"But We Have To Do Something" : the drivers behind EU crisis management operations

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CHAPTER III: STUDYING ESDP OPERATIONS

This chapter serves to discuss the choices underlying the research design by which this study examines ESDP operations' broader drivers. In particular, it will reflect on the reasons for selecting specific ESDP actors and policy outcomes and on the conceptual choices that form the basis of this study. Before engaging into a detailed analysis of the research design, however, we need to roughly delineate the object of analysis. For this purpose, the following section will sketch out a quick overview regarding the context into which ESDP is embedded. It cannot hope to do justice to the multitude of political struggles, institutional precursors and rivals, or legal and bureaucratic finesses that preceded and accompanied the emergence of the ESDP. Instead, it simply intends to summarize a few important aspects of the ESDP's politico-institutional environment in order to give a rough impression of how the subsequent analysis relates to the wider architecture of European (security) cooperation.

A. HISTORICAL PROLOGUE AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

As noted before, the ESDP is embedded into a broader EU foreign policy framework, the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). The latter was launched with the Maastricht treaty which entered into force in 1993. The CFSP in turn hailed from the 'European Political Cooperation', which had been introduced in 1970 as an informal consultation mechanism between members of the European (Economic) Community (EEC; EC after Maastricht), designed to 'prevent international problems from disrupting the Community' (Smith 2004: 4). Although it was hence created with a view to bolstering the EC, institutionally it was kept strictly separate from the latter (not even being included into the Treaties until the Single European Act of 1987). By ushering in the overarching institutional framework of a 'European Union', the Maastricht Treaty denoted an important attempt at integrating the various facets of cooperation between European governments. Yet the 'pillar structure' which it created also kept intergovernmental cooperation in foreign and security policy apart from the more supranational EC. The latter continued to function according to the 'Community method' which implied a strong role for the European Commission as 'guardian of the treaties', 'motor of European integration', and entity with the sole right of initiating EU legislation. The Community method moreover entailed a stronger role for other supranational institutions such as the European Court of Justice and the European Parliament, as well as significant constraints on member states' autonomy. The secular trend towards 'qualified majority voting' procedures

meant that EU members increasingly lost the possibility of individually vetoing European legislation – even though the latter would subsequently bind them.

The CFSP, by contrast, remained founded on consensus among all EU governments, and it was characterized by a conscious effort to keep the influence of supranational institutions at bay. The pivotal institution for taking decisions was (and remains) the EU Council of Ministers, which unites member states' representatives at ministerial level. With the Treaty of Amsterdam, signed in 1997, the Union however also equipped itself with a 'High Representative of the CFSP' who would simultaneously head the Secretariat of the Council of Ministers (Council General-Secretariat / CGS) (cf. Christiansen 2006: 89). Initially a small bureaucracy established in 1986 with the Single European Act, this Secretariat was designed to support the EU Council presidencies – that were rotating between member states' governments – in coordinating matters of external relations, without having to make recourse to the 'supra-national' European Commission (cf. Dijkstra 2009: 436; Christiansen 2006: 89). Over time, it has become an influential player in its own right and grown to comprise some 2500 officials (cf. Gray and Stubb 2001: 6; 19; Howorth 2007: 65). For ten years from 1999 onwards, the office of High Representative and Secretary-General (HR/GS) would be held by Javier Solana, a former Spanish foreign minister and NATO Secretary-General.

The fact that an ESDP came to be embedded into the structures of the EU and its CFSP was by no means a foregone conclusion. Several attempts during the Cold War to establish an organization for European defence cooperation failed, most notably the European Defence Community in 1954 and the Fouchet Plan of 1961. The end of the Cold War brought with it new uncertainties over the future security architecture in Europe. Various institutional alternatives beckoned: apart from the EC, options ranged from the inclusive Conference on (later Organization for) Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE/OSCE), a (renewed and expanded) NATO, or the Western European Union (WEU), an intergovernmental organization essentially uniting those states with membership in both NATO and the EU. Those institutions could obviously coexist, but questions regarding their interrelationship and inter-organizational hierarchy bedevilled policy-makers throughout the 1990s. Whereas most EC governments by then wished for the EU to take on a stronger role in the domain of foreign, security and defence policy, the British government in particular objected to the EU venturing into defence policy.[11]

[11] The UK was not the only country to object: Denmark secured a full 'opt-out' from defence cooperation in 1992 following the rejection of the Maastricht treaty in a referendum, which means that to date decisions with military implications are taken by 26 instead of the usual 27 EU governments.

The proximate cause for the 'birth' of ESDP was the result of a change in British policy. In December 1998, the newly elected Labour government under Tony Blair co-signed a Franco-British initiative at the bilateral summit of Saint-Malo which stated that 'the Union must have the capacity for autonomous action, backed up by credible military forces, the means to decide to use them, and a readiness to do so in order to respond to international crises' (quoted in Rutten 2001: 8). This initiative was subsequently tied into the CFSP and institutionally digested with the Nice Treaty of 2000. In the wake of intergovernmental discussions from 1999 until 2001, the EU set up several new institutions charged with implementing the ESDP: a Political and Security Committee (PSC) at ambassadorial level, tasked with directing (within limits) crisis management operations on behalf of the Council of Ministers; an EU Military Committee (EUMC) to advice the PSC on military matters and to direct the EU Military Staff (EUMS), a small organization attached to the Council Secretariat and designed to provide military expertise; and a Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management (CivCom), an advisory body mirroring the EUMC on the civilian side.

INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

The most difficult issues that the ESDP encountered upon its inception pertained to inter-institutional questions, both within the EU and in its relationship with NATO (cf. Jopp 1999: 18-22; Gnesotto 2005: 19; 21; Howorth 2007: 89-91; 135-177; Nowak 2006: 139-141). Within the EU, tensions arose between the Commission and the Council and its Secretariat as to whether the latter were not treading on the territory of the former in the domain of civilian crisis management. These tensions were tentatively addressed in the Lisbon Treaty, which aimed at greater intra-institutional coherence by fusing the office of the CFSP's High Representative with that of a Commission Vice-President and undergirding it with an European External Action Service who would draw on both Council and Commission personnel – although practice still has to show whether this arrangement will indeed improve intra-EU coherence.

Politically most challenging, however, was ESDP's relationship with NATO. This relationship was obviously embedded into the larger context of transatlantic relations, notably the close bilateral relations the US had with many individual EU member states as well as the multiple multilateral settings in which they interacted. As others have detailed, the US' reaction to ESDP has been variegated, fluctuating and ambiguous for several reasons (Howorth 2007: 135-177; Giegerich et al. 2006; Hunter 2002a). Yet it was the emerging institutional relationship between NATO and ESDP which became the primary theatre for the struggle over rivalling concepts for the future European security architecture. The stakes were summed up in the

response that US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright published three days after the declaration of Saint-Malo: Albright signalled approval, but conditioned it on avoiding what she referred to as 'the Three Ds: decoupling, duplication and discrimination' (Albright 1998). The injunctions against decoupling (of ESDP decision-making from NATO) and duplication (of expensive defence resources already at NATO's disposal) were aimed at safeguarding direct US influence on European security affairs. Their importance subsided over time as US policy-makers came to appreciate the EU's limited ambitions and benign intentions. The third issue, discrimination, revolved around the question of how to treat Turkey. Because this issue has evolved into one the most important problems for ESDP via its entanglement with and impact on relations between the EU and NATO, it deserves a short historical detour.

Turkey was (and remains) the most important non-EU European NATO member. Its relationship with the EU has been difficult. Applying in 1987 to accede to the EU, it became an accession candidate only in 1999 and started negotiations in 2005. During that time span, 13 countries (and more since) applied to and joined the EU whereas Turkey's eventual accession remains in serious doubt. Successive US administrations have supported Turkey's EU candidacy and insisted that ESDP not entail any deterioration for Ankara's position vis-à-vis the EU. Yet in view of the evolving institutional changes a relative degradation was the default option. ESDP's purpose as listed in Art. 17, 2 of the Nice Treaty, the so-called 'Petersberg tasks', had been taken over from the WEU. For implementing these tasks, the WEU had made arrangements with NATO to draw on the latter's assets and capabilities in the area of operation planning and command, control and support functions. These were agreed at a NATO ministerial meeting in Berlin in 1996, came to be known as the 'Berlin agreement', and afforded considerable rights of participation to the WEU's associated members, among them Turkey.

As the ESDP increasingly 'cannibalised' the WEU functions, Turkey, with US support, wanted to see these rights replicated in the EU (cf. Missiroli 2002). Yet whereas the WEU had largely been content to remain subordinate to NATO given that all its members also participated in the latter, this was not the case with the EU. The Union, comprising several militarily non-aligned member states, insisted on decision-making autonomy. Turkey's complaints have been opposed not only by those insisting on decision-making autonomy though, but also by EU governments less enthusiastic about the prospect of Turkish EU membership more generally. EU-NATO inter-organizational rivalries thus came to provide a convenient smokescreen for various power struggles between different member states and with third parties. Their ramifications will be analysed in greater detail in chapter IV, in the context of the EU's Bosnia operation. Suffice it to say at this point that it took the two organizations more than four years to reach a complicated set of agreements

specifying the conditions under which the EU could draw on the very NATO assets that it was not supposed to duplicate. With reference to its predecessor, this framework came to be known as the 'Berlin Plus agreement'.

ESDP AND CAPABILITIES

While these institutional issues proved hard to digest, they were not an end in themselves. The British defence minister at the time, George Robertson, warned in March 1999 that '[i]nstitutional re-engineering alone will solve little […] you cannot send a wiring diagram to a crisis' (quoted in Howorth 2001: 771). Instead, he insisted, it was 'political will and the ability to act that matter first and foremost' (quoted in Howorth 2007: 62). In other words, what mattered were the crisis management operations embodying political will and the capabilities needed to underpin them. Indeed, the question of capabilities had been one of the reasons why many EU governments – and London in particular – had supported the emergence of an ESDP. Their hope was that EU cooperation could leverage the transformation of European militaries from their traditional focus on territorial defence to the new task of global crisis management (cf. Menon 2009: 232; Howorth 2007: 103). To this end, a number of capability initiatives were launched, from the Helsinki Headline Goal of 60.000 deployable troops via the more quality-oriented Headline Goal 2010 to the creation of a European Defence Agency (EDA). Yet whereas military reforms slowly unfolded across the continent, the ESDP proved unable to generate the aspired additional political interest in capabilities and therefore essentially remained consigned to stock-taking. After his term had expired, the first head of the EDA thus summarized somewhat bitterly that 'the pattern of under-achievement is by now familiar: EU leaders commit to ambitious defence goals and deadlines, celebrate inadequate outcomes, move the goalposts, and authorise a further round of "reviews" and "roadmaps"' – if those goalposts were not 'dismantled altogether' (Witney 2008: 9; 30).

The narrative on the civilian side is not that different: after various stock-taking exercises the EU elaborated a 'Civilian Headline Goal' mirroring its military equivalent. However, as in the military domain it emerged not only that the focus needed to shift from quantity to quality, but also that capability development was essentially a national process whose voluntary nature limited the EU's impact (cf. Grevi and Keohane 2009: 109). It proved particularly difficult since the required capabilities (police officers, prosecutors, judges etc.) had to come from professional domains where multilateral collaboration has a more limited history than in the militaries, many of which look back on 50 years of close cooperation in NATO. Moreover, the necessary personnel are often employed at lower levels of government, limiting national authorities' direct access. Finally, much effort had to

be expended trying to increase the coherence between the Council's and the Commission's responsibilities (cf. Howorth 2007: 132; Nowak 2006: 37). In their assessment of the first 10 years of ESDP, two experts thus concluded that, despite advancements on specific problems, 'progress in the supply of civilian capabilities has been permanently outpaced by increase in demand' (Grevi and Keohane 2009: 109). In short, capability development has hardly ever driven ESDP. To the extent that capability improvements took place, whether in the military or civilian domain, it was primarily in response to urgent operational needs. This brings us to the driving force behind progress in ESDP to date: the operations carried out in this framework.

ESDP OPERATIONS

Since the EU ushered in its first ESDP operation on 1 January 2003, its list of activities has quickly expanded to comprise 23 operations by the time of the Lisbon Treaty's entry in force in late 2009.[12] While some observers have compared this number favourably to the one operation that NATO initiated during the same timeframe (Howorth 2007: 17), ESDP's 'usability' needs to be qualified insofar as most of these operations required far more modest resources. The following table provides an overview detailing the acronym, host country, time period, type, scale, and operational purpose of those operations. As it shows, ESDP operations have been rather diverse with respect to their size, mandate, length, and geographic location.

[12] As the ESDP became the CSDP in December 2009, those 23 operations encompass the entire population of ESDP operations.

TABLE 4. OVERVIEW OF ESDP OPERATIONS[13]

Mission type	*Mission acronym*	*Host Country*	*(Approx.) max. number of international personnel*	*Time period*
Military (in chronological order)	Concordia	FYROM	400	31/03/2003--15/12/2003
	Artemis	DR Congo	1.800	05/06/2003 - 01/09/2003
	EUFOR Althea	Bosnia	7.000	Since 02/12/2004
	EUFOR RD Congo	DR Congo	2.000	12/06/2006 - 30/11/2006
	EUFOR Tchad/RCA	Chad / Central African Rep.	3.300	28/01/2008 - 15/03/2009
	EUNAVFOR Atalanta	Somalia	1.800	Since 08/12/2008
Civilian (in chronological order)	EUPM	Bosnia	500	Since 01/01/2003
	Proxima	FYROM	200	15/12/2003 - 14/12/2005
	EUJUST Themis	Georgia	10	16/07/2004 - 14/07/2005
	EUPOL Kinshasa	DRC	30	09/12/2004 - 30/06/2007

[13] The precise number of missions could be challenged on the basis that two 'new' missions (EUPOL RD Congo, EUPAT) were simply the continuation of older missions under a new label, that the EU's support to AMIS did not strictly qualify as a mission in its own right, and that EUBAM Moldova-Ukraine is, strictly speaking, not governed by the ESDP framework. In nevertheless including those activities, I am following the overview provided by the Council Secretariat's website.

The maximum number of international personnel has been compiled from: the Council Secretariat's website; Howorth 2007: 210-211; Grevi, Helly and Keohane, eds. (2009).

Mission type	*Mission acronym*	*Host Country*	*(Approx.) max. number of international personnel*	*Time period*
Civilian (continued)	EUJUST Lex	Iraq	60	Since 09/03/2005
	EUSEC RD Congo	DRC	50	Since 08/06/2005
	EU support to AMIS	Sudan	50	18/07/2005 - 31/12/2007
	Aceh Monitoring Mission	Indonesia	220	15/09/2005 - 15/12/2006
	EUPOL Copps	Palestinian territories	50	Since 14/11/2005
	EUBAM Rafah	Palestinian territories	70	Since 25/11/2005
	EUBAM Moldova-Ukraine	Moldova / Ukraine	120	Since 01/12/2005
	EUPAT	FYROM	30	15/12/2005 - 14/06/2006
	EUPOL Afghanistan	Afghanistan	320	Since 15/06/2007
	EUPOL RD Congo	DRC	60	Since 01/07/2007
	EULEX Kosovo	Kosovo	1.650	Since 04/02/2008
	EU SSR Guinea-Bissau	Guinea-Bissau	15	12/02/2008 - 30/09/2010
	EUMM Georgia	Georgia	340	Since 15/09/2008

Since it is beyond the scope of this study to discuss the driving forces behind each of the above missions, the subsequent section will discuss the selection of four case studies. Before doing so however, this section will conclude with a short description of how these operations are institutionally managed and directed (for a more detailed discussion, see Dijkstra 2011: 103-28; Grevi 2009a; Mattelaer 2008). In principle, every operation comes about as the consequence of a consensus among all EU governments and is formalized by a legal act dubbed 'Joint Action'.[14] Although any EU government or the Commission can propose such an operation, in practice this has mostly been channelled through the Council's presidency acting in tandem with the Council Secretariat. Whereas the Council formally sanctions key decisions such as the launch, mandate and budget of an operation, substantial discussions on strategy are usually finalized by the PSC. The latter is routinely mandated by the Council to provide 'political control and strategic direction' for an operation. Operational control is then transferred to the head of mission / operation commander, who regularly briefs the PSC and its advisory bodies, but otherwise reports via the High Representative (in practice: the Council Secretariat) or the EU Military Committee and its Chairman respectively.

The PSC in turn out-sources much of its 'directing' to its military and civilian advisory bodies which, on the basis of planning documents and regular reports from the operation, make recommendations to the latter which the PSC will generally endorse. Some of the decision-shaping, notably the outlining of options and the drafting of planning documents, is *de facto* done by the Council Secretariat and the EUMS, in collaboration with the Council presidency and senior operation personnel. For civilian missions, accountability to the Council Secretariat and the PSC is complemented with financial accountability to the European Commission since the biggest part of missions' financial resources stems from the Community budget. Military operations by contrast cannot be financed from the Community budget. Here, the general rule is that 'costs lie where they fall', i.e. that states participating in an operation need to cover the expenses incurred by their troops; some collectively incurred cost items are designed 'common costs' by consensus and shared by all member states (except Denmark) according to a gross national product scale.

In sum, member state governments play a pivotal role in directing ESDP operations in that they do not only authorize them, decide on their budgets, and appoint the

[14] Apart from the Danish opt-out regarding military operations, the EU Treaty under certain circumstances also allows for 'constructive abstention', i.e. an explicit opt-out from a specific measure while allowing other EU members to adopt it. This option's only invocation so far has been Cyprus' abstention from the Joint Action creating EULEX, the EU rule of law mission for Kosovo.

operation commander / head of mission, but also need to agree to every (official) planning document. However, the High Representative and his Council Secretariat also have significant possibilities for exercising influence in that they draft those documents in the first place, provide 'technical' and legal advice, and counsel the presidency in negotiating a consensus among member states. The position of the European Commission, by contrast, has been much more limited although it needs to sign off on the financial implications of civilian missions (cf. Dijkstra 2011: 104). After this short introduction to the institutional context of ESDP crisis management, the following section will zoom in on the specific facets that this book will examine.

B. CASE SELECTIONS

The objective of examining the driving forces behind ESDP operations entails a number of choices. At the most generic level, this relates to the trade-off between the breadth and the depth of the analysis. When it comes to a systematic investigation of the drivers behind ESDP operations, the balance that needs to be struck between the two relates to three dimensions in particular: the number of potentially decisive actors, their possible motives and the range of policy outputs to be put under closer scrutiny. It would obviously be overambitious to attempt to thoroughly review the positions of all 27 EU governments, much less those of their constituent parts or even third parties with a potential interest in ESDP operations. Therefore, this study will particularly focus on the positions of three pivotal EU governments: French, British and German.[15] Similar self-restraint is necessary when it comes to systematically considering the range of motives they may have entertained in adopting their positions. For this purpose, the preceding theoretical chapter deduced four main propositions from the literature on ESDP. Finally, the explanatory prowess of these propositions will be appraised with respect to 4 out of the 23 ESDP operations listed above. Whereas one dimension, the choice of propositions in terms of likely motives, has already been elaborated in the preceding chapter, this section will explicate the selection of primary research objects in terms of actors and outcomes.

In selecting specific actors and outcomes for closer analysis, this study tried to avoid bias by including both 'most-likely' and 'least-likely' cases for each of the four propositions (cf. George and Bennett 2005: 121-2). Yet it cannot claim that each case study is necessarily the perfect match for the respective proposition, e.g. that the

[15] In focusing on these three governments, subsequent analysis will sometimes refer to capitals as actors (as in, London thought …). These anthropomorphisms only serve to preempt vocabulary monotony and refer to the respective governments' representatives.

military operation in Chad was definitively the most likely case for proposition I and the least likely one for proposition IV. Such immodesty would founder on the difficulty of conclusively linking, *a priori*, certain features of any operation with specific drivers. Whereas I will argue, for example, that military operations are an easier case for the balancing proposition than civilian missions because a competing 'hard power' framework represents a greater potential threat to US hegemony than do 'soft power' tools, this assumption could be questioned on account of the more principled challenge to US dominance that the EU's civilian activism may present. Others could therefore argue that seeking to wield influence via non-coercive instruments, e.g. by following a strategy of 'change through rapprochement', has greater potential than using military power and that a 'civilian power' strategy therefore is a stronger indicator of balancing behaviour. Whichever assumption is more promising will often remain in the eye of the beholder. In exposing the logic underneath the choices inherent in the research design, the subsequent paragraphs can therefore only demonstrate that the latter represent a reasonable, rather than necessarily the optimal point of departure.

SELECTING ACTORS

The first analytical choice relates to the actors this study will systematically look at. In selecting the governments of France, Germany and the UK, this study follows a tradition quite prevalent in studies of European foreign policy. Most analyses of this subject area have either focused on exactly those three member states (cf. Kaim 2007; Mérand 2006, 2008; Major 2009; Rathbun 2004; Hilz 2005), or included them all among a sample of four states (Giegerich 2006; Meyer 2006). There are several reasons to justify putting these three actors centre-stage. First of all, those three countries are generally judged to be the most powerful in the EU, combining economic and political heft with the greatest spending on defence (in absolute terms). Secondly, they have the biggest foreign policy machineries among EU governments and therefore tend to take a position on all aspects of EU foreign policy, rather than rubberstamping part of the agenda for lack of interest. Moreover and related, they form (or participate in) various *fora* that pre-shape EU discussions, be they the permanent UN Security Council membership for the UK and France, the bilateral Franco-German Security and Defence Council, the frequent bilateral cooperation between Paris and London in foreign policy- and defence-related matters, or their collective membership in the Balkan Contact Group. On a more practical level, all three governments also operate in languages which are accessible to the author.

The most important reason for selecting Germany, France and the UK, however, relates to the variation which they represent with respect to three dimensions that

are traditionally credited with explaining differences in European foreign policy behaviour.[16] First, in geo-strategic terms the UK and France occupy the two 'extreme' positions along the Atlanticist – Europeanist dimension, i.e. along an axis measuring the extent to which European states search proximity to the US in questions of European security (cf. Stahl et al. 2004; Giegerich 2006: 202). Germany falls in between, but has traditionally been closer to the UK's stance. Secondly, France and the UK on the one, and Germany on the other hand occupy opposite positions with respect to their disposition to project military force 'out of area' (cf. Giegerich 2006: 198-202; Matlary 2009). Thirdly, Germany and the UK traditionally take opposite stances regarding the desirability of European integration, including in the realm of foreign and defence policy, with Germany among the most integrationist and the UK among the most sceptical (cf. Mérand 2006; Koenig-Archibugi 2004a). France falls somewhere in between as it traditionally wants to strengthen the EU's role in security and defence, but tends to favour intergovernmental rather than supranational means for that end. In other words, the three countries that this study focuses on cover the full breadth of the pivotal dimensions which divide defence policies across the EU, with each opposing the other two along one axis.

Whereas these three dimensions do not perfectly mirror the drivers embedded in the four propositions, they obviously relate to them. US suspicions regarding European balancing intentions have always centred on 'Europeanist' governments and France in particular, whose striving for 'autonomy' from NATO was interpreted as an attempt to curtail US influence. 'Atlanticist' governments such as the UK, by contrast, have tended to emphasize how 'shared transatlantic values' resulted in parallel foreign policy behaviour. They thereby not only contradicted the claim that the EU had any interest in balancing the US, but also underlined how trans-nationally shared values rather than the systemic distribution of power shaped their security policy. Taking both views on board is hence necessary to appreciate the range of motivations that might find expression in ESDP and will make any findings

[16] In distinguishing these three dimensions, I build on Giegerich (2006: 12-13; cf. Meyer 2006: 11) who also evokes the first two of them, although he splits the second into a preference for civilian vs. military instruments and for differing purposes of the military (whether for territorial defence or 'out of area' interventions). As the two empirically overlap (those who are queasy about employing military force tend to focus their armies on territorial defence almost by default), I drop that distinction, but add a third one on European integration because ESDP operations imply not only a decision to intervene, but also a (potentially deliberate) choice for the EU institutional framework of intervention. For a very similar assessment, see Major (2009: 57).

more robust than a focus on governments representing merely one side of this debate.

The same goes for states' disposition with respect to projecting military force, as this links up with (potentially differing) national role conceptions as well as domestic expectations more generally. Whether such expectations have an impact can be best assessed if the full gamut of dispositions towards military force projection is represented in the sample of actors under scrutiny. Finally, it seems reasonable to suspect that the outlook on European integration, in particular the area of foreign and defence policy, will have implications for the extent to which the objective of furthering such integration may inform ESDP policy-making. In sum, by including three countries which embody the diversity of European security policy traditions (while at the same time being in a position to have an impact), we improve our chances of avoiding a biased image that may result from only taking into account the explanations and justifications of either side along one of the three dimensions.

The argument above does not imply that this study can claim to have taken into account all views that might be relevant within the EU. The selection notably does not include any small EU member state or any country that acceded to the EU after the end of the Cold War, whether formerly neutral or part of the Warsaw Pact. However, these historical (non-) alignments have largely receded or been reinterpreted so as to make ignoring these dimensions a justifiable omission. Rather than forming homogenous blocks, their foreign and security policies differ considerably, and can arguably be captured by the three dimensions alluded to above: with respect to the Atlanticist – Europeanist divide, Sweden and Finland of the 'formerly neutral' and virtually all Central European countries have harked closer to the British position, whereas Ireland, Austria and Cyprus have kept their distance to NATO. This becomes apparent, for example, if we compare the size of their respective contributions to NATO's Afghanistan operation. This division is repeated when it comes to the use of force for the purpose of coercion, where Ireland and Austria are more reserved than Sweden, a split that also divides Central Europeans among each other. Finally, these countries' governments have also differed in the enthusiasm with which they embraced the prospect, opportunities and strictures of a common European foreign policy.

In sum, whereas the systematic inclusion of further EU governments would likely have added insight insofar as their approach would have included diverging combinations of positions taken along the three dimensions alluded to earlier, the marginal benefit of such an inclusion seems smaller than the added cost in terms of resource diversion. This study's self-limitation to three EU governments is all the more justifiable as it only relates to the systematic examination of their motives across all cases. In addition, wherever empirical analysis suggested a particularly

significant role for other actors in a specific case study, this was followed up by research into those actors' motivations. In this sense, the idea that the three governments were particularly important in formulating ESDP policy was a starting point for research that was inductively amended when it came to specific operations.

Although decisions in ESDP are taken by EU governments, there are obviously a host of other potentially important actors. The latter range from specific domestic or transnational groups such as parliaments, political parties, the media, non-governmental organizations or interested bureaucracies to EU-level institutions and actors external to the EU, be they influential states such as the US or international organizations such as the UN or NATO. However, neither domestic nor international players figure as actors in their own right because their influence is wielded via EU governments: if the US, the UN, or the International Crisis Group (ICG), for example, wanted the EU to perform a certain operation, they would need to convince (some) EU governments to support their cause. The assumption is hence that such actors' influence would be revealed by examining the roots of EU governments' motives. The case is somewhat different for EU institutions because two of them, the European Commission as well as the High Representative for the CFSP with his Council General Secretariat (CGS), directly participated in the decision-shaping process. Whereas the Commission has largely taken a back seat with respect to ESDP, concerning itself primarily with limiting the latter's impact on Community procedures and prerogatives, Solana and the CGS clearly had a stake in ESDP as the most visible expression of EU foreign and security policy. Moreover, assisting the rotating Council presidencies put the CGS into a potentially pivotal position as it came to represent continuity and institutional memory. Finally, whereas the Secretariat's obligation to support the presidency and the concomitant need to achieve consensus among member states limited its ability to push its own agenda, this likely led it to gain a thorough knowledge of different member states' interests, priorities, and red lines – a knowledge of obvious interest for this study. For these reasons, this study also systematically checks for the impression various officials in the Council Secretariat had with respect to the discussions surrounding each operation.

SELECTING OPERATIONS

Whereas the analytic focus on the three EU governments and the CGS as pivotal actors is attenuated by the inductive element in the research design, the choice is less transient when it comes to the policy outputs, the ESDP operations. A number of criteria guided the selection for the four case studies from a population of 23

operations.[17] First, in order to be able to draw conclusions about the drivers behind ESDP more generally, the case studies were selected with a view to being representative of the larger population. While it is impossible to achieve representativeness in the strict, statistical sense of the word, the operations were chosen to reflect the diversity present in the larger population of ESDP operations. This does not constitute a foundation for empirical generalization, but it offers a starting point for theoretical generalization (cf. George and Bennett 2005: 109-11). Secondly, this study focuses on operations that, at face value, constituted the most important elements of the ESDP's operational record so as to ease the potential counter-charge linked to the lack of true representativeness. Even if those four operations were not truly representative, they would still represent the most important among the ESDP's efforts to impact on international security. Above all, however, the case selection depended on theoretical considerations. The operations were selected on theoretical assumptions about how specific operational properties would likely indicate certain underlying drivers (cf. George and Bennett 2005: 83-4). The following paragraphs will discuss these choices in greater detail.

The operations carried out in the ESDP framework could be ordered according to several criteria: whereas the earlier overview opted for chronology, two other salient properties are their geographical location and their respective nature, i.e. whether they are civilian or military. Both features are relevant because one could tentatively link them to different potential drivers: geographical distance would, *ceteris paribus*, tend to correlate with the level of international political ambition. Acting outside of Europe – as one crude proxy of geographical (and cultural) difference – may thus be driven by different factors than crisis management in the EU's borderlands. With respect to the second property, mission type, balancing intentions or the idea of nation-building by way of 'swaggering' could most plausibly be linked to military operations (cf. Anderson and Seitz 2006). Civilian missions, by contrast, would seem to fit more easily with the EU's 'normative power' claims, and

[17] When it comes to the decision of whether to deploy an operation, the population is greater than 23 and includes a number of operations that have been considered, but were not mandated. On the one hand, including only operations that actually took place is methodically dubious as it implies selecting on the dependent variable and thereby introducing a selection bias (cf. King et al. 1994); on the other hand, including case studies of non-operations creates methodical problems of its own, namely the unclear size of the population and the question as to whether a potential operation was considered seriously enough to constitute a relevant case; the lack of public traces a non-operation leaves; and the dearth of data as to the drivers behind the promotion and/or rejection of such a non-operation since many aspects will never come to be considered, and because a non-decision generally requires a far lower degree of justification than does an actual operation.

perhaps the publics' preferences for keeping or getting the troops home. Using these two operational features to form a simple matrix would suggest selecting two civilian and two military operations, one of which would respectively be situated within and outside of Europe.[18] By selecting one operation from each field of the matrix, we not only include one example of each combination of salient properties, but also allow for structured comparison along either dimension (civilian vs. military and European vs. outside of Europe). This in turn could help us to identify potential patterns that may link each characteristic with specific drivers. If we categorize the 23 ESDP operations according to the first two criteria, geographic location and operation type, the following table results:[19]

TABLE 5. ESDP OPERATIONS BY TYPE AND LOCATION

	Military	*Civilian*
Within Europe	Concordia*; **EUFOR Althea***	EUPM; Proxima; EUJUST Themis; EUBAM Moldova-Ukraine; EUPAT; **EULEX Kosovo**; EUMM Georgia
Outside of Europe	Artemis; EUFOR RD Congo; **EUFOR Tchad/ RCA**; EUNAVFOR Atalanta	EUPOL Kinshasa; EUJUST Lex; EUSEC RD Congo; EU support to AMIS; Aceh Monitoring Mission; EUPOL Copps; EUBAM Rafah; **EUPOL Afghanistan**; EUPOL RD Congo; EU SSR Guinea-Bissau

In addition to geography and mission type, there is a third generic feature that applies to military operations. The latter can be further differentiated by distinguishing between operations carried out in the 'Berlin Plus' framework, i.e. by relying on NATO's planning and command and control assets, or 'autonomously'. Given the US' misgivings about any 'decoupling' from or 'duplication' of NATO, we may speculate that if ESDP was about balancing against the US, we would most likely find evidence for this driver in the decision-making surrounding autonomous operations. Conversely, an EU operation with recourse to NATO assets may raise the

[18] For similar criteria, albeit with a somewhat diverging justification, see Dijkstra 2011: 48-50.

[19] Selected operations in bold; * indicates 'Berlin Plus' operations

question of the added value of deploying under an EU flag in the first place if, as it happened, such EU operations followed earlier NATO deployments – unless, that is, we assume that this EU flag in itself constituted the operation's purpose as the 'EU security identity' proposition suggests. In other words, the distinction between 'Berlin Plus' and 'autonomous' military operations implies similarly differentiated expectations as the distinction between inside and outside of Europe: the latter would more likely indicate attempts at balancing whereas the former may suggest 'nation-building' efforts.

As table 5 showed, a relative majority of ESDP operations has been civilian in nature, and a relative majority has taken place outside of Europe. Conveniently, the distinction between 'Berlin Plus' and 'autonomous' operations overlaps perfectly with those military operations carried out within and outside of Europe respectively: 'Concordia' and 'Althea' are the only two 'Berlin Plus' operations undertaken so far, and simultaneously the only military operations undertaken in Europe. Conversely, autonomous operations are identical with those undertaken outside of Europe. In other words, the two assumed proxies for potential balancing intentions – greater geographical distance and an autonomous command structure – correlate in practice. This leaves us with the task of choosing one particular operation from each of the four subsets.

Starting with the upper left quadrant, there are only the operations in Macedonia and Bosnia to choose from. I opted for the latter because, with initially 15 times as many soldiers on the grounds, it constituted a far more important undertaking. Indeed, many interviewed officials described the Macedonian undertaking primarily as a 'test case' and 'exercise' for the Bosnian operation. In theoretical terms, Althea is interesting because it apparently represents a puzzle for the balancing proposition: if ESDP was about curbing US influence, and Althea was the biggest ESDP operation, why would the US not veto the EU's takeover of this operation thitherto under NATO command? This problem becomes much less puzzling once we assume that the real purpose was flying the EU flag for the sake of building an EU security identity. Such an explanation would moreover resolve the potential conundrum of why Western states, in their declared mission of deterring any threats to Bosnia's stability and integrity, would forgo the participation of the strongest possible deterrent power, the US. Hence, whereas the operation constitutes a hard case for the balancing proposition, Althea simultaneously represents an easy case for the 'European integration' proposition.

Moving counter-clockwise to autonomous military operations, the choice is similarly easy. EUFOR Tchad/RCA constituted the biggest such operation so far, and the most remarkable one in terms of the logistical challenges involved. If ESDP served the purpose of balancing US influence, we would expect operations that counter US

interests or, in the absence of any plausible examples for the latter, were at least designed to show off the EU's potential for acting independently from Washington. EUFOR Tchad/RCA clearly embodied the operation with the greatest potential for impressing the military universe and therefore the most likely instance for the balancing proposition. At the same time, such an unsolicited display of interventionist voluntarism seems to amount to a difficult case for the 'domestic expectations' proposition. Given the military intervention fatigue in Europe following the controversy over, and difficulties in, Iraq and Afghanistan, why would EU governments take on new responsibilities, especially in countries few Europeans would find on a map, much less care about? In view of these considerations, EUFOR Tchad/RCA would appear to constitute an easy case for the balancing proposition, and concurrently a hard nut to crack for the proposition that links EU crisis management to domestic expectations.

Civilian missions present difficult cases for either the balancing or the security identity propositions: sending civilian (and often rather technical) advisers on improving the rule of law to a third country hardly amounts to effective balancing, and it seems too limited an instrument to promote nation-building in Europe. Yet such missions make face value sense in view of our two remaining propositions: on the one hand, the underlying idea of spreading security sector standards and human rights abroad embodies the liberal aspirations inherent in the 'normative power Europe' proposition. Such aspirations are especially selfless where they concern far away, conflict-ridden places. There should thus hardly be an easier case for finding normative and ideational motives at work than in an operation designed to support civilian policing arrangements and the rule of law in Afghanistan. Coincidentally, this mission also represents the biggest civilian mission outside of Europe thus far. At the same time, it should be a tough case for the nation-building proposition insofar as the latter relies on creating experiences of collective success for the purpose of broadening the EU's appeal among European citizens (cf. Anderson and Seitz 2006: 29-30). Already in 2006 when this mission was conceived, it was clear that establishing the rule of law in Afghanistan would be anything but a matter of course.

The remaining quadrant assembles the civilian missions undertaken within Europe. Again the choice was for the biggest and, in many ways, most important mission, namely EULEX Kosovo. Not only does this operation comprise four times as much personnel than the next biggest competitor, it is also the only civilian mission that involves 'executive functions', i.e. which has a mandate beyond monitoring and advising to include substituting for local law enforcement under certain circumstances. In theoretical terms, this should be an easy case for the domestic expectations proposition insofar as the objective of preventing organized crime and conflict-induced emigration in a region enclosed by the EU links up to domestic law and order concerns and can be easily explained at home. Simultaneously, it figures

as a hard case for balancing since there is very little about the mission's properties that could conceivably be linked with curtailing US influence.

In sum, this study has selected four operations, one from each of the categories identified earlier on. In each case, the mission represents the biggest and most important specimen of its kind, but also relates to the propositions in such a way as to include 'easy' and 'hard' cases. Moreover, the above choice of operations also embodies a chronological spread although that dimension is less important given the short overall timeframe. Yet as conceded earlier on, the arguments underpinning this selection could be challenged and twisted to generate alternative configurations. Moreover, the selection above is somewhat biased in that it does not include a 'hard case' for the 'normative power Europe' proposition. The reason is simply that it is difficult to conceive, *a priori*, the properties that would indicate disregard for the EU's own role conception. One could of course have argued that the turn away from civilian power instruments, as perhaps most clearly embodied in Althea's deterrence function, in itself constituted such a property. I refrained from thereby forcing 'theoretical symmetry' on the case studies because any forthright link between normative ends and civilian means introduces additional assumptions that might bias the study's outcomes. Similarly, some might take issue with the intentional bias that results from focusing on the most important ESDP operations, arguing that it limits the representativeness of the sample for the wider population. This bias serves a purpose, however, in that this study's puzzle relates primarily to explaining activism in the ESDP institutional framework at large rather than the 'average operation'. In short, the selection of operations follows theoretical expectations based on specific operation properties, but it also embodies the diversity of ESDP operations in terms of geography and mission type.

C. METHODS AND SOURCES

So far, this study has established four contending propositions for explaining ESDP operations and selected four cases against which their explanatory power is to be compared. This begs the question of how we are going to assess the plausibility of those propositions. As the last section argued, it is far from straightforward to deduce the (deeper) driver(s) underlying any particular operation from one particular feature of the latter because in reality various motives may interact and the (intended) consequences of action may not always be readily apparent even to its instigators. By way of example, a hypothetical operation initiated for the sake of promoting domestic values abroad could be embraced by other actors because of their expectation that it may promote European integration – and turn out to achieve primarily the latter result. Moreover, various proposed drivers may imply similar expected outcomes, rendering the weighting between different explanations

difficult. Returning to our example, an operation which verifiably (was hoped to) contribute(s) to the dispersion of liberal values may concurrently increase the EU's relative power, promote its collective security identity, and respond to domestic expectations. Whether expected and observed outcomes correlate may thus be not enough for knowing whether a specific driver was indeed instrumental in bringing about a certain outcome.

Because such co-variance is insufficient for establishing the consequential drivers behind ESDP operations, this study traces the process by which each operation came about (cf. George and Bennett 2005: 205-32). In other words, it establishes a detailed chronological account of how pivotal actors positioned themselves with respect to a mission across its overall 'life cycle'. The latter is divided into three phases, from the emergence of the idea for an operation during the agenda-setting phase via its evolution during the preparatory phase to its 'performance' during the implementation phase. The advantage of this approach is twofold. On the one hand, a detailed historical narrative helps to establish the various moments of decision-making and forces the analyst to link these multiple observations into an explanation that reduces the problem of indeterminacy (George and Bennett 2005: 207). On the other hand, systematically observing various actors' positions at different points in time increases the analyst's leverage over the research problem as it offers more opportunities for scrutinizing whether the empirical implications of the different propositions can indeed be observed across the entire case (cf. King et al. 1994: 29-31). In other words, the different operation phases can be used to cross-check whether any putative driver remains plausible once all relevant aspects of an operation's evolution are considered.

In order to allow for such a coherent comparison across the multi-faceted reality of the four case studies, this study relies on the method of structured, focused comparison. As two methodologists have defined it, '[t]he method is "structured" in that the researcher writes general questions that reflect the research objective and that these questions are asked of each case under study to guide and standardize data collection, thereby making systematic comparison and accumulation of the findings of the cases possible. The method is "focused" in that it deals only with certain aspects of the historical cases examined' (George and Bennett 2005: 67). The analysis thus draws upon a number of recurring general questions which structure the investigation of each case along the phases of each operation's life cycle (cf. George and Bennett 2005: 86-8).

The research objectives of the present study, namely to identify the drivers underlying the four selected operations, entail a particular focus on systematically comparing the level of support that each mission received from various actors. This study thus asks who initiated the selected ESDP operations; who was especially

supportive in the decision-making process, and who gave support only reluctantly (since decision-making in ESDP is by consensus, the fact that an operation took place implies unanimous 'support'); what actors' motives were in initiating, supporting or grudgingly tolerating operations; whose influence proved decisive, and for what reasons; who contributed significantly to a given operation and who provided no, or only token support; why certain governments did (not) contribute; and to what extent governments' professed objectives are in line with the degree of support they provided. Systematically comparing both the levels of and reasons for support across the agenda-setting, preparation and implementation phase of each operation will allow us to reach a relatively robust assessment with respect to whether any of the four different propositions add up to a convincing logic.

CHALLENGES

In investigating the question of ESDP operations' underlying drivers, this study relied primarily on two types of data. On the one hand, it drew on publicly available governmental documents such as legal acts, press releases, and speeches as well as the secondary literature on ESDP; on the other, it relied on confidential interviews with officials involved in the policy-making process. Both sets of sources were used to retrace the actions of pivotal actors as well as the objectives they sought and the constraints they faced. To reconstruct this diplomatic history, the author conducted 69 semi-structured, open-ended interviews with officials as well as a handful of academic observers who had closely followed these processes (details below). The interviews were semi-structured in that they adhered to the logic of structured, focused comparison evoked earlier in this section. Accordingly, they generally started off with requests to the respective officials to describe, from their perspective, the process that had led to the emergence of a particular operation, followed up by questions on who initiated and supported particular steps and for what motives, who resisted, what position the US took, what interests their own principals pursued and which motives they suspected behind others' behaviour, who contributed what kind of resources to the respective operation for which reasons, and which justifications were used by the relevant actors at each juncture. Beyond this basic grid of questions, however, each interview was allowed to take a different direction, based on each respondent's specific role and insights.

Reconstructing the diplomatic history of ESDP operations from these sources is challenging for two reasons. The first consists in limited access to data on the decision-making process: proceedings in the Council and its working groups, where decision-shaping takes place, are not public. In fact, not only are discussions between member state representatives classified but also their results, i.e. basic operation planning documents. This implies a need to rely on confidential sources,

which is inherently problematic. A lack of identification will always leave doubts on officials' reliability, and any reliance on data that cannot be publicly reproduced makes potential replication more cumbersome. In short, the lack of access to 'hard data' against which propositions could be tested in a transparent and reproducible way – e.g. accessible diplomatic archives – makes it difficult for the scholar to identify, much less demonstrate the motives underlying the various policy positions.

Secondly, there are problems related to the nature of confidential interviews with officials that go beyond the issue of inter-subjective verification. When it comes to contemporary security policy, a lack of distance in terms of time might make respondents less willing to disclose their motives because the latter may allow second-guessing current policy that interviewees would rather keep disguised. Next, respondents might have psychological, ideological, or even career-related interests in seeing one particular interpretation of history reported. This might in some instances give them an incentive to deceive scholars by insinuating plausible yet misleading motivations. Moreover, current commentary might lead the analyst to search for particular pieces of data, thereby introducing additional bias.

Last but not least, the problem is not only one of access to data on the process of decision-making. Diplomatic proceedings and planning documents themselves may be strategic in the sense that they do not necessarily spell out – or even hint at – the 'true' motives of actors, but rather reflect the perceptions that officials tried to impress upon their peers. For example, a government seeking to leverage ESDP for balancing the US may propose a hypothetical operation on account of its ostensible potential for protecting vulnerable individuals, rather than its desired indirect effect of strengthening its relative power. Finally, those initiating policy may themselves not have been fully conscious of the ultimate consequences of their proposals. Rather, they might have felt driven by the need to somehow respond to 'events on the ground' while ignoring the way in which these responses would impact on their governments' longer-term interests. This multi-layered potential for obfuscation encumbers process-tracing and thereby increases the uncertainty of any findings.

REMEDIES

There are two responses to the caveats listed above. The first is simply to acknowledge that there *is* little 'proof' to underpin analysis of contemporary foreign policy. While the possibilities for inter-subjective verification could be enhanced by relying on public sources such as academic papers or newspaper reports, this does not solve the underlying problem because these analyses usually substantiate their claims with similarly tainted evidence: claims of anonymous officials and/or interpretations by either these officials or observers. Given that the primary potential sources of 'hard evidence', the respective diplomatic archives, will likely

remain closed for many years to come, there is little alternative to relying on 'soft sources' such as confidential interviews. The resulting methodological concerns have to be weighed against the interest that an analysis of a very topical issue evokes. Yet they also imply that this work – one of the first that is explicitly interested in a systematic analysis of the drivers behind ESDP missions – can only provide a springboard for other scholars to extend and possibly correct the analysis, eventually on the basis of archival sources. The present study by contrast is largely based on secondary sources, above all confidential interviews with officials who participated in the decision-shaping process.

The second, more uplifting response points to the manifold possibilities for acquiring and cross-checking information on the decision-making process. In order to increase the reliability of the data, this study used triangulation wherever possible, i.e. it collected and compared data from different, alternately independent sources (cf. Patton 1990: 187-8). Whereas individual claims regarding the motives of various actors may be fickle, this study compared the accounts of multiple officials with different backgrounds and assessed their plausibility against the internal coherence of a narrative across different phases of an operation. In particular, the interviewer did not only ask respondents for their own motives and constraints regarding specific decisions, but also for the positions of other relevant actors, inviting interviewees to describe their perceptions of other officials' motivations and constraints. Importantly, the emphasis was on having officials describe the respective process from their point of view. The interviewer thus consciously tried to avoid intervening with the narrative, in particular with respect to pushing officials to plumb for any of the surmised interpretations (cf. Weiss 1994). However, if their accounts contradicted those of their colleagues or other academics and journalists, I eventually confronted interviewees with the discrepancy, asking how they would explain the latter.

In order to encourage interviewees to be as open and frank as possible despite the political sensitivity of the issue and the confidentiality of deliberations in the context of the CFSP, respondents had to be promised anonymity.[20] Therefore, the names of those interviewed are not included in the study, but references to information obtained in interviews include appropriate, non-identifying descriptions of the source in order to allow the reader some judgement on their particular angle. The

[20] On the condition of anonymity, about half of the respondents agreed to the author taping the conversation. I fully transcribed the ten most insightful of those, and most of the direct quotations cited later on derive from those transcripts. Regarding those conversations not recorded, some officials explicitly declined being taped whereas the majority worked in buildings which did not allow any recording devices to enter.

great majority of the interviews were face to face and took place during 2009, primarily in Brussels, Berlin, Paris and London. These were complemented by a few interviews conducted later, elsewhere or by telephone. A total of 63 officials from the European institutions (17) and relevant national ministries or embassies (Germany: 16; France: 12; UK: 6; other member states: 12) as well as 6 think tank experts were interviewed, three of the former twice.[21] 23 of those officials were military officers or worked in defence ministries, whereas almost all the others were career diplomats.[22] I chose respondents according to their (suspected) involvement in ESDP, and in the selected operations. Access varied, as did the number of detailed and consistent 'oral histories' that could be assembled on the respective operations. There are a few episodes which could not be fully reconstructed because participants apparently perceived them in contradictory ways. In these cases, the subsequent chapters will render the rival accounts of what supposedly happened without any final judgement. Wherever possible, however, such data was triangulated, and formulations will reflect the degree of certainty that the author has with respect to what happened.

Clearly, these efforts in corroboration can only ease rather than fully dispel doubts about the primary data. For this study, the difficulties of avoiding bias and participants' spin are both enhanced as well as attenuated by one particular factor, namely that the author worked on the topic of ESDP as a desk officer in the German Foreign Office from July 2006 to December 2007. Naturally, this study does not necessarily reflect the views of the German government but was written in a personal capacity as well as in a conscious effort to transcend (national) partisanship. Yet it is equally natural that the insights and experiences of this personal history have informed and influenced this book. On the one hand, this constituted a handicap insofar as the author invariably brought pre-conceived ideas to the research matter with respect to what likely happened. On the other hand, it offered a unique vantage point for identifying crucial questions and potentially supportive respondents, as well as a valuable backdrop against which to judge the specific accounts and plausibility of officials' explanations as to how the policy process unfolded. In balancing these two considerations against each other, it is ultimately up to the reader to decide whether these circumstances confer greater or lesser credibility to the analysis.

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[21] The difference between 69 interviews and 72 interviewed officials is due to three interviews where two officials were present.

[22] The seniority of officials went from desk to director level (according to the grades used in the EU Council Secretariat), i.e. it focused on those involved in day-to-day policy-making rather than those bearing political responsibility.

Irrespective of this particularity, any research on drivers behind (contemporary foreign) policy-making will necessarily rely on the author's judgements as to whether and to what extent participants' accounts represent a description – however distorted by the partiality of their insights – or a potentially biased sense-making or exculpatory exercise. This implies that the scholar's opinion becomes entangled in the analysis although few would admit this as openly as Thucydides, often depicted as the intellectual forefather of international relations theory, whose description of the Peloponnesian War starts out with 'an account of the causes of complaint which they [the warring parties, BP] had against each other and of the specific instances where their interests clashed', but is followed by the assertion that 'the real reason for war is, *in my opinion*, most likely to be disguised by such an argument' (Thucydides [410 BC] 2006: 42, emphasis added). Thucydides not only admits to his account's subjectivity, but links this to the asserted difference between justifications and proximate interests on the one hand, and underlying drivers on the other.

Both elements reverberate in the present study. In essence, it is an account of different governments' and other institutions' clashing and overlapping interests and the justifications they gave for their positions. But, in my opinion, these positions also disguise more fundamental reasons. This book's analysis will thus examine to what extent such underlying causes, developed into four competing propositions in the preceding chapter, can explain EU governments' (in)action with respect to ESDP operations. It will combine a history of the diplomatic struggles – and thus the proximate causes – behind these operations with an attempt to identify their fundamental drivers. Such an explanation necessarily involves a degree of interpretation. Whereas the reconstruction of the policy process by itself could conceivably be presented as historical description, linking the latter to generic drivers – drivers which might even be beyond the consciousness of those shaping the policy – cannot be reduced to incontestable inferences from empirical observations.

Since it tends to ascribe a politically motivated intentionality by default, such an approach introduces a bias insofar as it may overestimate the extent of political calculation at the expense of a functionally inspired, 'problem-solving' approach. The link between observable policies and unobservable, underlying motivations is in fact often tenuous. It is encumbered by decision-makers' potential lack of self-awareness regarding their fundamental motivations, their interest in dissimulating selfish motives, and the difficulty of ascertaining that any correlation between the latter and policy outcomes is indeed causal rather than coincidental in nature. Because fundamental drivers are ultimately unobservable, we can only analyze whether specific policies make a certain underlying intent plausible. Much of the reasoning therefore has to rely on 'as if' arguments: whereas we cannot observe whether any

particular motive 'caused' a policy decision, we can deduce political incentives, demonstrate the congruence between such incentives and policy outcomes, provide a plausible theoretical link, and point to incidental evidence for causation.

This is the strategy that this study followed. After deducing potential explanations from the theoretical literature, it reconstructs the diplomatic history behind the four ESDP operations. It then weighs the extent to which these accounts can be explained by each putative driver, both in terms of the process by which an operation came about and the results it (predictably) generated. Whereas this analysis is primarily based on arguments as to how plausible the empirical record renders the various supposed objectives, this is complemented with evidence for causal linkages wherever possible. The next four chapters will delve into this diplomatic history by covering four important instances of ESDP action. We will start with the Union's biggest operation yet, in a country that probably played a greater role than any other in convincing EU governments to create an ESDP in the first place: Bosnia.