The Study of the Foreign Policies of European Union Member States

Paper for the workshop on
‘International Relations in Europe:
Concepts, Schools and Institutions’
(directors: Wolf-Dieter Eberwein and Knud Erik Jorgensen),
held at the 28th Joint Sessions of Workshops
of the European Consortium for Political Research,
14-19 April 2000, Copenhagen, Denmark.

The paper will attempt to map the contemporary work taking place in the study of European Union (EU) member states' foreign policies and argue that the distinctive FPA approach needed for such a study has only recently begun to emerge. It will further suggest that the current analyses of EU member states foreign policies involves tackling both theoretical questions of FPA itself, and empirical questions of case study comparison in the European arena, which increasingly involves the International Relations community having to meet the European Studies community, and vice-versa. The paper posits that as it is now more appropriate to suggest that EU member states conduct all but the most limited foreign policies objectives inside an EU context, this necessitates a critical reexamination of the ‘traditional’ conceptual frameworks within which FPA formerly sat. The paper will argue that these patterns of change are leading to a significant reconsideration of FPA and its application to the member states of the European Union.

Address for correspondence:
Dr. Ian Manners
Dept. of Politics and International Relations
Rutherford College,
University of Kent at Canterbury
Canterbury, Kent CT2 7NX, UK
i.j.manners@ukc.ac.uk
The paper will attempt to survey the contemporary landscape shaping the study of European Union (EU) Member States' foreign policies. It will attempt to engage in an intellectual mapping of the most recent patterns of conceptual changes taking place in the study of the Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) of EU Member States. As part of this map, it will need to consider the constructivist move in the study of International Relations over the past decade, and European integration during the past three years, which is now shaping the conceptual framework in the FPA under consideration. This will inevitably involve tracing the intellectual path through which the debates in Britain, Scandinavia, Germany and Canada in IR (T. Christiansen et al, 1999) have found their way into the study of the FPA of EU member states currently found in Scandinavia, Germany and Britain (B. White, 1999; I. Manners and R. Whitman, forthcoming).

The end of the Cold War seems to be leading to a divergence of practices between Europe and America in terms of the development of foreign policies, and in terms of foreign policy analysis undertaken by scholars. In parallel to this divergence is the development of a critical mass of existing and new European scholars who are writing in the field of FPA in a European context. The contemporary European condition increasingly requires scholars to adjust their models of European FPA in a *sui generis* direction. These models need to take account of the triple developments of a post-Cold War Europe, a complex interdependent Europe, and an increasingly integrated Europe.

Foreign Policy Analysis is overwhelmingly an American subject, despite the presence of a robust and healthy European research community. …The obvious danger is that US FPA may not be relevant to the non-US setting.¹

As Walter Carlsnaes and Steve Smith have suggested (above) the application of FPA insights from outside of Europe to the Member States of the EU is an undertaking which raises questions about the value of broad-based FPA and the role of European approaches. The paper will attempt to map the contemporary work taking place in this area of European integration and international relations in order to argue that the distinctive FPA approach needed for the study of EU member states is only recently beginning to emerge. It will further suggest that the current analyses of EU member states foreign policies involves tackling both theoretical questions of FPA itself, and empirical questions of case study comparison in the European arena, which increasingly involves the International Relations community having to meet the European Studies community, and vice versa. The paper posits that as it is now more appropriate to suggest that EU member states conduct all but the most limited foreign policies objectives inside an EU context, this necessitates a critical reexamination of the ‘traditional’ conceptual frameworks within which FPA formerly sat. The paper will argue that these patterns of change are leading to a significant reconsideration of FPA and its application to the member states of the European Union.

Rare is the European foreign policy specialist who has not started [their] career by looking at a US theory (Carlsnaes and Smith, 1994).

Having raised so many crucial questions surrounding the study of EU member states’ foreign policies, it is only right that the argument of distinctiveness to be adopted in this paper is justified. There are indeed two sets of justifications to be made regarding the distinctiveness of current European foreign policy analysis and its application to EU member states. These two justifications are on the necessity for a distinctive FPA, and on what common framework can be supported. As Carlsnaes and Smith have pointed out (above) European FPA has almost inevitably been situated within a theoretical framework based upon, or least informed by, US theories. Thus the first justification for a distinctive FPA has been the need to escape the frameworks, or boundaries,

---

constructed within US FP circles and move towards a more appropriate approach primarily informed by more recent European thinking. The second justification for a distinctive FPA has been the attempt to construct an analytical framework which is appropriate for the European (of at least EU) condition. As William Wallace observed over twenty years ago:

There are number of immediate parallels between the context and conduct of American foreign policy and that of the major states of Western Europe. But the differences are as striking as the similarities (Wallace, 1978).

Thus it would appear clear that as these differences have become more exaggerated in post-Cold War Europe, so European scholars are far more prepared construct original analytical frameworks to examine the context and conduct of European FPA.

As many European scholars have all drawn our attention to over the past two decades, there is a considerable amount of concern amongst those working on the relationships between the EU and the foreign policies of its member states that the “actor-centred rationality” dominant in American discourses on the subject in the search for “theoretical generalisations of global reach” are increasingly inappropriate for application in the specific conditions under examination in this paper. In a recent article on the foreign policy analysis of the European Union White has argued that “European FPA can tentatively be characterised as more eclectic epistemologically, focused on more limited theoretical advances … and contextual ‘middle range’ theories…” (White, 1999).

Similarly, in one of the most recent European explorations of its kind, Ben Tonra has argued that:

To get an understanding of all of these issues it is indeed necessary to move beyond the rather sterile template of traditional (US-centric) FPA with its state-centric focus upon complex bureaucracies and allegedly rational, utility-maximising actors. Certainly, in the examples of Danish and Irish foreign policy it is evident that a model of FPA needs to be able to account for identity, beliefs, norms and expectations arising from a unique endeavour of political integration. Such a model cannot assume any trajectory or direction in these ‘non-rational’ variables, but it must – at least – promise to come to terms with them (Tonra, forthcoming).

The paper will therefore sets out to consider the study of the foreign policies of European Union member states. It will attempt to chart the way in which the field has developed since the end of the Cold War and the ways in which European FPA appears to becoming increasingly different from American FPA. It will suggest that the interplay between the changed basis for the understanding of notions of ‘foreign policy’ in the EU context, and the recent developments in European IR and

---

studies of European integration, are leading to a distinctive approach which reinforces thinking about the intersubjective nature of IR theorising.

Existing explanations for foreign policy

Most surveys of explanations of foreign policy understate elements in the existing FPA literature, largely because of the huge wealth of existing works in the field. Undoubtedly this paper will follow in this trend, which can largely be overcome by reading the best short summary, in its time, by Steve Smith.³ This summary admirably illustrates the sheer range of existing explanations for foreign policy, and importantly introduces the idea of middle range theories. In attempting to generalise more for the benefit of brevity than Smith does, it may be possible to suggest that existing explanations appear to fall into three very broad categories of foreign policy analysis, which are considered here in reference to their applicability to the analysis of EU Member States’ foreign policies. It is not the intention here to discuss any of these existing explanations in any great detail, but simply to acknowledge their existence and consider their value for further study. The first category is what can very broadly be called the ‘rational actor’ model of FPA and is generally associated with traditional analyses based on ‘state-centric realism’. The focus here is on the states as an egoistic rational actor pursuing national interests.

The second category is broadly labelled the ‘decision-making’ model of FPA as suggested by Richard Snyder et al and pursued by Graham Allison.⁴ This second category can be further distinguished between the ‘organisational process’ model and the ‘bureaucratic politics’ model. Both the rational actor and the decision-making models of FPA have tended to be mutually reinforcing and predominantly suitable for application in only one case - the USA. The more interesting work to emanate from the latter model of FPA has been in field of sub-national activity, in particular in the area of local (i.e. non-central government) foreign policy (Brian Hocking and Eric Phillipart).⁵ The focus of this second group is still largely on the state, but represents attempts to open the black box and look inside.

The third category is really not a category at all, but more of a grouping of more recent works attempting to move beyond the concepts of ‘actorness’ and ‘process’ in order to more fully appreciate the less tangible aspects of FPA in the form of ‘societal’ or ‘ideational’ factors. These factors have included ideology,⁶ national role conceptions,⁷ ethical considerations,⁸ ideas,⁹ and culture,¹⁰ amongst others. The focus of this third category is to move away from the state as ‘agent’ in order to return to the broader questions of the roles of institutions, public opinion, and norms, amongst others, in the analysis of foreign policy.

In parallel to these three very broad categories of FPA sit the few attempts to explain the foreign policies of European states in any form of comparative framework prior to 1995. In addition to considering the traditional areas of FPA mentioned above (and including the largely discredited psychology model) Christopher Hill emphasised the role of domestic society and the external environment as being important to foreign policy making in Western European states. Five years later Hill focussed on a range of cross-cutting factors as being important determinants of FP making in the European sphere: ‘extra-European distractions’, ‘domestic factors’, the European Community, and the ‘security dilemma’. Frank Pfetsch narrowed these explanations down to internal factors (i.e. domestic factors) and external factors (i.e. international factors) in an attempt to compare the foreign policies of EC members.

European foreign policy analysis literature

Comparative foreign policy is the field of FPA that has been most subject to criticism and self-criticism.

It seems clear that the existing literature has under-explored the distinctiveness of the foreign policies of European states who are members of the EU and the issues that this membership raises. Despite the observation by Margot Light (above) that the field of comparative foreign policy has been subject to critical re-evaluation, this does not seem to have extended to the area of European foreign policy analysis. The existing literature falls within two large, and two small categories. The largest is the broad-based FPA literature which is primarily US written, the most recent comprehensive survey of which is Laura Neack, Jeanne Hey, and Patrick Haney. This literature has rarely sought to address the distinctive nature of the foreign policies of EU Member States. The second largest category consists of case studies on the impact of membership on individual EU states, for example the ‘EC membership Evaluated’ series published by Pinter publishers. Although this literature is interesting, by its nature, it has rarely sought to address the issue from a directly comparative viewpoint across a series of studies. One early attempt to do so in a comparative analysis is that by William Wallace, and William Paterson, which poses many of the questions which we are returning to twenty years later. The last two categories are those that look at the topic of European foreign policy and states in European foreign policy. These two texts have approached the subject by asking very different sets of questions about European FPA. Walter Carlsnaes and Steve Smith have as their primary theoretical concern the interparadigm, and agency-structure, debates. Indeed, they do not seem overly concerned with explaining the foreign policies of European states at all, focusing on issues in international relations theory rather than directly upon the practice and interpretation of EU Member States foreign policies. Christopher Hill takes completely the opposite stance by focusing almost entirely on the detail of EU states’ behaviour within CFSP without being overly concerned by introducing a comparative element. It is interesting to note how little Hill’s project has moved since it was first written in 1983 with his list of research

---

12 C. Hill (ed.), National Foreign Policies.
16 W. Wallace and W. Paterson (eds.) Foreign Policy Making in Western Europe (Farnborough, Saxon House, 1978).
17 See for example, Carlsnaes & Smith, European Foreign Policy, p. 11.
questions remaining remarkably unchanged. An area which both of these latter two texts under-explore is the question of ‘what is distinctive about the foreign policy of EU states?’

Building upon the output in the English language by a small group of European foreign policy specialists (Dave Allen, Walter Carlsnaes, Christopher Hill, Brian Hocking, Mike Smith, Steve Smith, Ben Soetendorp, William Wallace, and Brian White amongst others) prior to 1995, it does appear that European FPA is starting to come of age. There are several reasons why this coming of age appears to be happening in the late 1990s / early 2000s. As Brian White and Ben Tonra suggest, the underlying basis of this coming of age is situated in discussions about the rejection of US-approaches and the insights of eclectic middle-range or ‘non-rational’ approaches.

This paper will, therefore, now suggest that the interplay between the changed basis for the understanding of notions of ‘foreign policy’ in the EU context, and the recent developments in European IR and studies of European integration, are leading to a distinctive approach which reinforces thinking about the intersubjective nature of IR theorising. During the mid-1990s, this led to the observation that European FPA seemed to be becoming more endogenous, examples of which included Walter Carlsnaes and Steve Smith, Christopher Hill, Stelios Stavridis and Christopher Hill. However, in the late 1990s the constructivist turn in international relations began to inform a new group of scholars working on European FPA, including Karen Fierke, Knud Erik Jørgensen, Henrik Larsen, Ben Tonra, Ulla Holm, and Kenneth Glarbo, amongst others.

It is now the intention of this paper to attempt to understand this trend by looking at the two ‘home’ disciplines of European FPA. - that of European Integration / Studies (ES) and foreign policy (FP).

The Study of European Integration

For the purposes of this paper is useful to subdivide the more theoretical approaches to European integration into four schools of thought: ‘California’, ‘Harvard’, ‘new governance’, and ‘Copenhagen’. These schools are obviously no more than a device to facilitate the comparison of competing approaches to integration, but given that they are broadly self-selecting and defining, it provides an insight into the dynamics of contemporary debate.

The ‘California’ School

The earliest theorising on European integration was to be found in California focussed on the work of Ernst Haas, Philippe Schmitter, and Leon Lindberg (Milward, 1992: 202). As Alan Milward has suggested, this theorising was conducted by a small group of American scholars who developed the ideas of neofunctionalism to describe the involuntary process of integration through spillover (Milward, 1992: 2). The impact of this work over the period 1958 to 1975 was substantial and shaped the thoughts of a generation of scholars through works such as Haas (1958) The Uniting of Europe, Lindberg (1963) The Political Dynamics of European Economic Integration, and Schmitter (1970) ‘A Revised Theory of Regional Integration’. During the 1970s and 1980s the California

School of neofunctionalism fell into disrepute until it was revived by research on the Single European Act in the late 1980s. In the late 1990s the focus of neofunctionalism returned home with the work of the “Laguna Beach Project” centred on the University of California found in Wayne Sandholtz and Alec Stone Sweet, eds. (1998) European Integration and Supranational Governance (Caporaso, 1998: 1 and Puchala, 1999: 32). This approach is not without its critics, in particular those found closer to Europe.

The ‘Harvard’ School
In the 1980s the criticism of the neofunctionalist approach came from historians reinterpreting the rationale for integration in order to emphasize the role of European nation-states. Alan Milward (1984, 1992, 1993) and his historian colleagues across Europe argued that integration provided the means for a ‘European rescue of the nation-state’, not a weakening. However, the most concerted attack on the tenets of the neofunctionalists comes not from Europe, but from America in the form of “the Harvard School” (Jørgensen, 1997: 10). This approach is often referred to as the ‘Harvard school’ because of the force of North American ‘rational-institutionalist’ theories appears to radiate outward from the New England capital, where it is the hegemonic discourse (see Moravcsik, 1999: 669). The school, though diverse, centres around broad agreement over the synthesis of neoliberal and neorealist theories terming ‘liberal intergovernmentalism’ by Andrew Moravcsik (1993) or ‘domestic-realism’ by James Caporaso (1999), but more accurately described as ‘rational-institutionalism’ by Marlene Wind (1997). Important in this school are the attempts to marry state preferences with institutional role found in the central ‘rational-institutionalist’ works of Robert Keohane and Stanley Hoffman, eds. (1991) The New European Community: Decisionmaking and Institutional Change, Robert Keohane, Joseph Nye, Stanley Hoffman, eds. (1993) After the Cold War: International Institutions and State Strategies in Europe, 1989-1991, and Andrew Moravcsik (1999) The Choice of Europe: Social Purpose and State Power from Messina to Maastricht.

New Governance School
The term ‘new governance’ was used by Simon Hix (1998) to describe a very broad group of writers who theorise the EU as a political system using ‘multilevel’, ‘institutionalist’, ‘regulatory’, or ‘governance’ approaches. Much of the new governance school reflects an attempt by policy specialists to develop means of theorising the distinctive nature of decision making within the European Union. Much of this school finds its roots in the attempts of Helen Wallace and William Wallace (1977, 1983, 1996) and others over the past thirty years to explain ‘the challenge of governance’ found in the study of European integration. The first challenge comes from the fact that the European Union is a “multilevel political system” as termed by Carole Webb (1983: 38), explored by Fritz Sharpf (1994) and used by Gary Marks (1993). The second challenge is that considered by ‘new institutionalist’ (Bulmer, 1994) and ‘historical institutionalist’ (Pierson, 1996) approaches focussing on the path-dependent impact of institutions in shaping integration. The third challenge focuses on the regulation of integration by the European Union as set out by Giandomenico Majone (1996) Regulating Europe. Finally, the EU is theorised in terms of governance “through a unique set of multi-level, non-hierarchical and regulatory institutions, and a hybrid mix of state and non-state actors” (Hix, 1998: 39) by Markus Jachtenfuchs and Beate Kohler-Koch (1995), Sonia Mazey and Jeremy Richardson (1995), John Peterson (1995), Gary Marks et al (1996) and Hix (1999).

The ‘Copenhagen’ School
The most recent theoretical developments have been born out of a growing dissatisfaction with a “predominant focus on interests” and is leading to a focus on normative ideas and intersubjective meaning (Jachtenfuchs et al, 1998). This approach has been referred to as the ‘Copenhagen school’ by one of its critics because of the supposed similarities with work on security studies conducted at the Copenhagen Peace Research Institute (COPRI) (Moravcsik, 1999). Despite this confusion, the work of this school is predominantly located in Northern Europe (Denmark, Germany and Britain),
so the mislabelling serves a purpose. The emphasis of this school is to provide a fairly radical “translation of a metatheoretical stance into new conceptualisation and eventually theoretical innovation” (Jørgensen, 1997: vii). Its two central works are Knud Erik Jørgensen, ed. (1997) *Reflective Approaches to European Governance*, and a special issue of the *Journal of European Public Policy* on ‘The Social Construction of Europe’ edited by Thomas Christiansen, Knud Erik Jørgensen and Anje Wiener (1999). However, the surveys by Marlene Wind (1997) ‘Rediscovering institutions: a reflectivist critique of rational institutionalism’, as well as Markus Jachtenfuchs, Thomas Diez and Sabine Jung (1998) ‘Which Europe? conflicting models of legitimate political order’ both serve to set out the distinctiveness of this school.

**The Study of Foreign Policy**

In a similar manner to the discussion of European integration ‘schools’ or broad approaches set out above, it is also possible to identify groups of scholars working on the study of foreign policy. Unlike the previous survey, this survey of foreign policy analysis is focussed on a less bounded discussion of groups sharing a central activity and/or publication, rather than a geographical location or meta-theoretical stance.

*Broadly Empirical*

The 1990s have produced a number of works on the foreign policy of EU member states which may be described as being broadly empirical in their approach. Inevitably a survey of these type of works will run the risk of being anglo-centric in focus and overlooking many works of value, however the purpose is not to be exhaustive but to provide an insight into some of the comparative empirical work on foreign policy. The first two works to consider demonstrate the activities of nationally-based research institutes in forging networks of scholars working on foreign policy. The 1990 collaboration between the Royal Institute of International Relations (RIIA) in London, and the Centre d’Etudes et de Recherches Internationales (CERI) in Paris led to Françoise de La Serre, Jacques Leruez and Helen Wallace (eds.) *French and British Foreign Policies in Transition: the challenge of adjustment* (1990). In a similar way the 1996 collaboration between the Institut für Europäische Politik (IEP) in Bonn, the Centre d’Estudos sobre la Pau et Desarmament (CEPD) in Barcelona, and the Instituto de Estudios Estratégicos Internacionales (IEEI) in Lisbon led to Franco Algieri and Elfriede Regelsberger (eds.) *Synergy at Work: Spain and Portugal in European Foreign Policy* (1996). Both these works serve as examples of the way in which membership of the EU has increasingly led national foreign policy institutes to consider FPA in a comparative framework as a valid, if not essential, approach to the sub-field. Similarly, these works indicate the unwillingness of research institutes, located in the middle ground between the study and practice of foreign policy, to engage in analysis with a significant theoretical component.

The second group of works to consider are those which demonstrate the extent to which networks of scholars based in EU universities have formed a community to study comparative foreign policy within a particular explanatory discourse. One such network is led by Christopher Hill at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), includes La Serre and Regelsberger, as well as David Allen (University of Loughborough), Esther Barbé (CEPD), Panos Tsakaloyannis, Stelios Stavridis (University of Reading), and William Wallace (LSE/CEU). The three works which help to demonstrate this network of academics at work are Chris Hill (ed.) *The Actors in Europe’s Foreign Policy* (1996), Stelios Stavridis and Christopher Hill (eds.) *Domestic Sources of Foreign Policy: Western European Reactions to the Falklands Conflict* (1996), and Stelios Stavridis et al (eds.) *The Foreign Policies of the European Union’s Mediterranean States and Applicant Countries in the 1990s* (1999).

The last group of works of interest are those which take a slightly more bureaucratic approach to the study of foreign policy in an EU context by looking at the question of adjustment, adaptation and change in member states and their ministries. Again, what is interesting here is the extent to which
there is a similar membership and assumptions about the theoretical context within these works. The three examples here are Yves Mény, Pierre Muller and Jean-Louis Quermonne (eds.) *Adjusting to Europe: the Impact of the European Union on National Institutions and Policies* (1996), Kenneth Hanf and Ben Soetendorp (eds.) *Adapting to European Integration: Small States and the European Union* (1998), and Brian Hocking (ed.) *Foreign Ministries: Change and Adaptation* (1999).

Included again within this group are the works of David Allen, Helen Wallace, William Wallace, and Wolfgang Wessels, representing some of the most widely respected writers in this tradition.

More Theoretical

Moving beyond these broadly empirical works it is worth differentiating those studies in comparative foreign policy which are more theoretically inclined and which seek to further the argument surrounding the need for a more distinctive, or appropriate FPA for EU member states. An important first step in this direction was taken in 1994 by a group of scholars attempting to understand the changed basis for the interplay between foreign policy theory and the ‘new’ Europe contributing to Walter Carlsnaes and Steve Smith (eds.) *European Foreign Policy: the EC and Changing Perspectives in Europe* (1994). Although the book was indeterminate in its theoretical orientation, and made no claim to providing sustainable analysis, it did contribute some of the more interesting theoretical discussions on foreign policy seen for several years. Important in this respect were the contributions by Steve Smith - ‘Foreign policy theory and the new Europe’, Walter Carlsnaes - ‘In lieu of a conclusion: compatibility and the agency-structure issue in foreign policy analysis’, and crucially Ole Wæver - ‘Resisting the temptation of post foreign policy analysis’. The Wæver chapter made a three fold distinction between an American school of ‘general theory’, a British tradition of ‘middle-range theory’, and a Scandinavian school of ‘weak theory’ (Wæver, 1994: 249-251).

Wæver’s work, together with that in Danish of Ulla Holm, and the focus of more critical work found at COPRI discussed previously, was to provide the basis for a flowering of theoretically-rich work on FPA in the late 1990s. Although eclectic in its own constitution, this group of scholars, primarily working in northern Europe, have the meta-theoretical concerns for the relationship between epistemology, ontology and methodology at the heart of their work on FPA. The works of interest in this respect are those by Ole Wæver (1995, 1996), Ulla Holm (1993, 1997), Knud Erik Jørgensen (1997, 1998), Henrik Larsen (1997, 1999), Ben Tonra (1996, 1997), and Karen Fierke (1996, 1998).

Separate to, although informed by this work, is the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) funded study at the Institute for German Studies (IGS) at Birmingham University on German Foreign Policy. Although only a single-country analysis, this project is an interesting contribution to this review of the study of foreign policy because it indicates the extent to which theoretically-informed approaches are being supported by fairly traditional government agencies such as the ESRC. The IGS study is entirely based on a discourse analysis of the German foreign policy debates in the Bundestag, with its first thoughts being found in Adrian Hyde-Price (1999), Arthur Hoffman and Vanda Knowles (1999), Arthur Hoffman and Charlie Jeffrey (2000).

The final work of interest in the theoretical sphere is one which seeks to apply middle-range theories as suggested by S. Smith (1986) in what Wæver (1994) described as the ‘British tradition’. What is interesting about this project is the extent to which its work has drawn on both the empirical and theoretical approaches outlined above, and has included writers working in both traditions, and in several European countries. *The Foreign Policies of European Union Member States* by Ian Manners and Richard Whitman (eds.) (forthcoming) has attempted to include the insights a broadly empirical nature by drawing on the work of writers such as David Allen, Ben Soetendorp, and Anthony Forster, as well as the more theoretical insights of writers such as Ben Tonra and Lisbeth
Aggestam. This work has attempted to construct a framework for the comparative analysis of EU member states’ foreign policies, the basis of which will be discussed later in this paper.

**Studies of the Discipline**


What these studies all appear to suggest is not that “an American hegemony exists and it influences the theoretical profile of the [sub] discipline” (Wæver, 1998: 688). But that in “a more regionalised post-Cold War order, European integration … [has led] to the emergence of distinct IR voices” in the study of foreign policy (Wæver, 1998: 688). What a reading of the more contemporary foreign policy work of the past five years reveals is that those speaking American English and those speaking European English are literally talking past each other (pun intended). And those not speaking English are only heard as an exotic ‘other’ within the American FPA heartland (Jørgensen, 2000: 9-10). For US-based FP scholars, the European literature is a source for empirical evidence to support US-based theoretical generalisations. For European-based FP scholars, the US literature is a source for theoretical explanations which may be easily disputed in the search for greater insight. The most painful glance into these non-discursive practices may be seen in the bibliography and references of a (fairly) recent review of the state of the art of foreign policy analysis by Valerie Hudson (1995) ‘Foreign policy analysis yesterday, today and tomorrow’ in the *Mershon International Studies Review*. Out of the 226 references in the bibliography only three could be considered of non-US origin - a stunning 1.3%.

**A Search for Middle-Range Explanations**

As suggested previously, any attempt to engage in a comparison of EU Member States’ foreign policies needs to utilise a selection of explanations which, although unsustainable at a meta-theoretical level, might lead to a greater understanding, if not explanation. This paper will now consider a series of policy variables, and the debates associated with them, in a search for middle-range explanations. This search is intended to lead to the construction of a framework for analysis based on a series of six explanations, divided into three sections. The sections attempt to delineate three different forces shaping the foreign policies of EU Member States - foreign policy change, foreign policy process, and foreign policy actions. It is intended that this common framework could act as a starting point for consideration in the writing of empirical studies looking at individual EU Member States. It is suggested that the study of foreign policy in this context needs three sorts of questions - those that consider the way in which exogenous change provokes endogenous change in a member states’ foreign policy construction and orientation; those that consider the way in which a member states’ internal organisation shapes its external orientation; and those consider a member
states foreign policy by analysing its actions. The approach taken here is to follow Ole Wæver’s suggestion and use a ‘synthesising perspective which is not a harmonising grand theory … but points to an emerging new attitude’.

Foreign policy change - adaptation and socialisation

The role of dynamic change as a factor in the foreign policies of the EU Member States has been a crucial element of explaining foreign policy on the basis of structural considerations. However, as the following discussions suggest, the impact of structural or exogenous factors shapes both member state adaptation and the social world in which its citizens and political actors exist.

1. Adaptation through membership?

The first consideration is the way in which EU Member States adapt their foreign policy through membership of the EU, as well as towards the EU itself, and towards the other Member States of the Union. Although the process of adaptation is more sudden for new Member States, even founding Member States have to change their policy towards previously external states (i.e. previously third party states) as they join. The second element of this variable concerns the adaptation of foreign policy towards third states in order to bring it into line with existing EU policies. Kenneth Hanf and Ben Soetendorp have emphasised the role of state adaptation to EU membership by looking at governmental, political, and strategic adaptation. Nikolaj Petersen has also suggested this approach by looking at the case of Denmark and its national strategy as an EU member.

These sorts of questions are premised on assumptions of rationality and actorness in international relations. They tend to be imbued with discourses of strategy, adaptation, and rationalisation whilst generally avoiding questions of how such changes may shape the social interplay that in turn shapes group or self identity.

These approaches lead us to ask to what impact the changing external environment has had on the Member State’s foreign policy? More specifically, a question that is particularly relevant for the more recent members is what has been the impact of membership? Similarly, the changes introduced in the Maastricht and Amsterdam treaties cause us to ask what has been the impact of changes to the treaty base of the EU? Finally, in the context of EU membership, what has been the impact of the end of the Cold War?

2. Socialisation of foreign policy makers?

note must also be made to the elite socialization which is clearly event … [as] this socialization had practical effects … where there is ever any new foreign policy initiative in the making the first reflex is European.

This approach looks at the role of socialisation and social interaction in shaping the practices, perceptions and interests of policy makers. As Ben Tonra has previously identified (above) the practice of elite socialisation has practical effects in foreign policy making. The starting point for the contemporary discussion of the theorising surrounding social interaction is often found in the work of Alexander Wendt who argues that ‘constructivists are interested in how knowledgeable practices constitute subjects, which is not far from the strong liberal interest in how institutions

---

22 Ole Wæver, ‘Resisting the temptation of Post Foreign Policy Analysis’ in Carlsnaes & Smith, European Foreign Policy, p. 272.
transform interests’. Interestingly, Wendt has also argued that European cooperation falls into this sphere of explanation for foreign policy makers:

A strong liberal or constructivist analysis of this problem [explaining the persistence of European institutions] would suggest that four decades of cooperation may have transformed a positive interdependence or outcomes into a collective ‘European identity’ in terms of which states increasingly define their ‘self’-interests.27

These sorts of questions tend to assume that it is possible to sustain an analysis based on a positivist epistemology of objective social science (‘foreign policy can be studied’) with an intersubjective ontology of social reality (‘foreign policy is what make it’). Although interesting, these types of approaches are hardly original, as any light reading of George Herbert Mead (1934) *Mind, Self and Society*, Herbert Blumer (1969) *Symbolic Interactionalism*, or Peter Berger and Thomas Luckman (1967) *The Social Construction of Reality* would demonstrate. It might be interesting to consider why Wendt’s work comes more than 30 years later than social constructivism in sociology.

These approaches lead us to ask what impact the changing internal environment has had on the Member State’s foreign policy? More specifically, the question of whether the sharing of information and common practices leads to socialisation or *engrenage* and thus habits of working together transform the common perceptions of policy makers? Taken one step further, it could be asked whether a redefinition of self- or national-interest is taking place, through which constructivist practices transform identities? Finally, it has been argued that an extension of these practices, through a more European orientation of policy-making groups, might lead to an actual ‘Europeanisation’ of foreign policy as a logical step. Obviously all three of these arguments are looking at a very similar process whereby habits become practices which shape the participants’ behaviour and may lead to a re-articulation of their beliefs.

### Foreign policy process - domestic and bureaucratic

Rather than focus on structural or external change, the two approaches in this second section focus on the role of the policy process as a factor in the foreign policies of the EU Member States. Thus, these considerations are concerned more with the domestic or endogenous factors in shaping foreign policy through their preference formation and the role of the bureaucratic/administrative process.

3. Domestic factors in the policy process?

This approach looks at the important inter-relationship between the domestic and the foreign arenas - an aspect which is even more critical in the European context. As Charles Pentland, Carole Webb, Helen Wallace, Christopher Hill and Simon Bulmer have been arguing since the 1970s, ‘the foreign and domestic policy processes’28 are part of the same ‘political game’29 where ‘foreign policy and domestic politics [are] of vital importance to each other.’30 Slowly, foreign policymaking among member states is becoming part of the EU ‘multilevel political system’31 where its primacy amongst the hierarchy of policy making is increasingly challenged. The idea of this ‘two-level game’ has

---

been recently addressed by American scholars, but the ‘political game’ between the ‘two tiers’ of
domestic politics and international politics has always been central to the analysis of Member
States’ foreign policy making.\textsuperscript{32}

The two-level game and its application in a European context has been gathering momentum since
1987 when Robert Putnam and Nicholas Bayne first posited its applicability to the G7.\textsuperscript{33} Currently,
the importance of the domestic-foreign relationship is being argued in several works by Peter
Evans, Robert Putnam and Harold Jacobson, Thomas Risse, and Helen Milner.\textsuperscript{34} Robert Putnam’s
metaphor of the two-level game is useful here in explaining how both international and domestic
arenas are important to explaining foreign policy of an EU state. But clearly this is a two-way street
as domestic change, such as a change of government, can have an international impact, but also EU
events, such as CFSP, can have a domestic impact.

These sorts of questions tend to focus on political science explanations involving layers of decision
making and distributional bargains that are central to the study of comparative politics. They tend to
assume that the political game of domestic-foreign policy making is indeed a game involving
strategies and gains-maximising behaviour.

These approaches lead us to ask what impact domestic political forces have had in determining the
member states’ foreign policies? More specifically, what impact has the constitutional relationship
between domestic political forces had on foreign policy? Most importantly, this leads us to ask what
impact the two-level game between the domestic and the international sphere has had on foreign
policy? The impact of this game will undoubtedly be different for multilevel governments as
predominantly found in federal states, and so what role does this separation of government play?
Finally, the impact of non-state actors at a domestic level (such as large companies, trade unions,
and pressure groups, for example) cannot be ignored.

4. \textit{Bureaucratic politics in the policy process?}

Most, if not all of those working on foreign policy analysis consider bureaucratic issues to be
important factors in the determining of foreign policy. As the discussion of the works by Mény \textit{et al}
(ed.) and Hocking (ed.) serve to illustrate, bureaucratic politics are the lifeblood of the study of the
European Union system. However, this approach is the one most tainted by association with the
work of Snyder, Bruck, Sapin, Allison \textit{et al} which (implicitly) focus on the decision-making
processes of only one type of state - the United States.

These analysts and commentators lead us to question what impact bureaucratic factors have had in
determining the member state’s foreign policies? More specifically, the role which the
constitutional design of the bureaucratic process has had on the Member States’ foreign policy. This
approach leads us to question what impact of the decision making process itself has had on the
outcomes? Clearly the way in which foreign policies are initiated, sanctioned and implemented are
all important here. Finally, the interrelationship between civil servants and their administrative
departments or ministries is a question which must be raised, especially if this leads to rivalry or
conflict which significantly effect the foreign policy process.

\textsuperscript{34} P. Evans, R. Putnam, & H. Jacobson (eds.) \textit{Double-edged diplomacy: international bargaining and domestic politics}
(Berkeley, University of California Press, 1993); T. Risse-Kappen (ed.) \textit{Cooperation among Democracies: the European influence on U.S. foreign policy}
(Princeton, Princeton U. P., 1995); and H. Milner, \textit{Interests, Institutions and Information: domestic politics and international relations}
Foreign policy action - with or without the EU

The examination of foreign policies themselves is often considered a separate sphere of investigation from the study of decision making. However, any sustainable study of foreign policy needs to consider the way in which change and process interact to produce action. Thus the final two approaches both focus on output rather than input or throughput in the foreign policies of the EU Member States.

5. Within the EU: constriction or opportunity?

This approach looks at the way in which participation in the CFSP of the EU and the External Relations of the EC alters the foreign policy of Member States. The question must be asked if this participation provides a constriction on foreign policy choice or an opportunity for foreign policy action. What is important to consider in this approach is that whereas CFSP appears to have actually achieved very little, indicating that Member States’ foreign policy must be somewhat at odds with each other, External Relations seems to have been somewhat more successful. An important question to consider here is how individual foreign policies have led to the reluctance to reach agreement on issues to be handled under the CFSP, and whether the submersion of national trade relations within the EC’s External Relations have met the same reluctance?

Hill, Wallace and Allen have all been concerned with the question of participation in the CFSP and its impact on Member States foreign policies. These analysts have gradually moved their position from one of arguing that national interests represent insuperable obstacles to common foreign policy, towards suggesting that the CFSP might actually represent the ‘European rescue of national foreign policy’. However, these analyses have been more reluctant to consider whether Member States foreign policies are affected by participation within the EC’s pillar I structures.

These sorts of questions tend to separate IR-inspired intergovernmental explanations from ES-inspired neo-functionalist explanations and CP-inspired domestic politics explanations (see Ben Rosamond, 2000). Thus we see a tendency for separate approaches to the study of Member States’ role in CFSP activities and in EC external relations activities - compare Hill (1996) and Kjell Eliassen (1998) studies of national approaches to CFSP with Christopher Piening (1997) and Charlotte Bretherton and John Vogler (1999) more encompassing studies of the EU as a global actor.

These points lead us to question what impact the EU’s policy processes have had in determining the member state’s foreign policies? More specifically whether constrictions caused by both the CFSP and the external relations of the EC have significantly altered the Member States’ foreign policies? In contrast, it is also important to ask whether the opportunities provided by both the CFSP and the external relations of the EC are being used by the Member States to advance their own foreign policies?

The third question here regards the consideration of possible ‘tiers of exclusivity’ representing levels of hierarchy in the EU’s policy processes and the impact these have on foreign policy. It can be argued that there are clear ‘tiers of exclusivity’ within the Union as it exists today. This is largely in terms of influence between the large and small states within the Union in terms of foreign policy clout. However, the integration process also creates new ‘tiers of exclusivity’ within the foreign policy field, with some members having deeper and more influential roles in the CFSP and External Relations processes than others as a result of attitudes towards the integration process in general. A good example would be Sweden and Finland’s observer WEU status and the difficulties that CFSP cooperation creates for Denmark. This leads to the question of whether there is evidence of ‘tiers of

35 Hill (ed.), National Foreign Policies.
exclusivity’ in the EU policy process and what impact have they have had on the Member States’ foreign policies?

6. Without the EU: special relations and special interests?

This final approach looks at EU Member States foreign policies which are ‘ring fenced’ by the states concerned as being special relationships or issues beyond the call of the EU. These ring-fenced relationships are very important because they do in fact alter the behaviour of Member States towards one another and towards external states. The example of Britain and the USA, France and Algeria, or Sweden and Norway spring to mind under this heading.

The first part of this question concerns the notion of special relationships, which is fairly well accepted in FPA. What is interesting for the FPA of EU states is that these special relationships may be with both internal and external to the EU. Frank Pfetsch focussed primarily on ‘extra-European engagements’ having a colonial/post-colonial context to them. Three of the most special relationships for the EU are the Franco-German relationship, the Benelux relationship, and the Anglo-American relationship (although most Americans remain unaware of their side of the bargain). Writing on this last relationship, Alex Danchev admits ‘the very idea of ‘specialness’ …remains radically under-thought and under-theorised.’ But he does observe that ‘as in life, so in international relations: expectations are crucial’ in a special relationship if it is to survive.

The second part of the question asks whether there are also ‘special issues’ which are ring fenced by the Member States because of national sensitivities. These might include issues such as behaviour in certain international organisations (France and Britain in the UN for example); they might involve issues such as defence questions (for neutral states) or human rights issues. What is important to consider here is that these are special issues for those EU Member States who seek to exclude them from Union or Community processes as part of their foreign policy actions.

It should be noted that these relationships and issues might have a negative as well as a positive context to them, the examples of German relations with Turkey, Greek relations with FYROM/Macedonia, Finnish relations with Russia, and the issues of Gibraltar or Northern Ireland all spring to mind as examples here.

These sorts of questions tend to be largely ignored in the study of EU Member States’ foreign policies, although they really do represent crucial cases in the critical consideration of competing explanatory theories. There are at least three reasons why ‘specialness’ might be underexplored in the study of FPA, all of which tell us more about the discipline of academia than they do about the sub-field. As Hazel Smith has consistently argued, from what might considered a critical theory perspective, the study of EU foreign relations has a tendency to draw scholars to study what has happened, what is announced, and what the EU considers important (H. Smith, 1995 and H. Smith, 1998). Thus, the notion of what has not happened (the dog that didn’t bark) remains underexplored and theorised. Secondly, studies of the EU sometimes seek to examine only the empirical evidence which we would expect to confirm the adopted explanatory framework, thus Andrew Moravcsik (1999) chooses to study only ‘grand’ intergovernmental bargains, Simon Hix (1999) looks at the EU ‘political system’ as a comparison with the American system of government, and Jan Zielonka (1998) examines cases of security to explain foreign policy. Finally, the study of special concerns in a comparative study is often very messy because of particular, discrete and contextual factors which do not support the theoretical approach adopted, and thus bring post-positivist concerns to the fore.


39 Hix leaves little room for national politics (only two pages consider ‘member states’) or sub-national policies (there is no mention of regional policy in the index).
These observations lead us to ask which special relations and special issues Member States seek to ‘ring fence’ in order to keep them out of the EU’s policy processes. More specifically, we are interested in special relations which are be inside or outside the EU and which lead to question what effect such a domain privé has on the Member States’ foreign policies? Secondly, the role of special issues must be questioned, whether inside or outside the EU, and the impact which these have on Member States’ foreign policies.

These six approaches to the study of foreign policy all sound relevant, and should contribute to a framework for comparative study. However, it is important that any individual EU member state analyses should not be wholly constrained by these variables. Indeed, it is quite clear that there will be many unique factors which do not fall easily into these approaches, and may thus throw light upon some of the problems of such a comparative analysis, and the theoretical bases on which it is constructed.

Conclusion: transformational disjuncture?

the unilateral pursuit of all but the most limited objectives would not seem to be an option that the Member States of the Union are any longer prepared to consider.  

Given the differing analytical approaches just described, it is necessary to revisit what such an eclectic mix tells us about the study of the foreign policies of EU Member States. As Allen has suggested above, are we looking at the foreign policies of EU Member States who conduct all ‘but the most limited objectives’ within an EU context? To this end we are very interested in gauging whether ‘traditional’ explanations, in a ‘slightly amended’ form are still applicable to the FPA of EU Member States, or whether these foreign policies have been ‘transformed’ by the globalised, post-Cold War, post-EU ‘European condition’. By ‘traditional FPA’, we are asking if we are witnessing traditional FPA (i.e. state-centric) where foreign policy remains largely the realm of the member state? In this traditional approach the Member States remain the ‘dominant actors’, with a ‘sharp distinction between domestic and international politics’, and with the focus of foreign policy activity primarily on the ‘struggle for power and peace’. On the other hand, by ‘transformational FPA’, we are asking if we are witnessing transformational FPA (i.e. pluralistic) where foreign policy is significantly altered through membership? In this transformation approach the Member States are not the only ‘significant actors’, where there is a ‘blurred’ distinction between ‘domestic and international politics’, and with the focus of foreign policy activity increasingly displaced by a ‘concern for economic and social matters’.

The very fact that we can now suggest that such a ‘transformational’ argument can be sustained is the result of a series of empirical and theoretical developments in the two fields of IR and ES which are the homes of the study of FPA in a European context. As this paper has been attempting to argue, these developments are leading to a disjuncture of FPA which is giving rise to a distinctive EFPA, not simply a ‘challenge’ (White, 1999). In contrast to Jørgensen’s (2000: 10) comments on the role of external explanations, it is possible to argue that in the case of FPA the post-Cold War period and the expansion of the EU’s scope has led to a fairly radical change in the sub-field. This disjuncture has both an empirical and a theoretical element to it, which are mutually reinforcing at the cross-roads of IR-led FPA and ES-led integration found in this study. Following the end of realist thinking about the Cold War in the period 1989-1992 and the development of the EU’s external role and CFSP in the period 1990-1994, theoretical ideas in IR and of the EU were radically reconsidered to take account of ‘alternative’ approaches incorporating post-positive

concerns (S. Smith, 1994: 6-7 and Jørgensen, 2000: 18-19). In the case of the study of EU Member States the constructivist and reflectivist approaches were those found to provide the most fertile ground for advancing the theoretical debate (Bjola, 2000: 4) as the discussions of the ‘Copenhagen School’ and ‘More Theoretical’ approaches in the sociology section above have suggested. Of increasing interest here is the extent to which there are disagreements within these approaches separating more positivist constructivists, such as Jeffrey Checkel or Ben Rosamond, from the more post-positivist reflectivists, such as Thomas Diez or Jef Huysmans (Huysmans, 1998; Diez, 1999; Christiansen et al, 1999; S. Smith, 1999; Risse and Wiener, 1999; Jørgensen, 2000; Bjola, 2000).

As important as these theoretical developments have been the associated changes in the study of IR and ES in the mid- to late 1990s which have led to the consolidation of English as being the via media for the study of EFPA. One of the crucial concerns leading to the apparent marginalisation of European IR identified by Wæver (1998) and Jørgensen (2000) had been the problem of communication caused by a tendency to focus on national discourses and the absence of a European zone of contestation. Thus, if European scholars wanted to address one another, the tendency was for them to either have to practice entrism into each others national discourses, or to accept the US sphere as being ‘international’ (which it clearly isn’t). A number of professional, institutional and technical developments have begun to resolve this problem of communicative inaction and are contributing to the growth of distinctive EFPA. Professionally, the arrival of the pan-European ECPR-IR conferences from Heidelberg, Paris, Vienna and on to Canterbury, together with the arrival of the European Journal of International Relations and the Journal of European Public Policy, are providing European scholars with a zone of contestation which is more inclusive. Institutionally, the enlargement of the EU in 1995 and the arrival of Sweden, Finland and Austria has led to an interesting consolidation of English as being European IR’s via media. This institutional development has been accelerated by the European Commission’s desire to promulgate and fund (through Framework Programmes IV and V) trans-European collaboration. Technically, the development of the internet, world wide web and the use of emails has facilitated the professional and institutional developments mentioned above. An example of this is the way in which the European Research Papers Archive (ERPA) has connected European scholars through the web sites of the European Integration Online Papers site in Austria, the Robert Schuman Centre at the European University Institute in Italy, the Advanced Research on the Europeanisation of the Nation-State (ARENA) in Norway, the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Societies (MPIfG) and the Mannheim Centre for European Social Research (MZES) based in Germany.

The final development in the study of EFPA is more of an empirical, rather than theoretical nature, caused by the Europeanisation of Member States foreign policies by their membership of the EU. Although, in theory, the treaty-based commitments for these developments were seen in the treaties of Maastricht and Amsterdam creating and amending the European Union, the events in the former Yugoslavia have been more important in provoking a change in foreign policies. From the St. Malo summit of December 1998 to the Cologne European Council of June 1999, we can see clear evidence of the extent to which the defence and foreign policy stances of Member States have been transformed in the post-Cold War period. In summary, what we have seen in the past ten years of the study of the foreign policies of EU Member States has been a critical disjuncture in the field caused by both theoretical and empirical developments which have led to the consolidation of a distinctively European approach on a transformatory basis.

To conclude, this paper has briefly suggested a common framework to analyse the foreign policies of Member States which it argues is distinctive because of its appropriateness for the unique condition of membership of the European Union. It asks whether we are witnessing traditional

---

43 See chapter 6 - ‘Negotiation of a defence component to the Common Foreign and Security Policy’ in Ian Manners (forthcoming) Substance and Symbolism: an anatomy of cooperation in the new Europe for a fuller discussion of this transformation.
foreign policies being pursued by the states under analysis, albeit in a ‘slightly amended’ form, or whether in fact we are witnessing the transformation of foreign policies into a Europeanised form which demand a distinctive EFPA. Thus, it seeks to explore whether the FPA approach of traditionalist FPA, still largely pursued by ‘the American, or neo-positivistic, approach’, is appropriate for the analysis of the foreign policies of EU Member States. As part of an answer to this question, it suggests that what is needed is a distinctive form of European FPA which is appropriate for the transformational foreign policies of EU Member States, characterised by the impact of membership, which focus on a number of regional factors as a means of explanation, and which take on board the theoretical developments in Europe over the past ten years.

The aim of this paper has been to provoke thinking about the comparative analysis of the European Union’s Member States’ foreign policies. It has sought to provide a brief sociology of the sub-field in which we can differentiate between four schools in the study of European integration and two approaches to the study of foreign policy. I has further sought to suggest six approaches, or questions, which seem appropriate to pursue in the EFPA under consideration, and which represent middle-range theorising as part of creating a comparative framework for analysis. Finally, this paper has suggested that the theoretical developments within the two home disciplines of IR and ES have combined with empirical developments in the EU field to produce a transformatory disjuncture in the study of the foreign policies of EU Member States.

Select Bibliography


