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## **The case of European defence: optimism to be found in a legacy of failure?**

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# The case of European defence: optimism to be found in a legacy of failure?

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# Abstract

European defence and security cooperation has largely remained intergovernmental in nature. Other issue areas such as the common market have been integrated and are primarily governed through EU institutions as a result. This is puzzling since the earliest efforts of European integration occurred in the field of defence and security. These efforts ultimately proved a failure and stifled further attempts at integration in this policy field for decades to come. In academic discussion, a common approach to European security and defence policy is the analysis of outcome. The pace and nature of European defence and security policy has been analysed and critiqued on frequent occasions, pointing to the still great reliance of the EU on NATO in security matters. Considering both of these aspects, this analysis aims to deliver an analysis that focusses on the process of EU defence and security policy making itself in order to investigate the puzzle of why it has remained intergovernmental. Hypothesising that it is a policy of deliberate non-decision, „gatekeeping”, by one or more actors within EU policy-making that is responsible for the intergovernmental outcome, process tracing is conducted. The findings of this analysis do not, however, corroborate the hypothesis and an alternate explanation is developed that points to a non-decision being motivated by passive factors, namely inopportune situations of the individual actors capable of propelling an integration effort forward. This analysis is, however, also able to observe that the recent push in the implementation of PESCO came about as a result of political hurdles being overcome and, in principle, a road towards integration may open up in the future.

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# The case of European defence: optimism to be found in a legacy of failure?

## Introduction

The development of a security and defence policy in the European Union (EU) „has been slow, [and] incremental [...]” (Koutrakos, 2013). A common approach to security has been part of the efforts to integrate Europe from the inception of the coal and steel community in 1951. In fact, common European security was the leading policy area in which political leaders in (western) Europe made efforts to integrate.

Today, European integration primarily brings to mind the integrated European Common Market, not a European army or an integrated foreign policy. Europe took the path towards economic integration and relegated cooperation in security matters to the realm of intergovernmentalism (Koutrakos, 2013; Hooghe & Marks, 2009). Offices such as the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (HRVP) exist and increasingly attempts are made to build intergovernmental military capacity (Fabre et al., 2021) under the framework of the Common Defense and Security Policy (CDSP). Yet, these efforts have not reached the depth and breadth of single market integration.

Why is that? Why has European Defence policy not yet been integrated and instead continues to exist in the realm of intergovernmentalism? Explanations have been delivered by the major theories of IR generally and theories of European integration specifically. Koutrakos (2013), for instance, delivers the explanation that defence as a policy area is simply a matter at the heart of governance of the nation state and not a matter of international integration for that reason. Opting for intergovernmental cooperation instead of integration under the directive of EU institutions has been the European norm ever since the failure of the Western European Union’s integration effort in 1954 (Fleischer, 2015; Koutrakos, 2013). The status quo remains intergovernmental.

A common perspective on European security and defence is the outcome-focussed approach. This approach focusses on the results of policy not the process through which policy is made. This would include military capabilities at the EU's disposal, budgeting concerns, or the EU's success rates when it comes to military initiatives. An alternative way of viewing the EU's defence and security policy would be through a process-focussed lens. Analysing the ways in which the EU arrived at its current institutional makeup requires studying the steps that were taken leading up to the current institutional makeup and contextualising them with one another. Such an approach would take an EU perspective since an understanding of the EU's policy-making processes would need to be gained in order to trace the process of defence and security policy. This analysis aims to provide this perspective and focusses on the EU's policy making process, attempting to explain the intergovernmental nature of the EU's security and defence policy from an EU perspective through a process-focussed lens. It poses the following research question:

*To what extent can a process-focussed approach explain the intergovernmental nature of security and defence policy in the European Union?*

## Literature review

There has been an abundance of academic literature about EU defence integration generally and the CSDP specifically. This literature review will give a non-exhaustive overview European defence and security policy. Followed this, previous explanations for the process of European integration and cooperation will be provided by including literature about European Integration more broadly. Finally, integration and cooperation in other issue areas that show different routes that were taken in different policy areas will be considered.

## The CSDP

### Overview

The current iteration of EU security and defence policy is the Common Defense and Security Policy. As discussed before, is it distinctly intergovernmental in approach but shows some characteristics of integration, such as the HRVP. European defence and security has since its

inception undergone developments that were in large parts indicative of integration efforts themselves.

The inception of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1951 indeed did coincide with the European Defense Community (EDC). This approach to European defence policy was integration, not intergovernmentalism. In the context of integration generally this made sense given the political context at the time. The emerging cold war and a not yet rearmed Germany were among the reasons for why (western) European integration of defensive capabilities were made. Indeed, it was WWII having ended only years prior to the EDC's inception that ultimately lead to the French parliament voting against ratification in 1953. The French public felt it could not pool its defensive resources with a country that it has fought with only 9 years prior. The path towards a truly integrated, if not federated, European Defence policy was therefore foreclosed (Fleischer, 2015; Koutrakos, 2013).

The move towards Intergovernmentalism instead of integration, then, came as a response to the failure of the EDC. In a set of looser policy reports that recommended policy implementation on an "ad hoc basis" (Koutrakos, 2013) between the early 1960s and 1981 parameters for foreign and security policy cooperation between member states of the European Economic Community (EEC) were laid out. The name of the successor policy to the EDC was the European Political Cooperation (EPC). A characteristic feature of the EPC is the increasing bleeding over of integration to other issue areas. Efforts to coordinate defence policy between member states were propelled in part by the recognition that with an increasing integration of the EEC in primarily economic matters a common interest for coordinated defence policy would also emerge; integration begets integration. With the last of the reports, the London Report released in 1981, this ambition was more clearly formulated, albeit still referring to member states' collective interest rather than the EEC's interest being at stake. Nevertheless, this period of integration in one issue area spilling over to another formed the basis for the theory of functionalism, which will be addressed in the Theories of European Integration section of this literature review. It should be noted that the focus of this

period of cooperation under the framework of the still partially fragmented EEC was not security or defence per se, rather foreign policy with defence coordination being a consequence of the wider integration efforts. This period is marked by a great deal of vagueness in integration efforts.

In the third phase of European integration, following the Single European Act (SEA), the EPC was succeeded by the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). Notably here is that the shift from common defence to common security has been fully formalised now. Intergovernmental in character (again referring to “High Contracting Parties” instead of the EEC as a collective), this set of policies was nevertheless more specific and attempted to unify the EEC in the face of post-cold war conflicts such as the break-up of Yugoslavia. Preceding the institutional structure of today’s EU the St Malo declaration of 1998 established a Intergovernmental ambition of France and the UK to cooperate in security matters to a greater degree, with national considerations of each country playing a major part. This declaration happened against the backdrop of a receding US in Europe due to the cold war ending.

Given this process, and given the aforementioned spillover effect, the current iteration of EU security and defence policy, the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) is a far cry from the integration efforts of the EDC. It is an Intergovernmental construct with early attempts at integration (such as the aforementioned office of the HRVP). It is also clear that it was the specific interest of specific member states at specific times that brought about the current state of European defence and security policy (Koutrakos, 2013).

## Process-focused vs. Outcome-focused

Across literature sources on either the CSDP or European defence and security policy, the focus is overwhelmingly outcome-based. This means that the literature assesses the results of policy-making efforts, not the process that led to the outcomes. Bickerton et. al. (2011) remark that „the policies themselves are subject to great scrutiny but the policy process is given much less attention.”. The political battles to shape European institutions that were fought and won by European countries since 1951 are rarely scrutinised in themselves.



The reasons for why the CSDP has taken the shape that we currently find it in can be explained through ad-hoc factors, such as the St Malo declaration but as previously discussed, it is indeed the complex history of European Defence and security policy that has brought about the situation of European security intergovernmentalism with each policy iterating upon the previous one in accordance with the contemporary political situation. A process-focused assessment would center the process in order to explain the contemporary state of policy (Bickerton et al., 2011).

## Theories of European integration and security

Two theories with multiple sub-strands are included in this literature review, realism and functionalism. From these two approaches, different explanations for the nature of the integration process (or intergovernmental cooperation process respectively) can be derived. Realism favours power as the main explanatory factor in predicting state behaviour and therefore takes a more reserved stand towards security cooperation, with classical realist scholars making a case for intergovernmental cooperation. Functionalism with its substrands of neo- and postfunctionalism is diverse and offers insight into European integration and cooperation via the approach of practical benefits gained by state cooperation, making it distinct from realist assumptions.

### Realism

The theories that explain the process of European integration are not mutually exclusive of each other but rather products of either the time during which they were conceived and therefore can differ in factors such as the unit of analysis, such as functionalism (not to be confused with neo- and postfunctionalism) or can only describe certain aspects of the political dynamics of integration such as some strands of realism which concerns itself primarily with power as the driving force behind political decision making (e.g. Hoffmann, 1966; Hooghe & Marks, 2009; Rynning, 2011).

Different strands of realism and their explanation for both the existence and the progress of European defence and security policy and CSDP exist. Realist strands in relation to the European integration process are contradictory at times. Offensive realism as put forward by Mearsheimer in the *Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (Mearsheimer, 2014) contends that a state in its determination

to obtain security would seek to become the dominating power in a region or accept a dominating power's hegemony. This approach is incompatible with security integration. A connection to European military matters being dominated by NATO integration and therefore by US influence could be made here as the US dominating Europe as a means of projecting power (especially in the cold war context) would be a viable strategy under offensive realism (Kempin and Mawdsley, 2013).

The offensive realist approach has been contested by classical realists. Whilst power still matters, within a classically realist framework, the existence of states implies the existence of particular interests per state, which can come together in order to form intergovernmental cooperation motivated by factors that transcend pure power considerations. The interests of member states as framed through the classical realist lens would be the foundation for a European intergovernmental approach to defence or security (Hoffmann, 1966; Rynning, 2011). Whilst Mearsheimer's strand of realism came after classical realism, academic discourse between the two strands go as far as classical realist Stanley Hoffman recommending to Mearsheimer in 1990 that „[He] ought to learn more about the European Community” (quoted in Rynning, (2011)).

Indeed, with conditions shifting post-cold war, the realist assumptions were increasingly amended towards structures that could conceive of intergovernmental organisation. Wendt (1992) coined the aphorism of „Anarchy is what states make of it”, challenging the key assumption behind realism. If a central authority was absent, conditions for cooperation among states could be explored and anarchy could form the groundwork for intergovernmental cooperation. It should be noted that Wendt's approach was not a strictly realist, liberal or functionalist one.

## Functionalism

Pure functionalism is an outdated but straightforward theory. It primarily considered the coordination of human activity to achieve a collective benefit as the goal of governance. It argued that with a need for European integration arising out of a perceived possibility for an increase in governing efficiency, integration would proceed. This can be referred to as functional pressure.

Neofunctionalism takes functional pressure further, adding the aforementioned spillover effect. Neofunctionalists argue that integration or intergovernmental cooperation in one issue area raises functional pressure in another. With an integrated single market for instance, a currency union could become an increasingly viable consideration. Neofunctionalism was initially conceived of in the earlier stages of European integration. The political battles over integration that were fought in the early years of the fledgling European community were dominated by governments making decisions in the forum of an integrating Europe, shaping the integration process as a result (Hooghe & Marks, 2009; Niemann, 2021).

Given the evolving debate in neofunctionalism as a result of an evolving European integration process, intergovernmentalism instead of integration was reasserted as a possible outcome. Member states retained their authority in certain policy fields such as defence and security. Neofunctionalist scholars would not assume that a transfer of authority to European institutions as an end state would be a necessary outcome. The neofunctionalist answer to why European integration and intergovernmental cooperation would sway towards intergovernmentalism in certain policy fields is that within the political arena of European institutions states asserted their interests, akin to a pluralist democracy accommodating the positions of multiple political groups (Hooghe & Marks, 2009; Niemann, 2021; Sangiovanni, 2006). The goal remained efficiency and integration in new policy fields would be explained through the spillover effect.

This perspective was broadened by Postfunctionalism. It focusses on identity as it the driving force of politicised integration. It is less state-centric in its considerations of political interests and assumes that all actors involved in European integration are politicised as a result of their individual identity. The European integration process therefore becomes politicised across all institutional levels (Hooghe & Marks, 2009).

Identity as a motivator could, for instance, be found in the decision of the French parliament not to pursue an integrated approach to European defence when they voted down the EDC in 1953.

This transformed the process of European defence integration towards European intergovernmental defence and security cooperation as a result (Koutrakos, 2013).

Neofunctionalism is criticised by postfunctionalists. They argue that with politicisation of all actors, integration dynamics have evolved. The authors argue that the dynamics that neofunctionalism describes are able to deliver explanations for the early years of integration but they do not hold for contemporary integration. Postfunctionalists explain the process of integration or intergovernmental corporation has expanded to a multilevel system involving actors such as political parties and therefore voters lobbying for their interests in a politicised environment.

Postfunctionalists note that greater public involvement could further democratise the integration process. Public involvement and a politicised environment might, however also constrain integration in its deepening and its broadening. A shift from intergovernmental cooperation to integration in policy areas such as security defence could be prevented by factors such as populist eurosceptic campaigning.

## **Integration of other issue areas**

Whilst security and defence remains largely intergovernmental, different routes were taken in other European policy areas. The common market is the prime example for European integration. Historically not the prime candidate for full integration, over the course of the shifts in defence policy discussed earlier, the common market emerged as the leading project of European integration, altering the character of the EU and its preceding organisations significantly. Foreign policy is another issue area worth including here since it remains largely intergovernmental but has integrated elements to it. Initially a part of security and defence, currently it functions as its own strand of policy in the EU, albeit remaining closely interrelated with security and defence.

## **The common market**

The scope of the common market is the enabling of free flow of goods, services, money and people within the borders of the EU. This means that in order to integrate the common market,

state policy needed to be rolled back and transformed. Customs and other trade barriers needed to be eliminated in order to enable an integrated market.

The measures that replaced national customs, border restrictions, standards of quality and other policies were unified under the Single European Act (SEA) of 1986. The progress of European market integration up to that point had been relatively limited. What brought about change was notably the European Institutions themselves. Jacques Delors, European Commission President at the time of the signature of the SEA lobbied member states for market integration.

The SEA was limited in scope, insofar as that it focussed on establishing procedures to move Europe towards a common market. Political intuitions were left relatively untouched, compared to treaty changes that would follow the SEA. Indeed, the signing of the Schengen Treaty of 1985 happened separately from the SEA and on member state initiative, further indicating political will for a more integrated Europe.

Following the SEA, Delors announced plans for a monetary union in 1989. With the momentum of the ending cold war, further ambitions for European integration in other issue areas were formulated, leading to the Treaty on the European Union in 1992/93. With market integration formalised, the SEA integrated a key issue area in the EU as a result of political lobbying by EU institutional actors and member states willing to participate (McCormick, 2015).

## Common foreign and security policy

The Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) is an example for a partially integrated policy area. It shares a point of origin with the current iteration of the EU's security and defence policy (CSDP), as discussed above. The CFSP was established with the Treaty on the European Union in 1992/93 and is an attempt at building from the previously established common market towards a political union as well. After some initially institutional inconsistency, the office of the HRVP was created with the treaty of Lisbon in 2007 and a quasi-foreign ministry was established in 2011 with the European External Action service.

These institutional structures grew due to member states recognising that in some policy areas, giving up some sovereignty for a more cohesive Europe-wide policy was beneficial to their interests as well as European institutions constituting themselves more firmly within the space given to them by the treaties. Unintegrated areas remain, however.

Member states do indeed coordinate their foreign policy with each other, formally and informally. There remain disagreements on fundamental questions such as the degree to which to rely on the US for security support or to build European capabilities as well as more minute details of foreign policy in practice. This partial approach to policy integration has been called a hybrid system and underpins that integration and intergovernmentalism are not necessarily mutually exclusive (European External Action Service, 2021; McCormick, 2015).

## Theoretical Framework

In order to investigate the puzzle to what extent a process-focussed understanding of European security and defence policy can explain its intergovernmental nature and why its nature is not integrated, four key parts are required. A definition of integration for the purpose of this research, a definition of intergovernmentalism for the purpose of this research, an explanation of the process-focussed approach and a further concretisation of what aspect of the proposed process this research will consider. This theoretical framework will conclude by stating the hypothesis  $H_1$ .

## Integration

For the purposes of this analysis, European integration refers to the integration of policy in a given field within the EU. If EU institutions are the main regulatory or decision-making body in a given policy field, such as in the common market as discussed above, the field can be considered integrated. Short of forming a European federation, integration of a policy field within the context of the current EU's institutional makeup is the furthest stage of the EU legislative process.

This analysis contends that, based on the literature discussed, EU security and defence policy as presented in the CSDP, CFSP and PESCO and its adjacent policies and its predecessor policies are not fully integrated. There have been previous attempts at integrating security and defence policy,

and with the CSDP a partially integrated policy that also addresses security has developed (Bickerton et al., 2011). Even with institutional structures in place as a result of the CSDP, the integration potential is not yet fully realised.

## Intergovernmentalism

Policy areas in which member States of the EU cooperate, yet retain political decision-making authority in their national arena are, for the purposes of this literature review, considered intergovernmental. Security and defence policy, currently the CSDP and elements of the CFSP, are one such policies. If the process of European integration has full policy integration as its end goal, intergovernmentalism would be considered an intermediate step towards full integration. It is the EU's ambition to integrate towards an „ever closer Union” (General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union, Archives, MariaValerio, 2021) security and defence integration falls within the purview of this mission statement.

The process of further integrating security and defence policy has been critiqued (e.g. Bickerton et al., 2011) for its slow pace towards integration and its remaining within intergovernmental jurisdictions. Whilst there are existing explanations within theories of integration, scrutinising the progress towards full integration under the aspect of deliberate non-action remains an understudied angle to the issue.

## Process

As discussed in the literature review, the prevailing approach to European security and defence policy is to assess the results of the policy made rather than to discuss the process that lead to the policy being made. Analysing the failures of the EU to prevent the catastrophe of Srebrenica would be an example for an outcome-based approach. This research proposes adding context to such debates by analysing the policy-making process that led to the outcome.

In order to make any policy at any level, the institutions of the EU involved in the legislation negotiate according to their bargaining positions and reach a compromise that is then made into policy. The neofunctionalist position would argue that the nature of the bargaining positions are

shaped by politicised negotiating parties. Conceiving of European integration as a political exchange allows for scrutinising the exchange in order to explain its outcome.

Considering the puzzle of this analysis, the outcome sought to be explained is the intergovernmental nature of EU security and defence policy. Intergovernmentalism as an approach to security and defence is at a mismatch with the historical ambitions of European integration; as discussed, the original idea for European integration was based around integration in defence matters. In the contemporary EU this ambition has been replaced with a common market being the leading integrated policy field.

This research proposes that the answer for why EU security and defence policy has remained intergovernmental is to be found in the EU legislative process. Since this is a process of EU legislation, an EU perspective is taken in defining what will be considered part of this process for the purpose of this analysis. EU security and defence legislation begins with the Maastricht Treaty and ends with the current iteration of EU security and defence policy. This timeline includes a broad set of policies, prominently among them the CSDP but also its previous iterations as well as EU foreign policy. This analysis uses a timeline provided by the European Council (European Council, 2021). It specifies 42 distinct events as part of the EU's security and defence cooperation process. These events will, for the purpose of this analysis, be considered the process to be analysed.

## Gatekeeping

With the process defined, a further definition of the causal mechanism that this analysis proposes is needed. This analysis will hypothesise that a deliberate non-action by one or more actors in the above-specified timeframe explains the makeup of current EU defence and security policy. This deliberate non-action will be referred to as Gatekeeping.

The reason for why this analysis has chosen this theoretical approach has multiple reasons. The assumption of postfunctionalism of the EU legislative process as politicised describes a contest in the arena of policy-making between all actors involved, lobbying for their respectively preferred policy outcome. Reflecting the current state of EU integration theory as discussed in the literature review,



considering the European integration process as a politicised process allows considerations of power within this process.

A possible expression of power (one of the faces of power (Bachrach and Baratz, 1963) is to limit decisions that can be made in the first place. If an actor deliberately blocks a decision being made in order to maintain the status quo or to keep policy within a certain arena, power is being exercised. Historically, this has occurred in the European security and defence before: When French parliament voted down the European Defence Community in 1954 it deliberately prevented an integrated approach to security and defence in the European community at the time (Koutrakos, 2013). This was a historic case in which France was able to exercise a de facto veto on a significant decision, but there are contemporary cases of lower magnitude within the EU legislative process. Niemann and Zaun (2017), as discussed in the literature review, observed non-action as a mode for exercising power within the EU legislative process in another policy field.

Applying the term gatekeeping to refer to the deliberate blocking, through non-decision within policy making has been used by R. Charli Carpenter, applied in a different context (cited in Avant et al., 2010). This analysis uses the term in a similar way, albeit not following Carpenter's approach since this analysis deals with a different mode of policy making in a different context. The use of the term is, however, informed by Carpenter's analysis.

## Hypothesis

Based on what was discussed so far the following line of reasoning emerges: European security and defence policy has remained largely intergovernmental with few attempts at integration. Previous literature on European security and defence policy focusses on outcome whilst literature on European integration more generally has moved to expand the actors it considers relevant to the European legislative process. Furthermore, the European legislative process is, under postfunctionalism, assumed to be politicised. Politicisation implies that power between actors in the process matters. One mode ('face) of power is non-decision, which we can call gatekeeping. Gatekeeping as an expression of deliberate political non-decision is a political act and an exercise of

power. European security and defence policy remaining intergovernmental can be the result of political will (as opposed to an integration process left unintentionally incomplete) expressed through gatekeeping. Gatekeeping is the mechanism responsible for European security and defence policy remaining intergovernmental as opposed to integrated.

Based on this  $H_1$  can be stated:

*European security and defence policy has not been integrated and has remained intergovernmental as a result of one or more actors in the European process of security and defence cooperation engaging in gatekeeping.*

## Research design

### Case selection

The case in question is the process of security and defence policy integration. Within this single case, a causal connection between gatekeeping and European security and defence remaining intergovernmental as hypothesised in  $H_1$  could be inferred, if the hypothesised connection is indeed present (Beach & Pedersen, 2013). When referring to European security and defence, this analysis uses the timeline provided by the European Commission and Council (European Council, 2021) to determine what policy milestones are part of the relevant legislation. This timeline spans from the Maastricht treaty in 1991 to the fourth round of PESCO projects adopted in November 2021 and names relevant events in European defence and security legislation.

In this time, the makeup of European security and defence policy has changed considerably alongside the European institutions in general. Since the treaty of Maastricht there have been three more European treaties with the last one, the Treaty of Lisbon, signed in 2007. Between these treaties other institutional shifts occurred as discussed above. (Koutrakos, 2013; European Council, 2021). This research focusses on the single case of European defence and security policy but recognises the broadness of this single case.

## Unit of analysis

This research is process-focussed. This means that the unit of analysis this research will employ is the temporally defined process during which the EU is making its defence and security policy. This will be elaborated on further in coming sections. This research will, through focussing on the process of EU security and defence policy-making take a EU perspective, meaning it will not focus on a certain actor within the EU, but rather on the process itself that the EU is the main constituent part of.

## Methodology

In order to investigate the puzzle at the core of this analysis, process tracing will be utilised. Process tracing as a general descriptor of method refers to a diverse set of methods out of which this analysis will use Explaining-Outcome Process Tracing specifically. Beach and Pedersen (2013) propose this type of process tracing to be used to establish a causal connection within a specific case with a minimum set of explanans. This approach works for the case of European security and defence policy since the outcome as defined for the purpose of this analysis is known: the intergovernmental approach instead of an integrated one. Actors in the EU legislative process engaging in gatekeeping is the proposed minimally sufficient explanation for this outcome. In summary, this analysis intends to explain the outcome of the EU defence and security policy being of an intergovernmental nature with the concept of gatekeeping being proposed as the explaining factor for this outcome.

Generalising the findings of an explaining-outcome process tracing is complicated by the linkage between the findings and the case. The proposed explanation for the given outcome, whilst being the minimally sufficient one, is still closely tied to the case. Given the complexities of the European legislative process and European integration, tracing a process within those larger systems still yields a result that is hard to separate from its case (Beach & Pedersen, 2013). Bearing these complexities and the goal of finding a minimally sufficient explanation in mind, a limitation of the

scope of this research becomes necessary in order to state and operationalise variables that can be used to produce a useful result in the context of this analysis.

The approach of explaining outcome process tracing is an iterative one. In search for a minimally sufficient theoretical explanation, Beach and Pedersen (2013) prescribe an approach that requires considering the data at hand until the explanation is found or an alternate theory can be developed. In the context of this research this means that the theory of gatekeeping which is hypothesised to be the explanation for the outcome at hand is not necessarily the only possible outcome of this study. The goal is not theory testing but the gaining of an alternate perspective on the topic (explaining the outcome) with the goal of amending the existing understanding with either a new theory or existing approaches. The key is the process-focused analysis of European security and defence policy.

Sources will be considered chronologically along the aforementioned timeline until a minimally sufficient explanation is found or an alternate theory can be developed. Beach and Pedersen (2013) describe this method as starting from a cause  $X$ , which, through a proposed mechanism, leads to an outcome  $Y$ . The proposed mechanism is gatekeeping. The goal of this analysis to deliver a “process-focussed” analysis is reflected in this method. Beach and Pedersen (2013) describe explaining-outcome process tracing as assuming that a causal mechanism exists that connects  $X$  to  $Y$  and attempting to analyse this process through empirical manifestations of it. In the case of this analysis, these manifestations will be events on the timeline.  $X$  and  $Y$ , too, empirically manifest. In the case of this analysis  $X$  manifests as the start of the EU’s integration process and  $Y$  manifests as the current intergovernmental cooperation between EU member states in security and defence.

## Variables

In order to analyse gatekeeping as a concept, variables with respective proxy measurements need to be defined. The goal of explaining outcome process tracing is, as stated, finding the minimally

sufficient explanation for the given outcome (Beach & Pedersen, 2013). With this in mind, a variety of variables could be considered to point to gatekeeping as the explaining factor for this outcome.

As mentioned in the theoretical framework, this analysis does not focus on the behaviour of individual actors but on the events on the timeline of EU security and defence cooperation (European Council, 2021). This approach is partially owed to the method utilised, with its method being broadly reminiscent of a historical analysis. Utilising this timeline does afford this analysis, however, to take some basic date into consideration that might hint at how the pace of European security and defence policy making has progressed. Time passing between milestones chronicled on the timeline is a straightforward way to measure the pace of the progress, the assumption being that a slower pace would hint at a greater resistance of actors to further the policy development towards intergovernmentalism.

Analogue to this, another 'quantifiable' metric of the policy making process is the level of legislation or policy that gets passed/is agreed upon at every milestone in the timeline. This refers to whether the milestone documents, for instance, an agreement of another round of consultations under the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), or something less or more significant. A treaty change will be considered as more significant than an event like "leaders take stock of progress achieved" (European Council, 2021). This variable will also take into account which actors were involved in the milestone.

Deliberate non-decision will be operationalised as key variable for the purpose of this analysis. This is in line with the main definition of gatekeeping as a term as done in the theoretical framework. The non-decision making on policy as laid out in the timeline will be operationalised as follows: A mismatch between a stated ambition and a policy outcome will be considered a proxy for non-decision, since it suggests that an ambition was left unrealised, leaving the development of the policy process constrained in a certain direction (e.g. Bachrach & Baratz, 1963). A second proxy for this variable will be the outright stated intention to block policy. This is a straightforward proxy since it accounts for the obvious. If an actor states that they do not wish for a policy to advance in a

certain direction, against the stated wish of other actors, they will be considered to be engaging in deliberate non-decision making.

**Table 1. Operationalisation of variables**

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Operationalised as/proxy</i>
1. Time passed between milestones	Time in months between milestones mentioned on the timeline
2. Level of policy	The level of significance of a milestone  Actors that were part of the milestone
3. Deliberate non-decision	Mismatch between stated ambition and milestone reached  Stated intention by one or more actors to block a policy

## Data

As previously discussed, this analysis will draw its data from the timeline provided by the council. It will also be used as a basic framework for categorisation of the data. The timeline catalogues 42 distinct events (European Council, 2021). These range from European treaties to much smaller announcements of progress and include primary sources for most of these events.

In addition to the timeline, context is needed. Therefore events that occur leading up to or following a given event will have to be included. News reports can deliver an indication of the state of discourse at the time of the event. This necessity to include these sources partially arises out of the nature of the selected method. Beach and Pedersen (2013) refer to explaining-outcome process tracing as a method reminiscent of the work of a historian. In order to trace the process, contemporary sources need to be consulted in order to gain a full understanding of the nature of the process.

## Analysis

Concerning the first variable, time passage, the overriding suggestion is that of a slow start. The time between the Treaty of Maastricht in 1991 and the presentation of the EU's global strategy in mid 2016 is characterised by multiple years passing between each milestone. The significance of these milestones is high, however. Events such as the Treaty of Lisbon fall into this time period.

After the passing of the EU global strategy, the milestones catalogued in the timeline are separated from each other primarily by less than 12 months. In this time frame there are, however, significantly less meaningful milestones, with an overriding majority of them being consultations between EU institutions or EU institutions and NATO. In this time period there is a key event with the creation of the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) in late 2017. PESCO is member states-driven framework including 25 of the 17 EU member states that was slated to be activated after the entering into force of the Lisbon Treaty. The program has an allocated budget and is a legally binding framework for its participating members (Biscop, 2018).

The hypothesis of a deliberate political battle to stall the progress of PESCO is further underpinned by a quote of Donald Tusk, at the time President of the Council, found directly in the timeline: "For many years, the strongest argument against PESCO had been the fear that it would lead to the weakening of NATO. [...]." (European Council, 2017).

Considering the second variable, the 'level' of policy, this quote connects to the most frequently mentioned non-EU institution in the timeline which is NATO. Whilst the majority of milestones on the timeline until 2016 largely consist of the setting up of institutions and the formulation of policy, since the joint declaration of EU and NATO in 2016, multiple milestones of EU-NATO cooperation are included. These milestones are, however, largely consultations and commitments to policy implementation on a smaller scale.

After the adoption of PESCO, it becomes the most frequently mentioned and most high level policy, underpinning its great significance. This significance, then, could be considered the causal origin for the intergovernmental approach to EU security and defence policy. If true, investigation of

the adoption process of PESCO would be the next step in tracing the process and to find a causal link to the gatekeeping dynamic.

A caveat to this assumption is that PESCO represents only part of the EU's defence and security policies. The CSDP and Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) represent aspects of integration, not intergovernmentalism. The HRVP has control over policy made under CSDP and CFSP, which includes decisions for military and civilian deployments by the EU. These deployments, whilst decided upon by EU structures, remain firmly under member state control, however. It is the member states that contribute troops and materiel to these deployments and command and control decisions still directly involve member states (European External Action Service, 2019, 2021). There also is a difference in scope and purpose to the realm of the CSDP and the CFSP vis-a-vis PESCO. The CSDP is the framework in place to command and control deployments under the existing structures, with the CFSP being a civilian analogue with a focus on the EU's foreign policy interests. These institutions are by no means meaningless but given that the status quo leaves the initiative for further expansion of CSDP and CFSP with the member states, their role must be considered prominently. Indeed, Biscop (2018) argues that PESCO might present a road towards integration in the future. This analysis, however, limits its scope to considerations up until the present.

With the focus on PESCO, the third variable must be considered. Deliberate non-action is hinted at at the inception of the policy post-Lisbon when it was referred to by Jean-Claude Juncker as „sleeping beauty” (Juncker, 2017; Nováky, 2018). The policy was accounted for in the treaty of Lisbon, but it remained inactivated until 2017. In the wake of the adoption of PESCO, commentators (e.g. Barigazzi, 2017b) noted tension between France and Germany as a main driver behind the delay. The difference in vision between the two countries is described by Barigazzi (2017b) as Germany campaign for an approach that includes all or most member states whereas France opts for the „Europe of multiple speeds” approach, meaning an approach that accepts that some member states may cooperate further, independent of a consensus.



This difference in political interests allows inference for complications within PESCO. The decision-making framework of PESCO requires a unanimous decision by its members (Biscop, 2018) which, once a member state opts in to join PESCO it is bound to. The possibility for member states to opt out of PESCO, as Denmark and Malta have done (Biscop, 2018) might work to resolve this tension.

Concerning cooperation within PESCO, a key non-member states governed aspect of the policy, the budget that the EU contributes to PESCO projects via the European Defense Fund (EDF) led to the cutting back of PESCO projects from 50 proposed to 17 implemented (Barigazzi, 2017b). This budget constrains-related matter presents another obstacle for policy implementation, albeit one that is not of a deliberate nature. Gatekeeping requires intent and while the allocation of funds is naturally done with intent, the finite budget at the disposal of the EDF points to a setting of priorities rather than a deliberate effort to stifle PESCO.

Indeed, sources both journalistic and academic published around or in response to the PESCO milestone highlight the tremendous political shift that PESCO brought to the EU's defence and security policy (for instance (Barigazzi, 2017b; Béraud-Sudreau & Pannier, 2021; Biscop, 2018; Mora Benavente, 2017). In order for this shift to occur, Béraud-Sudreau and Pannier (2021) cite Brexit, the US's increasing shift away from Europe in terms of defence commitment and Russia's annexation of Crimea.

Whilst the latter two factors present an outward shift of the geopolitical context the EU exists within, the former factor, Brexit, is significant in the gatekeeping context. As mentioned previously, PESCO represents a French-German compromise. This arrangement became only possible after the UK left the EU since it acted as an agent that deliberately blocked further EU security and defence integration, favouring NATO instead (Barigazzi, 2017a).

This straightforward view of Britain acting as a blocking force and therefore qualifying as a potential gatekeeper is complicated, however, by Béraud-Sudreau and Pannier (2021) who argue that Brexit was primarily a framing device to propel closer European integration post-Brexit. They

cite factors such as the short timespan between Brexit and the PESCO implementation as a reason for why the straightforward association between Brexit and PESCO adoption is unlikely.

With PESCO being the prominent approach to European defence and security policy and its late implementation being a striking feature of the policy, applying  $H_1$  to the UK blocking PESCO and inferring the presence of gatekeeping can not be considered a sound conclusion given the process as it presents itself through the sources considered. The method of explaining-outcome process tracing dictates that a minimally sufficient conclusion must be found and that, if the null hypothesis cannot be rejected an alternative theory must be proposed (Beach & Pedersen, 2013).

While the variable 1 and 2 in conjunction would suggest that little progress was made pre-PESCO in terms of time and little progress was made post-PESCO in terms of significance of policy, a qualitative reading of these variables suggests otherwise. PESCO is a pivotal policy in EU defence and security matters. Light is shed on the reason for its delay and for its confinement to the realm of member states in Jean-Claude Juncker's 2017 „sleeping beauty” speech. The history of defence and security integration in Europe is marked by the failure of 1954, as discussed in the literature review. The end of a truly integrated European military under the leadership of a Western European Union is cited by Juncker as a trauma that stifled progress in the following decades. In conjunction with Béraud-Sudreau and Pannier (2021) who argue that it was the convergence of interests of France, Germany, and the Commission that enabled PESCO to be implemented at the time that it was indeed implemented, an alternative explanation emerges. The authors mention an unwillingness of HRVPs to take initiative in defence matters, prior to Frederica Mogherini. They mention a shift in German foreign policy away from reliance on the US (and therefore NATO) with the EU being a potentially viable alternative that would allow to increase defence spending without losing face through appearing as giving in to Donald Trump's demands of Germany doing just that. France, then, is observed by the authors to be motivated by its desire to maintain „strategic autonomy” vis-a-vis the US and seeking an opportunity to further this goal in the EU context.

Gatekeeping and the principle of non-action implies an active intent to block. Under considerations of the history of EU defence initiative marked by failure and multiple decades of only informal cooperation, a different explanation emerges: there was not an active effort to block, but there was not an active effort to further, either. The external pressures on the EU as previously mentioned (Barigazzi, 2017b; Béraud-Sudreau & Pannier, 2021; Biscop, 2018; Mora Benavente, 2017) in conjunction with the alignment of goals by key actors led to a convergence (Béraud-Sudreau & Pannier, 2021) of initiatives that aligned in order to implement PESCO. The intergovernmental nature of the effort, then, must be understood under a consideration for time. If PESCO is understood to represent the EU's effort for defence cooperation with all prior efforts either leading up to it or interfacing with it, then the EU's ambitions for actual defence cooperation are relatively fresh. This would mean that an effort for integration in the future would be possible. Juncker, for instance, expresses in his speech a desire for integration. Barigazzi (2017b) cites a source within the EU as having said that the effects of PESCO will only become visible over the course of the following decade.

## Conclusion

The overriding understanding of European defence and security policy this analysis has delivered is the perspective of incompleteness. PESCO in its current state is the first step in an assumed development towards integration. For instance, PESCO's purpose as a project-driven member state-centric initiative can lay the foundations for an integrated European defence and security policy though alteration of the practical realities of 27 distinct member state militaries. Through the undertaking of projects across member states capacities can be built with integration in mind.

The focus on process has allowed this analysis to deliver an explanation and contribute to the understanding of European defence and security policy making. PESCO is not an expression of member states holding on to their national competences and only reluctantly ceding competences to the EU, rather PESCO is a relatively young initiative that cannot yet be judged as being member state centric by design. This research was therefore unable to confirm its hypothesis.

The process-based approach of this analysis has delivered a perspective on EU defence and security policy making that highlights that its current member state centric nature is indeed likely to be explained through the infancy of the attempts at an integrated approach.

It has, however, also shown that member states firmly remain the driving force behind the enabling of this approach. With the steps towards PESCO having been mostly intergovernmental it is too early to assess whether the intergovernmental approach will remain dominant in EU defence and security policy. Future research is needed here.

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## Appendix

**Table 2. Timeline data**

<i>Milestone as named on the timeline</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Time passed since last milestone (in months)</i>	<i>Level of policy</i>	<i>Institutions/actors involved</i>
The foundations are laid for a Common Foreign and Security Policy	Treaty of Maastricht	9 Dec 1991	n.a.	Treaty	Member states (EU created)
Launch of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP)	See name	3 June 1999	90	Top-level EU policy	Member states/Council
Signature of Berlin Plus	Berlin Plus introduced EU-Nato cooperation	16 Dec 2002	42	Inter-IO agreement	Member states
European Security Strategy adopted	Strategic assessment	12 Dec 2003	12	Top-level EU policy	Commission

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<i>Milestone as named on the timeline</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Time passed since last milestone (in months)</i>	<i>Level of policy</i>	<i>Institutions/actors involved</i>
Creation of the European Defence Agency	See name	12 July 2004	7	EU institution created	Commission, member states
The Treaty of Lisbon comes into force. The CSDP succeeds the ESDP	See name	1 Dec 2009	65	Treaty	Member states, External Action Service
Priority actions for defence set out	European Council discusses defence	20 Dec 2013	49	Consultations in the council	Member states/Council
Presentation of the European Union global strategy	HRVP presents new strategy under Foreign and Security policy	28 June 2016	30	Top-level EU policy	Commission/ External Action Service

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<i>Milestone as named on the timeline</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Time passed since last milestone (in months)</i>	<i>Level of policy</i>	<i>Institutions/actors involved</i>
Signature of the EU-NATO joint declaration	NATO-EU cooperation increased	8 July 2016	<1	Inter-IO agreement	Council, Commission, NATO Secretary General
Implementation plan on security and defence	Discussions about the implementation of the EU global strategy	14 Nov 2016	4	EU policy	Member states
European Defence Action Plan presented by the European Commission	Commission presents a plan for strengthening EU's joint defence capabilities	30 Nov 2016	<1	EU policy	Commission
Common set of proposals to implement the EU-NATO joint declaration	See name	6 Dec 2016	<1	EU policy	Council, Commission, NATO Secretary General

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<i>Milestone as named on the timeline</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Time passed since last milestone (in months)</i>	<i>Level of policy</i>	<i>Institutions/actors involved</i>
European Council stressed the need to strengthen Europe's security and defence		15 Dec 2015	<1	EU policy/intention to implement	Member states/Council
Council reviews progress and agrees to improve support for military missions	See name	6 Mar 2017	3	Consultations	Member states/Council
Council discussed EU-NATO cooperation with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg	See name	18 May 2017	2	Consultations	Member states/Council, NATO
EU Global Strategy: Council conclusions on security and defence	See name	18 May 2017	<1	Consultations	Member states/Council, Commission (CSDP)

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<i>Milestone as named on the timeline</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Time passed since last milestone (in months)</i>	<i>Level of policy</i>	<i>Institutions/actors involved</i>
Council establishes a Military Planning and Conduct Capability	See name	8 June 2017	<1	EU Institution created, EU policy	Council, Commission
Council welcomes progress made on EU-NATO cooperation	EU-NATO coordination	19 June 2017	<1	Consultations	Council, Commission, NATO
European Council calls for the launch of a permanent structured cooperation	Intend to launch the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) declared	22 June 2017	<1	Consultations	Council
European Council resumes discussions on PESCO	See name	19 Oct 2017	4	Consultations	Council

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<i>Milestone as named on the timeline</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Time passed since last milestone (in months)</i>	<i>Level of policy</i>	<i>Institutions/actors involved</i>
First step towards the establishment of PESCO	Joint 'notification' signed between 23 member states	13 Nov 2017	1	Consultations/Intention to implement	Member states/Council
EU-NATO cooperation: new set of proposals	See name	5 Dec 2017	1	Consultations/Intention to implement	Council, NATO
Council establishes PESCO with 25 member states participating	See name	11 Dec 2017	<1	EU institution created	Member states/Council
Council agrees its position on the proposed regulation establishing the European defence industrial development programme	See name	12 Dec 2017	<1	Consultations	Council, Commission

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<i>Milestone as named on the timeline</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Time passed since last milestone (in months)</i>	<i>Level of policy</i>	<i>Institutions/actors involved</i>
EU leaders welcome reinforced defence cooperation	PESCO adoption announced/celebrated in ceremony	14 Dec 2017	<1	Consultations	Council, Commission
PESCO: Council adopts an implementation roadmap	See name	6 March 2018	5	EU policy	Member states
European defence industrial development programme: Council and European Parliament reach provisional agreement	See name	23 May 2018	2	EU policy/intention to implement	Council, Parliament
Council adopts conclusions on strengthening civilian Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)	See name	28 May 2018	<1	Consultations	Council

<i>Milestone as named on the timeline</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Time passed since last milestone (in months)</i>	<i>Level of policy</i>	<i>Institutions/actors involved</i>
EU-NATO cooperation: Council welcomes progress made	Progress report on the matter published	8 June 2018	<1	Consultations	Council, NATO
Council highlights progress achieved to strengthen security and defence cooperation	Progress report concerning PESCO and the capability development plan and coordinated annual review (CARD)	25 June 2018	<1	Consultations	Council, Commission/ External Action Service
EU leaders discussed next steps for security and defence cooperation	Member states announce greater commitments regarding PESCO, the CSDP and chemical weapon non-proliferation	28 June 2018	<1	Consultations/ Intention to implement	Member states/Council



<i>Milestone as named on the timeline</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Time passed since last milestone (in months)</i>	<i>Level of policy</i>	<i>Institutions/actors involved</i>
EU and NATO sign new joint declaration	Declaration commenting on contemporary political issues, stressing commitment to existing agreements	10 July 2018	1	Consultations/ Intention to implement	Council, Commission, NATO
Council takes stock of security and defence cooperation	Assessment of the CSDP, PESCO, CARD, NATO cooperation	19 Nov 2018	4	Consultations	Council
PESCO: 17 new projects agreed	See name	19 Nov 2018	0	EU policy	Member states/Council
EU leaders take stock of progress achieved	Assessment of the CSDP, PESCO, CARD, NATO cooperation	14 Dec 2018	1	Consultations	Member states

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<i>Milestone as named on the timeline</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Time passed since last milestone (in months)</i>	<i>Level of policy</i>	<i>Institutions/actors involved</i>
PESCO: Council assesses progress made	Assessment of PESCO	14 May 2019	5	Consultations	Council
Council reviews security and defence cooperation	See name	17 June 2019	1	Consultations	Council
Council launches 13 new PESCO projects	See name	12 Nov 2019	5	EU policy	Member states/Council
Council calls for enhanced common action to counter hybrid threats	See name	10 Dec 2019	1	Consultations	Council

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<i>Milestone as named on the timeline</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Time passed since last milestone (in months)</i>	<i>Level of policy</i>	<i>Institutions/actors involved</i>
Fifth progress report published on the implementation of the EU-NATO common set of proposals	See name	16 June 2020	6	Consultations	Council, Commission, NATO
Council sets conditions for third-state participation in PESCO projects	See name	5 Nov 2020	5	Consultations/ EU policy	Member states/Council
Council launches the 4th wave of new PESCO projects	See name	16 Nov 2021	12	EU policy	Member states/Council

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Data retrieved from European Council (2021).