

The Effectiveness of the EU in Global Politics

The European Union has been assertive, successful and be demanded organization since it was first established. Very few people claimed the opposite until the Eastern enlargement. But the involvement of weak new states separated from the Soviet Union, the EU has begun to raise doubts. The states which were involved to the array of the European states also brought together their problems to the Union. The question that whether the EU has achieved the deepening that it aimed is still on the agenda of the researchers. It is still true that the EU is an effective actor in global politics although these new countries created some difficulties.

How much have the standards that the union brings to the member states affected other states and the global order? There are different opinions on this. While the integration of the EU is seen as a great success by some researchers, some find this integration and influence too interventionist. In this context on the one side there are scholars who find the EU successful and think that it is a normative power; while on the other side there are those who think that the EU is ineffective and that its values are transformed with the enlargements and that it has deviated from its purpose.

In the paper, I will first mention about the scholars who find the EU successful and see it as a normative power. They emphasize the achievements of it. Then there will be some contra-arguments by two scholars. And in the final part, I will share my opinions.

According to Daniela Sicurelli, the European Union should be seen as a normative power. She says that it has not all the features of traditional foreign policy instruments, according to Manners that is because the decisions about foreign policy are shaped by ideational motivations. Sicurelli argues that it tries to promote its norms beyond borders. To achieve this aim, it uses soft power

tools. Identity and normative concerns are the two most important components of European foreign policy (2016, 193). The trade agreements of the EU with their human rights clauses and a sustainable development chapter enforce international environmental and labour law. These attempts have made the EU seen as a normative power. She gives the example of the financial support of the EU for Spring programme which was established after the Arab Spring for the countries showing commitment to democratic reforms (195). Sicurelli says that the EU was involved many civilian security operations mainly in Africa and Southeast Europe. The aim was establishing rule of law, policing unstable areas, monitoring borders, reforming the security sector and supporting them for democratic governance.

According to empirical data, she mentions, the EU has achieved to export its regional economic and security integration at global level (195). It is not only about material factors, but also about capacity-building programmes. Especially when the EU finds receptive political actors, its support for democratization becomes more effective. As they are seen as legitimate, the norms of the EU make it easier to act as a normative power. Also the Lisbon Treaty, by giving more power to the European Parliament in foreign policy-making and increasing the image of the EU as a unitary actor, has contributed to the EU as perceived a normative power (198).

Like her, Rachel Epstein sees the EU as a success story and thinks that it has many benefits for the accession countries in the fields of security, democracy and economy (206). Thanks to the European Coal and Steel Community, the possibility of war between Germany and France was not just impossible, but also unthinkable. Besides that, the EU also helped the states to consolidate democracy. Before involvement to the EU, Spain and Portugal were authoritarian regimes and Greece had a military dictatorship (208). The post-communist countries, to be able to join the EU,

applied the Copenhagen criteria which are democracy, the rule of law, the protection of human rights and some economic conditions (209). These reforms also enhance the minority rights.

Although the EU has no compulsory conditions about the education and health systems, the member states to be in European standards, regulated their systems willingly. It is about both the success of the EU and its normative power. The states also take many advantages of economic reform of the EU. They have a wealthy market, funds of the EU for economic development and the Common Agricultural Policy for protecting the farmers (211). In addition to these, inflation is under control. Investments are made easily among the union. The citizens of the member states can travel, study and work in any country they want.

On the other hand, Christopher Bickerton believes that the Eastern enlargement transformed the EU institutionally and ideologically (213). Since that time, the EU has some difficulties. The processes of negotiations are slow and that makes the countries lose their interests to join. There is an 'enlargement fatigue'. Behind that notion, a discrimination and cultural prejudice and fears lie. Turkey is believed that, if it joins, will generate budgetary and labour mobility problems.

For him, in Eastern European countries the enlargement created two big problems which are the rise of illiberal populist-style politics and technocracy. Also, the main concern of the EU is not about improving the life conditions in the member states, but its identity and its future (214). He criticizes the national legislatures to rubber-stamp the EU laws. Enlargement process is not objective (217) and it causes political powerlessness and disenchantment (216). For example, people in Estonia think that the EU imposes laws upon them, they outwardly accept but in fact they resist. Because the elites in the countries do not believe them, so they cannot implement. The laws also are not seen as legitimate. Bickerton concludes his article by saying that the EU's expansion has negative impacts upon the political life of new member states.

Mark Pollack, like Bickerton sees some problems with the EU and criticizes the perception of it as a normative power. He uses the article of Manners as a base. For Pollack, the example of death penalty is not enough to explain the EU's power. To be against it is an easy case. The EU is not sincere about its normative preferences. It just uses them as a mask for hiding material interests. Its treatments are unequal for example in the matter of human rights. Because of the material interests, the EU ignores the behaviors of important states like Russia and China (201). The EU has not an important role to prevent authoritarianism in some countries such as Russia, Belarus, Turkey. For him, the Libyan intervention and the change in there is not normative, but military. Furthermore, while it was waited that all the member states would accept and welcome the Syrian refugees, a few of them did that and others responded with anti-immigrant policies. Of course, this situation does not fit the values of the EU while it emphasizes the importance of human rights.

About the enlargement process, I agree with Bickerton and Pollack. It does not act objective and prioritizes its interests. But besides that, it has many achievements. It also balances the United States. Many states create a powerful establishment which speaks as a single voice. Not just member states, but candidate states apply many reforms to involve it, they willingly do that. It strengthens and accelerates the process of modernization. Maybe it is not yet a normative power, but clearly doors are open for it.

REFERENCES:

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