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A Divided Union?

Public Opinion and the EU's Common
Foreign, Security and Defence Policy

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Abstract

There are few policy areas in which European integration in the past two decades has progressed as fast as in the foreign, security and defence realm. The democratic foundation of these developments, however, has been contested. This paper examines the question of democratic legitimacy from one particular angle, by examining public opinion towards the EU's Common Foreign, Security and Defence Policy (CFSDP) as measured in Eurobarometer surveys between 1989 and 2009. It reflects on the relation between polling results and wider questions of democracy and, on this basis, examines three aspects of public opinion vis-à-vis CFSDP: general support for a common foreign and a common defence policy; differences among support rates in EU member states; and to what use armed forces should be put from the point of view of European citizens.

It turns out that general support for a common foreign policy is high. The desirability of a common defence policy, however, is much more contested among EU member states with member states being divided into a group of supporters and a group of, in part highly, sceptical countries. An EU defence policy that goes beyond strict intergovernmentalism would thus require a significant communicative effort to be justified and become accepted in several EU member states. Thirdly, European citizens do not give particular preference to the defence of international law and human rights as tasks for the armed forces. Traditional security concerns like territorial defence still figure prominently. However, European forces geared primarily at enforcing international law and contributing to UN missions stand a much greater chance of being accepted in all member states, even those in which the idea of a common European defence policy receives only little support.

Keywords

Common Foreign and Security Policy – Democracy – European Security and Defense Policy – International Relations – Legitimacy – Public Opinion – Security

Introduction

The European Union's Common Foreign, Security and Defence Policy (CFSDP) is one of the few areas where European integration has made fast progress in the past two decades. Foreign policy, which had only loosely been coordinated before the Maastricht Treaty, is now an important topic on the European Union's (EU) agenda, decisions with respect to many foreign policy issues can be made by qualified majority, the Union has set up its own External Action Service and created the post of a High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, whose incumbent serves as the face of the Union in world politics. In the security and defence realm, progress has, arguably, been even more breathtaking. Since the Maastricht Treaty, the Union has made the Western European Union (WEU) obsolete, set up its own rapid reaction force, created standing integrated military units, which can be dispatched at short notice to crisis areas by Council decision, and carried out more than twenty civilian and military operations.

The democratic legitimacy of these developments, however, has been contested. Some argue that the policy field has remained intergovernmental and so its democratic legitimacy is no more problematic than that of any form of international cooperation. Others, however, hold that foreign and security integration in the Union have proceeded beyond mere intergovernmental coordination. The introduction of majority voting in the foreign policy field, the creation of powerful, Brussels-based institutions and agencies that are difficult to control by national governments, ranging from the Political and Security Committee (PSC) to the High Representative and most recently the External Action Service, and the setting-up of integrated military units are but some indications of such an integration process, which escapes purely national control. Against this background, scholars have sought to examine the democratic legitimacy of CFSDP in various ways. They analysed, in particular, its institutional setting (e.g. Bono 2006, Peters et al. 2008, 2010, Stie 2010) and its discursive and normative underpinnings (e.g. Riddervold 2010, Kantner et al. 2009, Kantner and Liberatore 2006).

This paper attempts to contribute to such an investigation by adding another perspective, namely by examining public opinion. It analyses European public opinion polls on foreign and security policy in the past 20 years and attempts to paint a differentiated picture of what European citizens think about such a policy, whether they support it and what it should look like from their point of view. Thus it aims to illuminate one additional aspect of the democratic legitimacy of the EU's Common Foreign, Security and Defence policy.

To do so, the paper will first reflect on the difficult relation between public opinion (polls) and democratic legitimacy. Even though the results of mass surveys cannot be regarded as undistorted reflections of public opinion, they can prove useful if properly designed and interpreted. In the context of the European Union, they hold information not only about the overall support for EU institutions and policy. They can also be used as cues about the structure of the European public sphere and about general foreign policy conceptions that will find support in the European population.

* In writing this paper I have greatly benefitted from the research assistance of Corinna Blutguth, Susanne Jakob and Philipp Seelinger as well as from valuable comments by Matthias Dembinski, Anna Herranz Surrallés and Wolfgang Wagner.

Based on three models of democracy in the European Union, the first section of this paper will work out how opinion poll results can be used not only to examine overall support for EU institutions and policies but also to learn more about the European public sphere. They can make visible whether separable national perspectives on the CFSDP dominate or whether common views within the European population exist or emerge over time. And they can help to explore whether Europeans view the EU as a regional cosmopolitan order.

Against this background, the paper will then explore the substance and structure of European public opinion, using Eurobarometer surveys from 1989 to 2009. It will turn out that, overall, CFSDP receives considerable public support. Yet this masks two important divisions within the Union. First, support rates vary according to issue areas. Common decision-making in foreign affairs receives substantially more support than common decision-making in security and defence. Second, there is a division among EU member states into two clearly delineable country clusters. Especially in the security and defence realm, the countries in which a common defence policy receives widespread support can be clearly separated from those in which a large majority of the population is highly sceptical about it. The dividing line between the two groups is not only clearly discernible but also stable over time. It is less obvious, however, with respect to the overall goals that should be pursued through CFSDP, where the population in both groups favours traditional security concerns but is also open for certain more cosmopolitan perspectives.

Public opinion and democracy

Past research

Public opinion, as measured in opinion polls,¹ is not a very popular reference point in democratic theory today. One has to go back to the late 19th and early 20th century to find great optimism about the potential contribution of opinion-polling to democracy. James Bryce (1920: IV, ch. 77), for instance, claimed that the ultimate stage of democracy would be reached once it would become possible to ascertain the distribution of opinions in the population in such detail and speed on any given issue that representative legislative assemblies could be replaced. Yet even early proponents of polling in the United States since the 1930s, albeit eager to point out the important function that opinion polls might have in modern democracies, did not go so far as to suggest that opinion polls should be used to replace representative decision-making. Rather polls were seen to provide additional information and input to decision makers and contribute to public scrutiny, e.g. by curbing the influence of lobby groups and making it possible to assess the extent to which certain interest group positions were supported (see Dion 1962).

Nowadays, in some political debates, there is a tendency to regard opinion polls as the ultimate yardstick against which to measure the democratic quality of decision-making. In this view, opinion polls safely establish 'what the people really want' and therefore what should be done by the decision makers. Researchers, however, rarely

¹ I use the term 'public opinion' in a narrow sense, as it is employed in most of the research dealing with the statistical analysis of survey data, to refer to aggregate patterns of attitudes revealed in surveys. The term can also be used in a more demanding sense to signify the opinion of the public, as it emerges from public discourse.

view opinion polls in this way and often do not bother to explicitly discuss the importance of polling results for democratic decision-making in normative terms. Democratic theory has turned to conceptions of democracy that highlight the important contribution of representative institutions to the democratic polity and utilise conceptions of the public which have little in common with how the public is represented in opinion polls. Research that relies on polling, on the other hand, is rarely, if ever, concerned with making normative claims about how political decisions should be made in a democratic polity. Rather, this research tends to focus on analysing how public opinion empirically affects policy decisions or on describing and explaining patterns within public attitudes.

This holds for public opinion research in EU studies too.² From its beginnings in the late 1960s, it addressed mainly two issues – public support for integration and the existence of a collective European identity. Its main reference point became the concept of the ‘permissive consensus’, as formulated by Leon Lindberg and Stuart Scheingold (1970: 41). They argued that European publics passively supported European integration, i.e. citizens allowed political elites to go ahead with integration without actively rallying to support it. Lindberg and Scheingold did not suggest that this would continue to be the case in the decades to come. Rather, they held that this consensus could fade away once the integration process would reach deeper into European economies and societies. And, indeed, some later attempts to deepen European integration met with anything but a permissive consensus, as became visible in the referendums on the Maastricht and Lisbon Treaties and in the growing salience of European integration issues in social movement protests (Imig 2004). Nowadays, therefore, the idea of the permissive consensus serves mainly as a negative reference point, with most research insisting that public attitudes need to be conceived in a more differentiated fashion, even though elements of such a permissive consensus may still exist (e.g. Down and Wilson 2008, Hurrelmann 2007, Sinnott 2000).

Particular attention has been paid not only to categorising but also to explaining these public attitudes toward European integration. Especially the question whether individual attitudes are based on utility calculations or on identities has inspired many studies. As Lisbeth Hooghe and Gary Marks (2005: 421f.) outline, utility calculations can be conceptualised either objectively (measured by economic indicators) or subjectively (measured by personal evaluations) and they can be based on a respondent’s personal economic situation or the situation of the wider community or state in which (s)he lives (for research along these lines see, e.g. Anderson and Reichert 1996, Christin 2005, Eichenberg and Dalton 1993, Banducci et al. 2003, Rohrschneider and Loveless 2010). Identity-based explanations, in contrast, argue that how much an individual supports European integration crucially depends on his or her main group allegiances. People may hold identities that they perceive to be threatened by outside groups and therefore view European integration negatively (Carey 2002, McLaren 2002). On the other hand, there are group identities that become empowered through European integration, e.g. regional identities in Spain or the UK, and that may therefore contribute to support for European integration (Haesly 2001, Mols et al. 2009). More and more texts attempt to integrate these two broad approaches (e.g. de Vries and van Kersbergen 2007, Garry and Tilley 2009).

² For an overview over public opinion research with respect to European integration, see Brettschneider et al. (2003).

Research on public support for the CFSDP has taken a similar road. In particular, the common security and defence policy has met with interest from public opinion research. While especially early texts restrict themselves to reporting and discussing trends in European public opinion towards issues of European security (Eichenberg 2003, Gareis and Klein 2003, Manigart and Marlier 1993, Sinnott 1997), attention has turned increasingly towards explaining these attitudes, relying again on utility and identity-based approaches. Highlighting the importance of utility calculations, Clifford Carruba and Anand Singh (2004) found evidence that support for a common defence policy depends in part on the goods that individuals want and see provided through that policy. Other utilitarian variables are found to be important by Cigdem Kentmen (2010) who holds that how individuals evaluate the economic benefit provided by the EU crucially affects their support for the Common Foreign and Security policy (CFSP), whereas identity variables, including gender, play a much less important role. Harald Schoen (2008) finds support for both types of approaches. Accordingly, national capabilities, threat levels and evaluations of how the EU affects one's own personal security influence support for a common defence policy; but identity-based variables are important too. Especially the strength of national attachments and neutrality as a foreign policy orientation affect support for a common foreign and security policy negatively. Other scholars, in turn, zero in on single identity variables and find them to be important as well. Leonard Ray and Gregory Johnston (2007) argue that attitudes towards the US affect attitudes toward organising defence within NATO or the EU. Martial Foucault et al. (2009) find that strategic culture, i.e. social representations of security also account for some of the variation in attitudes towards the EU's common security policy. Claes de Vreese and Anna Kandyla (2009) add that the framing in news media of CFSP issues also influences how citizens view the same.

Public opinion and democracy in the EU

This paper will take a different road. Instead of building another model for explaining attitudes towards the EU's foreign, security and defence policies, I suggest that analysing substance and patterns of public attitudes can be worthwhile in itself. This is so for two reasons. Firstly, survey results provide us with an assessment of the support the EU's foreign, security and defence policies receive among the population and thus also of their legitimacy. Secondly, they can serve as an indicator for the state and shape of the European public sphere and thus one crucial basis of democracy in the EU.

The nexus between polling results and the actual support and even legitimacy a policy enjoys has been contested for some time. Two main arguments have been employed to shed doubt on the validity of public opinion results as indicators of a policy's support and legitimacy. The first, put bluntly, holds that people do not really know what they are talking about when they answer questions in an opinion poll. Their answers are influenced by a host of factors and the policy to which a question refers is not the most important among these. This argument has been put forward with particular force in the realm of foreign policy. Here, the so-called 'Almond-Lippmann consensus' holds that the general public is ill-informed about foreign policy and attitudes towards foreign policy therefore are volatile and lack consistency and structure (see Almond 1950). As most respondents do not have any clear attitudes towards the issue but rather 'non-attitudes' (Converse 1964), interpreting their responses as expressions of true attitudes towards foreign policy would be highly

misleading. This early conventional wisdom, however, has been seriously challenged by empirical studies (Holsti 1992). Robert Shapiro and Benjamin Paige (1988), for instance, demonstrated the stability and rationality of survey answers on foreign policy issues. The alleged lack of underlying structure has also been argued to be much less evident than Philip Converse claimed (see Baum and Potter 2008). We will also see below that attitudes towards CFSDP are fluctuating much less than could plausibly be expected if attitudes were not somehow structured and stable.

This is not to say that any answer given in any survey needs to be taken at face value (see Wagner 2005: 12). Question wording, the number of available answer categories and the current political situation can be important influences affecting the answers given. In order not to draw false conclusions, the best chance is then to rely neither on single questions nor on single points in time when analysing public support for a given issue. At the same time, when constructing time series over an extended period, attention must be paid to that question wordings do not change. This can be achieved by relying on data from Eurobarometer polls, which are conducted across Europe usually around twice a year on behalf of the European Commission. Each Eurobarometer includes so-called trend questions, which are asked repeatedly over a long period of time and thus serve as a good basis for constructing time series. We will see below that they provide a valuable, even if not perfect, basis to draw conclusions about public support for the EU's CFSDP.

We can therefore be confident that analysing Eurobarometer data will provide us with valid results about the public support that CFSDP enjoys. To be sure, decision makers do not need to adhere to poll results in order for their policies to be democratic and legitimate. It is obvious, however, that a sustained divergence between public majority opinions and actual policies needs to be addressed in a democracy. Policy makers may react to this in a variety of ways, by adjusting policies, by engaging in public debate or by ignoring it and running the danger of being replaced by citizens through democratic procedures. Yet in the European Union not all ways of reacting to public discontent are equally available and so paying close attention to the output dimension of legitimacy, i.e. public support for policies, may be of particular importance to the overall democratic legitimacy of the integration project as such. Reaching out to the public through public discourse, for instance, is much more difficult in such a huge, poly-lingual polity. More importantly, standard procedures for ensuring input legitimacy do not work in the same way as in national polities. As the distance between decision-making and the wider public is much larger than in national polities, it is more difficult to ascribe responsibility for policy decisions and considerably more difficult for the individual to see how those in charge could be removed from office. Citizens dissatisfied with national policies may easily be satisfied with the prospect of voting for the opposition in the next national elections and having a reasonable chance of removing the incumbent government from office. In the EU context, however, it is not only much more difficult to see what successful grassroots activism could look like or how the European discourse could be influenced, but there is no clear electoral mechanism either that would link citizens to decision-making entities in the European Union. As a consequence, discontent with EU policies is much more prone to spill over in discontent with the EU as such than on the national level (where discontent with policies tends to result in discontent with a particular government and not with the political system as such). Ensuring broad public support for European policies thus becomes all the more significant. Discontent with European policies in combination with a feeling that nothing can be

done about them may lead to an erosion of public support for the European integration project and thus to a slow delegitimation of the European Union as a whole.

Eurobarometer results do not only help to determine the support a policy enjoys and thus to gauge its output legitimacy. They can also be interpreted as indicators for the structure of the European public sphere. How the European public is structured, in turn, has important implications for democracy in the European Union as different models of EU democracy have different requirements concerning the structure of the public sphere. The RECON project has developed three ideal-type models of democracy in the EU that imply different conceptions of the public sphere in Europe (on the models, see Eriksen and Fossum 2007, Sjursen 2009; on the implications for the European public sphere, see Liebert and Trenz 2009). Survey data can be used as an indicator concerning the empirical shape of that sphere.

The first of these models conceives of the EU as a functional regime rather than a supranational entity. It implies that democratic legitimacy of policies flows mainly from the national level and that the public spheres are nationally contained. The public sphere, of course, cannot be easily equated with public opinion as measured through surveys. It comprises public discourse, the actors involved in it and their relations. Nonetheless, patterns in public opinion can serve as an indicator on whether there are nationally contained public spheres in European Union member states. In particular, clearly separable patterns of public opinion are likely to indicate the existence of separate public spheres. If there were significant links between the national public spheres we would expect to see at least some form of convergence over time or some common trends linking them.

In a second model, the EU is conceived as a federal multinational political entity in which democratic legitimacy is derived from European-level processes. This conception presupposes a common European public sphere. In terms of public attitudes this would certainly not imply the disappearance of all national and regional particularities and the emergence of a uniform European public opinion. However, the dynamics of a European public sphere would at least lead to a toning down of large national differences and a gradual convergence of attitude patterns. The sustained existence of a deep rift between countries in terms of public attitudes towards EU policies would not only shed doubt on the existence of a European public sphere. It would in any case be difficult to reconcile with supranational decision-making in terms of democratic legitimacy. Especially in the security sphere, which touches upon core aspects of a political community, it would be difficult to pursue a supranational policy which is rejected by the citizens of individual member states.

In a third model of European democracy, the EU is conceived as a regional cosmopolitan order. This would not necessarily require a common public sphere in any strong sense but rather overlapping transnational public spheres (Liebert and Trenz 2009: 170ff.). Once again, distinct and stable national patterns in public opinion would be difficult to reconcile with such a conception. Moreover, for the EU to be conceived as a cosmopolitan order public opinion would have to support a foreign and security policy that concurs with that cosmopolitan conception. Such a conception would imply the 'move from an exclusive emphasis on the rights of sovereign states within a multilateral order to the rights of individuals in a

cosmopolitan order' and thus a particular emphasis on the 'principles of human rights, democracy and rule of law' (Sjursen 2009: 215).

Overall these reflections provide us with several ways of linking the study of public opinion data to questions of European democracy, which I will employ in the following analysis. First, examining overall support rates will enable us to gauge the overall output legitimacy of the EU's Common Foreign, Security and Defence Policy and its development over time. The Eurobarometer data allows for a promising investigation along these lines as CSFDP related questions have been asked over an extended period of time and comparable data for all EU member states is available. Their main focus, moreover, lay on institutional aspects of the EU's foreign and security policy and the general support integration in these areas received. This makes it very easy to assess the general support level for CFSDP over a long period of time.

Secondly, I will examine whether EU member states display clearly distinguishable support rates for CFSDP over time and whether national patterns persist over time. This will serve as an indicator of the existence of separate national public spheres or the emergence of a wider European sphere. This investigation will mainly rely on the same extensive material on general support rates. Thirdly, I will attempt to assess the importance of cosmopolitan orientations in the European population. There are only a few Eurobarometer questions (asked at few points in time), however, which deal in depth with attitudes towards the substance of the EU's foreign and security policy. Hence there is much less to learn about these issues than about general support levels. Nonetheless, one issue beyond institutional questions is indeed covered by the data – the role that military means should play in the EU's external policies. As this is a key issue that directly relates to the questions at hand, this data will receive particular attention in the third step of the analysis. Together steps two and three of the analysis will enable us to judge which of the three RECON models is most adequate as a model for democracy in the field of CFSDP.

Analysis

General support for EU decision-making in foreign, security and defence policy

Questions on the general support for a common foreign and a common defence policy have been included in Eurobarometer surveys on a regular basis since 1989.³ About twice a year respondents throughout Europe are presented with a list of policy fields and asked for each field whether they support national or EU decision-making there. From 1989 to 2004 the list included 'foreign policy towards countries outside the European Community/Union' and 'defence' as separate policy fields. Unfortunately, these were merged into a single item 'defence and foreign affairs' in 2005, making it

³ Data sets for all Eurobarometer surveys are taken from the ZACAT website of *GESIS – Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences*, available at: <<http://zacat.gesis.org>>. Codebooks and questionnaires can also be found there. Data for the period until 2002 was taken from the *Mannheim Eurobarometer Trend File*, which combines data for all main Eurobarometer trend questions from 1970 to 2002 and is available on the ZACAT page as well. In performing the data analysis, data was weighted for certain socio-economic factors and population size, employing the appropriate weight variables provided in the data sets, which are also used in the Commission's Eurobarometer reports.

difficult to compare the time series before and after that year. Therefore I will first focus on the period before 2005.

Throughout all years, a common foreign policy has found the support of more than 60 percent of respondents in Eurobarometer surveys. Except for one year (fall 1989 to spring 1990), even more than two thirds of the respondents wanted decisions concerning foreign policy towards non-EU countries to be made on the European level. The net support for such an EU-conducted foreign policy (i.e. the difference between the support for the EU level and that for the national level) was well above 40 percent of respondents almost throughout.

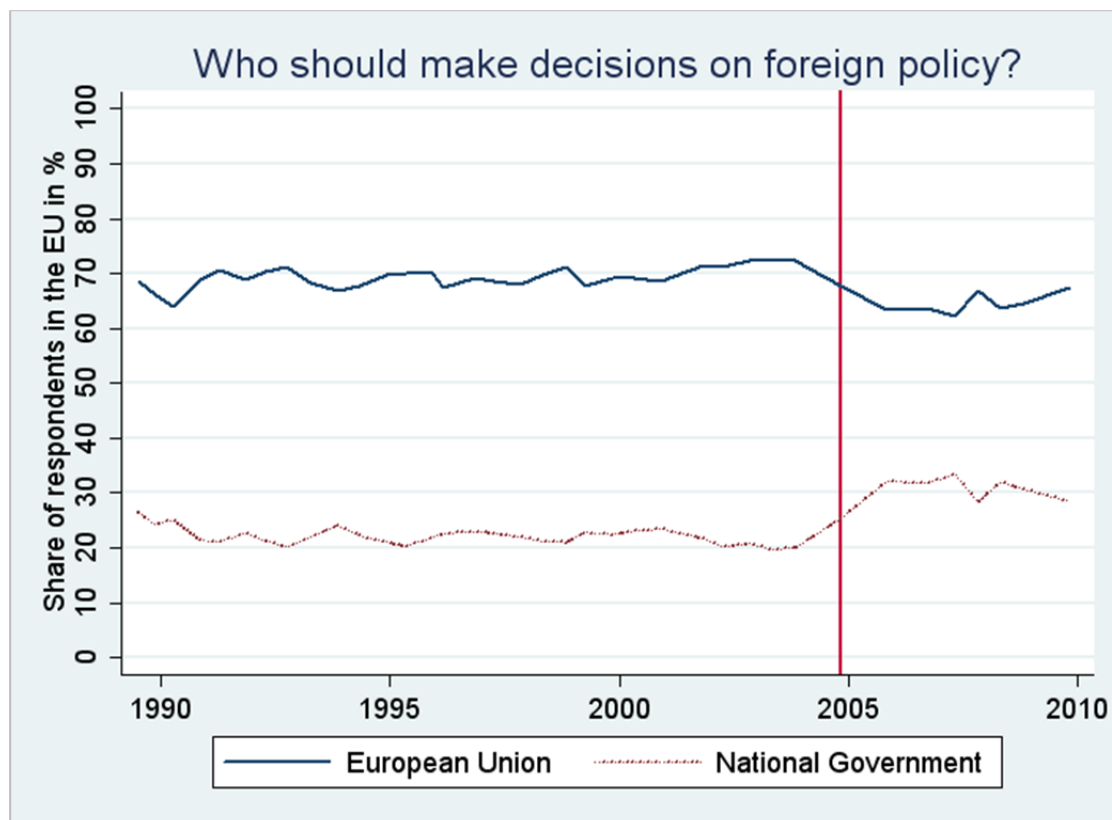


Figure 1: 'For each of the following areas, do you think that decisions should be made by the national government, or made jointly within the European Union? – Foreign policy towards countries outside the European Union'. After November 2004: 'Defence and foreign affairs'. Share of respondents, 1989-2009.

A common defence policy did not receive quite the same amount of support. As a matter of fact, respondents appear to be almost split between supporting an EU-made and a national defence policy. There are years with a clear majority in favour of EU decision-making, years with a much more narrow margin and some individual surveys, in which there is even a net support for a nationally conducted defence policy.

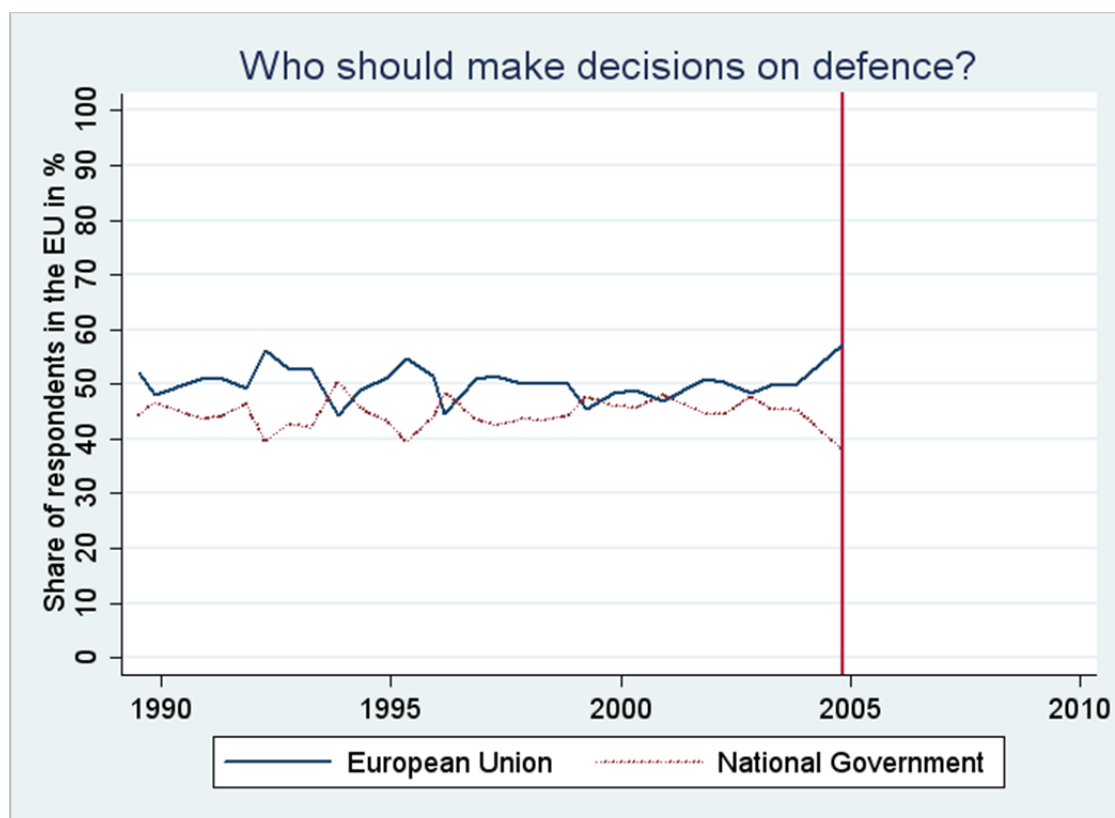


Figure 2: 'For each of the following areas, do you think that decisions should be made by the national government, or made jointly within the European Union? – Defence'. Share of respondents, 1989-2004.

What is remarkable, though, is the consistency of overall attitudes towards European foreign policy and European defence policy until 2005. To be sure, the net approval rates move much more sharply with respect to the defence field than for foreign policy. This holds especially for the early to mid-1990s, the time of the Balkan wars. Long-term levels, however, remain remarkably consistent with respect to both fields. There is no discernible upwards or downwards trend in the long run.

It is fair to say that this trend continued until 2008. Considering the differences in support for EU decision-making in foreign policy and defence, we would expect a drop in approval rates when the question is rephrased to refer to EU or national decision-making in 'defence and foreign affairs'. Even though it is impossible to estimate the effect of the rephrased question exactly, it appears that the overall consistency of attitudes towards EU decision-making has remained intact after 2004. If anything, there appears to be an upwards trend in the past years that has brought support for EU decision-making in 'defence and foreign affairs' almost to the level of support for EU decision-making in 'foreign policy' alone before 2005.

This assessment is further reinforced when we look at how the support for EU decision-making in foreign policy is related to the support of EU decision-making in defence at the level of individual respondents. For the time period from 1989 to 2004 we can compare for each respondent on which level (s)he preferred foreign affairs decisions and on which level (s)he preferred defence decisions to be made. Such an analysis reveals that support for EU decision in foreign and in defence policy is nested. That is to say, attitudes towards the two fields are related but their relation is not

symmetric. Rather, EU decision-making in foreign policy is seen as a prerequisite of EU decision-making in defence policy. Respondents that favour EU decision-making in defence policy overwhelmingly opt for EU decision-making in foreign affairs too. But those favouring EU decision-making in foreign affairs do not consider EU defence policy equally desirable. Rather they are basically split over whether there should be EU decision-making in security policy or not.⁴ This concurs with the position that appears to have guided the European integration process, namely that cooperation in security and defence needs to be preceded by and embedded in a wider framework of foreign policy cooperation.

Overall, then, there is obvious support for the EU level playing a significant role in the fields of foreign and defence policy. Whether this is high or sufficient is, of course, in the eye of the beholder. When compared to other policy fields, however, at least support for a common EU foreign policy is clearly extraordinarily high. There is almost no other policy area for which EU decision-making would be supported on a similarly sustainable high level over the years. It is another foreign policy issue, broadly conceived, that receives even higher approval, namely EU decision-making regarding cooperation with developing countries. There are a few other issues for which EU decision-making was similarly popular over the years as for foreign policy, including protection of the environment, scientific and technological research and the fight against drugs. It is important to note, though, that there are many other issue areas in which net support margins for EU decision-making are much smaller. This group includes security and defence but also e.g. VAT rates or rules for political asylum. Moreover, there is a number of policy fields, for which there is net support for *national* decision-making rather than European decision-making. These include, among others, education, cultural or welfare policy. Relative to other issue areas, then, EU decision-making in foreign policy has been extraordinarily popular, whereas EU decision-making on defence lies more in a middle category.

How stable is this support? If we look at the development over time, it appears that the strong support for EU decisions on foreign policy and the moderate support for such decisions in the defence field are remarkably stable. But do these support rates really indicate a more or less firm commitment of the respondents? One way of assessing the stability of answers is to rephrase questions, ask them again and compare results. Eurobarometer surveys offer two opportunities to do so. First, at one point in time the wording of the question regarding the preferred level of decision-making was changed. Instead of asking whether decisions in the respective policy field should be made 'by the national government or jointly within the European Union' the alternatives were rephrased and complemented by a third one. Thus the alternatives presented to respondents in spring 1996 were: decisions made 'mainly at national level, mainly at European Union level or both at national and European Union level'.⁵ With respect to foreign affairs, the share of respondents favouring the national level hardly changed.⁶ The new middle category, however, became clearly

⁴ Since autumn 1990 consistently (and sometimes considerably) more than 80 percent of those favouring EU decision-making in defence support EU decision-making in foreign policy too. For those supporting EU foreign policy, figures fluctuate a bit more but around 60 percent of them, sometimes considerably less, support EU decision-making in defence too.

⁵ This was Eurobarometer 45.1. These questions were excluded from the Mannheim Trend file for reasons of comparability. For the same reason EB 45.1 is excluded from the time series presented in this paper too.

⁶ 21.7 percent chose this option, compared with 22.6 and 23.0 percent in the preceding and subsequent surveys.

most popular, almost exclusively at the expense of the EU option. Whereas 67 percent of respondents had chosen the EU option when faced with two alternatives just a few weeks earlier, now only 29 percent chose the EU level, whereas 43 percent opted for the new middle category. With respect to defence, the middle category also became hugely popular (39 percent). Here, however, both the national and the EU category lost much support when compared to the two-option Eurobarometer a few weeks earlier. EU support declined from 45 to 29 percent, support for the national level from 49 to 27 percent.

These changes do not only illustrate that the wording of questions and the alternatives offered matter tremendously for the results and that high support for EU decision-making in foreign affairs should not be mistaken as support for a full-blown communitarisation of this policy area. They also underscore the difference in how citizens judge foreign affairs and defence policy. In the former area there appears to be a segment of about a fifth of respondents that is clearly opposed to EU involvement in these policies. Throughout, however, about two thirds of the respondents appear to support some kind of EU-level decisions in this policy field. Thus there appears to be a solid, if diffuse, support for joint decisions in the field of foreign policy. Security policy, however, is different. Responses appear to be more volatile here. This has already been discernible in the sharper movements that the approval rates for EU decision-making in this field displayed over time. It is now again visible in the impact that the new third category had on the overall distribution of answers. There is a high potential for support of EU involvement – in the three-option Eurobarometer 74 percent of respondents favoured some sort of EU involvement. But there is also a much higher inclination to support the national level when offered the alternative between EU and national decision-making only.

The volatility of answers regarding defence policy is further illustrated by the second opportunity that the Eurobarometer data offers for assessing the stability of answers. This is even more telling as here a series of Eurobarometers contained both the original and an alternative question. From autumn 2000 to autumn 2006 respondents were asked: 'In your opinion, should decisions concerning European defence policy be taken by the national government, by NATO or by the European Union?'. Obviously the latter question differs in important respects from the one analysed above, by referring explicitly to 'European defence' and by including NATO. Of course, NATO receives some support now (between 14 and 21 percent over the years). What is interesting, though, is that this is mostly at the expense of the national category. Compared to support rates of 38 to 45 percent in the former question, the national level now receives only 20 to 25 percent support.

The fluctuations become even more interesting if we look at the patterns in individual responses. Of those who had favoured EU decision-making (in contrast to national decision-making) on defence in the first question, 10 to 15 percent switched to the national level in question two. Of those who had favoured the national level in question one, a considerable 30 to 40 percent preferred the EU in question two.⁷

⁷ 55 to 64 percent of those favouring the EU in the first question stuck to that choice in the second. Only 31 to 40 percent of those who had chosen the national level in question one did so in question two as well. The switch to the newly offered NATO was approximately the same for both groups, ranging from 14 to 20 percent of those who had chosen the EU level and 13 to 22 percent of those who had preferred the national level.

Of course, some of the fluctuation must have been caused by the different wording of the question. It goes without saying that the inclusion of NATO is bound to reduce the support rates for the other alternatives. Moreover, the fact that respondents were explicitly asked to think about decisions in *European* defence will have been conducive to their favouring international or European institutions instead of the national level. Nonetheless, the extent to which especially those respondents who had preferred the national level in the first question were willing to accept EU decisions in the second is surprising. It serves to demonstrate again that attitudes appear to be more flexible with respect to the EU's role in the defence realm than with respect to foreign policy.

Country patterns

The overall trends in public opinion on which this paper has focused so far give the impression of a closed coherent and, at least regarding foreign affairs, stable EU-wide public opinion. This appears to support the conclusion that Philippe Manigart and Eric Marlier (1993) drew already in the early 1990s. Underneath this surface, however, there are some remarkable differences between countries and these have become much more pronounced over the course of the 1990s. Figures 3 and 4 illustrate the variance in opinions among EU countries regarding the desirability of EU decision-making in foreign policy and defence respectively. The box plots visualise the distribution of support rates across EU member states for each Eurobarometer survey. For each survey, the small horizontal line inside the box represents the middle of the distribution (the median): half the countries have support rates below this level; the other half has a support rate above it. In June/July 1989, for instance, half of the EU member states had support rates of above 65.6 percent, half of them below that level. The box itself marks the support rates of the middle 50 percent of EU member states. In June/July 1989 they ranged from 57.6 to 74.1 percent. Finally, the uppermost and lowermost horizontal lines mark the highest and lowest support rate a member state displayed in that Eurobarometer. In June/July 1989 these were 82.8 (Italy) and 38.7 (Greece) percent respectively. The occasional dot below the boxes marks an outlier, i.e. a country with an extremely low support rate relative to the other EU members.

The graphs thus illustrate the range of support that EU decision-making on foreign policy and on defence received across member states and can help us to detect a potential convergence of views. First, we can see that, with respect to foreign policy, there is indeed some convergence of support rates over time. It comes mainly from a rising minimum support that EU foreign policy decision-making receives up to 2004 (before the wording of the question was significantly changed). The minimum value is below or just above 40 percent until spring 1990, then flows consistently and with very few exceptions between 46 and 52 percent until the end of 2000, to then move up to around 55 percent. The maximum support rate remains basically static so that overall support rates converge over time. In between the extreme values there is not much systematic movement, with the range of support rates (indicated by the length of the box) increasing around the time of the Kosovo war and then decreasing again.

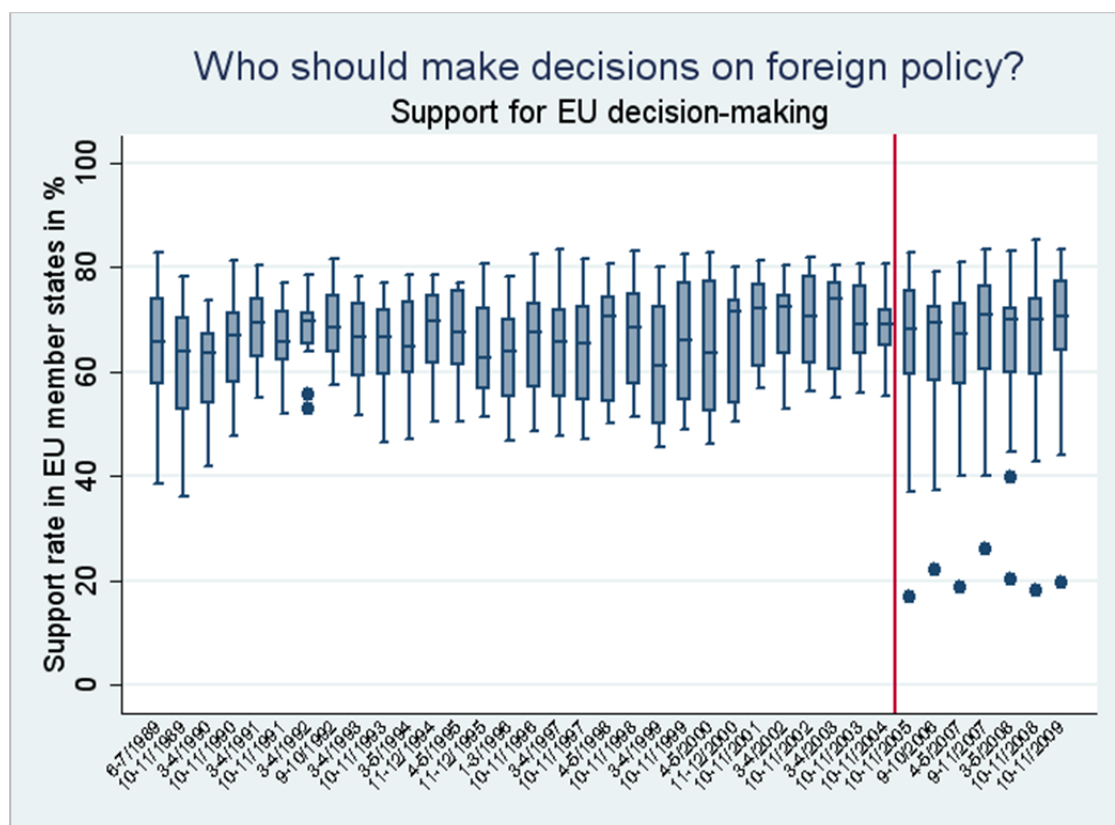


Figure 3: ‘For each of the following areas, do you think that decisions should be made by the national government, or made jointly within the European Union? – Foreign policy towards countries outside the European Union’; since 2005: ‘Defence and foreign affairs’. Range of the share of respondents per member state answering ‘European Union’, 1989-2009.

As soon as the wording of the question is changed to refer to ‘defence and foreign affairs’ we see a substantial change. The differences among EU members increase considerably. While public opinion in the bulk of EU members appears not to be affected too much (indicated by the only slight downward movement and expansion of the boxes), there is obviously vehement opposition that materialises when the idea of a common defence policy is introduced. This becomes visible in the much lower minimum support rates and the presence of an outlier, Finland (joined by the UK in spring 2008).

That EU decision-making on defence is a more contentious issue also is obvious when we compare figures 3 and 4. Maximum support rates for EU defence policy are almost as high as those for foreign policy.⁸ But minimum rates are dramatically lower and the overall range of support given to the issue is considerably wider. This becomes especially clear after the accession of the neutral countries Austria, Sweden and Finland in 1995. Also, there is no convergence of support rates over time. If anything, we see a downwards trend in maximum support rates, the sustainability of which cannot be assessed, however, as the time series ends with a resurgence in maximum values.

⁸ There is more fluctuation, though, and a low that persists from autumn 2000 to autumn 2003.

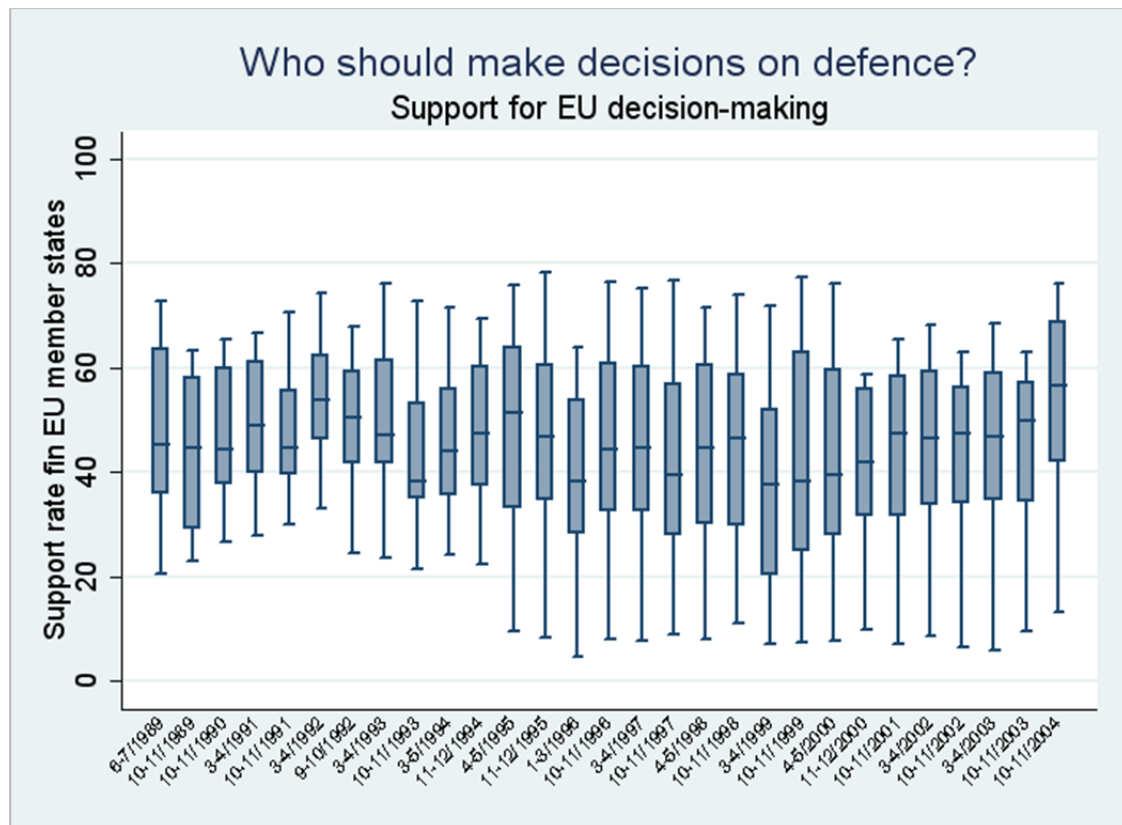


Figure 4: 'For each of the following areas, do you think that decisions should be made by the national government, or made jointly within the European Union? – Defence'. Range of the share of respondents per member state answering 'European Union', 1989-2004.

Once again, therefore, the data suggests a difference in the attitudes towards defence and foreign policy issues. It is not only that support rates for a common defence policy are more volatile, EU member state populations also disagree much more strongly about the desirability of a common defence policy.

Are there clearly delineable country groups, in which populations are inclined toward or opposed against a common foreign, security and defence policy? As member state clusters can only be identified survey by survey, I select three Eurobarometer surveys that, from the analysis performed so far, appear not to be atypical: the Eurobarometers of autumn 1996 (EB 46.0), autumn 2001 (EB 56.2) and autumn 2006 (EB 66.1).

Starting out with the two questions analysed so far, two neatly separated groups of EU member states can be identified (for an overview with selected figures, see Table 1 below). The two groups differ with respect to their support both for EU foreign and for EU defence policy. But it is with respect to defence that the difference between them is particularly sizeable. In autumn 1996 the group of supporting states is composed of the Benelux countries, Germany, France, Italy and Spain. Their average support rate for a common EU defence policy lies around 60 percent. In contrast, there is a group of sceptical countries, composed of the UK, Denmark, Ireland, Finland, Sweden, Austria, Portugal and Greece, whose average support rate for a common EU defence policy lies at just around 30 percent. Moreover, the groups are completely separable and do not overlap. The maximum support rate for an EU defence policy lies at 44 percent in the sceptical group (Austria), the minimum support rate in the

supportive group is 50 percent (Spain). The same holds for the support of EU foreign policy, even though the contrast is not as stark here. The average support rate among the seven pro-integrationist countries lies at 74 percent (with a minimum of 70 percent in Spain). Among the eight sceptical countries, average support is 58 percent (with a maximum support of 68 percent in Ireland).

The picture remains almost unaltered five years later in autumn 2001, with only minor changes in the overall figures. The two groups differ considerably in average support rates for EU decision-making in both defence and foreign affairs, the difference is more sizeable with respect to defence and the two groups can be clearly delineated. The only difference in composition concerns Greece, which was clearly in the sceptical camp in 1996 and which has now become a borderline supportive case due to a remarkable increase in support rates for EU decision-making in both policy areas of around 15 percentage points.

Greece again becomes a borderline case in autumn 2006, after the Eurobarometer question had been rephrased to refer to EU decision-making in both foreign affairs and defence. Once more, the seven sceptical countries, now again joined by Greece, all cluster together (with support rates ranging from 22 to 59 percent) as do the seven pro-integrationist countries (64 to 72 percent). What is remarkable is that all ten acceding countries now join the supporters' camp. All of them very strongly support EU decision-making in defence and foreign affairs and nine of them have support rates of above 70 percent, thus surpassing the average value of the old pro-integrationists.

If more concrete questions are asked, the picture remains similar but we can distinguish countries that belong to the core of each group throughout and countries that are not as easy to classify across the board. Starting with EB 59.1 (spring 2003) Eurobarometer surveys included, for a few years, additional questions regarding the desired degree of European integration in the foreign and defence field. In particular, respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements regarding the further development of the EU's CFSDP. The list included the following two statements:

- 'When an international crisis occurs, EU member states should agree a common position.'
- 'The EU should have its own Foreign Minister, who can be the spokesperson for a common EU position.'

Concerning the first statement, there is a remarkable coherence among EU member state populations. A large majority of citizens supports the idea that, when an international crisis occurs, EU member states should take a common position. It is worth noting that this statement is not formulated in a very strong integrationist sense, referring only to the event of an international crisis and to agreement on a common position among states, i.e. not even to a formal common EU policy. In every single EU member state this statement receives the support of more than 70 percent of respondents and there is only very little variance between countries and across time.

Concerning the idea of a foreign minister, three groups can be separated in EB 59.1. It is particularly unpopular in four of the sceptical countries (Denmark, Finland, Sweden and the UK) with less than 50 percent of respondents agreeing with the above

statement. It is particularly popular in six of the pro-integrationist countries (France, Benelux, Italy and Greece) with support rates of more than 67 percent. And there is a group of countries in the middle, composed of countries identified above both as either supportive or sceptical *vis-à-vis* CFSDP (Germany, Spain, Ireland, Austria and Portugal). Over time, it becomes increasingly difficult to separate strong supporters from weaker supporters. The only group that remains coherent and clearly separable over time is that of the four sceptical countries.

A final question that can be used to examine differences between EU member states concerns support for the EU's swift intervention force, which member states had decided to set up in 1999. In late 2000 (EB 54.1), respondents were asked whether they regarded this force a good or a bad idea. At the EU level the intervention force enjoys overwhelming support, with more than 72 percent of respondents judging it to be a very good or a fairly good idea. As Figure 5 demonstrates, the force has majority support in all EU member states, yet the support rates vary considerably from 82 percent in Belgium to 53 percent in Ireland. The same holds for the share of those who find the intervention force a fairly bad or very bad idea. Such outspoken opponents of the force are particularly rare in Italy, Portugal, Spain, France, Belgium and Luxembourg (around seven to eight percent) and much more common in Sweden, Austria, Denmark and the UK (around 16 to 21 percent).⁹

If we look at the 'net support', i.e. subtract the share of those who find an intervention force a fairly or very bad idea from those who think it is a fairly or very good idea, two separate groups emerge. There are strong supporters (66 to 75 percent net support) and once again this group is – mainly – composed of countries classified above as supporters: Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Italy and France. At the lower end Portugal and Greece join this group (66 percent respectively). On the other hand, there are countries with relatively low net support rates (40 to 61 percent). This group is comprised of the sceptical countries UK, Ireland, Austria, Sweden, Finland and Denmark – plus Germany (57 percent) and Spain (61 percent). While Spain is a borderline case like Portugal and Greece in the supporters' group, the German case is outstanding. While the German population is much more enthusiastic about the general idea of an integrated foreign policy and even about a common security and defence policy, its net support for a common intervention force is very similar to that of Finland and Sweden (58 to 59 percent). It appears that the generally pro-integrationist stance of the German population finds its limitations in the reluctance against the use of military means which has become characteristic of German political culture after World War II (see e.g. Berger 1998, Duffield 1998).

⁹ Denmark is a special case, as in Denmark many more respondents than in other countries do actually have an opinion on the issue (only around five percent answer 'don't know') so that a relatively high share of respondents supports the intervention force (78 percent) but there is also a relatively large share of opponents (17 percent).

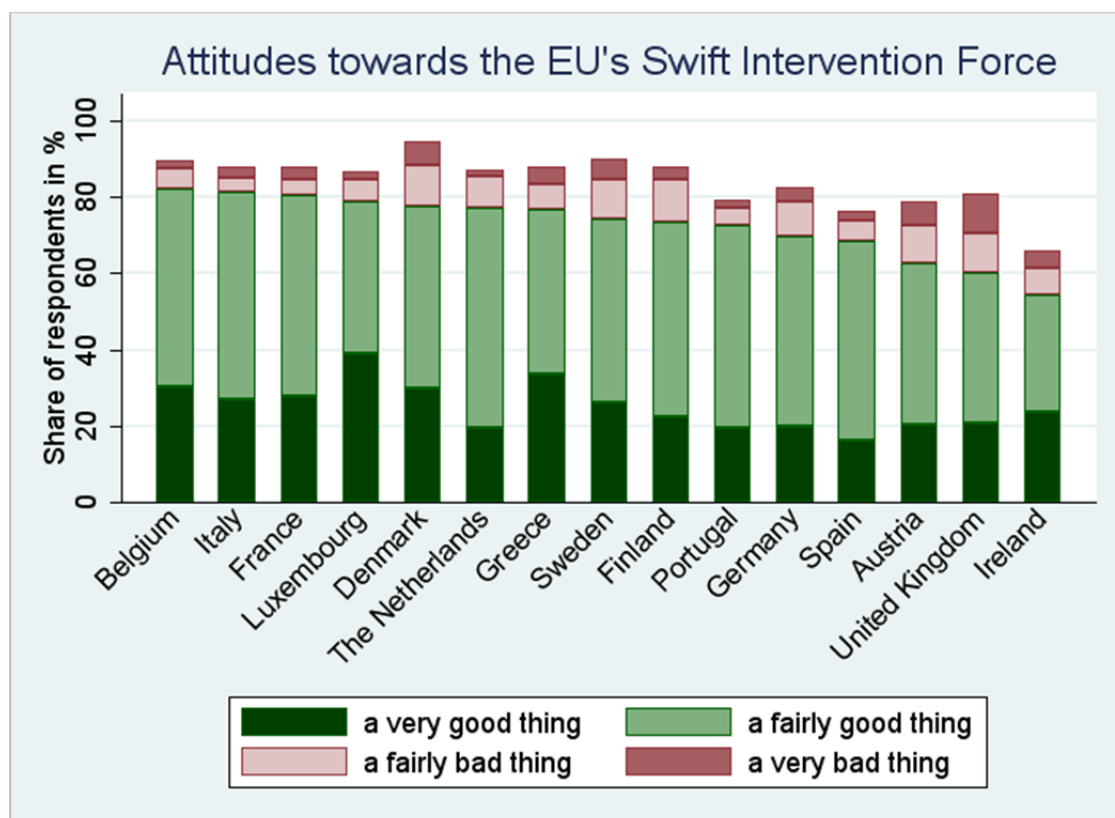


Figure 5: Eurobarometer 54.1 (2000). 'Recently, the European Union has decided to set up a swift intervention force of 60,000 men. Personally, do you think it is... a very good/a fairly good/a fairly bad/a very bad thing?' – Share of respondents per member state. Missing to 100 percent: 'Don't know'/not available.

Taken together, we see that below the level of general support for an integrated EU foreign and security policy there are remarkable and durable differences among EU members. How much support varies between EU member states depends crucially on the issue at stake. There is almost universal support for some kind of EU-level decision-making in foreign policy. Yet the stronger the prospective integration becomes and the more questions focus on defence issues, the more differentiated the picture becomes with public opinion in some countries still strongly supporting integration and attitudes in other countries turning against it.

Two groups of countries can be identified with four or five countries constituting the core of each group (see Table 1). The supportive group is comprised by five of the six founding members of the European Communities (Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, France and Italy), the sceptical group of countries usually classified as Atlanticists (the UK and Denmark) and the Nordic neutral countries Finland and Sweden. The Finnish public stands out as an opponent of any EU integration in the realm of military security. It is especially the substantial distance between these groups over a range of questions and the sustained character of these differences that suggest there is no overarching transnational discourse which links these publics together and which could lead to a gradual convergence of views.

Other countries have a tendency toward one of these groups but do not completely fall into it. The non-Nordic neutrals are almost throughout very close to the sceptics but are more relaxed with respect to the issue of an EU foreign minister. The German population is almost throughout part of the supportive group, but is much less

supportive when it comes to setting up a military force under EU auspices and also has reservations about an EU foreign minister. Spain and Portugal are marginal members of the supportive and sceptical groups respectively. Poll results in Greece show swings that are much more pronounced than in other countries and so Greece is very difficult to classify here.

Table 1: Country Clusters. Figures are shares of respondents in percent who support the item.¹⁰

'Supporters'					
	<i>EU decision-making</i>		<i>EU Foreign Minister</i>	<i>Common position if crisis</i>	<i>Swift Intervention Force (Net support)</i>
	<i>Foreign affairs</i>	<i>Defence</i>			
BEL	80.55	72.19	80.68	91.96	74.82
FRA	72.24	57.80	74.91	88.12	73.37
ITA	69.09	56.65	75.40	81.44	74.68
LUX	66.35	56.17	67.34	90.95	70.85
NET	74.58	62.18	68.34	73.98	65.93
Avg	72.56	61.00	73.33	85.29	71.93
CEE	68.39	64.82	69.78	86.60	n/a
GER	69.51	68.77	66.41	86.19	56.93
ESP	70.83	64.92	64.38	79.58	58.42
GRE	73.30	39.00	71.10	87.77	65.85
'Sceptics'					
	<i>EU decision-making</i>		<i>EU Foreign Minister</i>	<i>Common position if crisis</i>	<i>Swift Intervention Force (Net support)</i>
	<i>Foreign affairs</i>	<i>Defence</i>			
DEN	60.73	42.02	42.31	75.91	61.06
FIN	61.07	13.07	50.70	80.82	58.52
SWE	55.29	24.36	44.25	83.20	67.15
UK	56.27	41.47	56.14	77.16	39.52
Avg	58.34	30.23	48.35	79.27	56.56
AUT	66.63	49.69	59.97	78.54	46.50
IRE	72.83	34.02	59.81	73.04	42.79
POR	63.61	36.55	64.85	74.07	60.69

¹⁰ Figures are from EB 62.0 in autumn 2004 (decision-making), EB 63.4 in spring 2005 (foreign minister and common position) and EB 54.1 in late 2000 (swift intervention force). For question wording see text. Group averages are unweighted, i.e. they represent the average share of respondents per member state, not the overall share of respondents within the group. 'CEE' refers to the Central and Eastern European member states.

A cosmopolitan order? The role of the military

Finally, let us also look at the conceptions of foreign and security policy favoured by the EU citizens. In this respect, the Eurobarometer surveys offer far less material over time than for general support of EU decision-making in this area. It was only in November/December 2000 (EB 54.1) that some questions were asked which did not focus on institutions and decision-making procedures but on the substance of a military EU security policy. In particular, survey participants were asked about the role that the army in general should play from their point of view and about the potential role of a European army. These are particularly valuable questions as they allow a differentiation between a more traditional approach (in which the military serves to defend the national territory) and a more cosmopolitan thrust (in which the military serves to defend international law and human rights).

In the survey, respondents were presented with a list of potential roles of the armed forces and asked to respond for each of the items whether or not they considered this a role of the army. Table 2 lists the items, ordered by the number of respondents in the EU that considered them a role of the army.

Table 2: EB 54.1 (2000). 'For each of the following, please tell me if you think it is one of the roles of the army, or not?' – Share of respondents in the EU answering 'yes' to the respective item.

<i>Defending the country/the territory</i>	89.30%
<i>Helping our country in case of natural, ecological, nuclear disasters</i>	86.18%
<i>Helping other countries in case of natural, ecological or nuclear disaster, or combating famine, or clearing minefields, etc.</i>	79.25%
<i>Keeping or re-establishing peace in the world</i>	74.94%
<i>Preparing for wars and fighting</i>	71.43%
<i>Defending values, such as freedom and democracy</i>	65.94%
<i>Guaranteeing/Symbolising national unity</i>	54.54%
<i>Passing on to young people values such as discipline, respect for their superiors</i>	49.89%
<i>Helping young people to integrate into society, e.g. by teaching them a trade</i>	49.54%
Spontaneous response: The army is of no use	5.61%

Looking at this list, we see that there are signs of a cosmopolitan orientation without, however, surpassing more traditional conceptions of the army as a tool for national defence. The armed forces are considered to contribute to both peace and security at home and in the world, with slight preference given to the national tasks. Thus almost nine out of 10 respondents count territorial defence among the army's roles and almost three quarters the defence of peace in the world. Also the rather de-militarised tasks of helping in case of disasters and the like receive considerable support, once again with some preference given to their helping at home. The military defence of values such as freedom and democracy does not make it to the top of the list. One may read this as an indication that a norm-laden policy that utilises the armed forces to foster the spread of democracy is not among the priorities of European citizens. It is regarded as a task of the armed forces by even less people than the classical hard power task of preparing for wars and fighting. However, differences are small and more than two thirds of respondents do regard the defence of values as one of the army's roles.

Even though the national rankings, based on responses in the individual EU member states, largely mirror the overall EU list, there are nonetheless some remarkable national differences. These differences concern both the relative importance that is assigned to individual roles and the overall importance that is ascribed to the armed forces.

Concerning the first dimension, in many countries the ordering of the items is very similar to the ordering at the EU level. Especially Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Italy, Denmark and Portugal have very similar rankings in which only neighbouring items switch places. A few countries, however, display considerable individual deviations. These concern, in particular, the importance of one of the more hard-nosed items on the list, the preparation for war and fighting, which ranks fifth in the EU list. In Luxembourg, Sweden and Austria this role is ascribed to the army by considerably less respondents (33, 34 and 47 percent respectively), so that it ranks only ninth there. Even in France only 56 percent of respondents see this as a role of the army (eighth rank in the French list). One may see this as an indication that in some countries the army's role is perceived less in terms of war-fighting and more in terms of assistance-giving, which is also indicated by large support rates for disaster help roles in these countries. In the United Kingdom, however, the preparation for war and fighting receives extremely high support, with more than 84 percent of respondents counting it among the roles of the armed forces so that it comes in second on the UK's list, trailing only territorial defence.

A second difference among countries lies in the overall number of roles that are assigned to the armed forces. In some countries, individual respondents tend to attribute a high number of roles to the military so that even the number eight and nine roles receive support of almost two thirds of the respondents. In other countries only a few roles receive such high support, indicating that overall the armed forces are seen as of much more limited use or importance in these societies. A more expansive conception of the army's role can be found in Greece, Spain and Portugal. Especially in Luxembourg, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, and Austria respondents are more reluctant to ascribe many roles to the armed forces.

Similar questions were asked of a European army. Respondents were presented with a list of roles for a European army and asked which of those roles they thought a European army should have.¹¹ Their answers are summarised in Table 3. The list demonstrates that a European army is predominantly conceived in similar terms as a national army – and not primarily as a supplementary tool to support the commitment to international law and human rights. The main ordering principle of this list is 'EU first' and traditional security issues again play a very prominent role. Territorial defence again tops the list, followed by guaranteeing peace in the EU. Tasks within the EU consistently get preference over the same tasks with relation to the wider world, i.e. disaster relief in the EU is regarded as more important than disaster relief in other parts of the world, similarly as intervention in conflicts close at the EU borders. Nonetheless, the support of human rights and the carrying out of humanitarian missions are mentioned by more than half the respondents across Europe. Notably participation in United Nations (UN) peace-keeping missions is

¹¹ Note that now respondents did not answer 'yes' or 'no' individually for each role but simply chose the roles they deemed appropriate from the list. This accounts for the existence of the 'don't know' category here.

much less popular and if a UN mandate is missing they even fall to the bottom of the list.

Table 3: EB 54.1 (2000). 'The European Union has decided to put in place a common security and defence policy. Which roles do you think a European army should have?' – Share of respondents picking the respective item from a list (multiple answers allowed).

<i>Defending the territory of the European Union, including our country.</i>	71.30%
<i>Guaranteeing peace in the European Union.</i>	63.38%
<i>Intervening in case of natural, ecological or nuclear disaster in Europe.</i>	57.54%
<i>Defending Human Rights.</i>	51.11%
<i>Carrying out humanitarian missions.</i>	47.81%
<i>Intervening in conflicts at the borders of the European Union.</i>	44.29%
<i>Repatriating Europeans who are in areas where there is a conflict.</i>	40.91%
<i>Intervening in other parts of the world case of natural, ecological or nuclear disaster, or combating famine, or clearing minefields.</i>	37.14%
<i>Taking part in peace-keeping missions outside the European Union, decided by the United Nations.</i>	34.08%
<i>Defending the economic interests of the European Union.</i>	23.39%
<i>Symbolising a European identity.</i>	18.63%
<i>Intervening in conflicts in other parts of the world.</i>	18.29%
<i>Taking part in peace-keeping missions outside the European Union, without the United Nation's agreement.</i>	15.08%
<i>Don't know.</i>	5.32%
Spontaneous response: There shouldn't be a European army.	3.52%

Again, similar lists can be drawn up individually for each member state and again there is some variation with regard to the order of the items and to the overall support that individual items receive in the countries. Once again, the order of the items is very similar for member states with only a few exceptions. It is especially the countries grouped above as sceptical countries whose lists differ somewhat from the EU average. The Danish, but also the Dutch, list contains a whole series of changes. Especially various forms of conflict intervention (at the EU border, in other parts of the world, peace-keeping without UN mandate) are ranked *higher* than in the rest of the EU and more abstract roles (protection of human rights, symbolising European identity, protection of economic interests) lower. Very prominent differences in the rankings, in which an item differs in three or more ranks, are very rare, however. The Nordic neutral countries, Finland and Sweden, rank participation in UN peace-keeping missions considerably higher than the other member states (rank sixth instead of ninth) and more general humanitarian missions lower (eighth instead of fifth), hinting at the significance the UN has for these countries in terms of legitimising the use of force. Greece, once more, differs in a way that is hard to classify, giving the role of symbolising a European identity much more importance than the rest and ranking the repatriation of Europeans considerably lower.

In a second dimension, we see remarkable differences between member states in the absolute values. In some countries respondents are much more willing to assign roles to an EU army than in others, signalling a greater willingness to utilise the armed forces for a variety of roles and, of course, for having an EU army as such. In France,

Belgium and Luxembourg every single item on the list¹² receives greater support than on average in the EU. There is a similar picture in the other countries classified above as supporters of CFSDP. In the Netherlands, some roles of an EU army are supported by a very high share of respondents, when compared to the EU average, including the intervention in conflicts at the EU border (+20), the intervention in conflicts in other parts of the world (+14), disaster assistance in Europe (+17) and in the world (+16) and the participation in UN peace-keeping missions (+19). Only some roles receive moderately less support than the EU average in the Netherlands. In Germany there is a general tendency towards moderately higher support rates than on EU average, with some roles receiving slightly less support than on average.

In a second group of countries, however, figures are much lower than on EU average. This includes countries from the sceptical group, namely the UK, Portugal, Austria and Ireland. It also includes two countries, which had been classified above as pro-integrationist countries, namely Italy and Spain, and this even though in both countries there was no reluctance to assign roles to the armed forces in general. In the other countries from the sceptical group, Finland, Sweden and Denmark, support for some roles is considerably lower. This includes especially the defence of the EU territory (-8 to -10) and the protection of economic interests (-4 to -11). There are other roles, however, that find much more support among these countries than in other EU member states, in particular the participation in UN peace-keeping operations (+8 to +16). While the figures for Italy and Spain remain somewhat puzzling, the tendency of the Nordic EU members demonstrates that respondents in these countries can, in principle, conceive of the EU employing military means, yet not for territorial self-defence but rather as part of a wider effort of international peace-keeping under UN auspices. This, in turn, fits very well with a conception of the EU as a regional cosmopolitan order.

Conclusion

This paper has looked at three aspects of public opinion about the EU's Common Foreign, Security and Defence Policy: At general support levels over time to assess CFSDP's output legitimacy; at differences between EU member states in order to explore the structure of the public sphere in Europe; and at opinions about how national and EU armed forces should be used in order to evaluate the importance of cosmopolitan orientations. Overall it turned out that there is considerable public support for CFSDP but this support varies significantly across issues and member states and is, in part, based on traditional conceptions of security.

To begin with, there has been constantly strong support for common decision-making on foreign policy over the past twenty years or so. This can be found almost uniformly across all EU member states. This picture changes markedly when we turn to defence. Overall support for common decision-making in this field is considerably weaker. Judged from a long-term perspective, the EU population appears almost split over the issue with roughly around 50 percent of people supporting EU decision-making and a slightly smaller share supporting national decision-making over defence. Moreover support rates are more volatile than those for foreign policy and more varied across EU member states. There is a hard core of member states in which

¹² Except the 'don't know' and 'the army is of no use' items.

integration in this area (common decision-making, common intervention force) finds above-average support. These are the founding members of the EC minus Germany: Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, France and Italy. This appears to stand in contrast to findings of research on public support for European integration in general, which holds that the duration of membership is not a major explanatory factor for differences in support rates (see Brettschneider et al. 2003: 12). Interestingly enough, though, after the Eastern enlargement of the Union this group appears to be joined by all new Central and Eastern Europe member states. Yet this result must be considered with care as we do not have enough data yet to judge the sustainability of this trend. On the other hand, there is also a hard core of countries in which security and defence integration is viewed much more sceptically and finds clearly below-average support: the UK, Denmark, Finland and Sweden. Populations in some EU member states tend towards one of these groups without completely joining it. The German population, in general, supports defence integration. But when it comes to setting up a military force or an EU foreign minister, concerns kick in and support is much weaker than in the other EC founding member states. The non-Nordic neutrals, Ireland and Austria, on the other hand, generally tend towards the sceptical side but are generally more relaxed about the setting-up of an EU foreign minister. Finally, there is a group of countries which is difficult to classify here: Spain is a borderline supporter, Portugal a borderline sceptic and Greece does not neatly fall into any group.

Considering the preferred substance of a common EU defence policy, Eurobarometer surveys do not provide as much material. Looking at how European citizens view the role of the armed forces, however, it becomes clear that traditional conceptions of security have not lost their appeal and still figure very prominently. This is not to the exclusion of cosmopolitan orientations, but the latter appear only of secondary importance. In this respect, populations in EU member states differ somewhat but they cannot be grouped together as easily as is the case with respect to their general support for CFSDP. The Nordic neutrals Sweden and Finland are the only countries that can be singled out somewhat as they emphasise softer roles for the EU forces, place more emphasis on UN-authorized roles for the EU forces and generally are reluctant to ascribe many roles to the armed forces.

There is no way that sweeping conclusions about the democratic legitimacy of the EU's Common Foreign, Security and Defence policy could be drawn on the basis of survey data alone. As discussed above, several caveats must be kept in mind when analyzing survey data and neither public opinion nor the public sphere can be reduced to polling results. Findings about survey results can thus only provide one contribution among others to examining the democratic basis of the CFSDP. Within these limitations, several implications can be derived from this study of public opinion. First, this indicator suggests that there is strong diffuse support for a common EU foreign policy, which cannot simply be extended to the sphere of security and defence. Regarding the desirability of common defence decisions it is much harder to find a common denominator among EU member state populations. In this respect the Union indeed appears to be divided, with a hard core of supporters of such an idea, a hard core of sceptical countries and, with Finland, even a very strong opponent. Decision-making rules in the Council, which remain strictly intergovernmental in the defence realm, reflect this appropriately. Other forms of increasing integration which occur through processes like Brusselsisation or the formation of integrated multinational forces may be difficult to defend in this context (for a highly critical take on the implications of these divisions, see Brummer 2007).

Furthermore, public opinion in the EU does not contribute much to constituting the EU as a regional cosmopolitan order, yet a foreign and security policy in line with such a conception would most likely meet with a 'permissive consensus'. This is to say that European citizens appear not to actively push for a CFSDP in line with such a model but they would most likely not resist it either. A foreign, security and defence policy following cosmopolitan orientations would be easy to defend in the public sphere(s) in Europe if opinion polls are any indication. Most interestingly, an EU security policy designed primarily to defend international law and human rights would even be very easy to justify in the generally sceptical countries. We have seen above that respondents especially in the Nordic countries who are hesitant to accept a defence role for the European Union are much more comfortable with assigning humanitarian roles to EU armed forces. These tasks also find wide acceptance in the other EU member states. However, public opinion will not push CFSDP in such a direction as in most EU member states the use of EU armed forces for more traditional security concerns appears justifiable too. It may, moreover, be that public opinion will become more of a constraining force in the future when the EU becomes even more active in the security and defence realm and moves toward politically more salient issues (Oppermann and Höse 2007).

It must be emphasised again that public opinion in general (and polling results even less so) does not mark inflexible demarcation lines which cannot be crossed by democratic policies. Political elites, or any political actor, are free to engage in discursive efforts to convince others of the desirability of certain political decisions. Judging from survey results, the creation of a more integrated defence policy within the EU would require a considerable effort along these lines – at least in some EU member states.

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