
The Concept of Awkward Powers in Foreign Relations: Comparative Analysis of Canada and the European Union

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Summary

This paper addresses a specific phenomenon concerning power concepts in Canadian and EU foreign policies. As is widely known, the liberal-democratic platform has dominated global relations after the end of the Cold War. Implemented power approaches are studied from theoretical perspectives of liberalism/constructivism standpoints and their realist critique. Canada has been presented mostly as a middle power in international relations trying to find its specific role as a mediator and balancer among superpowers. On the other hand, the EU is classified predominantly as a normative power with tendencies to act as a great power from some point of view. In the paper, we analyse both entities through the recent concept of 'awkward power', whereby states have a so-called "dubious character", acting in-between the potential of great and middle powers.

Keywords: Power, Awkward Power, Realism, Liberalism/Constructivism, EU, Canada

Introduction

Canada and the EU are comparable in their influence on international relations. Their specific power is usually evaluated by one of the theoretical positions: liberalism, constructivism, and realism. The realist approach focusses on hard power. Political realists deny any important role of liberalism and treat power as a "materialised" phenomenon. According to Wilkins (2018) and Hidayatullah (2017), the realist school perceives international relations through a positional perspective

of states – classification regarding specific parameters concerning the use of hard power. On the other hand, liberals (and constructivists) insist that power may also be understood through norms, principles and political behavior defending justice in the international community. For realists, states are central forms of international cooperation, for liberals, international organizations play a crucial role in resolving complex international issues. One of the main critics of so-called liberal internationalism is Mearsheimer (2014), stating that liberal-democratic regimes have provoked many international conflicts in the last decades.

In this paper we compare power conceptions of the European Union and Canada, arguing that the EU foreign policy shares common elements with Canada, despite being differently defined in terms of power. Therefore, we introduce the recently defined concept of ‘awkward power’ as new explanans of comparable powers. Defining Canada as a middle power has been a standard explanation for its status in international relations. On the other hand, the EU common foreign and security policy (onwards CFSP) has been, according to several scholars, closer to super or great powers depending on the nature of each EU public policy. The CFSP has lacked a strong coherent approach between member states and the EU institutions.

There are many definitions that describe the EU foreign policy in many different power formations: Normative Power Europe (Manners, 2002; Whitman, 2011), soft power (Forsberg, 2013), transformative power (Börzel and Risse, 2009), small power (Toje, 2010), civilian power (Özer, 2012), middle or regional power (Haine and Salloum, 2021), almost superpower (Moravscik, 2010), the quiet superpower (Moravscik, 2009), and market power (Gehring, Urbanski and Oberthür, 2017). Scholars may partially disagree on the “intermediateness” position of Canadian foreign policy, but compared to the EU, it is much easier to say that Canada has followed the basic principles of a middle power. Similarly to the EU, different metaphors can be found in the literature describing Canada as a specialized power (Lennox, 2010), strategic power (Studin, 2009), functional power (Chapnick, 2017), dependency/satellite power (Gabryś and Soroka, 2017), major/foremost/principal power (*ibid.*), middle power (Chapnick, 2007), status quo power (Dowie, 2017), and selective power (Gabryś and Soroka, 2017). Joint operational definitions of power are closer to liberal theoretical standpoints than realist explanations.

In this paper, we will argue that Canada and the EU have both developed unique concepts of power vis-à-vis their foreign policy strategies. Most of them have origins in modern liberal thought advocating liberal internationalism and liberal-democratic values as *modus operandi* in foreign policy. We will argue that in both powers, regardless of their power position, liberal thought (and not realism) is predominant in their foreign policy strategies.

In addition to describing different existing power phenomena pertaining to the EU and Canada from a comparative perspective, we are testing a relatively new concept of power called “awkward power”. The awkwardness position (see Wilkins and Rezende, 2022) could be easily employed for the EU foreign and defense policy due to its vague character and less powerful role in international relations. On the other hand, Canada has been widely classified as a middle power even though there are certain definitional objections to its international power (e.g., Chapnick, 2000).

The present paper offers to the field of political science a comparative study of different power phenomena in the EU and Canada and their possible commonalities in foreign policies. To the existing typologies, we add the concept of awkward power as a further layer of analysis.

The structure of the paper is as follows: first, the paper discusses if and why Canada and the EU may be compared in power perspective(s) and terms of comparative politics. Second, the concept of awkward power is introduced to describe a new definitional core inside hierarchies of states or integrations. Then three main theoretical perspectives of power (realism, constructivism, and liberalism) are considered. Through the lenses of power conceptions of the EU and Canada, comparative differences and commonalities are presented. Finally, the parameters of so-called “awkward power” (Wilkins and Rezende, 2022) are tested against the power roles of Canadian and EU foreign policies.

Why are Canada and the European Union Compared?

Clarkson (2000) and Crawley (2004) metaphorically insisted that it is always somehow unusual to compare different “sorts of fruits” when speaking about Canada and the EU. The fact is that the main difference is in their essence: Canada is a federation often known as a ‘deep’ federal state with certain exclusive powers in the hands of the provinces. On the other hand, the EU is a so-called ‘sui generis’ structure / political system where public policies are dynamically shared between member states and EU institutions. Clarkson (2000) and Crawley (2004) speak about different continental systems and possibilities of comparisons. On the one hand, integrationist logic offers a natural comparison between the EU and NAFTA; on the other hand, comparing Canada and the EU as (con)federal structures is less applied. Both comparisons may have advantages and shortcomings. NAFTA and the EU are comparable in the sense of different integrationist approaches where an important research focus has been given to the nature of integration processes (Sanchez, 2006).

The European Consortium of Political Research (ECPR) conference (2015), in its section named “Canada and Europe: Comparisons and Relations”, discovered the relationship in various fields of political science explaining varieties of rela-

tions as a comparison between the EU and Canada. Above all, research was done between Canada vis-à-vis EU member states. The studies were related to different fields within political science such as comparative politics, European Union studies, federalist issues, governance challenges, international relations theory, policy analysis, and trade. Specifically, the main panels shaped migration governance in a comparative perspective, foreign policies, governance, decentralisation, public participation, and free-trade agreements such as CETA or TTIP.

Wood and Verdun (2010) examined EU-Canada relations in the period from 1982 to 2010. At first, the authors presented the so-called transatlantic relations from an economic and foreign policy perspective. Later, they applied a comparative perspective to show the development in the field of multilevel governance, social policy, environmental challenges, and economic policy.

Fossum (2004) justified the eligibility of comparison and at the same time stressed a role of a fundamental third player in this triangle – the United States. Roseman's 1981 study investigating the period between 1976 and 1981 was one of the first in the comparative field and primarily highlighted the importance of economic ties in the transatlantic relationship.

Much free trade and other agreements have been signed between Canada and the EU. The Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (further CETA) is the first to cover a wide range of different policy areas and could bring about some important changes in the transatlantic relationship. This agreement was negotiated at a time when globalisation trends were on the decline and European public opinion was critical of such a process of international trade liberalisation (see Durnik, 2016). One of the important Canadian objectives in negotiating CETA was to move away from the previously dominant trade relationship with the US toward more diversified trade with other potential partners in the international community (Hübner, Deman and Balik, 2017).

Hierarchies of Power

A conventional taxonomy of states' power lists concepts of superpowers, great powers, middle powers, regional powers, small states, or minor powers. Superpowers show important military and economic capabilities and technological development. Superpowers may influence political developments in a global context. The Soviet Union and the United States were examples of this category during the Cold War era. After the end of this era, the US was the only power dominating global political issues. In the last two decades or so, China, Russia, and potentially the EU have also raised the attention of scholars as potential superpowers. The second group of states called great powers are those who may exercise hard and soft power together on many occasions. Above all, they are able to be included in a "great war" and

as such they are strong military powers. In this context, great powers are based on high gross national product, military spending, nuclear arsenal, and international recognition. This group of states may also be measured using constructivist or liberal indicators such as international prestige, diplomacy, or technological development. The dominant realist measurement has been fulfilled with “soft” categories of liberalism or constructivism adding some more relevant and all-encompassing information about national power (Abbondanza and Wilkins, 2022).

Middle powers, as a third group of countries, have been an even more investigated phenomenon than the group of great powers. Their international focus is often on specialised tasks, niche diplomacy, normative stance, and multilateral issues. The middle powers investigation has been reconstructed and redeveloped after the end of the Cold War. Consequently, they are not capable to carry out political actions and strategies solely by themselves, but usually following stronger powers. In many terms, they are closer to the liberal image than realist explanations. Finally, the literature on the middle powers’ role is complex and often inconsistent and dispersed (*ibid.*).¹

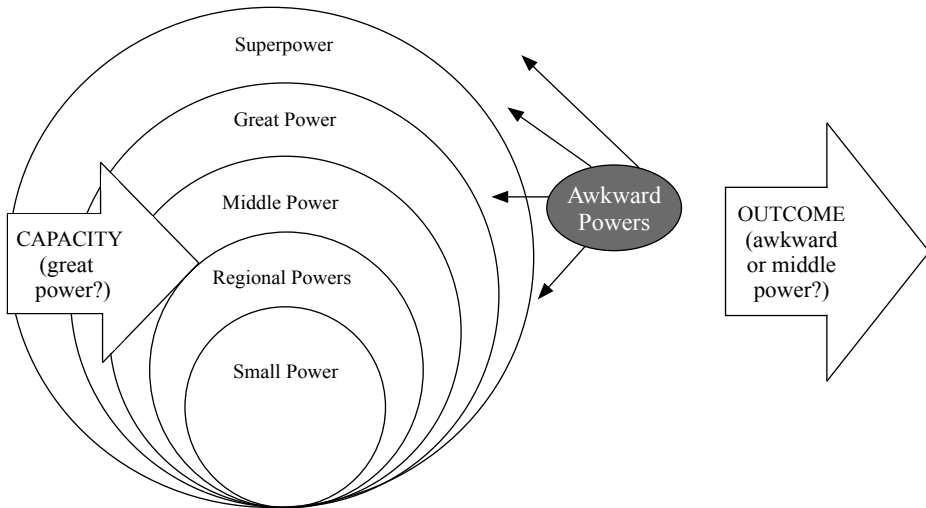
Abbondanza and Wilkins (*ibid.*, p. 21) introduce a new term concerning the power of states – so-called “awkward” powers as “any country with a contentious or dubious international status – a state that is in one circumstance defined as a ‘middle power’ by one scholar, and as a ‘great power’ by another”. As noted, the hierarchies of power certainly come from the realist school, but we analyse them also through perspectives of liberalism and constructivism.

As such, the concept overcomes the definitional shortcomings of great and middle power theories. A representative case of the awkward power would be Japan as a strong economic and less important military power. “If a country sits on average among the ten leading countries and yet it is commonly overlooked by both great and middle power discourses, it represents a potential candidate for awkward great powerdom” (*ibid.*, p. 23). Furthermore, an awkward power is “a state with significant capabilities and influence, which defies neat categorizations onto the conventional power hierarchies, on account of its contested, neglected, or ambivalent international status powerdom” (*ibid.*, p. 24).

Figure 1 (on the next page) shows the authors investigating the potential of awkward powers. Abbondanza (2022) uses Japan, Germany, and Italy as examples of great powers. As agreed, this group of states has special powers in the field of military capabilities, diplomacy, and culture. As has been known, they pertain to the Western liberal international order under US supremacy and its leading role. Due to their role in WWII, therefore, they could not develop and possess a nuclear arsenal

¹ The next groups of states are regional powers and small states, but they are excluded from our analysis.

Figure 1. Classification of states in conventional and reconstructed ('awkwardness') perspective



Source: Applied from Abbondanza and Wilkins (2022).

besides other limitations. Kowalski (2022) shows that India has made great political and technological development in the last years, but at the same time, it is still not a member of the UN Security Council. Similarly, Brazil showed potential to play a certain role as a probable great power, but shares some similar developmental problems as India. As Wilkins and Rezende (2022) showed, different parameters such as capabilities, behavior, and identity place Brazil somewhere between the middle and great powers.

Awkward middle power states such as Sweden or Saudi Arabia show that the theory of middle powers is much more innovative and dynamic contrary to the realist notion regarding the connotation of a great power. In the case of Sweden normative and behavioral components are fundamental in analyzing its potential (Abbondanza and Wilkins, 2022). Vandamme (2022) presents Pakistan as a case of awkward middle power searching for normative and behavioral recognition in the international community. The last group of states is caught between small-middle-state divisions. Israel is the case of a geographically small state with strong military power (Merom, 2021).

Wilkins and Rezende (2022) show distinctive characteristics of awkward powers. *Power asymmetry* refers to the unequal distribution of power among states. Usually, it is a debate over the distribution of economic and military capabilities in

the realist sense. Some countries like Italy, Japan, and Germany lack military power, but they are strong economic forces. Furthermore, they do not possess a nuclear arsenal, as is the case with India. On the other hand, Pakistan, Israel, and North Korea (despite their other limited capabilities) hold nuclear weapons. The second characteristic is so-called *power liminality* defining states that are “not fitting one precise power category, but rather being awkwardly positioned between or across them” (*ibid.*, p. 383). A valuable representative of this group of states is Brazil, acting interchangeably as a great or middle power similar to India. *Power frustration* is a difference between the self-perceived image of the state and the outside recognition of its power status. Germany, Italy, Japan, Brazil, and India are the states that often complain about not being permanent members of the UN Security Council. Moreover, they are states that seek to strengthen their status in international relations using *alternative forms of governance* through international organizations. BRICS is such a structure consisting of coalitions of states and offers alternative governance options. The next component called *strange coping mechanisms* can be explained by the role of Israel in international relations. Its foreign policy has been largely based on collaboration and representation with the Israeli lobby in the US. The last category within the present taxonomy is related to the behaviour of *divergent (atypical) states*. In military terms, for example, some of them are aware of the nuclear arsenal as a powerful tool, and some of them follow more liberal principles that should be presented in international organisations (Wilkins and Rezende, 2022).

Realism, Liberalism, Constructivism, and Power

The following competing theories are explaining the existence and challenges of the so-called liberal world order: liberal advocacy, constructivist posture, and the realist critique. Mearsheimer (2014) critically assessed the potential of today’s liberal-democratic model in international relations from a realist point of view. He sees liberal internationalism as one of the main factors that have provoked many international conflicts, and also the current Ukrainian conflict (*ibid.*). Mearsheimer explains that liberal scholars neglected the specific role of superpowers in international relations, pointing out their fundamental importance in assuring power balance. Moreover, as Mearsheimer (*ibid.*) insisted, the fact is that a particular superpower is even more sensitive when another superpower tries to establish new political and security conditions close to its borders (as in the case of Russia by the US).

As Baldwin (2016) pointed out, there are differences between the offensive realism of Mearsheimer and Morgenthau and Waltz’s neorealist (or structural realist) vision of power. Both Morgenthau and Mearsheimer are aware that states usually have the intention to maximize their power. Morgenthau, contrary to his realist colleague, speaks about the intention of states to gain power, while Mearsheimer insists that the international system pushes states to fight for power (Baldwin, 2016).

Classical realists defined power politics in terms of the long-term battle for power. Morgenthau argued that power shapes psychological relations between powerful and powerless actors (Schmidt, 2007). Waltz, using the neorealist vision of power, insists that states are using only such amounts of power that may assure their security (Baldwin, 2016). Neorealists assumed that every state has a right to defend itself using mainly its resources. As Schmidt (2007, p. 45) pointed out: “Some realists define power strictly in terms of measurable material attributes, such as the size of a country’s population and military forces, while others include non-material attributes that are often associated with soft power.”

Traditional realism stated that a particular state is egoistic, which is supposed to be a consequence of people’s behavior within the country. Human nature and behavior are necessary elements of power politics in the realist investigation. Structural realism in some sense refuses human behavior as a central element. Fighting for power in international relations produces anarchy and chaos in the international system. National power may be counted also as the availability of resources – the sum of military expenditure, gross national product, size of the armed forces, size of the territory, and population. Some other scholars inside the realist approach add some other parameters such as leadership effectiveness, national culture, and morality of the nation (Schmidt, 2007).

The primary opposition to the realist stance is liberal theory – often referred to as the “liberal international order” (Ikenberry, 2018) with special reference to the “hegemonic order”. Ikenberry (*ibid.*, p. 7) points out: “For seven decades the world has been dominated by a Western liberal order. After the Second World War, the United States and its partners built a multifaceted and sprawling international order, organized around economic openness, multilateral institutions, security cooperation and democratic solidarity.” Many world countries when making a regime transition decided to move towards a liberal-democratic model. Ikenberry stated that nowadays the liberal-democratic order is somehow in crisis: “Meanwhile, liberal democracy itself appears to be in retreat, as varieties of ‘new authoritarianism’ rise to new salience in countries such as Hungary, Poland, the Philippines and Turkey. Across the liberal democratic world, populist, nationalist, and xenophobic strands of backlash politics have proliferated” (*ibid.*).

Realist critiques of liberal international order mainly focus on liberal approaches, neglecting power relations in the international community and mostly advocating interventions based on liberal norms. McKeil (2022, p. 9) wrote: “My assessment is that not only are the limits of the constraining ‘buy-in’ logic of the liberal order made apparent by the invasion of Ukraine, but a strategy of defensive liberal internationalism is insufficient as a strategy for making international order on a global scale.” As Porter (2020) suggested, the modern world is in its essence “illiberal, insecure and anarchic”. Ikenberry’s (2020) idea of defensive liberal in-

ternationalism refers to the idea of connecting the liberal and illiberal world – the liberal West with Russia and China.

Constructivists try to redefine the so-called ‘state images’ where identity, attraction, culture and intersubjective relations become important parameters (Wilkins, 2018). Their critique is aimed at the realists’ reliance on a material component of power. Bially-Mattern defines representational power/force as the following: “Thus, where attraction rests upon coercion, the logic of a distinction between soft and hard forms of power becomes unsustainable. Certainly, the form of coercion (and ‘hard’ power) to which attraction (and ‘soft’ power) is indebted is sociolinguistic rather than physical, but it is coercive, nevertheless. In this way, soft power is not so soft after all. This revelation inheres to a variety of implications for those actors who wish to accumulate and wield ‘soft’ power” (Bially-Mattern, 2007, p. 100). Nye (2005) posits that the politics of attraction is based on the notion that it is socially constructed. An even more sophisticated concept of constructivist power is the power of persuasion based on the Habermasian tradition of communicative practices which “seeks to model how actors use persuasive ‘talk’ to facilitate agreement, cooperation, and better relations across nearly every domain of world politics – from security to economics to ethics to foreign policy” (Bially-Mattern, 2007, p. 104).

European Union: Civil, Transformative, or Superpower?

The political nature of the EU determines its power. Is it a political system or a state? Is it as any other international organization like the WTO or the United Nations? It might be a federal state like Canada, the United States, or Germany. As Hix and Høyland (2011, p. 12) wrote:

The EU does not fit either of these categories very well. Unlike other international organizations, the EU has delegated significant independent executive, legislative, and judicial powers, rather like a state. However, unlike federal states, the member state governments remain the sovereign signatories of the EU Treaty, the budget of the EU remains small, the EU relies on the voluntary compliance of the member states for the enforcement of EU law, and the member states remain sovereign in many areas of policy, including the ability to sign international treaties.

The EU political system is stable and complex where governments of member states are fundamental policy players in policy-making (Hix and Høyland, 2011). National governments share public policies with the EU institutions depending on the nature of each public policy, e.g., monetary and fiscal issues are solely in the hands of EU institutions (the case of the Euro), and education policy is in the hands of national governments.

The CFSP is complex and vague due to the many interests of member states vis-à-vis EU institutions. It has been developed by many EU treaties. Beginning

with the Maastricht Treaty of 1993, the idea of a joint and more coherent approach started (Aggestam, 2016). As Olsen and McCormick (2017) recognized, this treaty brought real progress in determining the future of the EU foreign and security policy. Due to several issues, the qualified majority was accepted in the context of decision-making in the Council. The Amsterdam Treaty (signed in 1997) influenced closer security cooperation between the Western European Union and the EU specifically integrating the so-called Petersberg tasks (humanitarian, rescue, peacekeeping, and other crisis management operations, also peacemaking) incorporated into EU treaties (Olsen and McCormick, 2017). In 1999, the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) was introduced as an integral part of the CFSP. Lisbon Treaty renamed it into the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP still demanded a principle of unanimity to start military operations outside the EU) (*ibid.*). Even though The Single European Act has given the Commission more powers in foreign policy, the CFSP and CSDP were still largely determined by intergovernmental relations between member states (Missiroli, 2016). According to Aggestam (2016) and Missiroli (2016), the Lisbon Treaty largely reformed the EU foreign policy in the following ways: (1) the EU may confirm and sign international treaties which have been given a legal personality; (2) President of the European Council and High Representative for foreign affairs and security policy were established to reach more cohesiveness and representation in external relations; (3) the European External Action Service was born as a new diplomatic service of the EU.

Due to incoherent attitudes between member states and EU institutions, the EU's international power impact has been well below what someone would expect. Furthermore, its strategy has been mostly oriented toward short-term policy goals without defining a longer-term vision of how to reach a better international position in the world context. Critics would say that these failures occurred in Iraq and Western Balkans during the 1990s wars and later. As mentioned above, the EU has functioned as a soft power (even civilian power) in international relations. It is expected that the concept of power should include political, economic, moral, and cultural aspects that would be familiar also with the EU foreign policy (Olsen and McCormick, 2017).

There are many various definitions of the EU power in its foreign policy. Most agree that the role in international politics has been known for its democratic tensions and normative stance rather than using hard power tools and strategies. According to Moravcsik (2010), the economic success of the EU has promoted integration that has made the EU closer to what we conventionally understand as a superpower. Today, the EU's expression of power in military and security relations differs significantly from its bigger potential in economic relations. He wrote: "... despite its lack of any military buildup, Europe has established itself unambiguously as the world's 'second' military power, with combat troops active across the globe"

(Moravscik, 2010, p. 92). Synonymously, Moravscik (2009) defined the EU also as a “quiet superpower”. A country would act and behave like a superpower if it was able to exercise hard (economic and military) and soft (normative) power on a global scale. Nye recognized the potential of soft power also in EU external relations. Davis Cross (2011) argues that soft power assures much wider usage possibilities than the hard counterpart, which is supposed to be more oriented toward narrower purposes and goals.

Another important factor that has limited the EU's stronger position as a third power block over bipolar arrangements is its history and as such a defense of multipolarity. “Our multipolar world is more heterogeneous and distant. The most likely configuration that will emerge is a world disorder – not necessarily more violent, but essentially power-regulated rather than rules-based” (Haine and Salloum, 2021, p. 52). Haine and Salloum (2021) point out these paradoxes as important determinants of the EU's classification as a middle or regional power instead of a global policy actor.

Toje (2010; 2011) has defined post-Cold War EU security and foreign policy as being equal to that of a small state. Specifically, due to the EU's policy actions in terms of using soft power where it has tried to avoid serious military actions. Toje (2011, p. 45) in his paper counts small states as the following: “In the scholarly literature, the group of states referred to here as ‘small powers’ have variously been referred to as ‘lesser’, ‘middle’, ‘secondary’ and regional powers.” Toje talks about two possible explanations of the term “small power”. As such, neorealists usually count small states through quantifiable criteria (indicators). On the other hand, the behavioral approach of weaker states explains their position because they behave as small powers (relational approach) concerning other states.

The concept of ‘Normative Power Europe’ expanded traditional state-centered approaches and offered innovations in political ideas and normative actions. As such, Europe may be known as a civilizational power (mediator) with high awareness of the responsibility to act (Whitman, 2011; Manners, 2002). The concept negates the well-known premise that solely nation-states are key players in international relations, whereas also non-material power shapes these relations.

Özer (2012) agreed that ‘Civilian Power Europe’ would clearly describe its position in international relations. States acting as civilian powers tend to use non-military power and little politicization. The EU in this sense actively played a fundamental role in enlargement processes, promoted neighbourhood policy, and made strong trade agreements with third countries. Using simultaneously soft and hard power, the EU may reach its normative goals in foreign policy. Similarly, Börzel and Risse (2009) applied the concept of ‘transformative power’ to highlight the transformative potential of the EU in enlargement processes. It means that candidate members should adopt several conditions if they want to become full mem-

bers. In this sense, European institutions hold enough power potential to reformulate their national policies (see also Dietz, Stetter and Albert, 2006).

Gehring, Urbanski and Oberthur (2017) negate the realist position that the EU is a great power lacking military capabilities. On the contrary, its market policy shows the character of a market power. “Furthermore, cross-policy effects that are central to our argument have rarely been systematically examined, although hints exist both in the theoretical literature and in comprehensive studies of EU foreign relations... Accordingly, great power politics occurs as a cross-policy effect” (*ibid.*, p. 2).

Table 1. The EU’s role in international relations (synthesis of power explanations)

<i>Theory/ concept</i>	<i>Theoretical assumptions</i>	<i>Ideological dimensions of power</i>	<i>Political practice</i>	<i>Strong points</i>	<i>Weak points</i>
<i>Normative Power Europe</i> (Manners, 2002; Whitman, 2011)	Promotion of norms instead of military power; EU as a global civilian power, economic and diplomatic power, the role of supranational institutions	The predominance of norms and liberal principles; less focus on military power, ideological power in ideas; a combination of liberal and constructivist parameters (ideas and norms)	Power of ideas, normative principles; State capability to enforce norms; usage of soft power principles	Coexistence with superpowers; identity as norm-enforcer, power of norms and ideas, the important role of institutions	Lack of military power, impossibility to act as a real superpower assuring power balance
<i>Smart power</i> (Cross, 2011)	Effective combination of soft and hard power interchangeably; soft power more widespread? Hard power has a clear purpose	Realist and liberal strategies are used at the same time, power of attraction and coercion	Military and economic tools as resources plus “coercive” discourses	Combination of power tools and strategies, military power as soft power in humanitarian intervention?	Unclear use of the concept? Misunderstanding? Hard to equally use soft and hard power at the same time, when to use one or another (time component)? Soft power is perceived differently by different public

<i>Trans-formative power</i> (Börzel and Risse, 2009)	The diffusion of ideas; diffusion of values, norms, and rules; cognitive and normative functions of ideas	Mostly constructionist and liberal orientation of the concept: immaterial power	Institutional effects of diffusion of ideas; the transformative potential of the EU in enlargement processes	Candidates must accept conditions offered by the EU institutions; enough power to reformulate national policies	‘Asymmetrical dependence’... one-way dependence of new candidate countries (Grabbe, 2006); the problem of centre and periphery in power relations; manipulation with ideas
<i>Small-scale, low-intensity power; small power</i> (Toje, 2008; 2010; 2011)	The definition of a small power would also be a matter of quantification – seat in the Security Council or possession of nuclear missiles, dependency on superpowers; membership in international organisations; relative passivity in relations	Realist standpoints with some normative (liberal) parameters; power hierarchy	Policy incoherence among member states in CSDP/CFSP; limitations of power in internal policy processes of EU institutions?	Possible good relations with all superpowers?	No joint agreement about the definition and differences between small and great powers’ dependence of the EU in political terms; power decline in the last decade; limitation to act in European affairs; the problem with international political image
<i>Civilian Power Europe</i> (Özer, 2012)	The normative power influencing the international environment; the importance of trade; military versus non-military power; the role of diplomacy and cooperation	Mostly liberal interpretations of power	Promotion of democracy and human rights, norms and values, implementation of normative goals’ implementation; trade policy as a power of enforcement	Sustainable policy solutions; promotion of democracy and development; the power of attraction and persuasion, strong economic power	Relative military weakness; some degree of military integration?

<i>Middle or regional power</i> (Haine and Sal-loum, 2021)	Importance of rules and norms instead of interests; impossibility to adapt to changes in power distribution	Mostly liberal principles (shortage of realist explanations)	Low risk in international security operations in some sense has provoked terrible mistakes	Soft power introduces norms and principles; defence of democratic principles	Inaction in Srebrenica, Rwanda, and Darfur contributed to humanitarian disasters; the negation of power politics due to its military limited power
<i>Second super-power/potential super-power</i> (Moravscik, 2010)	The use of economic influence, international law, "soft power", "quiet power"	Traditional realism excludes the EU as a potential superpower, the US the only hegemon; the liberal view argues that the EU will emerge as a superpower; economic power as liberal optimism	Different circles of the enlargement process, free trade inside the EU and trade relations with international environment	Power of attraction – states decided to enter the EU; the role of diplomacy in the neighbourhood; military power based on economy	EU citizens are getting older as a working population; overrated pessimism regarding the decline of the EU?
<i>The quiet super-power</i> (Moravscik, 2009)	Social interests of states are crucial, and negation of the 'realist' anarchy in international relations; the importance of interdependence; economic interdependence	Dominant liberal interventionism, negation of the realist vision of power; ideological convergence	Intensified and urgent defence cooperation due to many international crises	The usage of soft power; the role of civilian power and pacifism. "It has emerged as the most ambitious and successful international organization of all time, pioneering institutional practices far in advance of anything viewed elsewhere. Europe's distinctive instruments of civilian influence have	The realist prediction: the decline of Europe as a powerful force; no hard power

				seemed to gain in utility vis-à-vis hard military power” (p. 407)	
<i>Market power; an Inadvertent Great Power:</i> (Gehring, Urbanski and Oberthür, 2017)	Theories of corporate action, the use of economic power; great power politics even without strong military capabilities	Realist and liberal elements interchanged... “normative empire” (Del Sarto, 2016)	Application to the Ukrainian crisis – great power acting in its name	“... capabilities based upon its communalized policies can make it a great power in its own right (p. 2)”	Lack of military power and credibility using hard power in international relations

Source: Basic structure of the table adapted from Gabryś and Soroka (2017).

Is Canada Still a Middle Power?

Canada has traditionally been described in academic literature and political practise as a traditional middle-power country. Realists do not think the concept of middle power is of any serious importance. They predominantly see the power of states as materialized formations, that is military capabilities. The liberal position regarding power concepts defends the normative position in international relations. In this sense, political behavior is crucially important for middle powers (Wilkins, 2018). Middle powers must be recognized by other states to determine their status. “I understand that the middle powers as forming in hierarchical order the indispensable link between the bottom and the top. Middle powers are recognizable by their access/relation to great powers, coupled with their (regional) expertise and influence on small powers, operating up and down the hierarchical system” (Struye de Swielande, 2018, p. 21). Middle powers have traditionally been linked with the following parameters: “characterized by niche diplomacy (a domain of expertise), peace-building, multilateralism, and the roles of mediator, bridge-building, facilitators, catalysts, etc.” (*ibid.*, p. 35).

The middle power concept largely “strives for policy-relevance in addition to academic rigor and sophistication” (Wilkins, 2018, p. 47). The liberal image of middle powers refers to the importance of political behavior and normative powers fighting for justice in international politics. In this sense, diplomatic power largely determines the operation of middle powers. Anyhow, the international system in liberal terms tends to be justifiable in democratic conditions. Middle powers mostly

build their international position using a soft-power approach rather than coercive force. Using a multilateral approach in solving international challenges is fundamentally the role of these intermediate forces – states and international structures. Middle-power diplomacy in some sense operates as niche diplomacy trying to specialise in external activities also due to a shortage of resources (Wilkins, 2018).

As in the case of the EU, there are several varieties of power perceptions regarding Canadian foreign policy. First, Lennox (2007, p. 1) defined Canada as a specialized power: “Canada is most accurately conceptualized as a specialized power, prone to the performance of roles unsuited to great powers though essential to the proper functioning and amelioration of the status quo international system.” Canada as a middle power has played a certain specific role in the past that Lennox (2007) called the role-based or participatory function. Canada has always supported numerous multipolar policy actions such as peacekeeping initiatives, humanitarian actions, and support for international organizations. Due to the decline of the classical bipolar world, Canada was seen as a ‘level above’ the conventional determination of what the main characteristics of the middle powers are.

In the case of Canada, the following criteria are used to form the image in foreign relations (Zyla, 2019). Firstly, advocates of functionalism argue that Canadian foreign policy should express some sort of “functional interests” (Chapnick, 2012; cited in Zyla, 2019, p. 67) in international politics, specifically making a stronger Canadian position in the UN, establishing new groups of middle power states, and active role of Canada in global political affairs (Zyla, 2019). Second, the middle-powermanship, the idea was to represent the Canadian external image in international affairs through norms and rules, the mediator’s role, participation in international actions known as peacekeeping missions acting as a bridge builder, etc. The third component of the middle power approach has been its internationalism to show its role in development assistance as helping Europe after WWII.

Chapnick (2000) calls middle power taxonomy a ‘myth’. One of the possible explanations for so-called middlepowerhood defines these states as being able to influence and declare their interest and, as a group of middle powers, arrange such pressure that their decisions would have an international impact. Chapnick (*ibid.*, p. 195) explained this ‘mythomania’: “The rhetoric had changed: middle power, which had been a positional term to define states in an international hierarchy of power, became descriptive, connoting a particular state role in the international community.” Gabryś and Soroka (2017) also objected to the position that Canada still acts as a middle power. Several critics of Harper’s government highlighted that the state limited its role as a dedicated supporter of UN activities. Moreover, it was criticized by many observers that its role as a neutral force and mediator was compromised due to its support of Israeli politics. “Also, the policies of Justin Trudeau’s current government in many aspects are very distant from an ideal of a middle po-

wer; they are highly selective and calculated, though this fact is often veiled by the smart rhetoric..." (*ibid.*, p. 61).

Studin (2009; 2014) uses the term strategic power to describe the basics of Canadian foreign policy. As such, he claims that strategic power is the capacity of the state that would arrange its interests such as security, sovereignty, territorial integrity, wealth or prestige. This type of power uses "constitutionally legitimate channels – that is, channels permitted by the Constitution" (Studin, 2009, p. 8). Strategic determinants are based on the Canadian Constitution Act of 1867 and define the following characteristics as important: diplomacy, military, power of the central government, natural resources, economy, and population. Specifically, experienced diplomacy partially influences the state's strategic power capacity.

Three major concepts are usually mentioned relating to the role of Canada in international relations. Firstly, the dependency/satellite² conception refers to the fact that it always acted as subordinated to other superpowers, mainly to the US. Specifically, its economic, military, and political relations with the US seem logical due to its geopolitical position and crucial dependency on US economy. "Canadian political philosophers and prominent politicians, (...) not only perceived Canada as a dependency, but also denied Canadians the right to establish their own country and even treated the very concept of distinctively Canadian identity as an irrelevant idea, something non-existent in fact..." (Gabryś and Soroka, 2017, p. 20). What is evident is that advocates neglect the fact that Canada still plays a role in the international community by participating in many international organizations.

The second conception of power sees Canada as a major/foremost/principal power in the sense that it achieved high scores in terms of possessed natural resources, energy potential, and technological development (principal power). Its role in the post-WWII world liberal order concerning its reconstruction may be treated as a foremost power. To present itself as a principal power, it acted in the sense that no subordination was needed. The so-called "principality" of the Canadian power position has been related to the previously mentioned potential in terms of possession of natural resources. Above all, scholars demonstrated its role in international organizations which is supposed to be "much above its demographic or economic potential" (*ibid.*, p. 39).

Most of the Canadian natural resources have been purchased by the United States. Canadian resource and energy potential is not so important that it could influence the behavior of other states like, for example, Saudi Arabia did due to its

² There were many similar explanations that posited Canada as a subordinated state. Lowerer (1946; summarized by Gabryś and Soroka, 2017) defined Canada as a subordinated state and satellite to the United States. Hugh Aitken or Andrew H. Malcolm (1959; summarized by Gabryś and Soroka, 2017) put into question the full sovereignty of modern Canada.

availability of oil resources. Acting as a middle power, Canada has tried to ensure its role in the international community, for example, with its role as a stabilizer or legitimizer in the existing world liberal order, trying to find “niches” in international relations (Gabryś and Soroka, 2017).

It would be expected that Canada as a principal power should run some independent multilateral initiatives within the international community. As an example of principal power Lennox (2007) referred to an example of the Canadian command of the NATO forces in Kandahar, Afghanistan in 2006. Similarly to Gabryś and Soroka, Lennox (2009) also insisted that Canada may be perceived as a country that follows the so-called “continental hierarchy” and as such has been labelled as a “satellite” – a view influenced by dependency theory. In this sense, Canada has fallen within the US patronage as its strategically important member.³

Table 2. The Canadian role in international relations (synthesis of power explanations)

<i>Theory/concept</i>	<i>Theoretical assumptions</i>	<i>Ideological dimensions of power (realism vs. liberalism)</i>	<i>Political practice</i>	<i>Strong points</i>	<i>Weak points</i>
<i>Dependency/Satellite</i> (Gabryś and Soroka, 2017)	Subordination to powerful states	The realist view: a hierarchy of power? Liberal view as an economic dependence? Advocacy of norms and principles	Dependent position in economic collaboration with the US; Low population level; low level of GDP; US military and cultural dominance	US domination in the Canadian economy	Ignorance of the Canadian role in international relations concerning peacekeeping, human rights, denuclearization, foreign aid
<i>Major/foremost/principal power</i> (Gabryś and Soroka, 2017)	Canada is an important global power possessing natural resources; producing technology innovations, advocate of international institutions, no submission	Realism: power hierarchy, huge potential in natural resources liberal stance: humanitarian force, norms and principles	International rankings; membership in G7/G8, G20; important role in creating international organizations	Importance of natural resources; active role in international organizations; open society advocate; openness to immigrants; attraction to immigrants	Limited potential as a power – low level of population (on the big territory), bilateral trade with the US in favour of the latter

³ As Gabryś and Soroka (2017) pointed out, Canada has always been largely dependent on US military capabilities through NATO and NORAD.

<i>Middle power</i> (Gabryś and Soroka, 2017)	Teritorially big country but less population, acting as a bridge-builder in diplomatic relations, searching for niches	Predominantly liberal vision, liberal norms and values; also constructivist ideational power Realism: power hierarchy	Advocate of multi-lateralism, peacekeeping intentions and stabilization, sometimes reformist tensions, soft power, niche diplomacy	Democracy promotion, importance of international organizations, peacekeeping efforts, humanitarian assistance, opposition to nuclear weapons	Canada is not convinced anymore to act as a middle power due to support of Israeli politics and rejection of the Kyoto protocol
<i>Specialized power</i> (Lennox, 2009)	Specialisation is also needed due to subordinated position towards the US (selection of products); distinct roles in international relations	Power hierarchy in realist terms; similarity to middle powers' position (liberal view?); also constructivist identity	Focus on some innovative security issues: human security; specialization in exporting certain products; Canada as advocate and problem-solver	Focus also to domestic policy issues; focus often different than that of great powers; functions as a mediator or supervisor of some policy actions	Subordinated position vis-à-vis the US
<i>Selective power</i> (Gabryś and Soroka, 2017)	Choosing specific areas of policy action – e.g., energy policy; limitation of interest spheres, a self-centred, objective-oriented approach; issue structured power	Origins in neorealism (connection to the idea of principal and foremost power); also liberal values	Specific focus on international trade (the role of trade agreements), climate and immigration policies; differences between conservatives and liberals (Harper vs. Trudeau)	Globally recognized power in selective policy areas; potential leadership	Limited potential to influence global issues; limitations of economic, political, and military power
<i>Strategic power</i> (Studin, 2009; 2014)	Power as a capacity, not power as exercise; strategic interests by state – security, sovereignty, territorial integrity, wealth or prestige	Liberal and some realist standpoints “Strategic Constitution”	Diplomacy, military, power of the central government, natural resources, economy, and population, development assistance	Constitution as a channel of exercising power	How strong is the power of diplomacy? Legitimation of military intervention abroad?

<i>Functional power</i> (Chapnick, 2000; 2017)	State focus on a selection of interests, possibility to participate; functional powers are small?	Mostly liberal viewpoints: selection and functionality of interests in international relations	Work in specialized agencies of the UN possibly indicating functional principles	Small state, greater influence? Synchronicity with great powers; connection of middle power theory and functionalism; specific tasks of small powers	Subordinate position to US politics, even some interests have been to partially avoid a coalition with the American administration
<i>Status quo power</i> (Dowie, 2017)	Maximization of security, control over resources	Mostly realist standpoints – neoclassical realist theory (some liberal elements); similarity to the convergence theory?	Canada wants to maintain its privileged position in the international order (privilege power?); support to NATO and US dominance	Order based on rules and norms; advocating the system's stability	Weaker capability to act toward aggressive behaviour of some states

Source: Applied from Gabryś and Soroka (2017).

All three theories represent only a partial picture of Canadian foreign policy. Gabryś and Soroka (2017, p. 63) have offered a reconstructed definition of its role in international relations: “The most suitable category that, in our opinion, Canada falls into in these new geopolitical circumstances, is a selective power. In our understanding, a selective power is a country that is capable of global actions in selected and limited areas of its external relations and this capability is acknowledged and recognized by other international actors.” The idea of Canada as a selective power is based on the notion that the government may choose independently in which policy areas it would participate and in which not.

Finally, Canadian foreign policy may be understood as a status quo power pointing out that it has no such potential that would revise and improve its position in the existing world order. Status quo states are aware of their existing resources and pay important attention to strategies on how to secure them. On the other hand, so-called revisionist powers try to radically change the existing world order (Dowie, 2017; Kordan and Dowie, 2020). As agreed by Kordan and Dowie (2020), Canada has certainly been a status quo power as shown in the case of Ukraine and Steven Harper’s foreign policy strategy.

The Next Step: “Awkward” Powers in Comparison

According to many accounts, Canada belongs to the middle power group of states, originally counted as a conventional or traditional middle power (Struye de Swielande, 2018). Its image is recognized by many international organizations and states as a mediator, balancer, and strong advocate of the role of international organizations and international law. According to Moravcsik (2009; 2010), the EU is certainly a superpower in the sense of its international strategies based on economic power and normative positions. What correlations can we draw from these different conceptions of power? As we may notice, most concepts are connected to basic ideas of the liberal-democratic (international) order, as has dominated the international order during the period after the Cold War, highlighting monopolar power conditions. As such, fundamental elements of the modern liberal order are certainly democratic procedures, normative stance, niche diplomacy, or an important role of international institutions. Joint standpoints of Canada and the EU using also power concepts is the so-called *convergence* of economic, policy and political views – a unification of norms, principles and ideas of joint international liberal-democratic strategy.

Table 3. Correlations between different conceptions of power concerning Canada and the EU

	<i>Nor- mative Power Europe</i>	<i>Smart power</i>	<i>Trans- forma- tive power</i>	<i>Small power</i>	<i>Civilian Power Europe</i>	<i>Middle or re- gional power</i>	<i>Second su- perpower/ potential superpower</i>	<i>The quiet super- power</i>	<i>Market power</i>
<i>Dependency/ Satellite</i>	X	X	X	XXX	X	XX	X	X	X
<i>Major/fore- most/princi- pal power</i>	X	XX	XXX	X	XX	XX	XXX	XXX	XX
<i>Middle power</i>	XXX	XX	XX	XX	XXX	XXX	X	X	XX
<i>Specialized power</i>	X	XX	XX	XX	XX	XXX	XX	XX	XXX
<i>Selective power</i>	XX	XX	XXX	XX	XX	XXX	XX	XX	XX
<i>Strategic power</i>	XXX	XX	XX	X	XXX	XX	XX	XXX	XXX
<i>Functional power</i>	X	X	XX	XX	XX	XXX	XX	XX	XX
<i>Status quo power</i>	X	XXX	X	XXX	X	X	X	XX	X

Legend: XXX = strong correlation, XX = moderate correlation, X = weak correlation.

Source: Authors' own assessment and analysis.

The first important correlation is obvious when comparing Toje's (2010) definition that the EU plays a role as a small power and the perception that Canada is mainly dependent on US dominance in economy and politics – the dependence/satellite model expressed by Gabryś and Soroka (2017). Listening to Mearsheimer (2014) and other political realists, both powers are largely executing US supremacy and political power. What is more important for Canada, the main market for exporting its resources is the US – specifically electric power and many other natural resources. The geographic position is crucial in this sense.

The second correlation connects Moravscik's (2010) definition that the EU is a potential superpower and the role of Canada acting as a major, foremost, or principal power (Gabryś and Soroka, 2017). As explained by Moravscik (2010), the EU, despite its weaker military potential from an economic point of view, acts as a superpower, establishing one of the most prosperous economic and trading areas looking globally. As explained by Gabryś and Soroka (2017), Canada may be perceived also as a globally important player due to its economic power and huge availability of natural resources such as water, oil and gas, and others (the importance of the CETA agreement). From a liberal internationalist perspective, Canada contributed a lot to the construction of the post-WWII world order. Interestingly, one of the first political movements in Canadian history was called "Canada First" – a nationalist political movement from the 1870s associating young Anglophone Protestant intellectuals, politicians, and journalists (Gabryś and Soroka, 2017).

The idea that Canada is a conventional middle power in international relations shares some characteristics with the EU power concepts as normative and civil elements, and the notion that the EU is also a middle power in some sense. The fact is that both powers act in international relations as advocates of civil liberties and democratic values, and participate in numerous humanitarian actions. Moreover, the original Canadian idea (mentioned by the former minister of foreign affairs Lloyd Axworthy) is that of human security as a security concept assuming the use of soft power in securing the lives of individuals from poverty or crime, etc. Axworthy defined human security in a quite narrow sense as a 'freedom of fear' which seems more relevant to Canadian political tradition and history. As Remeacle (2008, p. 9) indicates:

Paramount issues were the establishment of a peace-building capacity, the banning of antipersonnel landmines, the reduction of the flow of small arms and conflict commodities, the situation of children with regard to sexual abuse, child labor, and their protection from violence, the promotion of international criminal justice, and later on a renewed approach to development assistance, in addition to promotion of rules-based trade to spur economic development.

Especially Canadian power concepts (and partially also that of the EU) largely describe and define the Canadian international role as limited to specific functions,

interests and specializations. The fact is that similar countries as Canada intervene in international relations with specific tasks and goals which are not of general importance, but focus on narrower policy areas building up the image of a particular state. On the contrary, specifically, Moravcsik (2009; 2010) and some other liberal thinkers argue that the power of the EU in the international community may be certainly seen as ‘supreme’, stating that the EU is a superpower even more focused on economic issues. On the other hand, realists have some doubts about this statement (especially Mearsheimer, 2014), asserting that a superpower would have to express a complete system of different powers – economic, political and also military.

Testing “Awkwardness” Parameters

Shortcomings of the EU power in foreign policy are comparable with the positions of Germany, Japan, Italy or Brazil (Abbondanza and Wilkins, 2022). *Power asymmetry* shows there is a lack of military resources in these states as well as in the EU. This is evident in the case of the Ukrainian crisis where the EU has not been able to fully operate as a geopolitical power from the realist point of view. It is questionable if solely following a normative stance might bring the EU enough power to act as a great power. Similarly, like the EU, Canada has also shown limited military capacities. Within the EU, only France has nuclear missiles, something that the realists deem an important element of power. We may portray the Canadian (and also the EU’s) approach as constructivist and liberal (even also geopolitical) pointing out normative and identity stances in political discourse.

The category of the *transitional status of states* means that some states do not belong to one single power category. Abbondanza and Wilkins (2022) mentioned the case of Brazil acting somewhere between the middle power status and its great power counterpart. The EU power status in foreign and defense policy could be described in this sense – as an incomplete great power. Mentioning Canada in this context, many experts would say that it fully related to the group of middle-power countries despite, for example, Chapnick’s (2000) and Gabryś and Soroka’s (2017) objections. Canada’s and the EU’s role in the Ukrainian crisis show their limitations to act as important powers – specifically because they act under the umbrella of another superpower, the US. This puts both entities under the category of “hegemon followers” (Jesse *et al.*, 2012).

The constructivist vision is also present in Abbondanza and Wilkins’ (2022) typology. It is a matter of so-called *external acceptance* where certain powers may not acknowledge the power status of some states and provoke discrepancy between their self-perceived role and the actual image recognized by most powerful international actors. The debate around the image is to a large extent a discursive formation – the way how the international community understands the role of great powers.

Based on many definitions of the EU's power mentioned above, one notices definitional differences. In addition, there are important differences between the characteristics of various public policies in the EU. Similarities may be found also in the Canadian case.

The next group of states is known for their strategy to use *alternative forms of governance* (regional and international) to exceed their usual power. One of the examples would be the G20 group of states. The BRICS case teaches us that participation in that kind of group is also a reaction to US hegemony in some sense (Abbondanza and Wilkins, 2022). As Abbondanza and Wilkins (*ibid.*, p. 391) insist, "these new institutional constellations represent 'coalitions' of awkward powers". An important case for our investigation is the Arctic Council consisting of permanent members including Canada (founding member) and the EU as an observer. According to this parameter, the EU and Canada have been using the same strategy of being incorporated into alternative forms of governance to exceed their power in international relations. One of the permanent members of the Council is also Russia, but the Ukrainian war may directly influence its status within the organization (Kirchner, 2022). "Cooperation across political divides has long been a key characteristic of the circumpolar North" (*ibid.*, p. 2).

So-called *coping mechanisms* picture the behavior of states searching for options to transfer their power to other states or organizations. As Merom (2021) indicated, Israel may pertain to this group of states using the power of the US (via the Israel lobby) – so-called "borrowed power". Similarly, this applies to Canada acting as a traditional middle power with the strong support of the US government. Coping mechanisms are certain strategies of middle or awkward middle powers trying to widen their power status by collaborating with stronger states.

The last parameter of *divergent behaviors* may be abbreviated using the liberal view investigating national behavior. One of the cases that potentially describe this context is the fact that some states (Germany, Italy, Japan) rejected to incorporate the nuclear program in their defense strategies, which is partially a deviation from conventional great powers' behavior (Abbondanza and Wilkins, 2022). As Abbondanza and Wilkins (*ibid.*, p. 395) argue: "In the case of awkward middle powers, it would appear that the standard model of 'traditional' middle power diplomacy does not apply to these awkward states, who have charted quite divergent, but sometimes overlapping paths." Using the case of Canada as a traditional middle power, its involvement in the Ukrainian crisis has brought new political reality in its foreign policy – from the status of benign power towards geopolitical (realist) power using military capabilities to influence the conflict; on the other hand, different behaviors of EU member states importantly affect its foreign and security policy. As we remember, the case of Hungary is evident, as it, at some moments, opposed Russian isolation due to its interest in Russian gas resources.

Conclusion: How Usable Might Be an Awkward Power Typology?

Why have we tried to offer a reconstructed typology of power focussing on the comparison between Canada and the EU? Abbondanza and Wilkins (*ibid.*, p. 376) agreed on using the concept of awkward powers: “As a result, our discipline is riddled with a plethora of states whose status in the international power structure escapes scholarly consensus, being either undefined or ill-defined. This predicament, we argued, was an unsatisfactory state of affairs for IR theory, and one that called for remedial attention.” We can hardly say that this concept is certainly an original political (theoretical) innovation, but in some sense it has tried to overcome the traditional power hierarchies.

As we have pointed out, speaking about power is not solely a realist conception, but it must also be investigated through other “non-material” aspects of power (liberal and constructivist theories). The awkward power conception shows that a combination of different aspects of power might offer a more reliable perception of relations among states and political actors on the international agenda.

We may also conclude that the awkward power typology is usable also in the investigation of power potential comparing the EU and Canada. In the case of the EU foreign and defense policy, there are so many various definitions of power that may provoke certain inconsistencies in understanding its role in the international arena. In some sense, the concept of ‘awkwardness’ in investigating the power potential of the EU seems a relative novelty and adaptation to the development of theoretical perspectives on the role of the EU outside its borders. On the other hand, Canada has been widely known for its traditional role as a middle power in international relations but, as Chapnick (2000) and Gabryś and Soroka (2017) insisted, its historical position has changed over time. Experts in this sense presented many different countervailing arguments about its power. As in the case of the EU also, the Canadian role in foreign policy has been perceived from its minor influence towards a more important role as a principal power. The final recognition in both cases of investigation is that there certainly exists some core agreement over their power potential, but there is even more a plethora of different views.

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