

Security Co-operation beyond the Nation-State: The EU's Common Security and Defence Policy*

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Introduction

The security policies of the European Union have in recent years become a central concern for researchers and policy-makers alike. A senior EU official has commented wryly that, whilst only around 200 officials actually 'do' the EU's common security and defence policy (CSDP),¹ there appear to be many thousands of academics and students all over the world who engage in its study (Howorth, 2007, p. 4). Leading European officials regularly cite security policy as central to the role and purpose of contemporary European integration. In Javier Solana's words, in the past the EU was intended to secure peace in Europe; today, it is about being a peace-builder in the rest of the world (Solana, 2007).

Several factors explain this burgeoning interest. First, whilst security and defence policies were long considered by students of the EU as the poor cousins of economic integration (Øhrgaard, 1997), they are increasingly viewed as central to the process of European integration. Here can be seen

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¹ The European security and defence policy (ESDP) was renamed the common security and defence policy (CSDP) in the Lisbon Treaty. This editorial will refer throughout to the CSDP in order to avoid confusion.

institutional struggles between national and supranational actors (witness the fight between the Member States and the European Parliament over the External Action Service). Here too, ontological questions about the EU's ultimate purpose are posed via debates on the organization's international role (normative, civilian, transformative, responsible, postmodern and so on) and how this relates to the Union's long-standing search for meaning (Sjursen, 2006; Laïdi, 2001, pp. 109–34; Žižek, 2005; Bickerton, forthcoming).

Moreover, foreign and security policy appears as the last great hope for those anxious to foster progress towards 'ever closer Union'. While enlargement was once seen as crucial to the onward march of integration, 'enlargement fatigue' has undermined such aspirations. Simultaneously, the erosion of the 'permissive consensus' (Mair, 2007) has effectively ended hopes for real progress towards some kind of federal Europe. Finally, economic unification is inadequate as a source of inspiration for European citizens (Garton Ash, 1999, pp. 312–27). Thus in a context where the EU is seeking a new legitimizing discourse, its international role has come to be seen as the most appropriate vehicle for galvanizing popular support for the EU in the 21st century and driving integration forward (Andréani and Ruyt, 2006).

The Union's putative role in world politics has also begun to interest numerous observers of international relations more generally. As the unipolar international system gives way to something less clearly defined, students of international security have come to consider the EU's potential role in an emergent multipolar international system (Howorth, 2010). Others see in the EU the precursor of a novel, 'postmodern' approach to dealing with problems of international order (McCormick, 2007, pp. 27–33; Kirchner and Sperling, 2007). Still others have claimed that the Union represents a sophisticated form of power maximization where Member States aggregate capabilities in order to maximize their global influence (Jones, 2007).

Given the increasing interest in the EU's foreign and security policies, it is more important than ever to acquire a systematic and detailed understanding of what these policies are, how they work and what their potential impact might be. The huge increase in publications outlining the nature of these policies clearly indicates that there is no lack of detailed empirical investigations. As yet, however, theoretically informed studies of CSDP are less common. This is disappointing for three reasons. First, CSDP provides an interesting case study for theoretical approaches drawn from the wider study of international security and from other areas of social scientific inquiry. Second, the deployment of such theoretical lenses can provide us with a more nuanced understanding of the empirical reality of CSDP itself. Third, it holds the promise of overcoming the gap that has opened up between the students of defence and security policies and those studying the more long-standing

EU policies. Apart from the intrinsic benefits it can bring, a theoretically informed debate about CSDP holds the promise of mainstreaming the study of a policy sector too often ignored by scholars.

The aim of this special issue is to mitigate these disappointments by collecting together new theoretical approaches to the study of CSDP. There is no desire to identify which approach is the most appropriate or effective. Rather, we provide a survey of the kinds of theoretical approaches that have been, or could be, applied to CSDP and their potential for furthering our understanding of it. Likewise, what follows in this introduction is not intended as a framework for the articles that follow. The aim is simply to provide some empirical and theoretical background to the more detailed discussions contained in the articles. The first section explores the nature of CSDP, the second traces the main contours of the extant theoretical debates and the third section identifies a number of conceptual themes relevant to the theorizing of the EU as an international security actor. Altogether, this introduction provides a critical overview of the state of the art in research on CSDP, and serves as a useful background article for those who would like to familiarize themselves with the empirical and theoretical issues raised by security and defence co-operation in Europe.

I. CSDP: A Moving Target

Perhaps the first point to note in any attempt to arrive at a theoretical explanation for the nature and development of CSDP is that those who seek to do so are shooting at a moving target. At the Cologne summit in June 1999, the 15 EU Member States officially launched the ‘common European policy on security and defence’. Soon thereafter, it acquired the label the ‘European security and defence policy’ (ESDP). Under the Lisbon Treaty, ESDP was converted into the ‘common security and defence policy’ (CSDP).

Evolution has involved more than nomenclature. From the first, CSDP was characterized by marked disagreements amongst its creators as to its ultimate nature and purpose. The Saint-Malo Declaration of December 1998, seen by many as the launch pad for CSDP, was characterized by a ‘constructive misunderstanding’ between the French and British governments on at least two fronts. First, both sides differed as to the meaning of the key term ‘autonomy’, and its implications for the EU’s relationship with Nato. Second, whilst some in France saw CSDP as a tool with which to further the construction of a ‘*Europe politique*’, it was viewed in London as an instrument designed to improve European military capabilities and that would also revitalize Nato (Howorth, 2003/04; see also the article by Hofmann in this issue).

Inevitably, given such underlying tensions, CSDP evolved rapidly from its inception. At the time of its launch, many hoped it would provide Europeans with the military capacity to manage a Kosovo-like crisis – large-scale operations in Europe's own near abroad (Bailes, 2008). Ten years later, the Union is engaged in 13 missions, the majority being civilian, and these across three continents and ranging from Somalia to Chad to Bosnia-Herzegovina to Georgia and Afghanistan. Whilst CSDP has thus shifted from a European to a global focus, it has also evolved from a concentration on military crisis management operations to address long-term civilian stabilization operations and other security-related activities such as counter-terrorism and combating the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Little wonder, then, that observers differ profoundly in terms of how they view this evolutionary process. For some, CSDP represents the functional final step in the process of European integration, a logical progression from European political co-operation and the common foreign and security policy (CFSP) (Smith, 2004). Others, in contrast, argue that the development of CFSP and CSDP serve merely to underline the 'chaotic path' and the '*bricolage*' that have characterized the development of the EU's external policies (Buchet de Neuilly, 2005; Mérand, 2008).

Achievements

The stated ambitions of CSDP were, broadly, twofold: to enhance the Union's ability to intervene in international security affairs through an internal process of *institutional* development; and to give the EU the practical means of intervening through a co-ordination and pooling of military and civilian *capabilities* (Menon, 2010). CSDP has spawned much activity in both fields.

Certainly, the number of operations launched under its aegis has been impressive.² Since its first mission in the Balkans in 2003, the EU's operations have varied widely in terms of size, ranging from the modest (ten EU experts in rule-of-law missions in Georgia and 30 in Iraq) to Operation Althea in Bosnia-Herzegovina which involved up to 7,000 soldiers. In addition the Union has launched military missions both autonomously (Artemis 2003 in Democratic Republic of Congo [DRC], EUFOR Chad) and with the support of Nato under the so-called 'Berlin Plus' arrangements governing operational collaboration between the two institutions (Concordia in FYROM, Althea). Missions have also varied widely in nature, ranging from the military to police missions in the Balkans, DRC, Palestine and Afghanistan, to rule-of-law missions (Georgia, Iraq), monitoring missions (Aceh, Georgia), security

² For the details of individual CSDP missions, see Grevi *et al.*, 2009.

sector reform missions (DRC, Guinea Bissau) and border missions (Georgia, Palestine, Ukraine-Moldova).

The number, scope and range of EU operations undertaken have doubtless taken sceptics by surprise. Most of these missions, moreover, seem to have exercised a beneficial impact. The sheer number of requests now received for EU interventions serves as one indicator that the EU has developed into a credible and important partner in international crisis management. With 22 missions carried out thus far, the absence of real failure and the fact that none have led to the kind of mission creep so symptomatic of many UN interventions have tended to foster a 'can do attitude' among policy-makers.

Critics, on the other hand, stress the limited scale of EU operations. The at times 'cosmetic' impact of EU action suggests it is undertaken more in order to highlight the role of CSDP than to solve problems on the ground (for example, DRC in 2006). There are many cases where the EU failed to intervene (for example, Darfur, DRC in 2008). There is also the suspicion that narrow national interests lie behind the CSDP flag (for example, Artemis, EUFOR Chad). Others point out that the EU has been merely an observer of major international crises in the Middle East, the Caucasus and East Asia. For some, CSDP operations have 'come to serve as an alibi for a tendency to avoid broader international security responsibilities' (Menon, 2009, p. 228; Bickerton, 2010, pp. 217–18). Moreover, the Union's ability to manage post-conflict stabilization has been the victim of a lack of resources, implementation shortfalls and bureaucratic rivalries that together serve merely to undermine its ability to develop a comprehensive approach for managing 'failed states' or complex post-conflict situations (Korski and Gowan, 2009).

The situation when it comes to capabilities is similarly mixed (for a discussion of capabilities, see also the article by Toje in this issue). The Union has undertaken numerous initiatives in an attempt to enhance European capabilities for military and civilian interventions. As early as December 1999 the EU launched the Helsinki Headline goal (envisaging an army corps of 50,000–60,000 troops, 100 ships and 400 aircraft deployable at 60 days' notice and sustainable for one year). The aim was that, by 2004, the EU would be able to manage two conflicts simultaneously: one 'hard' mission of separating belligerent forces, and one 'light' mission such as a humanitarian operation. The Capabilities Improvement Conference (CIC) in November 2001 identified 42 shortfalls in capabilities. It launched the European Capabilities Action Plan (ECAP) to deal with these shortfalls before the 2003 European Council created the Capability Development Mechanisms. In June 2004, Member States agreed on a new capabilities plan,

known as the Headline Goal 2010, and created the European Defence Agency.

Certainly, CSDP requirements have been an important driver for national military reform and the enhancement of force-projection capabilities of many Member States. Yet the Member States have failed to meet numerous targets and decisive shortfalls have persisted, such as a chronic lack of airlift capacity (Witney, 2008; Giegerich, 2008). Furthermore, the EU has downgraded its ambitions. The headline goal of 60,000 troops has been replaced with the battle groups initiative, envisaging a force package of around 1,500 troops available within 15 days to be the first force entering a conflict theatre.

Institutions

As an integral part of the common foreign and security policy, the institutional system of CSDP overlaps to some extent with that of CFSP. Yet the specific nature of defence policy and military operations led to the creation of a separate infrastructure designed to enable the Union to benefit from, in the words of the Saint-Malo Declaration, 'the appropriate structures and a capacity for situation analysis, sources of intelligence and capability for relevant strategic planning' (Grevi, 2007). Initial steps towards the construction of this infrastructure were taken with the creation of the Political and Security Committee, the EU Military Staff and the EU Military Committee (Howorth, 2007). This was subsequently expanded to the civilian dimension with the creation of the Civilian Crisis Management Committee (Cross, 2010).

Member State sensitivity about the need to preserve autonomy when it comes to defence-related decisions has led to the emergence of a complex decision-making process that requires consensus between the Member States. Decision-making is characterised by complex interactions between the Council Secretariat (headed by the Secretary General/High Representative for CFSP), the Brussels-based Political and Security Committee and decision-makers in national capitals (Grevi, 2009). The European Defence Agency exemplifies the tensions inherent in attempts to foster effective inter-state co-operation on defence matters, combining various contrasting (and in some cases incompatible) institutional 'logics' – for instance, defence sovereignty versus pooled defence resources, Europeanist versus Euro-Atlanticist, Europeanization of the defence market versus liberalization of the defence market (Batora, 2009). The preference of Member States for non-binding mechanisms in the field of capabilities improvements is a key factor explaining slow progress (Reynolds, 2006; Witney, 2008).

II. Evolution, Performance, Effectiveness: The Debate Thus Far

Unsurprisingly, policy-makers and officials tend to focus on actions and tangible results in their assessments of CSDP. The EU's first High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy, Javier Solana, regularly invoked the Nike slogan, 'Just do it', arguing that this should also be the EU's motif in its role as a provider of international security (Solana, 2006). As a CSDP publication put it, 'actions speak louder than words' (Council of the European Union, 2009, p. 9). What is interesting in the case of CSDP, however, is the extent to which academic analyses mirror this focus on the EU's effectiveness and performance (Irondelle, 2002/03; Bickerton, 2010). Consequently, the majority of published works dealing with CSDP have been either descriptive or prescriptive or both. Discussions tend to focus on technical matters of military/civilian capabilities provision and their interoperability. Debates in the literature are often on matters of empirical fact – over, for example, the way CSDP has developed. In other instances, they address differing prescriptions for future policies (Heisbourg, 2000; Grant *et al.*, 2001; Howorth, 2000).

This interest in effectiveness and performance is mirrored in the conceptual language developed to study EU security policy. Christopher Hill coined the phrase 'capabilities–expectations gap' in the early 1990s. David Allen and Michael Smith, responding to the Union's perceived inability to translate its 'statistical prowess' into concrete foreign policy outcomes, had earlier distinguished between 'presence' and 'actorness' (Allen and Smith, 1990). A concern about the gap between the demands made on the EU and its ability to match demand with supply has been carried through into studies of CSDP. Accounts of the EU as a security actor are often assessments of its performance (Menon, 2009). Many studies also bemoan institutional deficiencies or the problem of political will as the crucial constraints on the ability of the EU to become a major security provider. Conceptual energies are directed at identifying the EU's *sui generis* contribution as an international actor. Observers have highlighted the EU's crisis management skills and its unique ability to combine military and civilian instruments (Whitman and Wolff, 2010; Hill, 2001; Missiroli, 2003; Bono, 2004, p. 441; Mace, 2004; Howorth, 2007, p. 133).

It is worth inquiring into why the literature has focused on prescriptive accounts or assessments of effectiveness. Partly, this is a symptom of a widespread problem afflicting studies of foreign and security policy, namely that the policies themselves are subject to great scrutiny but the policy process is given much less attention.

In addition, the CSDP's lack of institutional history has played a role. Many scholars have claimed that CSDP emerged – seemingly *ex nihilo* – out

of a Franco–British summit in December 1998 and that therefore there is little by way of connection to what came before (Irondele and Petiteville, 2008; for a contrasting account, see Menon, this issue). According to such claims, while continuity between European Political Co-operation and CFSP has served as the basis for recent neofunctionalist studies of EU foreign policy (Andréani, 2000; Smith, 2004), precedents for security and defence policy are few and far between. The European Defence Community, voted down by the French national assembly to the tune of the *Marseillaise* (Menon, 2008, p. 38), preceded CSDP by 45 years and so can hardly be taken as an institutional precursor.

Perhaps as a result, scholars have vied to come up with ad hoc lists of variables that may account for the appearance of CSDP (see Howorth, 2007; Jones, 2007; Ojanen, 2006; Krotz, 2009). The list of external variables identified includes declining American interests in Europe, the return of war to the old continent with the conflict in the Balkans, a growing demand for international crisis management resources and the changing balance of power of the international and European state systems. Potential internal drivers include permissive public opinion, the leadership of some governments (in particular that of France), concerns on the part of the Labour government in the United Kingdom to avoid marginalization in the EU, the need to rationalize the European defence industry, the habits of co-operation developed between Europeans within Nato and the WEU, and an increasing awareness on the part of European governments that ever increasing costs have led to a need to share the defence burden.

There are other reasons, however, for the paucity of theoretical studies of the EU as an international security actor. As Jakob Ørregaard has argued, mainstream European integration theory has excluded by assumption co-operation in the security and defence fields. Realist approaches, analysing integration through the prism of state-brokered grand bargains, treat security and defence as part of the *raison d'être* of states and, as Hoffmann argued back in 1966 (Hoffmann, 1995, 2000), states are unlikely to bargain away their own souls (interestingly, Hoffmann here seems to have brought in a neofunctionalist assumption that co-operation must be supranational in nature – see below). Neofunctionalists also follow a logic that excludes security and defence co-operation: those areas most likely to generate the critical ‘spill-over’ dynamic are the depoliticized areas of ‘low’ politics rather than security and defence policy. Ørregaard sums up the problem:

The supranational-intergovernmental dichotomy ruled out integration in the absence of supranationality. The high–low politics distinction ruled it out in areas of high politics. In other words integration could only proceed on

issues of low politics within a supranational setting – two conditions that do not apply to security and defence issues. (Øhrgaard, 1997, p. 8)

An outcome of this has been the dominance of International Relations (IR) theory in the study of the EU's security and defence policy, though in a way that has generated considerable confusion. Some realists have argued that security and defence co-operation is unlikely as European states confront the realities of post-cold war pressures and rivalries (Mearsheimer, 1994/95). Others predict that the divisive forces of international anarchy will push Europeans to co-operate more closely together in the form of 'soft balancing' (Posen, 2006; Art, 2005/06). The same realist assumptions thus generate contradictory hypotheses. Moreover, the development of the EU as a security actor has in practice conformed to neither scenario: there has been no return of intra-state conflict in mainland Europe since the end of the cold war, but nor has the EU provided us with much evidence of soft balancing against the United States (Howorth and Menon, 2009, pp. 733–8). As Zaki Laïdi (2008) has put it, the EU's actions are marked less by power politics than by power *avoidance*.

Perhaps as a result of these theoretical limitations, a prominent strand in the debate about the EU in international security has been a normative one. *Should* the EU transform itself into a security and defence actor? (Sjursen, 2006). This question inevitably invokes the broader concern about the nature of the EU in international politics, with Robert Kagan's vulgarized use of Roman mythology mirroring a more subtle European debate about the nature and scope of the EU's normative power (Kagan, 2003; Manners, 2002; Lindberg, 2005). Some have lamented the shift from civilian to military power, others have welcomed it. Those critical of the EU's growing involvement in security and defence have raised both pragmatic and ethical concerns. Mette Eilstrup-Sangiovanni (2003) argued against the idea of a European security and defence policy on the grounds of its impracticability (cf. Morgan, 2005, pp. 165–6). Jean-Dominique Merchet (2009, p. 124), more polemically, has argued along similar lines in claiming that aspirations to playing a security role rest on little more than European 'fantasies of unity'. Others have observed that the fears of a militarized EU have been greatly exaggerated: CSDP has evolved in the civilian rather than military direction (Howorth and Menon, 2009, p. 739; Ojanen, 2000).

In this overview of the debate on the EU as an international security actor, we can say that the field is characterized, with some exceptions, by an orientation towards description and prescription. The overriding concern lies in the EU's effectiveness. This has generated taxonomies of outputs and a policy debate oriented towards finding solutions to the EU's relative lack of

capabilities. The field as a whole is over-specialized in its descriptions and fragmented in its theoretical inquiry. Contrary predictions flow from similar assumptions and a loud normative debate dominates in the absence of systematic, empirically grounded theoretical inquiry. It is the claim of this special issue that we can move beyond the current state of the debate by drawing together new approaches developed by researchers across different disciplines. A flowering of new approaches on the role of the EU in international security will allow us to generate new generalizations and to establish connections between disparate claims via a shared language of sustained theoretical inquiry.

The next section will provide an overview of the analytical challenges that the different articles in this special issue will address in their own way.

III. Theoretical Approaches to CSDP: Towards a ‘Second Wave’?

The articles in this special issue deploy a wide range of theoretical frameworks through which to study CSDP. The sense that traditional theoretical frameworks of European integration can only be grafted onto security and defence with some difficulties has already given rise to various neologisms in the literature. Howorth (2007, p. 32) wrote of ‘co-ordination’: a mixture of co-ordination and integration. Other articles deploy theoretical constructs drawn from outside the European studies literature. A corollary of the wide variety of potential approaches is the diversity that characterizes the theoretical ambition of the different contributions. In this respect, the articles in this special issue are reflections of the diversity of positions that exist in social science more generally. Some are closer to what Robert K. Merton described as ‘middle range theory’; others draw on approaches that consider themselves more all-encompassing (Merton, 1967, pp. 39–72; Meyer and Strickmann, this issue). What Robert Cox (1986) termed ‘problem-solving theory’ is central to some of the articles that are concerned with explaining a specific set of puzzles, identified as a result of a set of assumptions about the nature of CSDP. A number of other articles are closer to ‘critical theory’: a theoretical enterprise dedicated to exploring the basic assumptions upon which much existing theoretical work is taking place (Cox, 1986; Horkheimer, 2002, pp. 188–243; Habermas, 1971, 1988; see also Merlingen and Bickerton in this issue).

Such distinctions notwithstanding, it is possible to identity four core concerns that, to a greater or lesser degree, characterize all the approaches adopted. In the first place, debates about CSDP have been fundamentally

interested in the notion of power. Whether this be the power of individual Member States (in terms of their ability to shape EU outcomes) or the power that CSDP confers on the EU itself (whatever form this might take), whether 'normative' or 'hard,' actual or potential, discussions of power go hand-in-hand with analyses of the EU's putative international security role.

Second, it is virtually impossible to study CSDP without having something to say about the nature, role and impact of institutions. A number of the articles take up the thorny issue of how institutions relate to the states that created them. Is CSDP in this respect an exogenous constraint upon states, or is it merely the space within which states relate to and co-operate with each other? Whether an international institution is – as Inis Claude (1996) put it in his writing on the United Nations – an arena or an actor is a question raised by the EU's security policy. Again, different theoretical approaches adopt different definitions of, and varying approaches to, institutions. Yet inherent in all of them is some view of institutional dynamics, potential and limits.

Third, and closely related to the preceding issues, debates about CSDP are intimately concerned with questions of structure and agency. Some Realist approaches see the structure of the international system as the driving force behind the emergence of CSDP. Writers in the Institutionalist tradition view structures such as the CSDP institutions as constraints on Member States, locking them into path-dependent and potentially inefficient processes. Constructivist scholars, on the other hand, stress the interconnectedness of structure and agency. Other articles take up the theme of agents, inquiring into the kinds of agents that drive CSDP forward. Who are they exactly and what are their subjective motivations? (Bickerton, in this issue). Are they politicians, national officials, EU bureaucrats or think tanks and NGOs? (Mérand *et al.*, in this issue). Where should we look when analysing the balance between agents and structures: at the level of institutions, discourses, micro-level practices of officials and experts? (Merlingen, in this issue).

Fourth, underlying these sets of questions is the ontological issue of the relative balance between material and ideational factors in constituting state interests and driving their behaviour. To what extent is European security and defence co-operation a product of material changes in state capabilities? What role is there for ideational factors in our accounts of the EU as a security actor? Meyer and Strickmann tackle this question directly in their effort at 'solidifying' constructivist accounts of CSDP (Meyer and Strickmann, in this issue). A number of the articles engage with these various issues, albeit from different perspectives and with an eye to answering rather different questions.

An Outline of the Special Issue

The articles in this special issue cover a variety of different approaches. A number of articles ask what IR theories and IR-related concepts can tell us about CSDP: realism, liberal institutionalism, constructivism and the notion of 'small powers' are all invoked by articles in this special issue. Other articles take an institutional (though not necessarily institutionalist) perspective, at the level of institutional dynamics and in terms of organizational fields. Another set of articles adopt less conventional approaches, relying on sociology and social theory and putting concepts like 'networks', 'discourse' and 'bureaucracy' at the forefront of their concerns.

Altogether, these articles signal an unprecedented degree of theoretical sophistication in the study of CSDP. Long consigned to the margins of scholarship, work on CSDP is increasingly entering the theoretical mainstream. Drawing on theories, concepts and insights from the disciplines of IR, Political Science and Sociology, these articles together suggest that a 'second wave' of CSDP scholarship is emerging that is both theoretically self-aware and wholly interdisciplinary.

In order to structure what follows, and allowing for the maximum interplay between the articles whilst avoiding the temptation to constrain theoretical diversity, the editors asked contributors to address a number of empirical questions against which their theoretical contribution can be judged. What is CSDP exactly and why and how has it developed? How does CSDP work and what aspect of its functioning does the article explore? Finally, what impact has it had, or might we expect it to have, on international politics more generally and what have been its consequences for European integration and the EU?

Clearly some theories have more to say than others about each of these questions. We would not expect Realism to be all that interested in the workings of institutions. Nor will network analysis necessarily take a view on policy outputs. This being said, the focus on a common set of empirical questions has served to structure the contributions that follow and ensure that the different implications of different approaches are clear. It is also the view of the editors that whilst this special issue represents a significant theoretical contribution to the study of CSDP, in so doing it also highlights the interplay between theoretical sophistication and the advancement of empirical knowledge.

The articles of the special issue are grouped into three themes though some articles overlap a great deal. The first is CSDP and IR theories, the second is CSDP and institutions, and the third is CSDP studied through approaches somewhat outside the mainstream of IR and EU

studies. The remainder of this section will provide outlines of each article in turn.

Starting with the connection between CSDP and IR theorizing, the articles by Sten Rynning, Asle Toje, and Christoph Meyer and Eva Strickmann all directly engage with various IR theories. Sten Rynning's article asks what the theoretical tradition of realism can teach us about the dynamics and future prospects of European defence and security. Rynning begins by identifying a central puzzle of CSDP, close to Hill's notion of a 'capabilities–expectations gap' (Hill, 1993). Rynning observes that ambition and capacity contradict each other in the EU's international security role: its ambitions are considerable yet capabilities are inadequate, both institutionally and materially. How can we explain this mismatch between ambition and capabilities? In answering this question, Rynning explores the different traditions of realism. He argues that structural realism approaches CSDP uniquely through the prism of the EU's adaptation to the changing structural dynamics of the international system. Though this can provide some insight into its development, structural realism's inattention to agency means that it cannot account for the peculiar nature of CSDP. Unable to grasp the underlying ambivalence of the EU's security and defence project, structural realism generates a contradictory and ultimately indeterminate set of predictions, arguing that the EU may well emerge as a major security actor or it may not. Rynning's own preference is with classical realism. He argues that this approach, in particular with its focus on the agency of political leaders and the importance of their own social and historical background, can tell us a great deal about the aspirations and limitations at work in CSDP. Classical realism's unique mix of optimism and pessimism is best able to capture the CSDP's own combination of vaulting ambition and the lagging behind of its institutional and material capabilities.

In his article, Asle Toje presents an arresting thesis about the nature of the EU's strategic action. Contrary to those who deny that the EU has any kind of strategy at all, Toje argues that we can make sense of the EU's role in international security if we adopt the perspective of a small power. The behavioural features of the EU as an international actor – its dependence on leading powers, its reliance upon multilateral frameworks as means through which it can exercise its influence, its risk-aversion – all correspond to the behaviour of small powers. Toje breathes new life into the concept of 'small power' – a concept that was of great interest to IR scholars in the 1950s and 1960s but soon fell out of fashion. Toje discusses in detail the conceptual history of small powers and then applies the term to the EU. He explicates the operative features of CSDP and their correspondence to the actions of small powers. In so doing, he presents a new rationale for action which

hitherto has been dismissed by scholars and analysts as merely a lack of political will, a tendency to free-ride on the United States or an internal complacency and parochialism on the part of European elites and societies.

Christoph Meyer and Eva Strickmann's article revisits the long-standing debate between neo-realist and constructivist scholars over the relationship between material and ideational factors in determining state behaviour. They argue that the EU's security and defence policy represents a useful and interesting case through which to explore the relationship between these factors. Arguing that realist insights can help 'solidify' constructivism, Meyer and Strickmann identify a set of conditions that affect the role played by ideas in shaping policy outcomes. They argue that changes in economic growth and spending, the distribution of coercive capabilities and the adequacy of existing capabilities to deal with emergent problems can all help understand ideational change. They apply this theoretical claim to CSDP. It is indeed ironic that the CSDP process – driven in the eyes of many by an ideational commitment to closer European integration – may in fact move forward on the back of budgetary constraints that force EU Member States to reduce their defence spending through closer European co-operation. Enhanced Franco–British defence co-operation has already been suggested as a way of reducing the United Kingdom's defence budget.

Moving to the focus on institutions, but retaining a strong connection to IR-related debates, Anand Menon's article argues that institutionalist theory can learn a great deal from CSDP and that our understanding of CSDP can be advanced considerably if we adopt an institutionalist approach. He identifies the different approaches to international institutions in realist and institutionalist theories of international politics, with a focus on the limitations of both. Realists underestimate the independent role institutions can have in shaping both state preferences and outcomes of co-operation, whereas institutionalists tend to overlook the role of power in the creation, functioning and impact of institutions. Menon is critical of the institutionalist account of change, which tends to associate change uniquely with so-called 'big bangs' – that is, dramatic moments of institutional collapse and/or creation. Menon effects a synthesis of the two approaches in an attempt to grasp some of the distinctive features of the CSDP as an emerging institution in its own right, such as its focus on civilian operations and the constant institutional change to which CSDP has been subject. A realist–institutionalist synthesis, Menon suggests, is the best 'middle range' framework through which to understand the evolution and impact of CSDP and one that may be of use in studying other instances of international security co-operation.

In her article, Stéphanie Hofmann takes issue with existing studies of CSDP that have examined it in isolation from the wider European security

architecture made up of the overlapping institutions of Nato, the OSCE and the UN. Hofmann argues that institutional overlap is a key feature of the CSDP's development and its operational capacities, and is a much-neglected feature of international organization more generally. She suggests that the overlap between members, mandates and resources needs to be included as a key intervening variable in explaining the origins of institutions and their actions, and focuses on CSDP and the manner in which institutional overlap has shaped its emergence and its development over time. She argues that the interests and objectives of national actors within Europe were influenced by institutional overlap. Both Nato and the Western European Union (WEU) served as templates for EU Member States, and one of the drivers behind security and defence co-operation was precisely the desire to replicate these institutions at the pan-European level. Hofmann also identifies institutional overlap as an important variable in explaining the political conflict generated by institutional creation (for example, transatlantic disagreements over Nato/CSDP relations). She also argues that such overlap informs state strategies. States can strategically make use of the overlap in order to pursue their own interests. In her article, Hofmann makes a strong case for a middle-range theory of institutional overlap, able to provide a rational account of what other approaches might dismiss as mere institutional dysfunctionality or happenstance.

Finally, turning to the less conventional approaches, both the article by Frédéric Mérand, Bastien Irondelle and Stéphanie Hofmann and the article by Michael Merlingen use – though from quite different perspectives – the concept of ‘governance’ as the starting point for their investigations. Mérand *et al.* identify CSDP as a particular kind of governance that is predominantly government-led but which at the same time is very complex and includes a variety of sub- and supra-state actors. Mérand *et al.* use network analysis as a tool that enables them to map out the various features of the CSDP network, focusing in particular on the degree of complexity, the multi-level nature of the network and its inclusiveness *vis-à-vis* non-state or sub-state actors. Though CSDP figures highly in each case, they also find that of all the actors interviewed in their survey, those identified as being most central to CSDP decision-making (that is, those identified as best connected) are those we would expect from a more realist analysis: the directorate within the Council Secretariat led by Robert Cooper (DG E) and then the Political and Security Committee, the ambassadorial committee charged with foreign and security affairs that reports to the Coreper II and to the Foreign Affairs Council. Mérand *et al.* conclude by suggesting that whilst CSDP governance is indeed both heterarchical and multi-level, as the conventional governance model would suggest, state actors still have the upper hand. More attention should

therefore be paid to the role power plays in determining the structural conditions within which networks operate and which constrain and empower actors to different degrees.

Michael Merlingen's article studies CSDP through the lens of Foucauldian governmentality theory, providing, as with Mérand *et al.*, a critique of governance approaches applied to this policy area. Merlingen identifies in Foucault's *oeuvre* an interest in power and micro-practices that can shed light on CSDP. Unpacking the concept of 'governmentality' and focusing on its potential as a source for innovative research methodologies, Merlingen applies Foucauldian insights to both the internal governance of CSDP and to the external impact of CSDP missions on post-conflict societies. Looking at the CSDP police mission in Macedonia, the practice of mentoring regularly used in CSDP missions and the actions of the European Defence Agency, Merlingen demonstrates the value-added of the governmentality perspective when compared to existing work on CSDP and security governance, whilst also making clear its limitations as a theory.

Adopting the viewpoint of social theory, Chris Bickerton argues that existing theories of European integration have struggled to explain security and defence co-operation in Europe largely as a result of their limited conceptualization of the state. Bickerton argues that existing approaches tend to take as given Stanley Hoffmann's famous formulation of the problem as that of 'obsolete versus obstinate' nation-states. Rejecting this choice between the transcendence and the obstinacy of states, Bickerton argues that CSDP as a process is driven above all by the transformation of the nation-state in Europe. It is this process of internal political and social change that makes it difficult for either liberal intergovernmentalist or neofunctionalist theories to explain CSDP: relations between states in CSDP do not match the intergovernmental expectation about hard bargaining and a defence of self-interest; and yet nor are we seeing the emergence of supranational institutions as neofunctionalists would expect. Bickerton illustrates this with two examples: the early actions of European Political Co-operation in the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) in 1973–75 and the current day operations of the Political and Security Committee (PSC). In both cases, he identifies some distinctive features of European inter-state relations: a preference for consensus and compromise over any conflicts of interest; the dominance of bureaucratic rationales over ideologically driven political narratives; a functional organization and treatment of issue areas; and a leading role for national officials and representatives in lieu of leading political representatives. Bickerton concludes his article by arguing that if we consider the state as the combination of a number of contradictory political forms – notably the struggle between democracy and bureaucracy – then we can better

understand CSDP as a process driven by the steady bureaucratization of the European nation-state.

Conclusions

The EU's role in international security has become central to the contemporary narrative of European integration. It has also become an issue of interest for scholars of IR more broadly. The transformation of international security governance structures and the meaning of security itself have both made the EU increasingly relevant as a security actor. As noted in this introduction, there is little agreement on what counts as European security and defence policy or on its achievements to date. Moreover, the study of CSDP has become increasingly specialized and, as a result, fragmented as a scholarly field of inquiry. What this special issue demonstrates is that concept formation and theoretical reflection on this area of EU policy are becoming increasingly sophisticated and wide-ranging. As this theoretical sophistication develops, it can be hoped that some of the confusion at the level of policy assessment and some of the fragmentation at the scholarly level will be reduced, signalling the birth of what is termed here a 'second wave' in scholarship on CSDP. This special issue is an attempt at expanding the field of theoretical inquiry in the hope that it can both sharpen the analytical and empirical focus of work being done on the EU as a security actor and draw out the relevance of CSDP for all those interested in security and defence co-operation beyond the nation-state.

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