2 European Foreign Policy: Conceptualising the Domain

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The complexity of European foreign policy (EFP) continues to puzzle observers, perhaps more so than ever.[2] The simple fact that the number of European states has been growing logically implies that the number of policies and bilateral relationships has been significantly extended. The development of a European Union (EU) foreign policy only adds to this complexity, as does the increasing number and diversity of issues dealt with under the heading 'foreign policy'. The introduction of information and communication technologies has changed the temporal dimension of policy-making and public demands for transparency have increased (Coles, 2000; see also Ekengren, Ch. 13 in this volume). Given this background, any research focusing on the relationship between national and EU foreign policies constitutes a genuine analytical challenge.

   The rationale of the present volume is to examine EFP change, and specifically to address the following question: how the end of the Cold War and the developments within the EU since then have changed the nature of foreign policy in Europe, both with respect to the conduct of foreign policy by individual European states and by the EU itself. In what follows, I will therefore consider conceptual implications of addressing this question, involving three key notions – 'foreign', 'policy' and 'nature'. The concept 'foreign' is key because it designates a boundary between 'inside' and 'outside', the latter considered to be the domain of 'foreign' affairs.[3] In other words, when we analyse the 'foreign' policies of European states, we are also analysing the identity of the political (imagined) communities and the boundaries between them. Or, rather, following Anthony P. Cohen, we focus on the meanings people give to it, and thus on 'the symbolic aspect of community boundary. In so far as we aspire to understand the importance of the community in people's experience, it is the most crucial' (1998: 11–12; see also Anderson, 1983). The notion 'policy' is no less a key concept, because what is mutually acknowledged as policy can vary considerably. While many politicians, diplomats and observers often have no problem with assigning
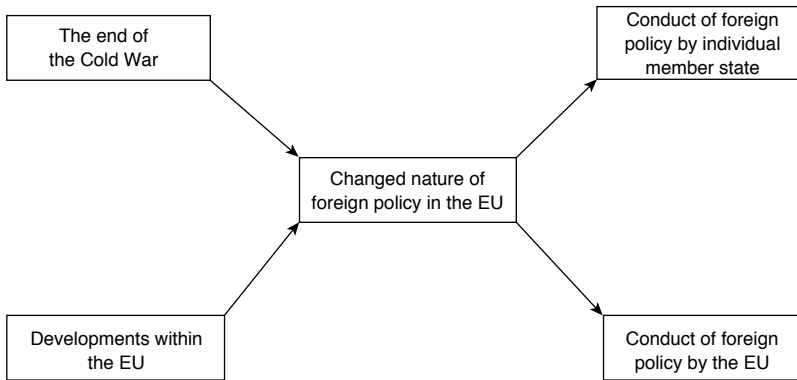
Figure 2.1 *Device for approaching, mapping and conceptualising European foreign policy*

key features of policy to the foreign policies of EU member states, they often demonstrate considerable reluctance to do so when it comes to EU foreign policy-making. This reluctance has not necessarily much to do with the nature of the policy in question. Finally, 'nature' is a key notion because it suggests much more than mere adjustments arising from the trivial fact that foreign affairs vary from time to time. Instead, it signifies change of the 'soul' of policy. Furthermore, the question involves two independent variables ('the end of the Cold War' and 'developments within the EU'), and one dependent variable (the conduct of foreign policy by individual states and by the EU, respectively). Figure 2.1 shows how the parts of the project are connected.

Keeping the overall aim of the volume in mind, the purpose of this chapter is to discuss how a conceptual 'raster' can be created, capable of examining the bold claim about a presumed change in the nature of foreign policy in Europe. Figure 2.2 (p. 34) summarises aspects that will be examined here, showing three different relationships and two different dimensions of output in the form of 'foreign policy'. The Figure also points to two distinct features. First, it puts aspects of EFP into perspective, that is, connecting these aspects to one another, indicating that to exclude some will result in pre-determined and biased analysis. In my view, operating with three levels and two dimensions of output strikes an appropriate balance between being parsimonious and being too inclusive, aiming at realism in the sense that this term is understood in literature or art.

In the first section of this chapter, I *approach* the general theme by presenting four axioms concerning: (i) the EU's foreign policy; (ii) our task; (iii) the importance of the topic; and (iv) the relationship between object and observer. This approach is, first of all, designed to help conceptualisation in order to understand better contemporary foreign policy practices in the EU. Second, Figure 2.2 will be used to *map* theoretical or analytical approaches. Hence, in the second part of the chapter, I trace connections between leading theories and substantive issues, pointing out where leading theories prefer
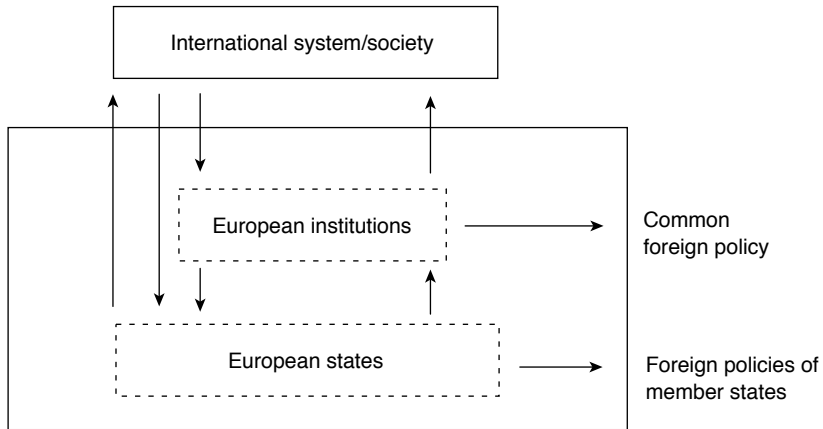
Figure 2.2 *Changed nature of foreign policy in Europe*

to operate or are capable of operating and where their weak spots are located. Additionally, the task of mapping comprises a *conceptualisation* of the domain. In this way, the Figure functions as a guide for reflection on issues deemed fruitful for analysts. In the third part of this chapter I summarise my findings and point to perspectives for further research.

Approaching EFP Axiomatically

The first axiom is that a *common* EFP actually does exist, and that it has existed for a considerable amount of time – in some issue areas for more than three decades.[4] Furthermore, almost since it was launched in the early 1970s, it has had a security policy component (involvement in the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) process, among other things), and since the mid-1980s also a defence policy component (for which the Western European Union (WEU) has been responsible). The components in the field of security and defence may have been of little importance in the past. Yet they have nevertheless existed and their degree of importance remains an empirical question. Something similar can be said about the umbrella, that is, the common foreign policy. For periods of time and in some issue areas this common policy was nothing more than declaratory in character. It has occasionally been an ineffective policy, often lacking coherence, vision or clout. Yet, despite having been a *policy without qualities*, it has nevertheless existed and, furthermore, important dimensions of the common foreign policy have from the very beginning been *communautarian*, that is, conducted with the European Commission (EC) at the centre of policy-making. In summary, the first axiom contradicts the rather common view that a common EFP has either failed to take form, or that it suffers from a perpetual existential crisis.

The second axiom is derived from the first, claiming that the existence of a common EFP makes the analysis of EFP theoretically and conceptually more challenging than many analysts are ready to accept. The question is quite simply how we can know whether or not the nature of foreign policy has changed in Europe. The assumption here is that the emergence of a European (multilateral) foreign policy implies that our analysis should be based on conceptualisations that *differ* from those applied in the analysis of traditional foreign policy of states. We should thus carefully consider whether or not we can or should continue to conduct the analysis of foreign policy in conventional terms. I argue that the emergence of a multi-level system of policy-making severely undermines the usefulness of some of the conceptual lenses to be found in traditional studies of national foreign policy, even when these lenses occasionally have been developed into highly sophisticated analytical tools. In turn, this means that we either have to conceptualise *da novo* or re-conceptualise and, eventually, to build new theory. Otherwise we could end up by providing answers to yesterday's questions. Needless to say, this diagnosis may be wrong, and I am perfectly aware that a number of theoretical perspectives assume that it is still quite feasible – and perhaps even desirable – to continue as if nothing has changed.

Even if we accept that a common EFP exists, and even if this new creature has theoretical consequences, does the policy really matter? The third axiom holds that it does. The end of the Cold War has made EFP markedly more interesting and more relevant to the foreign policy analyst. While policy-making during the Cold War primarily had been reactive and significantly constrained by bipolar superpower dynamics, the room for manoeuvre has now significantly increased, meaning that EU member states are able to make a difference – if they so decide. Some of the key dilemmas during the first post-Cold War decade have been whether this increased room for manoeuvre should be used; and if yes, then how, where and why? Should foreign policy be conducted unilaterally, multilaterally or in some sort of *ad hoc* grouping? EFP after the Cold War not only has become more interesting and relevant to study, it has also, in a sense, become easier to study – the simple reason being that whereas in the early 1990s many factors and issues were floating and many policy-makers somewhat confused, a number of key decisions have since then been taken, certain issues have been settled, and certain patterns have been established.

The fourth axiom holds that the conceptual lenses which observers apply have an impact on what can be observed and how it is observed.[5] In John Ruggie's concise wording, 'How we think about transformation fundamentally shapes what we look for; what we look for obviously has an effect on what we find' (1989: 32). When dealing with a domain such as EFP, we are dealing with a set of social realities, meaning that observers may have an impact on that which is observed. Consequently, for better or worse, we should note that among the most important distinctions in this domain is the distinction between practice and theory, and between concepts *of* practice (concepts in political or administrative discourse) and concepts *in* theory

(analytical or theoretical concepts, usually to be found in academic discourse).[6] Certainly, some overlap does exist and one should be aware of such dual usage.[7] Furthermore, observers can be of two kinds. Many players in the game, whether politicians or diplomats, probably reflect upon their own practice, that is, engage in self-observation. Yet some also present their reflections in writing, that is, make them directly accessible to outsiders.[8] However the literature written by insiders plays, or could play, an important role for those of us who – on the outside – try to understand and describe what, from our perspective, seems to be happening. Why an important role? Because conceptualising the domain in another way risks being a rather sterile exercise that has little to do with the social reality of EFP.[9] It is, however, even more complicated than that. Foreign policy analysts have difficulty in avoiding being part of public political discourse on EFP. Some 'go native', with the predictable result that they become *part of the game*. Concepts being used sometimes become conceptual blinders – perhaps because these concepts very accurately describe situations, developments or features of past practices rather than the present. Hence, analysts employing them are hindered in reaching accurate images of the present. Scholars employing them may even be aware of this situation yet live happily in their conceptual prisons. In such situations, concepts do not just contribute to constructing (social) reality, but also do so in a biased fashion.

These four axioms are far from theoretically neutral. Rather, they constitute part of a theoretical stance. As an illustrative example, let us consider neorealism in this context. From a neorealist perspective, the first axiom is questionable if not nonsensical. Neorealists argue that European institutions function merely as arenas on which great powers pursue power politics (Mearsheimer, 1995). Furthermore, if a common foreign policy can be detected, it can and should be explained as national foreign policy disguised in multilateral clothes, that is, as being national foreign policy writ large, or as the outcome of the traditional dynamics of alliance formations. From a neorealist perspective, the second axiom looks even more dubious, primarily because a minor reconfiguration in world politics, such as a degree of cooperation between a number of European states does not really disturb a deductive structural theory such as neorealism. On the other hand, the third axiom makes much more sense to neorealists. It comes close to arguing that a major change in the distribution of power, that is, the international system moving from a bipolar to a unipolar configuration, determines state behaviour. The fourth axiom runs counter to the behaviouralist underpinnings of neorealism, which are based on the assumption that realism can 'tap' reality directly.

Mapping and Conceptualising the Domain

Having discussed general issues on how EFP can be approached, the task of mapping and conceptualising EFP can now be taken up in a more direct

mode. The first issue to consider here is whether the end of the Cold War has changed the nature of foreign policy in Europe. This is a perfectly feasible and timely issue to raise, and it may even result in very valuable findings. Yet it is likely to lead only to an analysis of a 'thinly' changed foreign policy, for example, by demonstrating that contemporary EFP is addressing new issues or providing new answers to old problems. In short, we would find out to which degree policies after the Cold War are different from policies during the Cold War and, potentially, how a balance between member states' and the EU's conduct of foreign policy has been established (cf. Keohane et al., 1993; Hill, 1996). However, to specify what is likely does not exclude what is possible. In other words, it could turn out that the end of the Cold War has produced dramatic changes in the nature of EFP, for instance, resulting in new principles, doctrines or means of conducting foreign policy.

The second issue to consider is whether developments in the EU are responsible for changes in the nature of foreign policy in Europe. In contrast to the first issue, this one is likely to have more far-reaching ramifications, in particular because it opens up for investigation whether such changes have occurred in a 'thick' sense. In other words, it potentially goes beyond questions triggered by the 'end of the Cold War' factor. Instead, it implies changes in the ontological nature of foreign policy, suggesting that intersubjective understandings of what counts as foreign policy have either changed or at least have become contentious.

The third issue to consider is the consequences of the changed nature of foreign policy on the conduct of foreign policy by both individual European states and by the EU itself. The 'thin' version merely suggests that member states conduct foreign policies differently from the days of the Cold War; or, that they use the EU as a complementary carrier for conducting (part of) their foreign policies. The 'thick' version implies considerably more, touching upon issues such as shared representation in foreign affairs or pooled competencies. The 'thick' version can be illuminated by means of historical comparison: what happened to the 'foreign services' of political entities merging into nation-states in the late 19th century (Germany or Italy); or what happened to predominant mindsets about foreign affairs during fundamental reconfigurations of polities (for example, the US after the Civil War)? Or are we perhaps not yet there but rather in some kind of interregnum where member states no longer conduct traditional foreign policy and the EU is not yet ready to conduct foreign policy in a new (upgraded) key? Does the changed conduct of foreign policy only apply to intra-EU relations (consider, for example, the widespread uncertainty in member states as to whether the EU is 'foreign' or 'domestic' policy); or does it also apply to the EU's conduct of foreign policy vis-à-vis the non-EU world?

In the following, I will use Figure 2.2 (see p. 34) to map the major 'axes' on which different theoretical conceptions of EFP have their 'heartland'. Furthermore, I will use Figure 2.2 to consider which concepts seem capable of helping us to examine the claim about a presumed changed nature of EFP.

EU member states and the international system/society

Relations between the international system/society and the conduct of foreign policy by the EU and its member states, respectively, have not attracted much interest among foreign policy analysts. It is, therefore, worthwhile to mine two theoretical orientations here: neorealism and the English School.

The causal relationship between systemic structure and state behaviour constitutes the preferred hunting ground for neorealists. In this view, systemic structural impulses, transmitted via balance of power dynamics, determine state behaviour. In other words, we have a flow of influence from the system, via states, to their behaviour in the form of foreign policy. This perspective is not at all irrelevant for our analysis of EFP. First of all, because a neorealist perspective provides at least to some degree the *rationale* for this study as a whole, it is not an insignificant part of this enterprise. It is the end of bipolarity and the emergence of a new polarity that makes us analyse the presumed changed nature of EFP. Furthermore, the perspective directs our attention to those European states that realists consider to be great powers and therefore worthy of attention.[10] Hence, the perspective forces us to address the distribution of capabilities and balance of power issues, that is, issues which largely have been ignored by most foreign policy analysts. Neorealists would also be quick to point out that deadlocks in developing the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and Common European Security and Defence Policy (CESDP) are easily explained by bringing NATO into the equation and thereby the presence of the US in Europe. Additionally, it seems as if the institutional design of the EFP decision-making system has largely been outlined by precisely the West European great powers. Thus, the CESDP was launched in a successful manner as soon as a shared understanding was created between the UK, France and Germany. It also seems that in the event of severe crisis situations, the multilateral EU common foreign policy system is short-circuited and replaced by, once again, the major European players.[11] Finally, the notion *multiple bilateralism* seems relevant because it suggests the existence of underwood institutions based on exclusion and informal hierarchy. Proposals concerning *directoires* are different precisely because they suggest codification of *de facto* informal institutions. In summary, the realist conceptual repertoire seems eminently suited to improve our understanding of contemporary behaviour by European states.

However, there are three major problems with this approach. First, neorealists have not produced comprehensive theory-informed empirical studies in this area. Second, if there is an unexploited potential in neorealist theory, there are also numerous problems in addressing issues like transformation, change and relations between the EU and its member states. Third, in contrast to the neorealist image, some diplomats and analysts argue that within the EU it is not brute force but in fact argumentative power that matters.[12]

Turning to the English school, we have a theoretical orientation that on the face of it should have something important to contribute to our subject

matter. Indeed, much can potentially be analysed by using the school's conceptual repertoire, ranging from the very conception of international society, via the notion of fundamental institutions (including their relations to so-called pseudo-institutions such as the UN, NATO or the EU), to perspectives on classic ethical issues. Originally, international society consisted of the European states system, and hence European states can be said to have created international society. The Concert of Europe, many rules of conduct in diplomacy, diplomatic discourse, international law and so on – all have originated on the European historical arena. During the 20th century, international society has expanded to cover the entire globe. In other words, international society has become global and the European states system has become but a part of international society. However, what in the present context is important is that as originators of international society, and as powerful members of it, European states continue to be very influential actors in international society. Norms and rules that help constitute international society are to a considerable degree the result of the very existence of this society. However, once rules and norms have been institutionalised in international society, the dynamics of the game have tended to go in the opposite direction. Intervention policies provide an illustrative example. UN authorisation is, as a rule, considered a precondition for European states to engage in interventions or peace support operations. It is increasingly a norm that such operations are conducted in a collective fashion in order to avoid action based on excessive national self-interest. There have been exceptions to the rule, but not to the norm. For example, the Kosovo campaign in 1999 was to some degree an exception to the rule, yet basic principles for interventionist policies were never endangered. What is worthwhile noting, both from a political and an analytical perspective, is that among European states this rule is not uncontested. Some EU member states claim UN authorisation as a precondition for any military intervention, while other member states find this to be preferable but not mandatory. As a result, we currently seem to be witnessing a reconfiguration of attitudes to the rule calling for UN authorisation.

However, the English school has less to offer than one would expect. One reason is that the school, like realism, is a general International Relations (IR) theory, having little interest in or awareness of 'specificities' in any particular part of the world. A second and related reason is that early members of the school seemed to have lost analytical interest in contemporary European affairs, focusing instead on historical systems of states, or on contemporary global politics. The result is that the school has little to say about the European state system (and its constituent entities) *after* it became part of global international society and *after* European states launched and cultivated the process of European integration. The possibility that the EU should develop into a significant international actor and conduct foreign policy is at best dealt with in a fashion quite similar to how it is handled within neorealism, that is, as a hypothetical but unlikely outcome.[13] We are thus forced to conclude – once more – that although possessing a seemingly valuable set of concepts, members of this school have not found it worth

their while to address the problematic features of it as an approach to the analysis of EFP.

European states and EU institutions

While the relationship between states and system has been analysed by means of a limited number of approaches, a whole cluster of theories, pre-theories and approaches has focused on relations between member states and EU institutions. In the following, three key perspectives will be examined with a view to conceptualisation. The first perspective concerns 'bottom-up' approaches, privileging flows of influence from states to institutions. Approaches like intergovernmentalism, liberal intergovernmentalism and classical realism belong to this category of 'second image' approaches. By contrast, the second perspective includes 'top-down' approaches, privileging impact flowing from the external environment to states, that is, what Gourevitch (1978) calls 'second image reversed' approaches. Such approaches comprise Europeanisation, multi-level governance, supranationalism and others. The third perspective concerns constitutive relationships between states and EU institutions.

Second image approaches   Processes of common identity and interest formation have obviously not 'destroyed' state actors. Stretching our historical imagination, it is even possible to imagine European states *without* EU institutions. Historically, European institutions were created by their founding 'father' states, not vice versa. This genealogy is the ultimate refuge of realists, principal-agent and intergovernmentalist theorists, always eager to point out the constructedness of European institutions but seldom the constructedness of European states (Grieco, 1997; Pollack, 1999; Moravcsik, 1998). Each of these approaches has something to offer. Liberal intergovernmentalism offers a sequential theoretical triad, consisting of mid-range theories of interest formation, bargaining and institutional design. The package also includes a sophisticated methodology and novel ideas concerning thorough theory testing. Unfortunately none of these approaches have been systematically applied in studies of EFP. Leaving that task for another occasion, I turn instead to the terms 'k-group' and 'minilateralism'. Having been used to squaring the circle between influential states and multilateral institutions, the terms exist in the grey zone between realism and liberalism, suggesting that in formulating or implementing specific policies, some states are more 'key' than others. They make up a k-group. The outcome is called minilateralism because on the surface it looks like multilateralism but has its origin in a k-group within a multilateral grouping (Kahler, 1992).

An illustrative example of European minilateralism could be seen during the early 1990s in European policy-making on Bosnia. France and the UK constituted a k-group that got its policy multilaterally accepted and legitimised, first within the EU and then, with EU backing, in the UN Security Council. A second prominent example of a k-group – the Franco-German

axis – has been very active in the area of institutional design. The Anglo-Italian connection sometimes plays the role as balancing k-group, whereas Nordic member states have been largely inactive in this field (Jørgensen, 1999). Multilateral outcomes emerging due to k-group action may have a peculiar genesis, but they are nevertheless highly relevant to an adequate understanding of the dynamics between member states and European institutions. Relevant, both because the outcomes in question may have a significant political role and because successful minilateralism requires persuasive reasons for (k-group) action and provides legitimacy to multilateral outcomes. Thus, the creation of the Contact Group was from some corners publicly criticised for undermining the role of EU institutions (which indeed was the case), yet among most member states it was a shared understanding that launching the Contact Group was a necessary step in order to provide increased effectiveness (Jakobsen, 2000).

In general, second image approaches highlight flows of influence from states to institutions. They contribute well-developed analytical frameworks and focus on important features of the EU system. Their weaknesses are therefore not to be found in what they cover, but in their omissions. Privileging flows of influence from states to institutions, the opposite flow is either regarded as so insignificant that it requires no attention whatsoever, or it constitutes one of the recognised or unrecognised blind spots of this approach.

Second image reversed approaches   These approaches all turn the second image upside-down. In the words of Gourevitch, 'In using domestic structure as a variable in explaining foreign policy, we must explore the extent to which that structure itself derives from the exigencies of the international system' (Gourevitch, 1978: 882).[14] While systemic impact has been dealt with above, it is possible to transfer the logic to a lower level of analysis, for instance, the European sub-system. Turning independent variables into dependent variables opens up a huge research agenda; yet transforming the general argument into an operational research agenda on European foreign policy requires careful thinking. Some important work has nevertheless been done here. Part of the literature on Europeanisation explores the impact on domestic structures and institutions (Radaelli, 2000; Cowles et al., 2000; Bulmer and Lequesne, 2002). Furthermore, according to Magnus Ekengren (1997, 2002), the timing of policy-making in member states has been brought into Brussels mode, that is, synchronised with reference to ministerial meeting sequences. Similarly, Ben Tonra (1997) has shown how even intergovernmental co-operation in the field of foreign policy has an impact on national policies and institutions, while Hocking and Spence (2002) demonstrate how several foreign ministries have been thoroughly reorganised due to processes of European integration. According to a very comprehensive study (Güssgen, 2002), the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs constitutes the real hard case concerning reorganisation of ministries. Many attempts at reforming the ministry have been made, yet none with much success. For

better or worse, it seems that the Quay d'Orsay has been entirely immune to reform or outside influence. Nevertheless, *socialisation* is one of these terms that continues to pop up in studies of EFP. Compared to Europeanisation, we are here dealing with the properties of agents at the micro level, that is, with politicians, diplomats and officials active in the EFP system.[15] It thus refers to properties of individuals.

Finally, the distinction between 'hardware' and 'software' dimensions of European foreign policy seems highly relevant, particularly in the context of a possibly changed nature of foreign policy.[16] Among 'hardware' dimensions of foreign policy, organisations play a key role. They embody, so to speak, software dimensions. When something is institutionalised it is taken for granted that an element of inertia has been introduced to a domain that used to be more in flux before institutionalisation. Furthermore, people working in organisations tend to develop ideas and interests of their own. Sometimes an organisation is even being tasked to provide some degree of guidance to a process as, for example, in the original role of the European Commission (though not its role in CFSP policy-making). If we aim at reaching a comprehensive understanding of EFP, it would be necessary but insufficient to look at just European institutions (organisations) and their inter-relationship.[17] It would be necessary, additionally, to include traditional sites of policy-making, such as foreign ministries, defence ministries and embassies (Hocking and Spence, 2002; Ekengren, 2002), but not as timeless, never-changing organisational structures. Instead, keeping an eye on both levels of policy-making, the contemporary system can be regarded as a multi-level system of governance, represented as the dotted area in Figure 2.2 (p. 34). The foreign ministries of member states constitute a crucial part of such a system. Thus, instead of having formal legal competencies and decision-making power transferred to Brussels, we have an almost virtual European 'centre' of policy-making, which, in turn, has significant effects on policy-making in the capitals of the EU.

All these studies suggest that a comprehensive, systematic research programme on 'second image reversed' logics would be able to improve significantly our understanding of the contemporary multi-level system of EFP-making.

Constitutive approaches   Having now accounted for two very different perspectives on the making of EFP, the time has come to explore the possibility of somehow merging the two perspectives. In the present context, I am only interested in the kind of merger that allows us to explore constitutive approaches to the study of EFP. This aim implies that we have to leave causal explanation and the search for truly independent and dependent variables behind. Constitutive explanation belongs to a different kind of analytical game.

According to Alexander Wendt, a social structure *constitutes* an agent 'when the properties of those agents are made possible by, and would not exist in the absence of, the structure by which they are "constituted"'

(Wendt, 1995: 72, 1998: 105), pointing out that 'social structures also constitute actors with certain identities and interests' (1999: 78). Wendt refines his conceptual framework by making a distinction between internal and social structure, that is, between the structure of an actor as such (a rogue state is rogue because it rejects the norms of international society) and 'the set of relationships with other actors that define a social kind as such' (Israel is not considered a rogue state because great power discourse avoids this possibility) (Wendt, 1998: 113). Furthermore, constitutive explanation goes to the heart of the purpose of this chapter – to conceptualise the domain. Why? Because this kind of explanation is done by means of classifying observations and claiming they can be unified as parts of a coherent whole. In short, 'subsuming observations under a *concept*' (Wendt, 1998: 110). Finally, Wendt points out, conceptualisation is often more than simple labelling. It can be explanatory because conceptualising the properties of things is also to point to dispositions, that is, 'propensities to behave in certain ways under certain conditions' (1998: 111). What does this imply for our study of EFP?

Wendt (1998) provides a few hints. Thus, one of his examples is the 'what-question': 'What kind of political system is the EU?' Answering this question involves conceptualisation – classifying numerous observations and unifying the parts under a concept, for instance, a 'quasi-federation', in turn pointing to certain dispositions of this kind of federation. Similarly, what-questions like 'What is a civilian power?', 'What is an international actor?' or 'What is a "common" foreign policy?' require constitutive explanation. Various answers to such questions have been suggested. The EU is not 'rogue' because the EU does not reject norms of international society. Rather, the EU has often acted as a norm entrepreneur or a defender of international norms. Furthermore, ever since the concept 'civilian power' was coined, it has been highly contested. To Bull (1982) it is best characterised as 'a contradiction in terms', whereas Johan Galtung (1973) summarised his conclusion with the term 'a superpower in the making'. Finally, foreign policy analysts are, generally, not used to analysing 'common' policies and hard thinking has been required to study the making of such policies. Turning to the distinction between internal and social structure, we see that several intriguing issues pop up. Thus the EU has a very 'rich' internal structure, a structure that, combined, makes a whole class of preconditions for being a foreign policy actor of a certain kind. In order to examine the interconnectedness of (state) agents and (institutional) structures, we can ask how it is possible for member states to reproduce social structures present in the EU system? At the same time, a class of external preconditions also exists. Thus, do other actors *recognise* the EU as an international actor? How is membership of several UN organisations possible for a non-state like the EU? In sum, constitutive approaches invite us to study how social structures, whether internal or external, constitute an actor like the EU with certain identities and interests. In turn, we can ask how such processes of constitution have consequences for the identities and interests of member states. We can analyse 'national interests', perhaps contending that member states do pursue perceived

national interests, but these interests have been derived from processes of identity formation, whether collective or individual. If social interaction indeed does have an impact on processes of identity and interest-formation, something claimed by a broad range of constructivist approaches, then it is time to put these approaches to work on the European case (Wendt, 1994; Katzenstein, 1996; Jørgensen, 1997; Glarbo, 2001; Christiansen et al., 2001).

Constitutive approaches make up a huge and important research agenda. Such approaches make it possible to go beyond reification – if we deem it appropriate to do so – for instance, by critically analysing 'natural' things like borders, currencies or states, or 'artificial' things like a common foreign policy, the euro or the EU polity.

The Conduct of EFP

The purpose of this section is to understand better the interplay between the conduct of national and EU foreign policy-making. First, ontological conceptual issues will be addressed. Does a common policy exist? Do national policies? Second, the concept of 'policy' will be examined. What does it take to be a policy? Finally, I turn to processes of Europeanisation, focusing on three different meanings.

Ontological issues

Many EU foreign policy analysts take a narrow perspective, focusing exclusively on the common policy, as if member states or their foreign ministries did not exist or matter. When reading the CFSP literature, it is easy to get the impression that member states and their foreign policies have disappeared. Vis-à-vis CFSP analysts, it is therefore necessary to state the obvious fact that the foreign policies of member states have not withered away. However, not only CFSP analysts tend to commit the sin of omission. It is equally necessary, and even more so, to state a few obvious points vis-à-vis conventional analysts of national foreign policy.

Reaching an adequate understanding of contemporary EFP is hindered by the unfortunate fact that many remain doubtful about the very existence or importance of a common EFP. Most analysts of national foreign policy avoid the European dimension and analyse the conduct of foreign policy by individual European states as if the EU does not exist.[18] Perhaps the nature of national foreign policies is no longer quite what it used to be.[19] At the very least, traditional foreign policy analysts should seriously consider this idea (cf. Figure 2.3, p. 45). They could also consider the fact that national embassies in Europe used to play a significant role in the past but no longer do so, thus contributing to a crucial difference between the traditional European states system and the contemporary system. Finally, EFPs used to be directed at *other* European states, thus constituting European international relations, the paradigm case for our, *grosso-modo*, Euro-centric
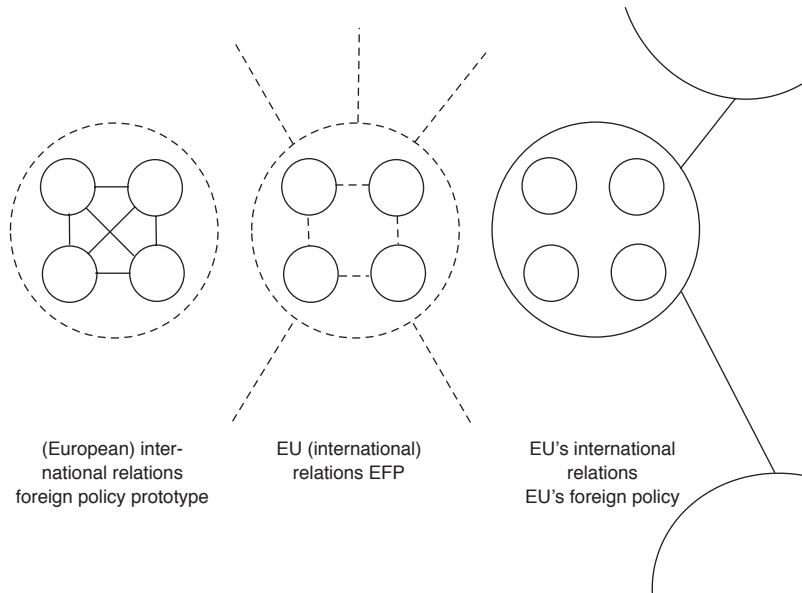
Figure 2.3 *Changing nature of foreign policy in the EU*

discipline, IR. Against this background the common foreign policy can be conceptualised in two very different ways. First, it can be conceptualised as, basically, having a function vis-à-vis what used to be European international relations. That is, the prime function of the common policy is to address the well-known enemy Western European states have faced in the past, namely themselves. From this perspective we are dealing with an EU *internal* function, and conceptualisation should reflect this. Of course, the second – and more intuitive – perspective is that the common policy either is elevated from the national to the EU level, or viewed as co-existing with national policy-making. These reflections trigger two intriguing questions: Could it be that the existence or importance of national foreign policies amounts to less than a trivial fact? If yes, where should we expect to find the origins of a common policy?

Some analysts claim the existence of a Danish policy on the Middle East (Haagerup and Thune, 1983). Yet it remains questionable to suggest a Danish 'policy' on the Middle East on the same level as US – and perhaps UK, Russian, French or EU – policies on the Middle East. Several (critical) studies indicate that Italian foreign policy has been a low-key affair well into the 1980s. Thus Joseph LaPalombara (1989) writes about *immobilismo* in Italian foreign policy, while Edward Luttwak (1993), in his usual blunt fashion, characterises Italian foreign policy under Gianni DeMichelis as a somewhat farce-like affair. Ben Tonra (2001) describes Irish foreign policy as being very limited in substantive scope and spatial reach. Germany has only been Germany since its unification in 1990, and Western Germany was widely considered merely a

semi-sovereign state, hardly the best foundation for the conduct of a 'genuine' national foreign policy. Ben Soetendorp (1996) has described a moment of truth in the Dutch foreign policy establishment, when it realised that The Netherlands had less leverage on Indonesia than it was used to in the past. Certainly, all EU member states continue to have foreign ministries (however small), diplomats (however few) and a foreign policy process (however insignificant for all but the involved). But only a small minority of member states has had great power status. The shadow of this asymmetrical configuration is likely to have a significant impact on the sources of EU foreign policy.

Finally, conditions during the Cold War strengthen the general argument. Four decades of superpower overlay are likely to have dissolved significant previously existing national foreign policy traditions, defined in terms of national interests or images of the national 'self'. Unless, that is, analysts believe in a 'frozen' primordial foreign policy behaviour, only waiting to be reinstantiated with the lifting of the 'overlay'. More likely, the 1990s has been a decade of thorough (re-)considerations concerning the 'self' and all 'others'. Obviously, more examples could be presented, but these should suffice to illustrate my point. Yet, despite all these striking limitations, each EU member state has no doubt been cultivating processes called 'foreign policy making' by politicians, diplomats and analysts alike. It is a perfect example of an efficient speech act in practice, and foreign policy analysts have been very active participants in such acts.

As noted above, the foreign policy traditions of most EU member states have, one way or another, been undermined in the past decades, meaning that their spatial reach, substantive volume and instruments for conducting foreign policy have been significantly reduced. A range of traditional foreign policy instruments has been 'removed' from the toolbox of EU member states, to be used instead in the foreign policy conducted by the EU. Indeed, if the same criteria are applied to the determination of national policies as criteria of the EU foreign policy to the EU, how many national foreign policies would in fact survive a critical analysis? Finally, although it is trivially true that member states continue to pursue their perceived national interests, it is worthwhile to consider the hypothesis that these interests have been redefined due to a changed institutional setting. Constructivist arguments, as put forward by Wendt and others, lead us to predict that interaction at both the European and international levels have effects on processes of identity and interest formation among European states. This hypothesis has not yet been thoroughly tested. What we do have are merely hints, for instance, when Nicole Gnesotto comes to the following conclusion: 'That all countries of the Union … now subscribe to the political and operational aims set out at Cologne and Helsinki, is certainly a major political revolution' (Gnesotto, 2000).

The problematic nature of 'policy'

Of all the concepts being employed in the analysis of foreign policy, the concept 'policy' is probably the most over-stretched, devalued and least precisely

defined. It would make sense to be more restrictive, to ask what is and what is not a policy. For example, it is widely believed that during the Cold War, France actually had a policy towards Eastern Europe. However, it appears not to be as simple as that. Pierre Hassner has issued a well-taken warning against a casual employment of the term, concluding that 'from de Gaulle to François Mitterrand French leaders were cast more than ever as specialists in vision rather than policy, in words rather than deeds' (1987: 189). Hassner's provocative view may trigger contending views. Some will probably argue that it is a very inaccurate perception of French foreign policy. Others will argue that Hassner characterises well features of the Cold War period, but not policy-making in the post-Cold War era. No matter which attitude is chosen to Hassner's criticism, the aim has been to illustrate the point about the necessity of some minimum standards for qualifying or not qualifying for the concept of 'policy'.

A second problem with the term policy is that it is a very egalitarian term, suggesting that all policies belong to the same league, have comparable features and share fundamental qualities. In the past we have tended to assume, uncritically, that a policy is a policy is a policy, which is a powerful device in any process of (self)-presentation – sometimes self-aggrandisation – but hardly an assumption that automatically has relevance for the analysis of European states during the Cold War. The interesting question is whether the assumption has become more adequate for states in the contemporary system. Though all policies can be said to have areas of concentration, being formulated through policy-making processes and conducted by politicians or diplomats, does it follow that they are in the same league, belonging to the same category? Are there not good reasons to establish a hierarchy according to which some qualify and others do not? Is it really impossible to create meaningful limits, for instance, in terms of volume, portfolio, reach or clout? In any case, research on this subject matter should at least cast some doubt on the actual justification for speaking about national foreign policy traditions and thus, in turn, raise serious questions about some of the standard explanations for the difficulties in developing a common EFP.

A third problem has to do with the noun 'common', an often employed term of Euro-speak. Proponents of analytical individualism prefer to arrive at something 'common' by aggregating individual intentions, actions or policies. However, intentionality does not need to be individual, which means that the term 'collective intentionality' seems particularly relevant for studies of common EU policies.[20] Collective intentionality is fully agnostic concerning progress or regress in integrative dynamics. It can function both as a pre-condition for integration and as a brake. The 'successful' non-function of the WEU during the decade 1973–83 is a prominent example of 'negative' collective intentionality. The presence of a strong inter-subjective understanding among members of the organisation meant that the WEU was a no-go organisation. No meetings at ministerial level were organised, no political declarations were issued, no statements were made. Brussels treaty provisions were dead letters. In short, members acted as if the organisation did not exist, despite the fact that the WEU had a postal address; it was based on

a comprehensive treaty, officials were paid salaries and a parliamentary assembly held sessions. Similarly, the absence during the Cold War of a European defence policy and a European army has often been explained by a lack of political will. In a certain sense, there was a very conscious political will to *avoid* such political initiatives, because they could 'rock the bipolar boat' and risk a severe de-stabilisation of international relations. Remnants of this strong (negative) political will are probably responsible for the opaque wording of the Maastricht Treaty on defence issues. The two examples show that the concept of collective intentionality is far from being 'married' to a notion of progressive institutional dynamics.

Finally, a distinction between four different roles of foreign policy demonstrates how further specification could be achieved. The first role is the inside-out function, meaning that foreign policy is regarded as an extended image of the (national or European) self, that is, related to issues of national, state or EU identity. The second role is a projection image of foreign policy, implying the projection of ideas, values, institutions, models – or just brute power. The third role is a protection image of foreign policy, for instance, protecting interests or values of a given state. The fourth role includes the symbolic representation of foreign policy, showing its value when national decision-makers realise that their international influence is limited, yet pretend the opposite in front of their constituency – and are believed. The de-constructive part of the story, then, is to acknowledge that sometimes it is analytically helpful to step three steps backwards and ask which role of foreign policy we observe in action. In summary, a given policy may play a significant role in celebrating the self of an imagined community, yet hardly be detectable across the boundaries of the very same community. It has been claimed that the opposite characterised Italian foreign policy during the Cold War. International events were for consumption in Italian domestic politics.

Processes of Europeanisation

Policy-makers and analysts widely share the view that the term 'Europeanisation' is both relevant and helpful in describing one of the key processes in contemporary European foreign policy. However, the term has been employed in a variety of ways, sometimes even in a casual fashion. Radaelli (2000) is therefore right in pointing out that the term is currently in danger of being over-stretched, at least as an analytical concept. In the context of EFP, Europeanisation has at least three different meanings.

Adaptation   The term 'Europeanisation' has been employed in order to describe how interaction at the European level has certain effects on national foreign policy. A cluster of concepts deals with more or less the same process: how national foreign policies have been changed, transformed or adapted as a result of European integration. Some analysts employ the term 'adaptation' here (see Hanf and Soetendorp, 1998). David Allen (1998), on the other hand, argues that European foreign policies have been 'Brusselised', that is,

not transformed into a communautarian mode but nevertheless moulded into a Brussels-focused mode. Mike Smith (1998), writing about elements of foreign policy within Pillar 1, employs the term 'communitarised'. These observations lead to the proposition that the foreign policies of EU member states have become 'something' they would not have been had the process of European integration not happened in the first place.

Obviously, the proposition forces us to engage in counterfactual reasoning, which is not always easy. However, whether easy or not, such reasoning appears to be highly relevant to accomplish our mission and is, in any case, difficult to avoid. Furthermore, much hinges on the features of the 'something', on which methods we can employ in order to detect the 'something' and, eventually, on how we can describe the 'something'. Intuitively one could expect the distinction between larger and smaller member states to be highly relevant for refining the proposition. That is, does Europeanisation only apply to minor and medium member states? What about the larger member states, for instance the (two) hard cases? According to Brian White (2001: 118–41), UK foreign policy too has been Europeanised. Furthermore, UK officials claim that the CFSP department in the British Foreign Office has become increasingly popular among the young, smart and career minded during the 1990s. John Coles is more sceptical, arguing, however, that the CFSP has become 'an important dimension of British foreign policy' (2000: 150). The French case is less well described, yet seems to be similar to the UK case (Hill, 1996; Manners and Whitman, 2001).

Elevating policy-making The second meaning of Europeanisation has to do with aspects of foreign policy being 'taken out' of the exclusively national conduct of foreign policy and elevated to EU policy-making. As such it concerns the balance between member states' and the EU's conduct of foreign policy, leading to the proposition that, in the EU, foreign policy is increasingly conducted by the EU.

Examples that come to mind include foreign economic policy, that is, decision-making on tariffs and other trade issues. Volker Rittberger and Frank Schimmelfennig point out that:

> Germany's foreign trade policy cannot be observed directly in the GATT [General Agreement on Tarifs and Trade] negotiations of the Uruguay Round. The EEC [European Economic Community] treaty stipulates that member states must co-ordinate their foreign trade policy with the EC/EU. As a result, the EC/EU Commission has been charged with conducting the negotiations in the GATT. Consequently, Germany's foreign trade policy toward the GATT can be examined only at the European level, i.e. by looking at the processes of co-ordination from which the European position within the GATT negotiations results. (1997)

A few examples, however, do not suffice to 'close the case'. To be persuasive, analysts must present findings pointing out that *more and more* 'modules' of

policy are being elevated to the EU and, consequently, that national foreign policies are being significantly 'diluted', perhaps leading to a domain that is increasingly populated by symbolic politics.

Empowerment   The third meaning refers to how processes of Europeanisation are connected to processes of empowerment. Only two member states, France and the UK, have been traditional great powers, while Germany for a long time has followed a different trajectory. Italy has always been considered the least of the European great powers and has thus also followed its own path. What about the rest – what about Spain, Finland, Greece, Portugal, The Netherlands, Sweden, Belgium, Luxembourg, Ireland, Denmark and Austria? What has the multi-layered system of foreign policy-making to offer these states and their bureaucracies? Adaptation of policy and administrative culture? Certainly. Europeanisation of policy and international horizon? Probably. Socialisation of representatives? Most likely. But, research findings suggest, also empowerment in the sense of having increased information at their disposal, access to major decision-makers (Tonra, 1997) and participation in the making of EU foreign policy. In other words, processes of Europeanisation imply an empowerment of most member states of the EU, meaning that they can now, finally, participate in conducting a foreign policy that matters beyond their own borders.

Europeanisation also implies reduced fears of being entrapped in traditional European great power politics and reduced fears of being 'targeted' by major non-EU actors, such as the US, Russia or China, in response to foreign policy initiatives that are regarded as unfriendly by the latter. Interestingly, realism has the term 'voice opportunity' to offer for this kind of dynamics. Drawing on Hans Morgenthau and Paul Schroeder, Joseph Grieco points out that states attempt to achieve the dual purpose of balancing against adversaries and constrain 'and modulate the behaviour of partners' (Grieco, 1997: 200). In other words, Grieco claims that 'relatively weaker states may choose to cooperate through an institution in order both to pursue balancing against an external challenger and to mitigate their domination by the stronger partner in the balancing coalition by ensuring that the institution is composed of rules and practices that provide the weaker partners effective "voice opportunities"' (Grieco, 1997: 185).

Conclusion

Between the Scylla of theoretical orthodoxy and the Charybdis of detailed description, conceptualisation provides a means for keeping a steady innovative analytical course. Furthermore, conceptualisation is a precondition for theory building, in turn a precondition for theory-guided empirical research. In this chapter, I first (re-)visited some of the general conceptual issues, including so-called 'strategic' conceptions that carry a whole toolbox of more directly applicable concepts. Using Figure 2.2 (p. 34) as a guide

through key *problématiques* believed to be particularly relevant for the study of EFP, I conclude that in order to improve our understanding of EFP we need to refine further our conceptual framework of analysis. When doing this we should keep in mind that contemporary EFP is conducted at several levels, implying that mutually constitutive features should be privileged. Furthermore, EFP is conducted by a number of different sets of collective actors, applying several methods of decision-making, and making policies that are more or less efficient in terms of reaching stated goals.

When addressing these issues, five dilemmas emerge on the horizon. First, are we content with detailed description of the conduct of foreign policy or do we want some kind of theory-informed analysis? Second, do we want to develop a *European* approach to the study of foreign policy, or do we agree with scholars who argue that, quite simply, there is no such thing as a 'regional' approach to research on foreign policy? Third, do EFP analysts want to focus on foreign policy *tous azimut* or just focus on European foreign policies? Fourth, in continuation of the focus issue and provided theory-building is part of our research practice, do we aim at universal applicability or at limited, confined applicability? Fifth, do we want to aim for grand theory or for mid-range theory?

Ian Manners (2000) observes two predominant trends in contemporary foreign policy analysis, pointing out that (increasingly) different approaches are being cultivated in the US and Europe, respectively. His analysis suggests that most scholars in the US continue to opt for seemingly general theories, presumably applicable everywhere. By contrast, European scholars increasingly opt for theorising with limited applicability. If we combine these trends with the fact that most Europeans focus on European foreign policies, it is easy to predict that we will end up with theory synthesising European experiences, but not very much beyond that. In other words, if we continue down the road, keeping the present goal in mind, we will potentially become knowing specialists on EFP, but not necessarily on foreign policy as such. Whether or not this is regarded as a satisfactory state of things remains an issue for prudent consideration.

Notes

1   I am grateful to Thomas Christiansen, Hans-Henrik Holm and Sonia Lucarelli for commenting on earlier versions of this chapter. Having presented drafts of the chapter at two workshops in Oslo, I also thank the participants for their valuable comments and suggestions.
2   We should, however, not underestimate previous instances of complexity, for instance, after the First World War when several of Europe's traditional empires disappeared and the ideology of Communism appeared, or the post-Second World War period, characterised by processes of de-colonisation, the emergence of nuclear weapons and the creation of numerous multilateral institutions.

3 In principle, foreign policy could be considered a public policy, being like all other public policies. Yet, because foreign policy deals with relations between a polity and its environment, it has traditionally been assigned a special status, reflected in provisions in constitutions and, in the scholarly community, in cultivating the study of foreign policy as a sub-branch of the field of International Relations. On this issue, see Carlsnaes (2002) and Kleistra and Mayer (2001).

4 In a sense, the *European Foreign Policy Bulletin online* (EFPB) documents the existence of a common policy. While this is particularly valid concerning the policy conducted within the framework of the CFSP, the *Bulletin on the European Union* documents the *communautarian* parts of the common policy. Both the EFPB and the Bulletin are therefore ideal points of departure for research on the common European foreign policy. This axiom is not based on wishful thinking but on the conclusions of comprehensive research; see for instance Piening (1997), Jørgensen (1997), Cameron (1999), Ginsberg (2001), Bretherton and Vogler (2001) and White (2001).

5 Admittedly, this is an old hat axiom (see Kaiser, 1966; Allison, 1971; Keohane and Nye, 1977), but even old hats have their use, and it is highly relevant to explore what the axiom means in the context of conceptualising and analysing contemporary European foreign policy.

6 Concepts of practice can be found in speeches, declarations, statements or Council Presidency conclusions. They are political or diplomatic discourse. By contrast, observers reflecting on developments in the field of foreign policy by describing, conceptualising, re-conceptualising or theorising tend to employ concepts of theory.

7 On this problematic, see Hellmann's (1994) very informative analysis on German foreign policy analysts and their conceptions of German foreign policy.

8 Among those who have contributed to the literature on European foreign policy, we find David Owen, Philippe de Schoutheete de Tervarent, Simon Nuttall, David Spence, Horst Günter Krenzler, Graham Messervy-Whyting, Henry Wynaendts, Peter Brückner, etc.

9 For an extended argument, see Andersen (1998), Glarbo (2001) and Jørgensen (1997).

10 Having identified the 'great powers', we also automatically have the out-group which, in a neorealist perspective, we can forget about, i.e., most members of the European Union.

11 Cf. for example the case of the Contact Group, which was established as an attempt to handle the Balkan crisis more swiftly and efficiently than was possible by the EU, or European military responses to the 11 September 2001 terrorist attack.

12 The former Secretary-General of the Council Secretariat, Niels Ersbøll, argues along such lines. Among analysts, see Müller (2001) and Lose (2001). See also Risse (2000).

13 Compare Waltz (1979) to Wight (1977) and Bull (1977). For the pros and cons of the English School analysing European integration, see Buzan (2001), Little (1999), Diez and Whitman (2002), Jørgensen (2000) and Manners (2000).

14 These approaches can draw on a long research tradition. Gourevitch points to Otto Hintze, Perry Anderson, Stein Rokkan and Theda Skocpol, among others. Interestingly, a realist like Grieco (1997: 182–3) draws on the same literature. Peter Katzenstein, in explaining the emergence of corporativism in Nordic states, puts forward a similar type of argument.

15 This in contrast to Waltz's (1979) conception of socialisation, i.e., the view that states in a competitive anarchic environment, through processes of socialisation, become 'like units' (or perish!). Socialisation in this sense refers to macro-phenomena, specifically states.

16 'Hardware' includes phenomena like organisational infrastructure, personnel, military gear, industrial base etc. 'Software' includes phenomena like ways of thinking, visions, aspirations, world views, key concepts of practice, principles, norms in both the sociological and legal meaning, beliefs etc.

17 We should thus abstain from regarding the European institutions as the only site of importance for the common European foreign policy, discussing relations between the Commission, the Council and the Parliament, including their various sub-departments (the Commission DGs, the working groups within the CFSP, the CFSP Secretariat and the High Representative etc.). This is the focus privileged by CFSP analysts.

18 Comparison of the websites of foreign ministries in EU member states shows considerable variation concerning whether or not to include links to EU 'partner' foreign ministries. There are reasons for analysts to be doubtful about a high degree of common policy.

19 Cf. Coles' (2000) telling chapter title 'Not What It Was: The Nature of Foreign Policy Today', reflecting experiences from a long career in the British Foreign Office.

20 For a thorough philosophical explication of the term, see John Searle (1995).

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