regional initiatives*

### **Conditions for EU model adoption**

The scholarly literature lacks an analytical framework defining conditions for successful adoption or emulation of the EU model by other regional groupings. One exception in this regard is a study by Tanja A. Börzel and Thomas Risse who identify five mechanisms used by the EU to promote regional integration: coercion, manipulation of utility calculations, socialization, persuasion and indirect influence (Börzel and Risse 2009: 6-9). Their study, however, does not take into account factors related to the recipient side, i.e. external regional initiatives, and focuses exclusively on EU external action aiming to foster regionalism and interregional cooperation.

To remedy omissions of the current literature, this paper considers effects of commitment on the part of both the EU and external regional groupings on the likelihood that the EU model is adopted or emulated. It is hypothesized that success of EU model transfer is determined by two main factors: degree of EU engagement and willingness of regional initiatives to borrow from EU integration experience. *EU active promotion* can take three forms: (i) be absent or consist in general, political support, (ii) financial assistance, and (iii) administrative support where the EU takes over main coordinating functions from in-region cooperation members. EU influence is expected to increase alongside with EU formal engagement. As for *premeditated emulation*, I distinguish between three instances of orientation towards the EU: (i) purely regional agenda with no explicit reference to the EU, (ii) regional agenda appealing to EU rules, practices or institutions, and (iii) relayed EU agenda. Here, too, the likelihood of emulation of the EU model increases when such a goal becomes formalized.

<b>Condition</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>Indicator</b>
<i>Promotion by the EU</i>	Absent or general	No tangible support for regional cooperation provided by the EU
	Financial support	The EU fully or partially finances regional cooperation
	Administrative support	The EU acts as a chair or main coordinator of cooperation in a regional grouping
<i>Emulation by regional initiatives</i>	Regional agenda	Cooperation in a regional initiative focuses on internal regional issues and policy problems
	Mixed regional and EU agenda	Primarily regional focus of cooperation with explicit orientation on EU policy templates
	Relayed EU agenda	Determination to implement EU institutional or policy solutions, including harmonization with EU legislation

Table 2: *Conditions for successful adoption of the EU model*

Accordingly, the most favourable setting for the transfer of the EU model of regionalism is when a regional initiative explicitly proclaims the borrowing from EU integration experience as a goal and at the same time the EU takes tangible efforts to promote its model externally. Conversely, the lack of intent on both sides renders any adoption of the EU model incidental. Asymmetric commitment can be expected to obstruct the transfer of the EU model in two ways. First, the argument about the export of the EU model will be undermined by the existence of regional fora seeking to emulate the EU but offered no support from the EU for achieving this goal. Second, the power of attraction of the EU will be questioned by cases in which the EU is trying to enforce its model of regional integration on to other initiatives but meets resistance. Before discussing how these conditions play out in the EU neighbourhood, it is, however, necessary to address the question of what constitutes an assessable model of EU integration exportable to other regions.

## **II. THE EU MODEL(S) OF REGIONAL INTEGRATION**

The unsettled scholarly debate over what constitutes the EU model of regional integration indicates not only a variety of perceptions of the EU, but also the fact that any conceptualization is but partial. Indeed, the complex polity of the EU stands unmatched on the international scene. If the EU model were conceptualized as the combination of all key EU features, be it institutional structures, decision-making procedures, modes of governance, legislative and monetary competences (and the list may go on and on), the failure of the EU in

exporting such a model would be evident. By contrast, a narrow definition of the EU model, for instance as a union based on specific values, would make it easier to find cases of successful promotion elsewhere in the world, but would be defenceless against evidence built on alternative conceptions (see also Costa and Foret 2005: 502).

This paper pursues no ambition of formulating a reconciliatory, all-embracing definition of the EU model of regional integration. At the same time, it goes beyond conceptualizations that reduce the EU to any one aspect of regional cooperation, for example, deep economic integration, for the EU has long evolved beyond economic dimension (see Wallace 2001). Similarly, the notion of the EU as a civilizing, norm-based power is rejected as constrictive, not in the least due to the gap between the strength of a theoretical proposition and debatable evidence supporting it (e.g. Manners 2002, 2006; Nicolaïdis and Howse 2002).

Instead, this paper builds on two existing perspectives that address cross-cutting properties of regional cooperation within the EU: the institutional and governance models of regional integration. The two models should be considered complementary rather than competing. Whereas the institutional model focuses on formalization of regional cooperation through institution building, the governance model concerns rules and practices of decision- and policymaking in established institutional settings. Despite being firmly grounded in the scholarship, at the conceptual level the institutional and governance models alike remain elusive and lack conventional indicators. In order to assess the influence of the EU on the shaping of regional cooperation, I introduce operationalizable conceptualizations of the two models. In doing so, I draw on the theoretical accounts of institutional design and governance.

### ***EU institutional model***

The existing conceptualizations of institutional properties of EU integration are imprecise. William Wallace defines the European model of regional integration broadly, as ‘subregional [, i.e.] the construction of institutional structures to combine the interests of a group of countries within a wider region’ (Wallace 1997: 202). The institutional set-up distinctive of EU regional integration is, however, not specified further but described in terms of core cooperation issues: ‘an attractive model of formal economic integration [...] contained within a stable and well-defined security framework’ (ibid.: 226). Sanoussi Bilal, by contrast, takes the institutional template literally and explores whether regional cooperation in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and Latin America is entertained within the same institutional bodies as in the EU, i.e. secretariat (*à la* European Commission), council, parliament, court of justice, and regional bank (Bilal 2004: 23-31). In this study, Bilal comes to the conclusion that regional groupings do not replicate the institutional framework of the EU but borrow EU institutions

selectively (ibid.: 6). However, this approach appears crude in its focus solely on macro-institutional forms and neglect of the rules of institutionalization underpinning them.

In order to compare institutionalization of cooperation in the EU and other regional initiatives, there is need for a concept of institutional design general enough to see beyond the *sui generis* nature of the EU, but at the same time sufficiently specific to grasp the most important properties of EU integration. Therefore in conceptualizing the institutional model of EU integration, I propose to utilize the conceptual framework developed by the theorists of institutional design of international organizations. To begin with, institutional design is defined as formal institutional structures and legally established procedures pertaining to international cooperation fora. Further, the notion of institutional design is conceptualized along three dimensions: scope, mandate, and centralization. These three dimensions capture the most essential properties of regional cooperation and are extracted from the studies theorizing institutionalization and legalization of international cooperation (Koremenos *et al.* 2001; Abbott *et al.* 2000; Acharya and Johnston 2007).<sup>4</sup>

The dimension of *scope* addresses the question of how many issues a cooperation initiative is dealing with. The scale is subdivided into three categories: narrow, medium – or issue linkage (see Haas 1980; Leebron 2002), and broad scope. *Mandate* concerns the function that a regional grouping performs. The distinction is made between consultation, coordination, and initiation mandate afforded to a regional initiative by the participant members. The third dimension of institutional design, *centralization*, is about the delegation of competences to formal institutions of regional cooperation. On the one end of the scale there are indeterminate frameworks of cooperation with no delegation of competences, and on the other – strongly institutionalized initiatives organized at multiple levels. The logic of centralization, as such, consists in increasing decentralization of decision making at multiple levels (Pogge 1995: 3). For all three dimensions of institutional design, each higher value includes the lower one (see Table 3).

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<sup>4</sup> In order to adapt the models elaborated for international organizations to the context of (sub-)regional cooperation, some dimensions identified in these studies were discarded while others were merged. For instance, the lack of enforcement mechanisms in the majority of regional initiatives yet on their way from cooperation to integration devalued the dimensions ‘delegation’ (Abbott *et al.* 2000: 415-8) and ‘centralization’ as defined by Koremenos *et al.* (2001: 771). To give another example, since regional groupings, unlike many international organizations, preserve formal equality among the members, the dimension ‘control’ (ibid.: 772) did not appear relevant for the institutional model of regionalism.

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>Indicator</b>
<i>Scope</i>	Narrow	Cooperation on one issue area
	Medium	Issue linkage: cooperation on a few interlinked issue areas
	Broad	Multiple and at best loosely connected areas of cooperation
<i>Mandate</i>	Consultation	Information exchange
	Coordination	Coordination of national efforts tackling specific problems
	Initiation	Legislative harmonization: reshaping existing or introducing new solutions to specific problems; binding national enforcement of policy decisions
<i>Centralization</i>	Informal	Spontaneous, <i>ad hoc</i> negotiations
	Intergovernmental	Regular intergovernmental negotiations, such as summits and intergovernmental conferences
	Subgovernmental	Delegation of issue-specific decision- and policymaking to specialized bodies, such as expert groups and working tables
	Multilevel	Regular multilevel negotiations including parliamentary, business, non-governmental and other levels

Table 3: *Institutional design of formal regional cooperation*

Defining the institutional model of regional integration in terms of design properties proves useful, since it allows grasping essential features of cooperation in the EU and other regional groupings while avoiding the pitfall of comparing concrete institutional forms. However, characterizing the EU in terms of institutional design features appears tricky, since the EU in its current form developed from a few distinct though interconnected regional initiatives. For the sake of simplicity, we can however assume continuity in the succession of these institutional forms. In this perspective, the institutional design of the EU has undergone little change since the inception of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1951. Back then, the Community was conceived as a cooperation framework of medium scope, initiation mandate and multilevel centralization, already including the specialized Court. The Rome Treaties of 1957 introduced additional areas of cooperation – economy and atomic energy, thus increasing scope to broad, but did not formally alter the values on the dimensions of mandate and centralization. Since that time, EU design properties strengthened (e.g. with the expansion of cooperation areas and the introduction of new institutions, such as the European Parliament and the European Central Bank) but did not qualitatively change.

By this formal criterion, the EU can be expected to promote external regional cooperation of relatively high profile. At the same time, it would be naïve to assume that the EU would actually demand enhanced institutionalization from weak or nascent regional fora that have little capacity for integration and/or little political will to delegate their competences to a regional level, as in the EU neighbourhood. Doing so would produce regionalism at best empty of substance. Therefore the prediction with regard to the institutional design model would be that the EU will not actively seek to influence the institutionalization of regional cooperation in its neighbourhood but will support the regional fora (relatively) indiscriminately. At the same time, regional initiatives themselves may be tempted to adopt the EU institutional model as one that has proved successful in sustaining EU integration.

### ***EU governance model***

Whereas the institutional model of EU regionalism captures formalization of regional cooperation, the governance model describes the rules of steering within and among regional institutional structures. Defining the EU model as a particular governance template is, on the one hand, advantageous, since it allows accounting for meso-institutional properties of regional cooperation, but on the other hand, more problematic due to the extremely contested nature of the concept of governance. The theoretical accounts of governance are manifold and incoherent, causing confusion and debates about its meaning (see Kohler-Koch and Rittberger 2006: 28-9; Van Kersbergen and Van Waarden 2004: 144-52). The term ‘governance’ is used to denote ‘a wide variety of phenomena [...] ranging from different institutional structures and actor constellations in political decision-making to varying types of policy instruments’ (Treib *et al.* 2007: 1).

The EU model of governance is equally difficult to grasp. Mary Farrell maintains that it is ‘based on institutionalized decision-making, with legal rules that support such principles of regional integration as competition, liberalization, mutual recognition, and subsidiarity, and a set of normative values based on democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights, and multilateralism’ (Farrell 2007: 305). Formulated as an inconclusive list of EU properties, this definition, however, appears more descriptive than analytical. Tannelie Blom and his co-authors adopt a straightforward institutionalist perspective and understand EU governance as institutional design (Blom *et al.* 2008). The studies of EU governance focusing at the policy level are altogether sceptical about the existence of a single EU governance model. Heather Grabbe, for instance, points out that the EU ‘lacks the comprehensive institutional templates that would be needed to shape political institutions into an identifiably “EU” mould’ (Grabbe 2001). Indeed, from the policy perspective not only does each policy field in the EU enjoy

specific templates, so that one can speak, for example, of the EU model of social policy (Scharpf 2002; Hay *et al.* 1999), cross-border cooperation (Jorry 2007) or customs union (Hartler and Laird 1999), but also templates differ within one issue area. Ulrich Sedelmeier argues that a single EU model is absent in many policy areas (Sedelmeier 2006: 12).

Faced with the ambiguity surrounding the term ‘governance’ in general and EU governance in particular, I opt for a compound conceptualization of the governance model of regional integration that captures essential properties of decision making and policy implementation in regional institutional settings and is not restricted to innovative steering modes characteristic of the EU.<sup>5</sup> More specifically, I suggest taking up on three features recurrent in general literature on governance, good governance, democratic governance as well as in their applications to the EU: regulation, policy dynamic, and participation. *Regulation* concerns legitimization of governance rules and policy solutions. Strong regulatory governance relies on legally binding rules developed internally, whereas weak regulation is detected in absence of precise rules controlling policymaking and implementation.<sup>6</sup> Policy steering according to external agreements, such as international conventions, characterizes regulation of medium strength. Thus defined regulatory dimension of governance resonates with the concept of obligation (Abbott *et al.* 2000: 401; applied to EU external governance in Lavenex *et al.* 2009: 815), but is distinct in its focus on rule origin rather than degree of commitment bound by legal rules.

*Policy dynamic* is defined as the logic driving cooperation on specific policy issues. At one extreme lies general political logic underpinning regional cooperation and at the other extreme there is functionalist logic of policy problem solving. This distinction originates in neofunctionalism that conceives of the EU as a system of functionally driven regional integration (Haas and Schmitter 1964; Schmitter 1969). The governance approach refers to this distinction when contrasting hierarchical policymaking dominated by political pressure and efficiency-oriented, technocratic governance by experts (see Jachtenfuchs 2001: 251-3). Furthermore, policy dynamic links up with the studies investigating the correspondence of institutional settings to problem structure, or type of main cooperation problems that an

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<sup>5</sup> In fact, the application of EU-centred conceptualizations of governance to non-EU settings can be quite misleading. For instance, proliferation of loose, informal governance in the EU context denotes the development of innovative horizontal network governance, whereas in less developed regional initiatives, such as those in wide Europe, informal governance is rather the evidence of weakness of cooperation, i.e. the lack of agreement among cooperating members regarding degree of policy coordination and competences of regional institutions. As Alberta Sbragia eloquently puts it, ‘[w]hereas other regional projects are concerned with the process of integration, however defined, the EU is not struggling to come to terms with the degree of integration it has already achieved’ (Sbragia 2008: 35). For this reason, I do not adopt the conceptualizations of governance in terms of modes (for example, Héritier 2002; Lavenex and Schimmelfennig 2009).

<sup>6</sup> Compare strong regulation with initiation mandate: the latter does not differentiate between cooperation according to legal rules developed internally and implementation of international obligations.

institutional arrangement is designed to conquer (see Sedelmeier 2002, 2005; Hall 1993; Mitchell 2006; Chisholm 1995). Finally, *participation* grasps the representative, democratic quality of governance. The distinction is made between decision- and policymaking restricted to governmental actors and more inclusive forms of governance involving non-state actors (see, for instance, Freyburg *et al.* 2009: 918; Kohler-Koch and Rittberger 2006: 32; Treib *et al.* 2007: 7-8).

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>Indicator</b>
<i>Regulation</i>	Weak	Cooperation in absence of binding legal rules regulating policymaking and implementation
	Medium	Implementation of rules committed to by international obligations, such as conventions
	Strong	Rules of policymaking and implementation are established within a regional initiative
<i>Policy dynamic</i>	Political	Scope and development of cooperation, including in sectors, are driven by (geo-)political consideration
	Mixed political and functional	Policy solutions are found at the intersection of political pressures and functional needs
	Functional	Cooperation serves solving concrete policy problems at stake
<i>Participation</i>	Constrictive	Decision- and policymaking solely by governmental actors
	Semi-inclusive	Optional participation of non-governmental actors in decision- and policymaking
	Inclusive	Decision- and policymaking requires involvement of non-governmental actors

Table 4: *Governance in regional cooperation frameworks*

Table 4 reviews the three key dimensions of governance. The EU governance model, similarly to the institutional design model, has not changed substantially over time. It has been characterized by strong regulation and functional dynamic since the ECSC. The participatory dimension of governance, however, is a recent development. It was not an essential feature of EU policymaking and implementation until the 2001 White Paper on European Governance that streamlined consultative processes into all EU sectors. With respect to the governance model the EU can be expected to promote regional cooperation as a means of solving policy problems (functional dynamic) and medium to strong regulation. Regulatory governance according to the EU may equally denote rules specific to a given cooperation forum and the transfer of EU rules as a ready-made template from which external

initiatives could borrow. It is possible to argue that participation would be less likely to be promoted by the EU as a centrepiece governance feature since it has not been ingrained into the EU policymaking since the outset. Naturally, the EU governance model can be expected to be most easily promoted and emulated through the adoption of EU policy templates.

### **III. WIDE EUROPE: REGIONAL INTEGRATION BY THE EU MODEL?**

#### ***The EU models according to the EU***

The EU itself tends to be rather vague when it comes to defining the institutional model of integration it represents. The European Commission conceives of the design of regional integration, based on the EU's own experience, as 'a blend of supranationalism and intergovernmentalism' resulting in a 'realistic mandate' that avoids redundancy with other institutions (European Commission 1995: 11, 2008a: 46). By and large, this is the most comprehensive definition of the EU institutional model provided by the EU itself. There is, however, certain evidence that in supporting individual regional groupings the EU pays attention to the ways in which such cooperation is institutionalized. For example, the recent EU strategy targeting regional integration among the African, Caribbean and Pacific states calls for 'simplification of the institutional architecture and integration agendas' (European Commission 2008b: 4). In wide Europe, the EU advocates the strengthening of the Council of the Baltic Sea States through the establishment of a new institutional body, permanent secretariat (European Commission 1996: 8). Institutional capacity building is also an important part of the EU's support for regional cooperation in the Mediterranean area, under the Agadir Agreement (European Commission 2007b: 34).

As for the governance model, the 2001 White Paper on European Governance defines governance as 'rules, processes and behaviour that affect the way in which powers are exercised at European level, particularly as regards openness, participation, accountability, effectiveness and coherence' (European Commission 2001: 8f). This notion is related to the theoretical perspectives on governance as a particular form of rulemaking and implementation, as conceptualized above, as well as governance seen as a process whereby decision- and policymaking acquire democratic qualities (see Freyburg *et al.* 2009). This twofold understanding is reflected in the EU's often interchangeable use of the terms governance, good governance, and democratic governance (see, for example, European Commission 2006: 5). Governance features prominently in the EU's relations with external regions (European Commission 2006: 15). The regional dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), for example, focuses less on institutions proper and more on

governance mechanisms attending to them, especially at the sectoral level (European Commission 2003, 2007a, 2007b). Moreover, the EU supports bottom-up regional initiatives in the Eastern and Southern neighbourhoods through the prism of (governance) objectives realized in the EU's own region-wide policy programmes (European Commission 2007a: 11-2). Whether or not such support also entails the transfer of EU integration experience is yet an open question.

### ***EU neighbourhood: case selection***

Thirty-four regional initiatives in the wide neighbourhood of the EU were chosen for the empirical analysis.<sup>7</sup> The selection of initiatives was made according to two criteria. First, they had to embrace countries as primary members. By this condition, non-state-level frameworks bringing together civil society and non-governmental organizations, industries, lobbyists, political parties and the like were excluded from the pool of analyzed cases. Second, initiatives had to be established as independent regional structures. Hence not only EU policy programmes targeting the neighbourhood, such as the Black Sea Synergy and Inogate, but also platforms for cooperation between the EU and groups of countries, such as the Baku Initiative, Northern Dimension, ENP and Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, were disregarded in order not to distort the analysis. At the same time the analysis includes formally independent frameworks triggered and to a different extent controlled by the EU, such as initiatives for energy cooperation in South-Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean area and a South-South Free Trade – regional groupings seen by the EU as steps towards integration of regional markets into EU markets. In fact, these groupings present most-likely cases for pursuing regional cooperation by EU example.

Each regional grouping was coded as regards the institutional and governance properties it enjoys, and its willingness to borrow from the EU integration experience. Whenever cooperation initiatives underwent significant changes, i.e. a value on any dimension changed, they were considered as separate fora. The data for the coding was obtained from various official documents released by the selected regional cooperation initiatives, such as founding agreements, declarations, summit and meeting conclusions, strategy papers, action plans, as well as information published on the official websites, particularly as regards organizational set-up of cooperation. Degree of EU engagement was coded using, first, EU official documents such as Commission communications, strategy papers, working documents and the like, and second, sources originating in regional

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<sup>7</sup> For a full list of analyzed regional initiatives see Annex.

initiatives. All variables were coded on an ordinal scale. The coding table is provided in Annex.

**Most- and least-likely cases for EU model transfer**

The main hypothesis for the likelihood of EU model(s) transfer has been that degree of each party’s engagement determines the likelihood of template adoption or emulation. Figure 1 displays how the regional groupings in the EU neighbourhood stand on these two conditions. In the empirical analysis I furthermore controlled for three factors – EU membership (through the European Commission / through EU member states / none), Russia’s membership (in a framework comprised solely of the former Soviet Union countries / in a wider framework / not a member) and integration dynamic (political and sectoral, i.e. with enlargement perspective / sectoral without enlargement perspective / none).<sup>8</sup>

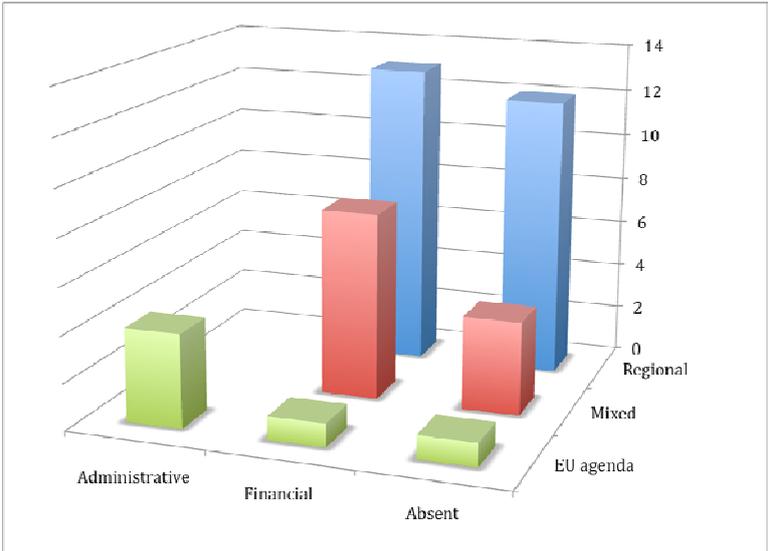


Figure 1: Promotion and emulation in EU neighbourhood

Two main patterns are evident. First, the majority of initiatives develop a regional agenda and are not by default oriented towards the EU. It can be expected, therefore, that they will be unlikely to emulate the EU model. The lack of commitment to borrow from the EU is, however, not correlated with degree of EU support enjoyed by these fora: in fact, more initiatives with exclusively regional focus receive financial assistance from the EU than those that do not. Consistently high degree of EU support for non-isomorphic regional initiatives challenges the argument about the EU’s tendency to promote its own model of regionalism

<sup>8</sup> The controls have not been included into this paper.

through interregional relations. Second, the EU is keen on administering regional fora that seek to implement EU agenda, i.e. adopt the relevant *acquis*. Highest scores on both conditions make these initiatives most-likely cases for borrowing from the EU model. It is therefore worth having a look at them in a slightly greater detail.

Four regional initiatives in the EU neighbourhood conform to the two conditions for EU model adoption and emulation: Regional Electricity and Gas Market (REM) and Energy Community (EC) for South-Eastern Europe, Sub-regional Cooperation on Electricity in Maghreb (SRCEM), and South-South Free Trade Area (SS FTA) in the Mediterranean. All of these have been incepted by the EU as a precondition for future integration with the relevant EU markets. *De jure* the EU is not a member of any of these fora, but *de facto* it is the EU who defines terms of cooperation, sets conditions – harmonization of legislation with the relevant EU directives, and supervises progress in their implementation. In these cases, the integration dynamic sets in even outside the enlargement framework. In Europe, the EU introduced the idea of functional market integration as an extension of the Stability Pact process tackling conflict prevention, post-conflict reconstruction and stabilization in South-Eastern Europe. Although accession of these countries to the EU is on the agenda, it is however not yet a set question. In the Mediterranean, only sectoral integration is at stake, but also demanded by the EU as a step towards integration into EU energy markets and establishment of a Euro-Mediterranean free-trade area.

Interestingly enough, the EU has not been nearly as active in the formation of the Central European Free Trade Area (CEFTA) that emerged as a bottom-up initiative back in 1992 when the Eastern enlargement of the EU was not even considered. The EU has been continually providing financial assistance to CEFTA but has not taken over administrative functions of coordination, monitoring and supervision even in the second phase of CEFTA which started in 2006 with new members – South-Eastern European countries.

As for least-likely cases for the adoption and emulation of the EU model(s), the picture is less clear. Eleven initiatives neither refer to the EU agenda nor enjoy any degree of EU support. It is possible, however, to single out two homogenous groups of cooperation fora among these eleven cases: first, groupings established by the countries of former Soviet Union: Community of Independent States (CIS) and its branch initiative Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), Eurasian Economic Community (EAEC/Evrazes), and Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). All of these initiatives are in the so-called Russian sphere of influence and are furthermore largely driven by Russia. In view of this, it is not surprising that they do not look to the EU for cooperation templates. The second group is comprised of

two initiatives – Arab-Maghreb Union (UMA) and General Arab Free Trade Area (GAFTA). Both fora have emerged from within the region prior to the establishment of Euro-Mediterranean Partnership framework. GAFTA was conceived in 1981 but really took off only in 1997, whereas UMA was established in 1989. This may explain for the lack of mutual interest between these cooperation fora and the EU. The remaining four least-likely cases – Baltic Sea Task Force on Organized Crime (BSTF OC, branch organization of the Council of the Baltic Sea States, CBSS), Danube Cooperation Process (DCP), Southeast European Cooperation Initiative (SECI), and SECI Center (SECIC) – are rather dissimilar and do not offer any visible patterns as regards conditions for EU model transfer.

In general, in the EU neighbourhood there are no cases when the EU acts as a chair of cooperation that has no connection with the relevant EU policies. By contrast, there is one example for the alternative scenario of asymmetric commitment. While the Visegrád group (V4) committed itself to fulfilling the EU's common goals and objectives, the EU did not reciprocate. This was due to the fact that the main channel of EU assistance to accession countries was bilateral, and the EU saw regional initiatives formed by the candidate states, particularly V4, as sites where future member states could demonstrate their own commitment to regional integration. However, the V4 case is an exception. In general, regional initiatives not composed of candidates for EU membership, if they aim to implement EU integration agenda (which basically means employ policy solutions developed by the EU through the transposition of the EU *acquis*), also receive support from the EU for undertaking this task. Overall, the EU and the neighbouring regional initiatives display relatively symmetric commitment as regards the endorsement and promotion of the EU model(s).

### ***Export of the EU models?***

As regards the institutional model of regionalism, no framework in the EU neighbourhood enjoys institutional design properties comparable to those of the EU. Moreover, there are no distinct patterns of institutionalization of cooperation among the EU-neighbouring countries. Not only are there multiple combinations of institutional features in general, but also many fora considerably overlap both in terms of country membership and in terms of cooperation focus, thus multiplying the number of possible institution-building options available for solving intra-regional problems. In view of this, the export of the EU institutional model in the neighbourhood can be characterized either as an instance of absent emulation or failed promotion.

The governance model of EU regional integration, by contrast, finds more adepts in the EU neighbourhood. In fact, there are quite a few cooperation fora that are characterized by

strong regulation and functional dynamic of policy processes, with varying degrees of participatory governance. The initiatives with the highest scores on regulation and policy dynamic but exclusive participation are the Black Sea Commission, Helsinki Commission, Caspian Environmental Process (CEP), International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR, in its original set-up), GAFTA, SS FTA, and CEFTA (first set-up). Subsequently, CEFTA developed semi-inclusive participatory governance, whereas ICPDR evolved to feature fully inclusive participation of non-state actors in policymaking and implementation. It is evident that all of the listed initiatives are functional cooperation fora focusing either on environmental issues or on economy, aiming to establish regional free-trade areas. While some of these initiatives clearly emulate the EU (CEFTA and SS FTA), others seek to develop their own regulatory rules rather than borrow from the EU.

In general, there is no statistically significant causal relationship between the identified conditions for emulation and promotion of the EU model and actual adoption of the EU institutional or governance features by the regional groupings in the EU neighbourhood. The picture appears to be more nuanced and requires a further investigation into possible causal factors. There are, however, certain correlations between the two main conditions, as well as the three control variables, and the properties of regional cooperation in wide Europe. In particular, the variable controlling for integration dynamic seems to provide some insights into the likelihood that EU rules regulating policymaking and implementation are borrowed by external regional cooperation fora.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The scholarly literature offers an influential argument about the export of the EU model of regional integration in other parts of the world. The empirical evidence supporting this claim is, however, inconclusive. Since the students of the EU tend to consider the EU as *the model* of regional integration, EU support for external regional groupings is often seen as an instance of the export of the EU model as such. The studies of new regionalism, however, believe regionalization processes to be part of the dynamic of globalization and thus, not owing specifically to the EU. This paper addressed the controversial issues of what considers the EU model of regionalism, whether the EU tries to promote it elsewhere in the world, and whether the EU model, however defined, is actually adopted or emulated by other regional groupings.

Two models of EU integration established in the literature were elaborated in order to compare regional cooperation fora in the EU neighbourhood with the EU: the institutional and governance models. The empirical analysis has demonstrated a few interesting patterns. First,

the EU actively supports semi-isomorphic and even non-isomorphic regional initiatives in its neighbourhood, unless they are in the Russian sphere of influence, as is the case with initiatives formed by former Soviet Union countries. At the same time, the EU acts as an administrator and supervisor of only isomorphic regional groupings that seek to transfer EU policy solutions outside the framework of enlargement. There is little evidence for the scholarly argument that EU support for regional cooperation also implies the export of the EU model – this holds for both the institutional and governance models.

Second, regional initiatives conceived and triggered by the EU are also *de facto* controlled by the EU despite their formally regional ownership. As a result, they score high on their commitment to borrow from EU integration experience – typically by adopting EU policy templates – as well as on specific properties of institutional design and governance rules. These findings link up with the studies on policy export (e.g. Christiansen *et al.* 2000; Lavenex *et al.* 2009), extending the conclusions made for the EU's programmes targeting the neighbouring countries to the EU's relations with independent regional groupings. Regional cooperation fora established bottom-up, however, do not conform to this pattern. Finally, the empirical analysis reveals the proliferation of functional regional initiatives in the EU neighbourhood. These groupings aim to solve concrete policy problems faced by the regions either by adopting ready-made policy solutions developed by the EU or by elaborating internal rules for dealing with regional challenges. In either case, they demonstrate governance properties typical for the EU model of regionalism.

## ANNEX: REGIONAL INITIATIVES IN THE EU NEIGHBOURHOOD

Regional initiative	Institutional design			Governance			Conditions		
	name	version	scope	mandate	centraliz	regulat	dynamic	particip	emulat
Adriatic-Ionian Initiative (AII)	1	3	2	3	1	2	2	1	2
Adriatic-Ionian Initiative (AII)	2	3	2	3	1	2	2	2	2
Baltic 21	1	3	2	3	2	3	3	1	2
Baltic 21	2	3	2	3	2	3	3	2	2
Baltic Sea Region Energy Cooperation (BASREC)	1	2	2	3	1	3	2	2	2
Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC)	1	3	2	3	1	1	2	1	2
Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution (Black Sea Commission)	1	1	2	3	3	3	1	1	2
Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (Black Sea Economic Cooperation, BSEC)	1	3	2	4	1	2	1	1	2
Barents Regional Council (BRC)	1	3	2	3	1	1	2	1	2
Black Sea Forum for Dialogue and Partnership (BSFDP)	1	3	1	1	1	1	3	1	2
Baltic Sea Task Force on Organised Crime (BSTF OC)	1	1	2	3	1	3	1	1	1
Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS)	2	3	2	3	1	1	2	2	2
Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS)	1	3	2	3	1	1	2	1	2
Community of Democratic Choice (CDC)	1	3	1	1	1	1	2	2	1
Central European Free Trade Area (CEFTA)	2	1	3	3	3	3	2	2	2
Central European Free Trade Area (CEFTA)	3	1	3	3	3	3	2	3	2
Central European Free Trade Area (CEFTA)	1	1	3	2	3	3	1	1	2
Central European Initiative (CEI)	2	3	2	3	1	2	1	2	2
Central European Initiative (CEI)	1	3	2	4	1	2	1	2	1
Caspian Environmental Programme (CEP)	1	1	2	2	3	3	1	1	2
Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)	1	3	2	4	3	1	1	1	1
Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO)	1	1	3	2	3	1	1	1	1
Danube Co-operation Process (DCP)	1	3	2	2	1	1	1	1	1
Energy Community for South-East Europe (EC SEE)	1	1	3	3	2	3		3	3
Environmental Programme for the Danube River Basin (EPDRB), 1991-2000	1	1	2	3	2	3	3	1	2
Eurasian Economic Community (Evrases/EAEC)	1	1	3	4	1	2	1	1	1
Greater Arab Free Trade Area (GAFTA)	2	1	3	3	3	3	1	1	1
Greater Arab Free Trade Area (GAFTA)	1	1	3	2	3	3	1	1	1
Organization for Democracy and Economic Development (GUAM)	1	3	2	3	1	2	1	2	1
Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (Helsinki Commission, HELCOM)	1	1	2	3	3	3	1	1	2
International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River against Pollution (ICPDR)	2	1	2	3	3	3	3	2	2
International Commission for the Protection of the	1	1	1	3	3	3	1	1	2

Danube River against Pollution (ICPDR)									
Migration, Asylum and Refugee Regional Initiative (MARRI)	1	1	1	3	1	3	1	2	2
Regional Electricity and Gas Market for South-East Europe (REM SEE)	1	1	3	3	2	3		3	3
Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)	1	3	2	4	1	1	1	1	1
Southeast European Cooperation Initiative (SECI)	1	2	1	3	1	1	1	1	1
SECI Center (SECIC)	1	1	2	3	1	2	1	1	1
Southeast European Cooperation Process (SEECF)	1	3	1	2	1	1	1	1	1
Sub-regional Cooperation on Electricity in Maghreb (SRCE)	1	1	3	2	2	2	1	3	3
South-South Free Trade Area in the Mediterranean (SS FTA)	1	1	3	3	3	3	1	3	3
Arab-Maghreb Union (UMA)	1	3	3	4	3	1	1	1	1
Visegrád Group (V4)	2	3	2	3	2	2	1	3	1
Visegrád Group (V4)	1	3	2	1	1	2	1	2	1

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