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Contending metaphors of the European Union as a global actor

Norms and power in the European discourse on multilateralism

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The legitimacy crisis that existing institutions of global governance are undergoing has led the European Union (EU) to place the idea of “effective multilateralism” at the heart of its foreign policy doctrine. This article draws inspiration from debates on the notion of power in International Relations to expose the normative dilemmas behind multilateralism in EU foreign policy. To do this, the article systematically analyses the metaphors on the EU’s role in global governance that are present in political speeches that address the question of multilateralism during the period 2004 to 2011. This analysis shows that the most sedimented metaphor on the EU’s role as a promoter of multilateralism – the EU as MODEL – is precisely the one that entails the most serious normative concerns from the perspective of the ideal traits of multilateralism described in the literature.

Keywords: Metaphors; Discourse-Historical Approach; Power; Multilateralism; European Union; Global Governance

1. Introduction

In the aftermath of the United States’ invasion of Iraq in 2003, the European Union (EU) launched its first “Security Strategy”, placing the idea of *effective multilateralism* at the heart of its foreign policy doctrine (European Council 2003). This initiative was generally interpreted as a reaction to the unilateralist turn of U.S. foreign policy under the neo-conservative leadership of the George W. Bush Administration, triggering a serious legitimacy crisis among existing institutions of global governance at that time. More recently, acutely felt changes in the international arena, such as the rise of the so-called “emerging powers”, the long-lasting effects

of the 2008 financial crash, and the standstill in core multilateral processes (e.g. the Doha Round and the Kyoto Protocol) added further reservations related to the ability and legitimacy of existing international institutions to deal with contemporary global challenges. In this context, the goal of reinforcing international norms and multilateral cooperation has become ever more salient for the EU. Over the last decade, the promotion of multilateralism has been diversely described as “a constitutional goal of Europe” (Barroso 2010, 4), the “European Union’s DNA” (Prodi 2004, 6) or, more enigmatically, “less than a religion but more than just a method” (Solana 2008a, 6).

Despite the centrality and widely undisputed nature of multilateralism as a basic tenet of EU foreign policy, the meaning of and implications drawn from the term remain elusive (Lazarou et al. 2010; Wouters et al. 2010). The idea of multilateralism is a rather slippery concept in International Relations (IR) literature, where it has variously been defined as an institutional form (Keohane 1990), an organising principle (Ruggie 1993), a practice (Pouliot 2011) and, crucially, a contingent power structure (Cox 1992). The 2003 European Security Strategy defines effective multilateralism broadly as “the development of a stronger international society, well-functioning international institutions and a rule-based international order” (European Council 2003, 8). Beyond demonstrating a preference for a densely institutionalised international system and a reflex against coercion and traditional power politics, this definition still allows for many differing visions and prescriptions concerning the kind of multilateral order that has been envisaged and the ways in which to attain it.

This article will expose the different meanings of multilateralism in EU foreign policy and assess their potential conflicts and normative implications. To do this, it combines theoretical underpinnings from IR and methodological tools from Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Specifically, the article discusses the usage of the concept of multilateralism through the prism of critical IR theory and devises an analytical framework that consists of a study of *metaphors* relating to the EU’s role in global governance. Building on emerging cleavages in the literature on EU foreign policy, we distinguish three conceptual metaphors: the EU as MODEL (or rule-setter); the EU as PLAYER (or rule-negotiator); and the EU as INSTRUMENT (or rule-facilitator) for global governance.¹ Using qualitative content analysis, this analytical framework is then applied to a sample of 35 speeches given by EU representatives during the period 2004–2011. This leads us to the conclusion that the most sedimented metaphor in EU policy discourse is the EU as MODEL,

1. For the purpose of clarity, this chapter follows the convention of referring to these metaphors in capital letters.

the one that entails the most serious normative concerns from the perspective of the ideal traits of multilateralism described in the literature.

This article is divided into five sections. The first section briefly introduces the concept of multilateralism and its ambiguous relation with the notion of power. The second section outlines our research design and sources. The third section contains a three-part analysis that explores the discursive order of the three conceptual metaphors in the EU's policy discourse. The fourth section assesses both the degree of conventionalisation of each of the metaphors and the extent to which they match the ideal normative qualities that a maximalist concept of multilateralism is meant to entail, namely, respect for equality, inclusiveness and deliberative function. Finally, the article concludes with a fifth section in which we spell out the wider implications of this study.

2. Theoretical underpinnings: Multilateralism as an 'antidote' or a form of power?

Although there are many definitions of multilateralism, the most commonly accepted one has a markedly normative character, as "an institutional form that coordinates relations among three or more states on the basis of *generalised principles of conduct*: that is, principles which specify appropriate conducts for a class of actions, without regard to the particularistic interests of the parties or the strategic exigencies that may exist in specific" (Ruggie 1993, 11). In other words, multilateralism is not only an instrumental policy choice of the actors involved, but also a normative commitment to a particular way of conducting international relations. Other common elements among definitions of multilateralism are *inclusiveness* in terms of the actors affected (Peterson et al. 2008, 2) and *equality* among them, in the sense that all voices should have equal right to be heard and respected (Mitzen 2005, 411). Yet another characteristic of multilateralism as a diplomatic practice is its open-ended or *deliberative* character (*Ibid.* 403ff). In this regard, multilateral institutions should have mechanisms to accommodate 'moral disagreement and uncertainty', in recognition that participants may have very different interests and moral standpoints, and that not only the means and goals, but also the very standards of justice and legitimacy of multilateral institutions, may change over time (Buchanan & Keohane 2006, 418). Coined this way, the analytical concept of multilateralism has been most prominent in liberal IR theory, for which international institutions are seen as an expression of convergent domestic interests and liberal values across states, and thus, as an "antidote of power" (cf. Barnett & Duvall 2005, 40–41). In addition, from the lens of constructivist approaches and cosmopolitan thinking, multilateral diplomacy is understood as a practice for taming anarchy,

preventing estrangement (Held 2003; see also Mitzen 2005; Pouliot 2011) and even providing opportunity for a sense of community (Adler 2006).

The first systematic elaborations on the notion of multilateralism by EU representatives stressed precisely that multilateralism entails making new forms of global governance more inclusive and attentive to different voices, “so that every state – however big or small – every individual – however rich or poor – has a stake in his or her own future” (Solana 2002, 9). EU’s defence of multilateralism has been often rooted in its own experience as “the most extensive example of profound multilateral cooperation one could imagine” (Patten 2000, 4). In the words of the former EU External Relations Commissioner, multilateralism enabled the EU to “preserve what is best about its members: their different cultures, languages, traditions, and historical identities while overcoming what has been worst: nationalism, xenophobia, mutually destructive trade and monetary policies, and (ultimately) their tendency to go to war with one another” (*Ibid.*). According to some authors, it is this experience with a shameful past that leads the EU to be a defender of multilateralism in a humble, self-reflexive and non-hierarchical way (Diez & Manners 2007, 181–183). EU’s view of multilateralism is thus also seen “as a way of life rather than as a question of power” (Groom 2006, 460).

However, since the very emergence of the concept of multilateralism as a source of academic enquiry, critical theorists noted that the practice (and discourse) of multilateralism, as any other form of international order, cannot be abstracted from power relations. For example, in his seminal works on multilateralism and global order, Robert W. Cox contended that “the official discourse of multilateralism has been a Western, Euro-American, discourse” (Cox 1997, 110). Rather than a form of cooperation and collective-will formation, he claimed, multilateralism should be understood as part of the efforts to institutionalize and regulate the existing order, as well as a site of struggle between the powerful and less powerful (Cox 1992, 177). With the growing perception of the ascent of new powers, scholars have come to focus more explicitly on multilateralism as a situation in which normative struggles between Western and non-Western states, as well as between states and non-state actors, are played out (Zürn & Stephen 2010; Hampson & Heinbecker 2011). These struggles are not only for the substantive output multilateral processes are expected to produce, but also for establishing the principles of legitimacy and rules of participation that determine who is entitled to be heard and contribute to global deliberations in the first place (Clark 2009, 2). Therefore, multilateralism as a discourse can also be seen from the prism of its “productive power” (Barnet & Duvall 2005, 55–57), alluding to the power emanating from imposing concepts and identities upon others through discourses of normality. Speaking multilateralism thus implies a certain representation of the

world order and the position that the Self and Others occupy in it, as well as the establishment of criteria of inclusion/exclusion and standards of legitimacy.

Bearing in mind this last approach to multilateralism, the EU discourse on global governance and multilateralism can be critically examined in terms of the following interrelated questions:

1. What relations of *equality* (or hierarchy) between international actors are embedded in the EU's discourse on multilateralism?
2. How *inclusive* (or exclusive) are the envisaged institutions of global governance?
3. What are the *principles of legitimacy* emerging from the EU's discourse on multilateralism?

An assessment of these questions will help determine how close or distant the ideas of multilateralism that are advanced by the EU satisfy the ideal of equality, inclusiveness and deliberative quality that are often assumed to inform its distinct approach to global governance. The next section will spell out how to integrate these questions into a discourse analytical framework.

3. Methodology: Examining the EU's discourse of global governance through metaphors

The methodological basis for this analysis is the study of *metaphors* – in this case, metaphors of the EU's role in global governance. We build particularly on the growing body of work applying metaphor analysis to the study of the EU, for example, studies on attitudes towards Europe and European integration (Chilton & Ilyn 1993; Drulák 2006; Musolff 2004), and on specific policy domains such as EU social policy (Straehle et al. 1999), EU enlargement (Hülse 2006) or EU external action (Carta 2014). Metaphors are discursive devices that allow for understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another (Lakoff & Johnson 1980, 5). Metaphors order and simplify complex phenomena by relating them to other phenomena and making them more understandable through arranging certain facts, objects and ideas (Ghafele 2004, 442–443). Among the many cognitive functions of metaphors (Straehle et al. 1999, 68), one is identity-building through the exclusion/inclusion of some meanings associated with culturally embedded concepts and phenomena (Hülse 2006). Metaphors also have the performative function of constituting social reality. As argued by Ringmar (2007, 119), “metaphors give you power since they help to organise social life in a certain fashion. Metaphors tell you what things are and how they hang together; metaphors define

the relationship between superiors and subordinates and between social classes; they identify social problems and their solutions and tell us what is feasible, laudable and true”.

Following Drulak (2006), we distinguish between *conceptual metaphors*, which are abstract general notions structuring discourse, and *metaphorical expressions*, which are specific statements exemplifying a given conceptual metaphor. The selection or identification of the conceptual metaphors to be examined can be made in a variety of ways. For example, Carta (2014) proposes three conceptual metaphors of the EU as an international actor by relating academic definitions with archetypal figures of the European literature. Differently, the conceptual metaphors we examine in this article draw more directly from the emerging cleavages observed in the academic and policy discourse of EU foreign policy, most specifically on whether the EU is, or should aspire to become, a model for global governance by projecting its norms, experience of multilateralism and regulatory standards onto global public policy. This is what concepts akin to the much-discussed “Normative Power Europe” (Manners 2002, 2008) convey when depicting the EU as an actor capable of setting the standards of normality in world politics. This view of the EU as a model has, however, been confronted from different angles. On the one hand, an important strand of the literature has challenged this notion on grounds that EU’s ambitions to play role model are unrealistic, if not counterproductive, in a world where new non-Western powerhouses are emerging (e.g. Howorth 2010; Mayer 2008). From this point of view, the EU should rather concentrate on building “partnerships for multilateralism” with main global players (Vasconcelos 2008; Whitman 2010). On the other hand, a relevant strand of the literature has warned against the imperialistic or civilising undertones of the normative power discourse and favour more reflexive and inclusive approach to global governance other than the reproduction of EU’s norms and rules by default (e.g. Diez 2005; Sjørusen 2006; Zielonka 2008). In light of this scholarly debate, we propose three conceptual metaphors reflecting these three different perspectives on how the EU should engage in global governance: (1) the EU as MODEL (or rule-setter) that sets its own norms as the standard for global governance; (2) the EU as PLAYER (or rule-negotiator) that co-develops international rules with the other main global powers; and (3) the EU as INSTRUMENT (or rule-facilitator), supporting the creation and implementation of international norms set by broad constellations of actors in international institutions.

The article also assesses the degree of conventionalisation of the metaphors, distinguishing among the *unconventional*, *conventional* and *sedimented* metaphors (Drulak 2006). This is done through a content analysis exercise (see below) that provides both quantitative measure (frequency of appearance in discourse) and

qualitative assessment of the degree of acceptance of each metaphor within the speech community. Specifically, we analyse a sample of 35 speeches made by the main representatives of EU external action covering the period 2004 to 2011.² Within the *genre* of political discourse, the speeches selected can be considered to be a *sub-genre* of “soul-searching” discourse (Weiss 2002), in this case, speeches directed to a reconsideration of the EU’s identity in global politics. In order to scrutinise the discursive order embedded in each metaphor we focus on the following analytical categories: *nomination/predication*, *prescription* and *argumentation*.³ As spelt out in continuation, these three dimensions of the analysis are instrumental for examining the questions outlined in the previous section concerning the EU’s understanding of multilateralism (*equality*, *inclusiveness* and *deliberative quality* respectively).

First, *nomination* and *predication* refer, respectively, to the discursive construction and qualification of social actors, objects, phenomena, events/processes and actions (Reisigl & Wodak 2009, 94). Our analysis has paid particular attention to the adjectives, attributes and *metaphorical expressions* employed to refer to the EU, and to how these relate to the three conceptual metaphors of MODEL, PLAYER and INSTRUMENT. For example: nominating the EU as a “*laboratory for globalization*” depicts the EU as able to offer new solutions to global challenges, and hence can be related to the idea of the EU as a rule-setter (EU as MODEL); qualifying the EU as being “another *emerging power*” implies the EU’s equal standing to other big powers as a co-maker of global rules (EU as

2. In total, the sample consists of 12 speeches for two European Commission Presidents (Romano Prodi and José Manuel Barroso); 13 speeches for two High Representatives (Javier Solana and Catherine Ashton) and 10 speeches for two Commissioners for External Relations (Chris Patten and Benita Ferrero-Waldner). The sample was retrieved from the Commission and Council on-line archives, using the following keywords in the title or text: “global”, “international”, “world” and “multilateral” or “multilateralism”. The selection was then refined according to relevance and representative criteria; to minimise differences in the audience, the vast majority of selected speeches were given inside the EU; they are distributed evenly across time and actors analysed.

3. These analytical dimensions are inspired by the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) to CDA (see e.g. Reisigl & Wodak 2009), but adapted for the purpose of our research aims. For example, *nomination* and *predication* are considered in the DHA as separate discursive strategies, but given the closeness of the two concepts, we bundle them together under a single analytical category. Another adaptation is that *prescription* as such is not conceptualised as a separate discursive strategy in DHA, but implicitly considered within the *argumentation* strategy, which includes the analysis of the normative proposals or claims. For the purpose of our analysis, we refer to prescription separately and reserve argumentation for the analysis of justifications and topoi.

PLAYER); or depicting the EU as “a *friend* of the United Nations” is consistent with the representation of the EU as a facilitator for international institutions (EU as INSTRUMENT). This examination of the discursive qualification of the EU will allow us to interpret how the Self (Europe/EU) is represented in relation to other actors in the system and, hence, of how the relations of *equality* (or hierarchy) are implied.

The second dimension, *prescription*, shifts the focus from self-representation to the claims or normative proposals on how the EU should contribute to global governance. In particular, we looked for statements on which rules should be promoted as a benchmark to build the multilateral system, as well as which the relevant settings for global rule making are. For the purpose of the content analysis, we categorised EU’s statements calling to promote its *own rules* as the standard for other countries and international institutions as belonging to the MODEL metaphor; statements inviting the EU to engage *with big powers* in the formulation of global rules, e.g. through bilateral partnerships or club settings, as PLAYER; and statements in favour of promoting broad global rule-making processes in the framework of universal *international institutions* such as the UN, as INSTRUMENT. These statements about whose rules and which settings are envisaged as relevant for global policy-making allow us to interpret the degree of *inclusiveness* (or exclusiveness) of the EU’s proposed global system of governance.

Finally, the third aspect of our analysis, *argumentation*, focuses more specifically on the justification that EU representatives give for their claims on what the EU can/should do in global governance. To do this, we have placed particular emphasis on the *topoi*, or often implicit “warrants or ‘conclusion rules’ which connect the argument(s) with the conclusion, the claim” (Reisigl & Wodak 2009, 110; see also Wodak in this issue). Given the topic under examination, many of the relevant arguments and topoi have to do with assumptions about the opportunities and constraints offered by the international system as well as with standards of legitimacy. This is why the patterns of argumentation behind the EU’s normative proposals on global governance allow us to interpret the *principles of legitimacy* guiding the EU’s envisaged multilateral system.

The following two sections apply the analytical framework to our sample of speeches. The first examines the discursive orders of the three conceptual metaphors as they emerge from the examined speeches, providing specific examples of their discursive realisation through strategies of nomination/predication, prescription and argumentation. The second presents more detail on the results of our content analysis (see Tables 2 and 3), in order to assess the relative conventionalisation and implications of each of the metaphors for the three questions on the nature of multilateralism posed in the previous section.

4. Analysis: Metaphors of the EU's role in global governance

4.1 The EU as MODEL (or rule-setter) for global governance

The conceptual metaphor of the EU as MODEL for other actors and global governance is presented frequently and explicitly in the speeches of EU representatives. Consider, for example, the following statement by the President of the European Commission, condensing all the dimensions of our analysis: “We can help to create a more *just* globalization [argumentation] if we *spread our norms and rules* to regulate global interactions [prescription]. Europe *is* already one of the *leading* international *norm-setters* [nomination/predication] (...) the European Union *is* a *true school* for global governance [nomination/predication]. Our main task for the next decades is to *make the world understand this*” [prescription] (Barroso 2008, 5).⁴

In terms of nomination/predication, the notion that the EU can serve as a MODEL for global governance appears frequently enacted by adjectives and metaphorical expressions that qualify the EU as successful, unique, advanced, influential, respected or admired. As shown in Table 1, the list of metaphorical expressions used by EU representatives in itemising the qualities of the EU model is long and diverse. This representation of the EU as MODEL for global governance often conveys a hierarchical relation between the EU and the other actors in the system, for example by presenting the EU as able to teach others (EU as a *school*), to stabilise those unstable (EU as *anchor, magnet, gravitational pull*), or to guide those in need of direction (EU as a *beacon*). Even if EU representatives sometimes insist that the EU model cannot be imposed on others, the EU is nonetheless seen as “*uniquely well-placed to lead*” (Barroso 2006, 3) and, therefore, as a legitimate candidate to determine the rules of world order. In the words of the Commission President: “Europe is itself a *laboratory* of globalisation, a *successful case* of setting transnational rules and standards. This experience makes me believe that *we are better prepared* than any other great power to propose, not to impose, the organising principles and values of the global order” (Barroso 2008, 4).

The last quote offers also a good example of a prescriptive claim related to the EU as MODEL metaphor, namely the reference to the EU's task “to propose the organising principles and values of the global order”. More practically formulated, the path of action often prescribed is to pursue the “*external projection of EU policies globally*” (Barroso 2009, 4). These normative proposals are supported by explicit argumentation linking back to the EU's special characteristics. Take

4. All emphases in quotations are added by the authors of this paper.

Table 1. Examples of metaphorical expressions of the EU as a model

Metaphorical expressions...	Reference(s)
<i>... Suggesting the Attractiveness of the EU Model</i>	
<i>Model</i> for other regions of the world	Prodi 2004, 5
<i>Pole</i> of attraction and positive <i>reference</i> for many people around the world	Barroso 2004, 3
<i>Anchor</i> of stability in its neighbourhood and far beyond	Barroso 2004, 3
Gravitational <i>pull</i>	Barroso 2004, 4 Ferrero-Waldner 2006, 5
<i>Example</i> for the world	Barroso 2009, 3
<i>Magnet</i>	Barroso 2009, 2
<i>Model</i> of international governance	Barroso 2011a, 3
<i>Beacon</i> of the world	Ferrero-Waldner 2006, 4
A source of <i>inspiration</i>	Solana 2005a, 3
<i>Transformative power</i>	Solana 2005b, 3
<i>Force for good</i> around the world	Solana 2006a, 3 Solana 2008a, 3
<i>... Suggesting the Ability, and the Legitimacy, of the EU to Lead</i>	
One of the leading international <i>norm-setters</i>	Barroso 2008, 4
<i>Laboratory</i> for globalisation	Barroso 2008, 4 Barroso 2009, 5
<i>Successful case</i> of setting transnational rules and standards	Barroso 2008, 4
True <i>school</i> for global governance	Barroso 2008, 5
<i>Rule generator</i>	Barroso 2010, 6
[European way] as <i>the most realistic way</i> to organise an interdependent world	Barroso 2010, 7
<i>Smart power</i>	Ferrero-Waldner 2008, 4
<i>Soft power</i> with a hard edge	Ashton 2011, 4

Source: Own elaboration.

for example the following statement: “The European Union is at the *forefront of progress* to bring international relations to the realm of lawful order. It represents the *triumph of reconciliation* over revenge; of *cooperation* over chaos; of *law* over violence. It is the *natural starting point* for any effort to improve global governance” (Barroso 2009, 5). This quote reflects well *topoi of success, uniqueness* and *moral rightness* as providing justification for the EU’s aspiration to shape global governance. In this sense, it is the uniqueness of the EU and its experience of overcoming a dreadful past that entitles or even obliges it to project its own model on

to other actors, regions or international institutions. Romano Prodi, who is a former President of the Commission, also argues that “we take *pride [in] this model* and we are convinced it provides a model for other regions of the world” (Prodi 2004, 5). Even the rise of other powers is attributable to the “outcome of a *victory of ‘our’ model* of open markets and, we hope, increasingly open societies (...) In a way [we are responsible for] the *triumph* of Western values and principles, not of their decline” (Ashton 2010a, 3).

However, the justification for the prescription of spreading EU’s norms and rules sometimes departs from this common value-based argumentation to embrace more pragmatic and self-interested arguments, using for example, the *topos of external threat* to EU’s own progress. To put it bluntly, “It is in *our interest* to *spread our norms* and to *extend our influence*. Let me tell you in a very frank way: if we do not persuade other great powers that our norms are beneficial for world order, *it will be very difficult to keep our* social, environmental standards, and at the same time *our economic growth*” (Barroso 2008, 4).

4.2 The EU as PLAYER (or rule-negotiator) in global governance

The notion of the EU being a “global player” appears to take a prominent role in the second half of the 2000s, in parallel with the establishment of so-called “strategic partnerships” or “partnerships for multilateralism” (Vasconcelos 2008). By embracing these concepts, the EU does not appear as *the* rule-setter, but rather, as an actor that must *negotiate* the rules and co-shape the international system with other global players.

In terms of nomination/predication, the metaphor of EU as PLAYER is enacted by emphasizing the EU’s attributes and resources of first-order power, including its economic, political and even military power. This characterisation of the EU is discursively reinforced by comparing the EU with, for example, the United States and China and quantifying its relative weight in the world (see e.g. Solana 2004a, 1). Even at the height of the Euro crisis in 2011, the President of the Commission contended that the EU “is also a very strong *emerging power*” (Barroso 2011b, 2). This affirmation of the EU as a key global player is reflected in EU claims of being recognised as an equal partner in transatlantic relations. Noting that the EU and the United States share many comparable attributes and resources of power, both are seen as “*natural partners* to take the lead” (Barroso 2006, 2). Indeed, Javier Solana contends that while “the EU is the *only global partner* available to the US and vice-versa”, he also insists that “the US has to grant the European Union full partnership status” and that “it has to be an effective and *balanced partnership*” (Solana 2004a, 5).

The representation of the EU as a full-partnership player with the United States and other emerging powers prescribes taking into account the views of other

global powers in the process of rule-making in global politics. As argued by Javier Solana, the task faced by the EU is to “not resist globalisation, but perhaps *negotiate* its terms. Not [to] impose our views but get hearing for them: in Washington today and Beijing tomorrow” (Solana 2006a, 3). Emphasis is thus placed on recognising the diversity of world politics and considering this when reforming institutions. For example, the High Representative asked “not [to] see this as the Western powers inviting the others after our discussions” but as the relevant players being “present at the creation of the new system” (Solana 2008a, 2). In this sense, the Western powers should be prepared “for the *new powers* having their *own ideas* on how the system must be run and reformed” (*Ibid.*).

When it comes to argumentation, in contrast to the metaphor of the EU as MODEL, the metaphor of the EU as PLAYER does not seem to arise from internal characteristics but from a more conscious awareness of the determinants of an international system and the EU’s difficult place in a world order made by and for big powers. In many passages, it is suggested that it is mainly because of global power shifts that the EU is compelled to include the views of others. In the words of the former External Relations Commissioner: “a *multi-polar world* also means we will *have to* engage increasingly with other world views and philosophies” (Ferrero-Waldner 2009a, 4). This and many other similar arguments are based on the *topos of adverse power shifts*, alluding to an idealised past where the EU/Europe/West allegedly held a dominant position. This is what Ashton seems to imply when she states that “this is no longer ‘our’ world” (Ashton 2010a, 3) or when Barroso affirms that “Europe cannot pretend to run the world forever” (Barroso 2011b, 3). The following prescriptive statements by Solana do also reflect the *topos of adverse power shifts* when he recommends “*making space* at the top table of global politics” (Solana 2007, 1–2), “[*sharing*] the leadership of the world with others” (Solana 2009a, 2), or “[*giving*] *new centres of power a stake* in its success, in our mutual self-interest” (Solana 2005a, 8).

4.3 The EU as INSTRUMENT (or rule-facilitator) for international institutions

As mentioned earlier in the article, EU’s defence of multilateralism can also be understood in terms of its commitment to promote strong and inclusive global international institutions. This role, captured here by the conceptual metaphor of the EU as INSTRUMENT for multilateralism, does not insist on the EU as the emitter of norms and rules, but conveys an outside-in image of its contribution to global governance, namely the idea that the EU is a receiver and a transmitter of international norms and obligations. As the President of the European Commission said, “effective multilateralism means (...) having strong political will to *implement* the international consensus; it means *taking* global rules, instruments

and commitments seriously; it also means *helping other countries to implement and abide by these rules*” (Barroso 2005, 4).

In terms of nomination/predication, this idea of multilateralism is realised by representing the EU via metaphorical expressions such as the United Nation’s (UN’s) “most ardent *supporter*”, “instinctive *ally*”, or “firmest *friend*” (Ferrero-Waldner 2009b, 3–4). The UN is also often named as the “centre” (Solana 2004b, 5), “cornerstone” (Solana 2005a, 7), and “heart” (Ashton 2010b, 4) of the international system and “of the multilateralism we espouse” (Ferrero-Waldner 2004, 4). Other metaphorical expressions falling within the conceptual metaphor of EU as INSTRUMENT are those that emphasise its character as a “mediator” and a “facilitator” of international consensus rather than its role as actor, power or leader. Take for example the following statement by Catherine Ashton: “[The] strength of the EU lies, paradoxically, in its ability to throw its weight around. Its influence flows from the fact that it is *disinterested* in its support for democracy, development and the rule of law. It can be an *honest broker*” (Ashton 2011, 4–5). Alternatively, in the words of Ferrero-Waldner, “[Our] credibility is accepted by all sides because we are *objective* and always *place people at the centre* of our policy” (Ferrero-Waldner 2006, 5). While the foreign policy identity and motivation of the EU are associated with “a philosophy of humanity, solidarity and integration” (Solana 2005a, 3), this is seen as “*not unique* to Europe” (Solana 2006b, 6). Emphasis on the defence of universal norms goes hand in hand with a notion of equality among different international actors. Regarding this, Ashton claims that the EU thinks of “*all partners*” as “*equal partners*” (Ashton 2011, 4).

In terms of prescription, this policy metaphor favours setting and implementing international rules through facilitating broad international consensus. In the words of the Commissioner for External Relations, “the EU supports a *greater voice* and influence for developing countries, *including the poorest*, in the international financial institutions. And a similar issue applies to the UN” (Ferrero-Waldner 2009b, 3). Javier Solana often calls for systematically involving “non-state actors” (Solana 2007, 2), “broad constellations of international actors” and “wider sets of people” in the planning and execution of foreign policies (Solana 2008b, 1, 6). Along with seeking a greater voice through all participants comes the notion of respect of others’ subjectivity and differences and a clear awareness that the self cannot be set as a standard for others, given that “what we consider normal, acceptable or desirable may look very different to people half way round the globe” (Solana 2008b, 5).

The justification for the EU role as an INSTRUMENT of multilateralism comes closer to a cosmopolitan vision of “responsibility to work for the *global common good*” (Solana 2005a, 1) and the idea of just deliberation. In the words of Solana, “diplomacy is to create rules. Rules on political participation. Rules to tame the

passion of states and individuals, to end conflicts within or between states (...) Agreed rules [that] make states secure and *people free*” (Solana 2009b, 7). This quote, however, also shows the recurrent tendency to link the ideals of inclusiveness and justice with the *topos of security*. Again in Solana’s view, “a world *more fair* is a world *more secure*” (Solana 2004b, 4). Similarly, notions of justice and diversity appear often as a warning of the potential conflict engendered when the EU projects its own norms as a model, rather than as legitimizing principles in their own right. In this sense, EU representatives sometimes admit that “we cannot take it for granted that the rest of the world, that is to say the greater part of humanity, regards our values as theirs too. We have to uphold our values and project them, while remaining aware of the existence and perceptions of ‘the other’” (Solana 2007, 4).

5. Discussion: Norms, power and conventionalisation of the metaphors of the EU’s global role

The metaphorical analysis of the speeches of EU representatives on multilateralism carried out in the previous section leads us to expose three distinct readings of the EU’s multilateralist identity (see Table 2). These metaphors also imply different approaches to equality, diversity and the legitimising principles of global governance. In this section, we will briefly summarise this point and provide the results of the content analysis.

The metaphor of the EU as INSTRUMENT probably comes nearer to the ideal notion of multilateralism, understood as observing equality, inclusiveness and enabling change through deliberation. By making the EU subordinate to international law, subsidiary to international institutions and equal to other actors in the system, the metaphor devises a multilateral system based on inclusive participation. It also conceives of the EU as open to learn and change, as result of interaction with other actors. However, as can be seen in Table 3, predicative elements of the EU discourse, which emphasise equality among peoples and authority of global international institutions are clearly secondary to the definitions of the EU relating to the metaphors of MODEL and PLAYER. Notions of justice or inclusiveness of different sensitivities in the process of global governance also appear to a much lesser extent when compared to arguments about EU’s success and moral rightness or the constraints of global power shifts that sustain the EU’s prescriptions of the metaphors of EU as MODEL and PLAYER respectively. Therefore, the metaphor of the EU as INSTRUMENT for global governance lies on the verge between a *conventional* and an *unconventional* type of metaphor due to its relatively less widespread usage.

Table 2. Summary of the analysis of the metaphors of the EU's global role

	<i>MODEL</i> (<i>rule-setter</i>)	<i>PLAYER</i> (<i>rule-negotiator</i>)	<i>INSTRUMENT</i> (<i>rule-facilitator</i>)
<i>Nomination/ Predication</i>	EU as more advanced, successful and legitimate than other international actor	EU as equal in power to other key global players	EU as equal to other international actors and subsidiary to global institutions
<i>Prescription</i>	Promoting EU rules as a model for global governance	Developing strategic partnerships with key global powers to tackle global issues	Empowering others for contributing to multilateral processes; implementing international norms and encouraging others to do so
<i>Argumentation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rightness of own values - Success of own policies - EU/global progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Power shifts - Multipolarity - Effectiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Justice - Inclusiveness - Respect for difference
<i>Resulting image of multilateralism</i>	Multilateralism premised on a generalised acquiescence of EU/Western-inspired institutions	Multilateralism premised on higher responsibility and decision-taking rights by the big powers	Multilateralism premised on equal rights among peoples and individuals

Source: Own elaboration.

Table 3. Frequency of discursive elements conceptualised as MODEL, PLAYER or INSTRUMENT (per cent of speeches containing at least one unambiguous reference)

		European commission president	High representative	External relations commissioner
MODEL	<i>Nom./Pred.</i>	92	69	44
	<i>Prescription</i>	58	23	56
	<i>Argumentation</i>	50	38	67
PLAYER	<i>Nom./Pred.</i>	25	69	67
	<i>Prescription</i>	42	77	56
	<i>Argumentation</i>	25	77	33
INSTRUMENT	<i>Nom./Pred.</i>	25	38	67
	<i>Prescription</i>	50	62	56
	<i>Argumentation</i>	17	54	33

Source: Own elaboration is based on a sample of 35 speeches. Numbers that are highlighted in bold and italics indicate that the codes related to the metaphors appear in more than two thirds or more than half of the speeches analysed, respectively.

The metaphor of the EU as MODEL for global governance, which lies at the opposite end, is more difficult to square with the ideal notion of multilateralism. In terms of equality criteria, self-representation of the EU conveys a rather hierarchical image of the international system where the EU holds a superior position compared to other actors in the system. The predicative elements presenting the EU as MODEL and their logical prescription that the EU's main task is to expand its rules globally also present a restrictive approach to developing global governance norms and rules. If the only focus of EU actions were to persuade others of the benefits of the EU and the worldwide applicability of its rules, norms and policies, the possibility of taking into account a diversity of international voices would substantially diminish, and so would the chances of accommodating moral disagreement and uncertainty. Therefore, the idea of multilateralism underlying the EU as MODEL metaphor is premised on a generalised acquiescence to EU/Western-inspired institutions, thus close to Robert Cox's notion of "hegemonic order" (1992, 179).

Despite the challenges that the metaphor of the EU as MODEL poses in terms of the ideal normative qualities of multilateralism, we found that this is comparatively the most commonly reproduced metaphor among EU representatives. In many senses, it represents a *sedimented* type of metaphor, so deeply internalised by speakers that it appears as natural and common sense within the speech community. Although the metaphor of the EU as MODEL appears to be disproportionately reproduced by the President of the European Commission, the other two institutional actors analysed also share it to a great extent, making extensive use of the same nomination/predication strategies and, in the case of the External Relations Commissioner, often using the same prescriptive claims and *topoi of success, uniqueness or moral rightness*. In particular, our analysis of the nominative/predicative strategies finds that the characterisation of the EU in terms of a MODEL is pervasive; 25 speeches of our sample of 35 explicitly exhibit attributions in this regard.

The EU conception of multilateralism following a metaphor of PLAYER allows for a larger, but still clearly limited, recognition of equality and diversity. Our analysis finds that this discourse retains a very strong sway, however, especially in the speeches of the High Representative and the External Relations Commissioner. The widely accepted usage of this metaphor suggests that this is a rather *conventional* type of metaphor. The representation of the EU as PLAYER continues to emphasise hierarchical relations with most international actors as the EU establishes its equality among a selected group of (new) major global powers. The prescription of the EU as PLAYER metaphor would allow for more accommodative and diversity-aware EU actions than that of the EU as MODEL, although it considers only large and rising powers as co-makers of global rules. The centrality of the *topos of adverse power shifts* in EU's calls to include emerging powers in global

decision-making suggests that power and efficiency, rather than the intrinsic value of respect for diversity, stand as the organising principles of global governance. Overall, therefore, the discourse of the EU as PLAYER would achieve far from the ideal of multilateralism as an inclusive system of governance.

6. Conclusion

In this article, we examined the various conceptual metaphors on the EU's global role as a promoter of multilateralism. It has been argued that this notion is broad and malleable enough to encompass many differing images of the world order and the EU's role in it. While this is hardly surprising, coming as it does from a highly compound polity, the fact that the different metaphors simultaneously reproduced by those who speak for the EU in the world are conceptually and normatively conflicting makes them hard to reconcile in practice.

The described conceptual tension between different policy metaphors about the EU's place and purpose in the world can be seen as a new *normative* cleavage in EU foreign policy, one that develops independently from most traditional ones, such as those of Europeanism vs. Atlanticism or Community Method vs. Intergovernmentalism. Although the three normative positions (captured here by the conceptual metaphors of the as MODEL, as PLAYER or as INSTRUMENT for global governance) are represented in the EU's policy discourse, the dominant ones (MODEL and PLAYER) have precisely the greater risk of sliding into hierarchical and exclusionary approaches to multilateral frameworks of governance. As argued in this article, the metaphor of the EU as INSTRUMENT for global governance would come closer to the normative ideal of multilateralism, thus emphasising inclusiveness, equal rights and fair deliberation. However, as seen in our analysis, this approach remains secondary when compared with the dominant representation of EU's global role.

In the *empirical* terrain, the findings of the article invite further study on how the potential tensions between the different approaches to EU's role in global governance are resolved in practice.⁵ Some of the questions that merit closer attention are: Which of the three policy prescriptions prevail when the EU engages in particular multilateral processes? Is the EU more likely to act as a model in Community matters than in intergovernmental ones? Is it actually possible or effective for the EU to combine different policy discourses in the same international process? And

5. For a preliminary attempt to extend this research to the analysis of the EU's role in specific multilateral processes, see Barbé et al. 2014.

crucially, how are EU's attempts to act as model, player or instrument received by other international actors? We hope that answers to these questions would contribute to a greater awareness on the practical (dis)advantages and normative consequences of the EU's different policy options for promoting multilateralism.

In *theoretical* terms, this article followed this Special Issue's call for interdisciplinarity by seeking to explore complementary analytical approaches from IR and CDA. While dealing with a key concern in discourse analytical approaches to foreign policy in IR, namely, the identification of the dominant *discursive structures* that sustain and condition actors' policy options, the use of CDA inspired tools has enabled a more detailed linguistic analysis of specific *discursive realisations* or strategies employed by individual actors. At the same time, by bringing in insights from critical theory in IR, this article also attempted to place CDA's traditional interest in power, social inequality, inclusiveness and emancipation within scholarly debates around the role of norms and power in the realm of international politics.

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