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RECONSTITUTING DEMOCRACY IN EUROPE

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Abstract

Next to states and established international organisations, the European Union is emerging as an actor in the realm of international conflict management. Has the media in the EU Member States reflected this change? Our study reveals that the EU, despite its limited institutional capacity in external security affairs, is present in media coverage on international conflict management. Awareness of EU institutions and other EU Member States has increased over time. This pattern is evident in all selected EU Member States, whereas it is considerably less pronounced in the US. The findings point to an appropriate media perception of EU foreign and security policy and to an emerging European problem-solving community. The study is based on a systematic content and corpus-linguistic analysis of a large data set encompassing 16 years of mass media coverage of humanitarian and military interventions in Austria, France, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, the UK and the US.

Keywords

Introduction

With the growing importance of EU activities in security policy and other areas traditionally considered 'high politics', the question becomes relevant, whether these activities are known to, understandable for and accepted by EU citizens. This paper maps the perception of the EU in newspaper reporting on military and humanitarian interventions in order to determine whether the EU has become a reference object in media reporting on external security affairs and whether it has (increasingly) been portrayed as an actor in these issues since the end of the Cold War (1990-2005/6). Sufficient visibility of the EU as an international actor is a central precondition for (national) publics to develop a common understanding of the EU's foreign policy role. Moreover, visibility is the basis for a transnational discussion of common security concerns and is therefore an indicator for the emergence of a transnational 'problem-solving community'[1] and critical public scrutiny of CFSP/ESDP institutionalisation processes. In this sense, medial recognition of the EU as a foreign policy actor is a prerequisite for any steps towards a possible democratisation of EU governance in this policy field.

"'Europe' is not an actor in international affairs, and does not seem likely to become one …" Hedley Bull (1982: 151) once noted, reflecting a common perception that the European Union (EU) would never become a foreign policy actor (Howorth 2007: 2). Most traditional theorists in the field of International Relations long assumed that only states and alliances of states could engage in security and defence policy. The EU, which is more than an alliance, but not nearly a state, was therefore thought unlikely to develop the qualities of a collective actor in international relations – especially in the sphere of defence and security, the heart of national sovereignty.

After the end of the Cold War, however, when the coordinates of external security in Europe rapidly shifted, academic interest in the EU's foreign policy role increased. With the institutionalisation of the EU's so called 'second pillar' – its Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) in the early 1990s, and especially the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) in the late 1990s – this interest reached unexpected levels (c. f. Allen 1998; Allen and Smith 1990; Elgström and Strömvik 2005; Ginsberg 1999; 2001; Hill 1993; 1998; Hill and Smith 2005; Knodt and Princen 2003; Peterson and Smith 2003; Smith 2006). Having established itself as a giant in economic terms with the introduction of the Single Market, the EU was, for the first time, expected to overcome its status as a 'dwarf' in political (and military) terms. Since then, the question whether the EU is an international actor or not (Bretherton and Vogler 2006) has been primarily assessed from the perspective of its problem-solving capacities and military as well as civilian crisis-management capabilities. 'International actorness' referred to the EU's capacity to act intentionally in relation to other actors in the international system (Groenleer and Van Schaik 2007; Sjöstedt 1977; Smith 2003). More specifically, Jupille and Caporaso (1998) identified four dimensions that specify such action capacity: cohesion, authority, autonomy and recognition.

> *[C]ohesion* refers to the degree to which an entity, i. e. the EU, is able to formulate and articulate internally consistent policy preferences. *Authority*

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[1] By a 'problem-solving community' we understand a collectivity sharing a sense of 'sitting in the same boat' and converging problem perceptions – without a collective identity based on shared ethical convictions (Dewey 1927; see also Eriksen 2005; Kantner 2004, 2006a).

pertains to the legal competence of the EU to act. *Autonomy* implies institutional distinctiveness, meaning that the EU can operate relatively independently from individual EU Member States. *Recognition* refers to acceptance of and interaction with the EU by others.

(Groenleer and Van Schaik 2007: 970)

Applying these criteria to the EU's foreign policies, the EU clearly has established itself as an international actor in the course of the last decade. However, its actorness is unevenly developed across policy fields. The EU is undoubtedly a major international player in the fields of international trade, economics, competition, cooperation and association policy, stabilization and enlargement policy, as well as development policy. These policy fields belong to the EU's 'first pillar'. They are characterized by a high degree of supranational decision-making that endows the EU with legal *authority* and *institutional autonomy* vis-à-vis the Member States. Common foreign, security and defence policies, by contrast, are coordinated intergovernmentally within the EU's so called 'second pillar', granting every member a veto.

Along with the different degrees of supranational institutionalisation go different degrees of internal *cohesion*. Cohesion is quite high, for example, with regard to voting and policy-coordination in international organisations such as the WTO; it has, however, been low with regard to some major crisis situations, such as the Balkan-Wars in the 1990s and the Iraq War (2002/2003). This is also reflected in the EU's outward appearance as a discordant, undecided, and weak security actor (Börzel 2005; Pollack 1994; Schmalz 2000). The EU often appears unable to 'speak with one voice.' Indeed, it has become a truism that as long as the EU Member States prioritize their own national foreign, security and defence policy and as long as the CFSP/ESDP is intergovernmentally organised, inconsistent policies will undermine the credibility (Scheipers and Sicurelli 2007) and the effectiveness of the EU as an international actor (Schmalz 2000).

Other particularities of the EU as an international actor are its limited military resources and its preference for non-military means of conflict resolution. In the course of the NATO intervention in Kosovo in 1998/99, the dramatic deficits of most EU Member States with regard to military assets and modern weapon systems became obvious. Compared to the US, the EU displayed a debilitating 'capabilities-expectations gap' (Dover 2005; Hagman 2002; Hill 1993; 1998). Since the institutionalisation of the ESDP in 1999, the EU and its Member States have increased the available military and civilian capabilities. At the same time, the debate about the EU as a 'civilian power' resurged. The *topos* of Europe as a civilian power was already coined in the 1970s, when the members of the European Community (EC) attempted to coordinate foreign policies for the first time (Duchêne 1972; 1973). The EC was seen as a civilian, not a military power. Its economic power granted it influence and it was able to lead by example, having transformed (Western) Europe from war-torn ruins into a region of peace and prosperity (Bull 1982; Hill 1990). Europe had no, needed no, and did not attempt to develop a supranational military component, choosing rather to further develop its non-military philosophy of conflict resolution. When the ESDP became operational in 2003, the discussion of Europe as a civilian power revived (Hyde-Price 2006; Kantner and Liberatore 2006; Manners 2006a; Orbie 2006; Shepherd 2006; Sjursen 2006; Wagner and Hellmann 2003; Whitman 1998). Some authors viewed the development of the ESDP as a threat to the operation, the image, and the

self-understanding of the EU as a civilian power (Manners 2006b; Smith 2000; Treacher 2004).

Others argued that only today – equipped with economic, civilian, and military instruments – is the EU prepared to choose from among a diversity of possible reactions to international challenges (Börzel and Risse 2007). Only now that it disposes of the entire spectrum of means to promote its norms, can the EU be considered a 'power'. Furthermore, the EU's potential for action in foreign and security affairs seems to be acknowledged by third parties. The degree of formal and informal *recognition* of the EU[2] as an international actor and a contractual partner is very high among third states, international organisations, and NGOs (Groenleer and Van Schaik 2007: 990).[3] Hence, the EU appears to have gained a potential for international actorness in external security issues, albeit to a limited extent.

Yet, it is an open question whether the EU's international actorness is recognised by the broader public. Is the EU perceived as an actor who ought to act upon international crises and violent conflicts? Does an informed public watch and discuss the development of EU foreign and security policy capacities? Given the fact that the EU's foreign, security, and defence initiatives have to be justified with regard to 27 nationally constituted electorates, this question is of significant importance. Wallace, for instance, assumes that public awareness of and familiarisation with the shift of foreign policy agency from the national to the transnational level is a precondition for effective foreign policy coordination at the EU level. As long as such understanding is missing in the public, the heads of government will keep emphasizing their commitment to domestic rather than European concerns. They will play on their electorates' supposed preferences, instead of formulating a common position vis-à-vis international partners (Wallace 2005: 451). From this perspective, an informed *transnational* public is a limiting and enabling factor for the EU to become an international actor. However, the prospects for the development of public awareness for and transnational communication of the EU's foreign policy role are seen to be rather dim. The ESDP is said to be virtually absent in public debate (exemplary for many complaints about the public invisibility of ESDP see: Howorth 2007: 2, 58; Kaldor et al. 2008; Wallace 2005) and national publics are thought to be indifferent towards the EU's international profile:

> The absence of a European public space – of a shared public debate, communicating through shared media, think tanks, political parties, responding to and criticizing authoritative policy-makers – remains the greatest inhibitor of further subordination of sovereignty, national traditions, and national expenditure to common policy. A transnational expert community has gradually developed across the EU, communicating through specialist journals and think tanks […] National parliaments and mass media, however, were only intermittently interested.
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> (Wallace 2005: 454)

However, to date there have been very few systematic, cross-national, empirical investigations to validate or disprove these very widely held beliefs (among the

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[2] The 'EU' is usually represented by the High Representative for the CFSP, the Council Presidency or the European Commission.

[3] In this context, 'recognition' is not understood as a normative concept. It is sufficient for the EU to be perceived (however positively or negatively) and accepted as a relevant partner by other international actors.

exceptions are: Grundmann et al. 2000; Meyer 2005; Meyer and Zdrada 2006; Renfordt 2007).

This paper seeks to address this shortcoming. It explores *empirically* whether the EU is publicly perceived as an actor in the context of the debate on humanitarian and military interventions in the EU Member States. We investigate whether we can observe changes in perception over time and whether these (changing) perceptions are debated in the different Member States' media and are therefore visible to the public. Moreover, we were interested in the question whether changes in the discourse relate to the institutionalisation of CFSP/ESDP. To this end, we collected and analysed a large corpus of multilingual newspaper articles comprising 16 years of newspaper debate on military and humanitarian interventions (January 1990 to March 2006) in six EU Member States and the US as a non-European comparative case. We used both qualitative content analysis and corpus-linguistic methods to identify the EU's 'perceived actorness'.

In the following we will comprehensively map the perception of the EU as an international actor in media debates on humanitarian and military interventions. *Firstly*, we will introduce the broader research framework within which the study is situated and outline the categories and methods used. *Secondly*, we will present the results produced by our study. *Finally*, we will draw some conclusions on the implications these results might have for the public recognition of the EU as an international actor.

The EU as a reference object in a problem-solving community Assumptions, theses, and design of the study

Our research analyses media debates on humanitarian and military interventions. It asks whether similar perceptions of international problems are presented to audiences in different countries. Are similar reference objects (e. g. EU actors) referred to and similar criteria of assessment used when searching for problem solutions? By reconstructing problem perceptions, reference objects, and criteria of judgement, we will be able to determine whether 'European public spheres' and a 'European problem-solving community' based on shared convictions concerning security issues even without a strong collective identity have emerged (Eriksen 2005; Kantner 2004; 2006a). Well-informed transnational publics that reflect upon, influence, or control institution-building at the EU-level might, in doing so, counter-balance some dimensions of the EU's democratic deficit. While we are not investigating the political effects of this communication, we share the presumption that thematically intertwined national media debates facilitate transnational political communication on concerns that defy the exclusive competence and democratic control of the nation state such as security issues in the EU (Kantner 2004; 2006b).

In line with current research on the emergence of European public spheres, we expect *national* mass media to be a major catalyst of such transnational EU-related political communication (Eder and Kantner 2000; Trenz 2004; van de Steeg 2002). As soon as media in different EU Member States draws attention to similar problems (e. g. the Kosovo crisis) and attributes similar relevance to them and to similar actors (e. g. the EU), the involved communicators and audiences will be able to refer to shared frames of reference and to form their opinions on transnational issues of common concern more easily. They might even develop shared criteria of judgement and justification

(e. g. of military interventions). Next to synchronous agenda-setting and rapprochement in relevance attribution, shared references to EU politics are considered to indicate evolving European (EU-related) problem-solving communities in the national media. Due to its multi-level character, EU politics may become a point of reference in two respects: either supranational institutions attract the media's attention and become addressees of social actors' claims (vertical Europeanization); or the politics of Member States and claims articulated in Member States' publics start to attract media attention and commentaries in other EU countries (horizontal Europeanization) (Koopmans and Erbe 2004).

While vertical Europeanization indicates that media and other social actors acknowledge the EU as an (additional) centre of policy-making, horizontal Europeanization points to an increased awareness of the EU as a shared context for political action and mutual observation between different Member States' publics. However, the emergence of the EU as a reference point in issues of external security implies more than the opening of perspectives to supranational and other Member States' concerns. It may well imply the social construction of an additional international actor, imagined to be capable or even obliged to act upon international conflicts. Therefore, we are interested not only in finding out *whether* the EU has become an object of reference in external security issues. We need to know what kinds of references were made; whether and what kind of actorness was ascribed to the EU. The following assumptions informed the design of the study:

Firstly, the construction of the EU as a shared reference object in terms of *actorness* should manifest itself in *increased awareness for the EU* in external security issues, both in vertical and horizontal respects; and in a *frequent portrayal of the EU as an actor* who is affected by international crises and is able to or ought to act upon them. Media *mentions of CFSP/ESDP* could provide an additional indicator for the EU's 'perceived actorness'.

Secondly, news coverage on military and humanitarian interventions was chosen as a 'hard test case' for the EU's 'perceived actorness'. It is a 'hard case' because military and humanitarian interventions are traditionally dealt with by established international actors that have the mandate and/or institutional capacities for international conflict management: the United Nations, NATO, and (coalitions of) states. Therefore, the EU is rather unlikely to gain a big share of media attention in these issues. Moreover, the degree of Europeanization of news coverage in a particular policy field correlates to the degree of supranational institutionalisation of that policy field (Neidhardt 2006). Given the limited competences the EU has gained in external security affairs, we suspected *the EU to be a rather minor point of reference* in debates on military and humanitarian intervention compared with other international actors. Therefore, even rare reference to the EU in this issue area would be an important finding and would tell us much about the 'perceived international actorness' of the EU.

Thirdly, we expected that both international crisis events (which are likely to open up perspectives for interdependence), and/or moves of institutionalisation of the CFSP/ESDP would trigger rapprochement in news representation and perception in the different countries. In the period under investigation, we distinguished three distinct sub-periods that are characterised by particular series of crisis events *and* moves of institutionalisation at the EU-level: Between 1990 and 1995, the first Gulf War and the Balkan Wars made it clear that, despite the end of the Cold War, violent

conflicts could occur even on the European continent. During this time period, the second pillar of the European Union, the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) was established with the Maastricht Treaty (1993), however, a common security and defence policy could not yet be created. In the second period, between 1996 and 2000, ethnic conflicts ravaged Bosnia, Rwanda, and Kosovo and the EU Member States began to institutionalise the security component of the CFSP, the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). At the policy level, the discussion about European military capabilities was central. During the third period, 2001 to 2006, which began with the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the United States, conflicts and non-EU-missions outside Europe (Afghanistan, Iraq) divided the Member States. Yet, in 2003 the ESDP became operational. With the formulation of a European security strategy, the Member States codified the principles and aims of the ESDP (European Union 2003) and the EU started to lead an increasing number of international missions. We expected these developments to have influenced the perception of the EU in external security issues. *In particular, the Balkan Wars and the subsequent institutionalisation of the ESDP in the second period might have pushed awareness of the desirability of the ESDP's problem-solving capacities.*

Finally, we expected perceptions to vary cross-nationally, given the different foreign policy traditions and the different trajectories of membership (both in the EU and in other international organisations) of the countries under investigation. Rapprochement in problem perception and relevance attribution to the EU, therefore, might not manifest itself as a continuous convergence between EU Member States. *Intra-European differences could, however, be rather minor when comparing news coverage in EU Member States with news coverage in non-EU countries* such as the US. To test these assumptions, the factor 'nation' was used as a major descriptive category, even though we did not examine the reasons for cross-national variance at this point.

Operationalisation of the study

To examine empirically whether the above expectations hold true, we analysed a large, multilingual data set, which included 16 years (January 1990 – March 2006) of news coverage on humanitarian and military interventions, here taken to mean peace-keeping and humanitarian operations in which a third party intervenes into an ongoing intra-state armed conflict for security and humanitarian reasons. The cleansed full-sample of newspaper articles (reporting as well as editorials) on wars *and* humanitarian and military interventions was taken from electronic archives of major national broadsheets published in Germany, The Netherlands, Austria, France, Ireland, the United Kingdom, and – for extra-European comparison – the United States (N=489,508).[4] We included a centre-left and a conservative newspaper for each country (with the exception of Ireland, where only one paper was available). From the full-sample we drew a smaller sub-sample (N=102,809) on 'military and humanitarian intervention' specifically, using more specific keywords and collocations identified with the help of more complex corpus-linguistic methods.

This 'intervention-sample' was subject to extensive *corpus-linguistic analysis*. We assessed the immediate word context of particular keywords (e. g. of 'European', 'Europe', 'Brussels') in order to assess the meanings of the foreign policy actor 'EU'

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[4] The keywords for the sampling procedure focussed on war, intervention and troop deployment in combination with the names of all crisis countries (1990-2006). This listing of keywords did not contain any CFSP / ESDP or EU components. The raw sample was cleansed of doublets and sampling errors (e.g. articles on sports or legal cases containing war-metaphors) using computational-linguistic procedures.

from the texts. This was done with the help of WordSmith, a software that lists all the uses of a search word in the available text corpus and sorts them according to regularly co-occurring words (statistically significant 'collocates') and to word clusters that include the search-word on a regular basis. The word clusters identified as signifying a particular international actor (e. g. 'the Atlantic Alliance' for NATO) were then used in a text-mining procedure to identify newspaper articles that referred to this particular actor using the software SPSS Clementine. This method allowed us to automatically retrieve the frequency of an actor's occurrence in a large data set that would have been impossible to analyse manually. However, for a more in-depth, qualitative content analysis, we drew on a smaller, representative sample of articles.[5] It was coded by well-trained and continually supervised coders.[6] They categorised the newspaper articles after detailed hermeneutic analysis according to variables (e. g. the EU as an initiating actor) that were given in a database interface. The following section describes which categories were used during these procedures to identify the EU's 'perceived actorness'.

Identifying 'perceived actorness'

While a large body of literature defines international actorness in terms of institutional capacities, there has been no discussion so far on the definition and measurement of its perception in the (media) public. To approach this phenomenon, we drew on the concept of 'media visibility' that is (implicitly) applied by the majority of studies on EU coverage in national mass media. The term 'visibility' refers to the occurrence of a specific topic or actor in the media: An actor or topic is 'visible' to the audience when it occurs in the news. Visibility is taken as an indicator for the attention and the importance attributed to a specific actor/topic during the process of news selection. Its degree and quality is usually measured by the frequency of news stories or parts of news stories dedicated to the actor/topic under study, the length and elaborateness of those reports or commentaries, and their placement in more or less prestigious program or newspaper sections (Peter et al. 2003: 307).

At the same time, visibility in the media is the precondition for the audience's awareness of an actor and for the development of expectations and judgments towards this actor. Therefore, visibility of the EU in issues of military and humanitarian intervention is a first indicator for the EU's 'perceived actorness'. However, how do we know that the fragments of news stories, in which the EU, European politics, EU institutions or EU politicians are mentioned, do portray the EU as a foreign policy actor that has or should have capacities to act at the international level? In order to arrive at valid indicators, we developed additional, more specific instruments for both the classical qualitative content analysis and the corpus-linguistic analysis in order to capture the ambiguity and multi-level character of EU politics, the portrayals of the EU as an international actor, and the institutionalised dimension of its activities – the CFSP/ESDP.

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[5] For the exact number of the overall sample on war and intervention and on the sub-samples see Table 2 in the Appendix.

[6] We continuously tested for intercoder reliability. If necessary, the coders were given an extra-training in order to improve the quality of the coding. Using an adaptation of Holsti's formula we conducted 34 tests on the 24 coders in total. The results were highly satisfactory for all the variables discussed in the paper: The Holsti coefficient for the lead actor was 0.83, for the initiating actor 0.77 and for the affected actor 0.67. According to Brosios and Koschel (2001: 75) any score higher than 0.6 can be considered satisfactory for variables which are demanding in terms of identifying highly abstract codes in the text. For an in-depth discussion of reliability tests see Krippendorff (2004: Ch. 11).

For the *qualitative content analysis*, coders were instructed to not only note the occurrence of a particular person or group that represents a particular collective social or institutional actor (e. g. 'parties', 'rebels', the United Nations, the US-Army) in the news. They also had to decide which actor was fore-grounded in particular parts of the selected article and which roles were ascribed to him/her[7]: was he/she portrayed as the *news-giver* in the introductory lead of the article (in the following: *lead actor*); as *initiating* something with regard to the main issues at stake; and/or as passively *affected* in relation to the main issue?[8] While all three categories capture 'reference objects', it is the first and second categories that identify dimensions of 'perceived actorness'. A portrayal as '*lead actor*' indicates that the author considers the actor to be well-known to the audience and capable of catching the reader's attention. A portrayal as '*initiating actor*' qualifies the reference object as being capable of acting upon an issue.

Accordingly, these two categories were at the centre of our analysis of the 'perceived actorness' of the *institutional actor EU and other international actors* (see Figure 1). The codebook further defined the institutional level at which the respective actor was operating. The UN, the NATO, other international organisations, or more vague concepts like the 'international community' were classified as *international*, while representatives of EU bodies were named EU actors. 'EU' therefore referred to *EU institutions* only. At the *national* level coders had to classify the provenance of state representatives (governments, parliaments/deputies, armies, judges etc.). For better comparison, these actors were later grouped into the categories 'own national actors' (actors from the country where the newspaper was published), 'US national actors', 'other EU national actors' (actors from other EU Member States), and 'other national actors' (e. g. the Japanese Prime Minister) (see Figure 1).

For the *corpus-linguistic analysis of keywords and their immediate word context*, the definition of the reference object 'institutional actor' was less demanding. It encompassed all those words and word clusters belonging to the semantic field of an institutional actor that were unambiguously related to a concrete institution and that had proven to be collocates of the selected search-word. The semantic fields of institutional actors generally included the official names and paraphrases of the institution; abbreviations; names and abbreviations of sub-entities, of persons representing the institution and of founding documents.[9] This 'ontology' of an institutional actor was more or less the same in all the languages analysed. It was applied in a text-mining procedure to retrieve (the number of) articles from the intervention sample that referred to the respective international actor. However, it did not capture all the articles that referred to *EU* actors because they were often simply referred to ambiguously as 'Europe', 'European', 'Europeans', 'Brussels', in French and English articles in particular.

In order to also retrieve the articles that used 'Europe', 'European', 'Europeans', 'Brussels' *in the sense of EU politics*, we isolated all word clusters that unambiguously signified the EU and did *not* refer to a larger political or geographical context, or to

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[7] If several actors shared one of the coded actor roles, the actor mentioned first was coded.

[8] In each of these roles only the actor was coded who was mentioned first.

[9] Ambiguous words, e. g. 'Javier Solana', who used to represent the NATO before becoming the EU's High Representative, had to be excluded from the text-mining procedure. The same was true for 'false friends' – expressions that were partly identical with the searched word cluster, but signified something else (e. g. the Russian Security Council in the case of the UN).

the Belgian capital and compiled large lists of word clusters that mirrored the entire universe of EU multi-level politics. They entailed expressions for the different levels, representatives, and mechanisms of EU internal politics, among them terms for EU institutions, terms for policy-making in Brussels, for intergovernmental Europe (e. g. European leaders), for intra-EU relations (e. g. European partners, other European states), and for EU-related domestic politics in the newspapers' country (e. g. confiance dans l'Europe, bataille européenne).

There were also expressions for the intellectual struggles, visions, and myths of European integration (e. g. European debate, European project, founding fathers etc.). Many words signified the EU's appearance at the international level (e. g. European position, Europe's failure, the Europeans), its external relations (e. g. between Europe and America, relations russo-européennes), and the institutionalised common foreign, development, and security policies. Furthermore 'Europe' appeared as a grammatical subject that, in our data, unambiguously referred to the EU ('Europe must', 'Europe should' etc.).[10] These expressions were used in addition to the official names of the EU and its predecessors for the identification of articles that dealt with the reference object 'EU' (see Table 1).

To develop a measure of 'perceived actorness' similar to that used in the content analysis, we extracted all those expressions from the above 'EU universe' that portrayed the EU as someone who *initiates something at the international level* or who is expected to do so: expressions for the EU's external relations and subject clauses attributing agency to the EU. We further added all the wordings that signified the EU's institutionalised foreign, development, and security policy instruments. This list of word clusters was used to identify occurrences of the EU as a foreign policy actor (see Figure 3). The word clusters that signified the EU's foreign, development and security policy instruments were further used to separately identify the share of articles that explicitly referred to CFSP / ESDP and its predecessors (see Figure 4).

The EU's perceived actorness in news on humanitarian and military interventions

How was EU foreign policy actorness in the context of the debate on humanitarian and military interventions perceived by the media? This section confronts the research questions and hypotheses that were introduced in the beginning with the results produced using the methodology discussed above.

The EU as a reference object in news on interventions

Our starting point was the question whether the EU occurs in the news on humanitarian and military interventions. We assumed that it would be visible, though to a lesser extent than the established actors of international conflict management. Both the results of the human coding and of the word cluster-based analysis provided evidence that, indeed, the EU has become a reference object in the news on military and humanitarian interventions. Table 1 shows that the EU, understood to include *all*

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[10] In order to account for the occasionally remarkable national differences in wording, the expressions were scanned for each country separately. The resulting national lists were than compared with each other to make sure that every semantic sub-category of words was included in the subsequent text-mining procedure for every single country.

Table 1: Share of Articles that Mention: EU, NATO, UN, OSCE, European Council (in %)

Country Cases/IOs	EU	NATO	UN	OSCE	European Council
Germany	26.5	38.5	60.3	5.4	0.8
Austria	30.7	39.9	58.7	6.3	0.7
Netherlands	25.6	35.8	64.4	4.5	0.4
France	32.3	30.2	63.8	3.8	0.7
Ireland	28.2	31.1	73.0	3.0	0.6
UK	21.2	28.1	64.5	2.1	0.3
US	16.3	26.8	60.9	0.6	0.1

Note: N = 102,809, method used: corpus-linguistic frequency analysis

The figures resulted from the word cluster based analysis and are given in percent of the total of newspaper articles that were published on humanitarian and military interventions ('intervention sub-sample', N=102,809, Σ > 100 per cent).

*aspects of EU multi-level politic*s, receives between 16.3 per cent and 32.3 per cent of news coverage. In no European country does the EU receive less than 20 per cent.

In all the countries, the EU easily surpassed the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE/OSCE; 2.1 per cent to 6.3 per cent in Europe; 0.6 per cent in the US) and the European Council (0.3 per cent to 0.8 in Europe; 0.1 per cent in the US). The EU ranked third following the UN and NATO in all countries (UN: 60.3 per cent to 73.0 per cent; NATO: 26.8 per cent in the US to 39.9 per cent in Austria), except in France, where the EU ranked second ahead of NATO. Interestingly, the British media lagged behind all the other EU members regarding the relevance attributed to Europe-based organisations; but still referred to them much more frequently than the US media.

The picture turns out to be different, though, when we – as in the qualitative content analysis – consider only those actors highlighted in the articles as either *lead actors*, *initiating* or *affected* actors, when we take *states* into account and when we focus only on *EU institutions*, such as the, High Representative of Common Foreign and Security Policy, the EU Commission, the Council of the European Union, etc., rather than on the various aspects of EU politics. Using this measurement, representatives of states make up by far the biggest share of reference objects in news on interventions, with the newspapers' home country ('own national actors') and the US being the most prominent. Especially the newspapers in the larger countries (France, Germany, UK, US) tend to focus on national representatives and their own state representatives, while the newspapers in the smaller countries display a more international profile. This pattern is particularly clear for the category 'initiating actor' in the years 2001-2005 (see Figure 1).

Here, among the international actors, the UN is again the most visible. EU institutions, to the contrary, are hardly referred to in the British and the US media.[11] They are also less frequent in the other European countries, with the notable exception of Austria. This pattern – rather little attention for international actors and for EU institutions in

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[11] The French media go together with the British and US media only in 2001-2005.

particular – is valid for all the coded categories (lead actor, initiating actor, affected actor) and for all three periods, but it is strongest in the years 2001-2005 (see also Figures 5 and 6).[12]
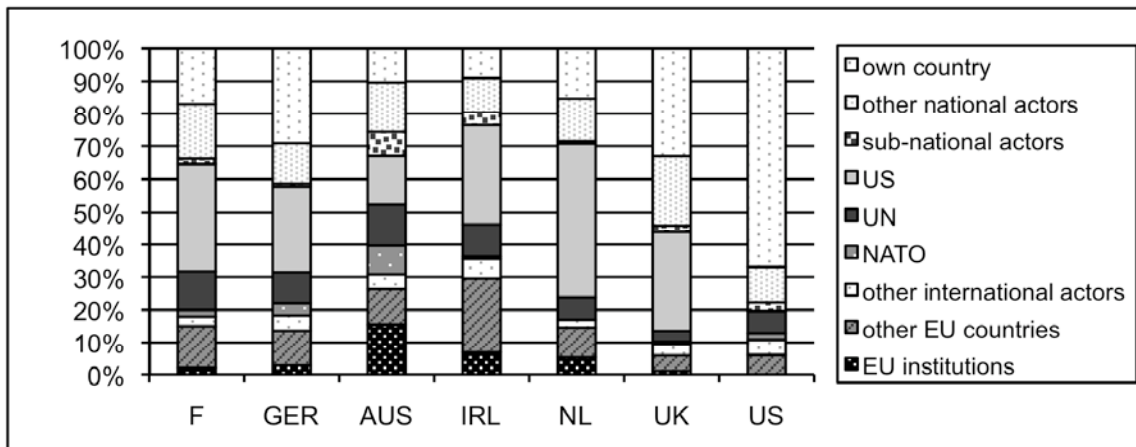

Figure 1: Initiating Actors 2001-2005 in %

Note: Method used: human coding

N = 3,500. Institutional initiating actors: n = 1,360 articles (US: 148, UK: 185, Germany: 213, France: 240, the Netherlands: 260, Ireland: 132, Austria: 182).

However, this finding does not suggest that EU actors and EU politics are insignificant reference objects in debates on military and humanitarian interventions. It also does not necessarily contradict the findings of the word cluster-based analysis described earlier. When we take a closer look at 'other EU countries', we can see that they are frequently referred to in all the countries analysed (see also Figure 7 and 8). If we further take into account that, in EU countries, 'own national actors' often appear in a EU context, i. e. their statements and deeds are compared to those of other Member States (e. g. 'France and other European states', 'Paris and other European capitals'), the above figures mirror the *intergovernmental character* of the EU in issues of external security. By referring frequently to EU politics in general (see Table 1), by fore-grounding other EU Member States as actors more often than EU institutions, the media, in fact, provide a realistic portrayal of the status quo of European integration in external security issues.

Increase over Time?

Did perception change over time? We assumed that events like the Yugoslav Wars and perhaps also milestones in the institutionalisation of the ESDP would raise awareness of the EU's role as a security actor in the media and would continuously increase the number of references to the EU. The results generated by the word cluster-based analysis show that we were only partly right.

Figure 2 reveals that there is *no continuous increase* in absolute figures over time. To the contrary, during the first period the graph displays some high amplitudes.[13] In the

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[12] Sub-national institutional actors are hardly referred to in any of the three actor roles.

[13] In the first period electronic data were not available for all newspapers. For the missing data in the early years of the period of investigation see Table in the Appendix.

US and, to a slightly lesser extent, in the UK, the EU is even more often referred to in the first period than in the second and third periods.

The assumption that the institutionalisation of the ESDP would trigger more EU references was also disproven. Instead, the share of word clusters that signify the CFSP/ESDP and its predecessors *decreases* over time in those articles that mention the EU. It is highest during the first period and lowest during the third in all the countries analysed, except in France and Ireland where it is highest during the second period (see Figure 4 in the next section). This finding suggests that in news on humanitarian and military interventions the EU was not only already a reference object in the early 1990s but, in light of the high percentage of CFSP/ESDP references at that time, also points to the existence of a vivid discussion of common policies *prior* to their institutionalisation. When the CFSP/ESDP were being institutionalised and implemented, media attention decreased. Hence, it seems that while scholars still struggled to define the EU's international actorness, it was already acknowledged in the media. This interpretation is supported by our results on the portrayal of the EU as a foreign policy actor, discussed in the next section.

While major crisis events apparently did not induce a linear increase in attention attributed to the EU, they caused cyclical peaking of EU references. Despite the fact that our sample included interventions in *all* conflict regions, the Gulf Wars and the conflicts in former Yugoslavia attracted by far the most attention. The number of references to the EU and to other international organisations over time peaked at the same times.

Hence, the EU seems to be important when international organisations in general were expected to act upon a conflict. However, while the EU gained more attention than NATO during the Bosnian War in 1992 and the Iraq crisis at the beginning of 2003, NATO got more attention during the 1999 Kosovo War. These findings suggest that references to international actors in issues of military and humanitarian interventions are driven by particular historic contexts. Which international actors receive the most media attention depends on the type of conflict and conflict management strategies at stake: The bombing of Belgrade led to a NATO-centred perception, whereas diplomacy and coordination between states in the lead-up to the Second Gulf War led to a state-, EU-, and UN-centred discussion.

Furthermore, increases in references seem to depend on whether the conflict is perceived as a 'European' problem that has to be dealt with by the EU. This becomes clear when we compare the references to the UN with those to the EU over time: References to the EU peak synchronously with UN references, however, they are particularly strong in June 1992 (WEU Petersberg Declaration, May 1993 (Bosnian War), March and July 1999 (Kosovo War) and March 2003 (Iraq crisis), when the involvement of EU actors was very controversial. The totals for EU references (see Table 1) further suggest that the perception that the EU plays an important role is much stronger in the EU Member States than in the US. It is strongest in continental Europe and Ireland. Moreover, in Europe the perception that the EU plays an important role is accompanied by an interest in other European security organisations. News coverage on the OSCE and the Council of Europe increased during the major 'European' conflict events with the exception of the Iraq crisis in 2003.
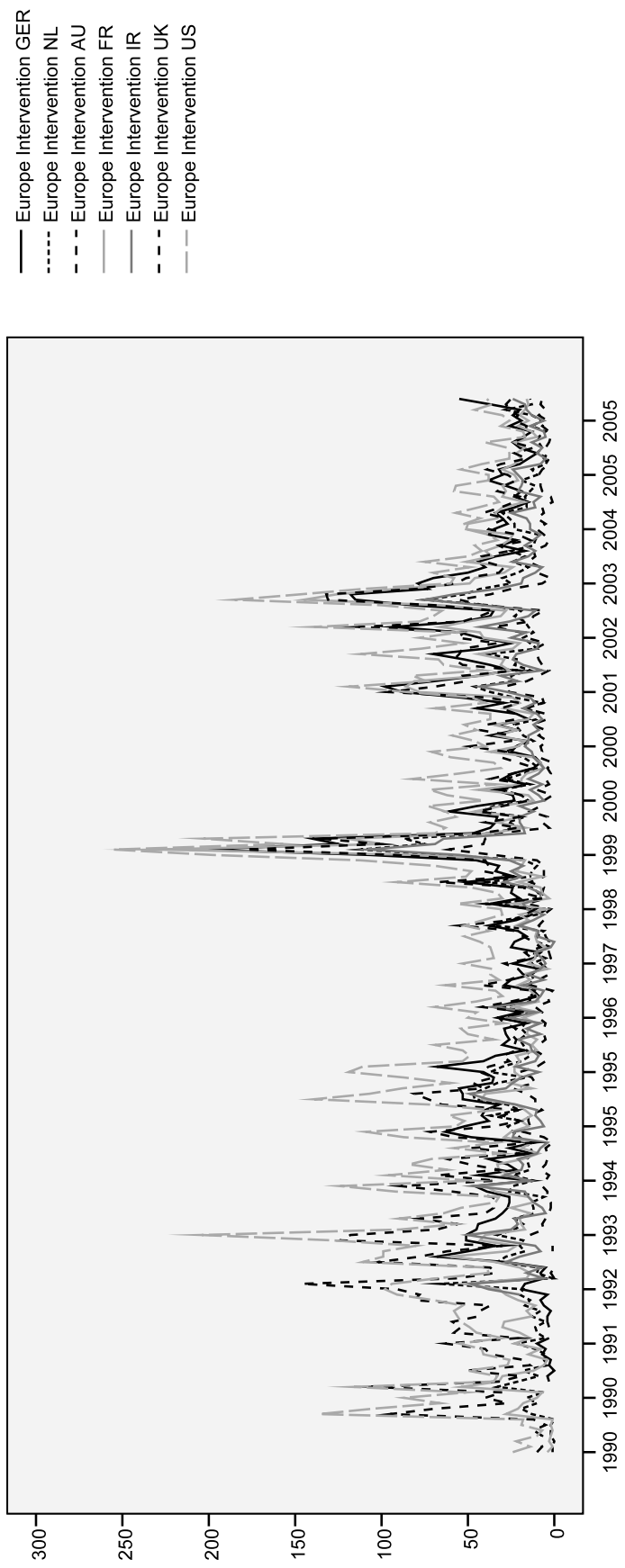
Figure 2: Number of Articles Referring to EU Politics in the Intervention Sub-Sample

Note: N = 102,809, method used: corpus-linguistic frequency analysis

The portrayal of the EU as a security actor

While the quantity of references to the EU does not increase over time, our evidence suggests that the way in which the EU is referred to changes. The word cluster based analysis provided evidence that, with the exception of the UK and the Netherlands, all newspapers increasingly portray the EU as an entity that is capable and obliged to act upon external security problems. The share of word clusters that signify the EU's international actorness (e. g. diplomatic initiatives, relations to other countries, CFSP/ESDP, etc.) increases over time (see Figures 3 and 4).
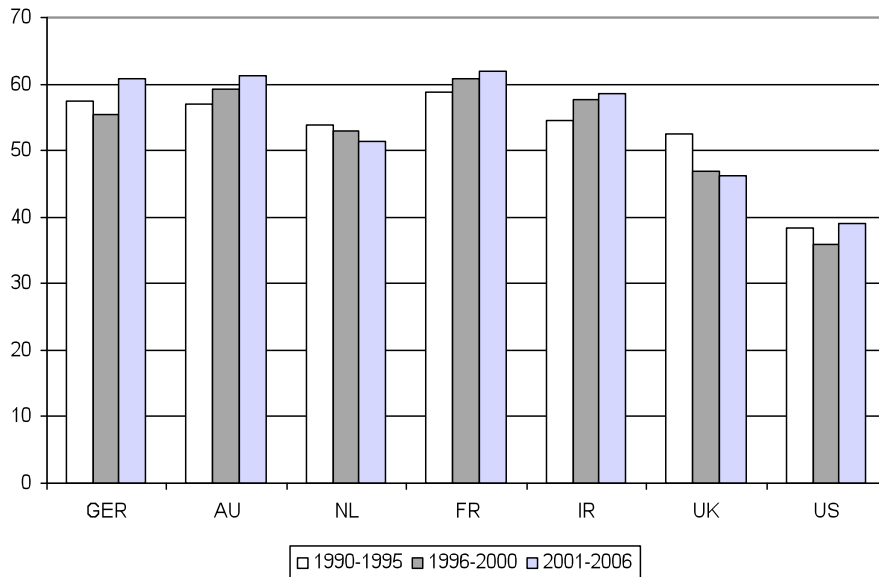
Figure 3: The share of 'EU actorness' in articles mentioning the EU (in %)
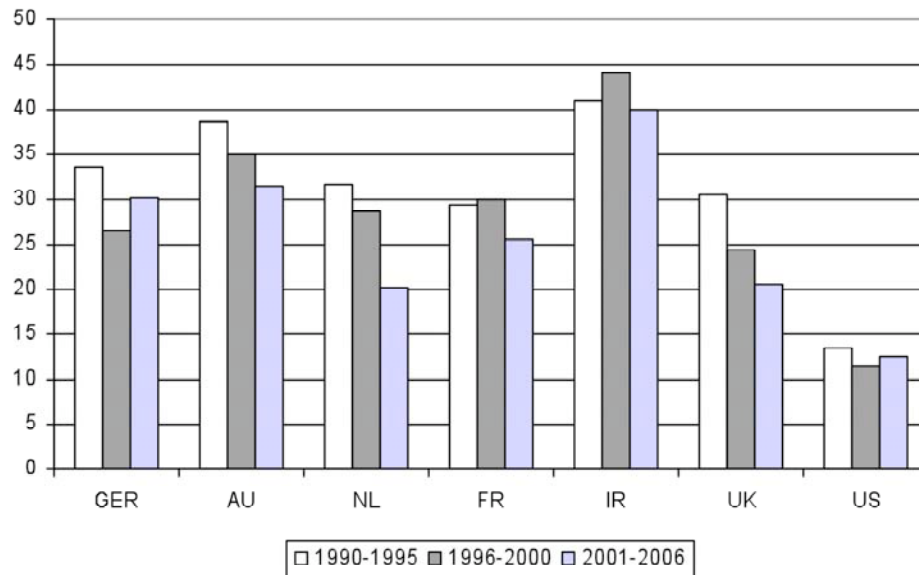
Figure 4: The share of CFSP/ESDP in articles mentioning the EU (in %)

Notes *(both tables)*: N = 102,809, method used: corpus-linguistic frequency analysis.

> The numbers are given in percent of the total of all articles on intervention that referred to the EU. The respective Ns were: Germany: 4,241, the Netherlands: 2,532, Austria: 1,137, France: 3,919, Ireland: 2,263, UK: 4,869, US: 5,917.

The results produced by the qualitative content analysis provided more detail for the above finding. They show that the increase in the EU's perceived actorness is unevenly distributed among EU actors at different levels of the multi-level system. *EU institutions* are comparatively rarely highlighted as *lead actor* and/or *initiating actor* in all selected countries (see Figure 5 and 6).[14] The average frequency of the EU as the
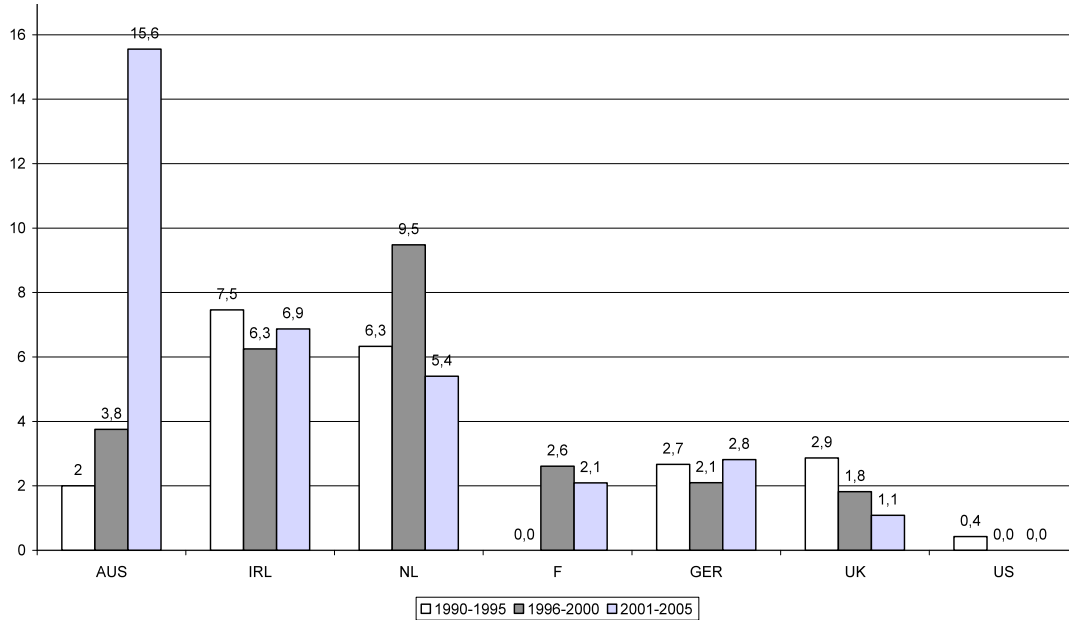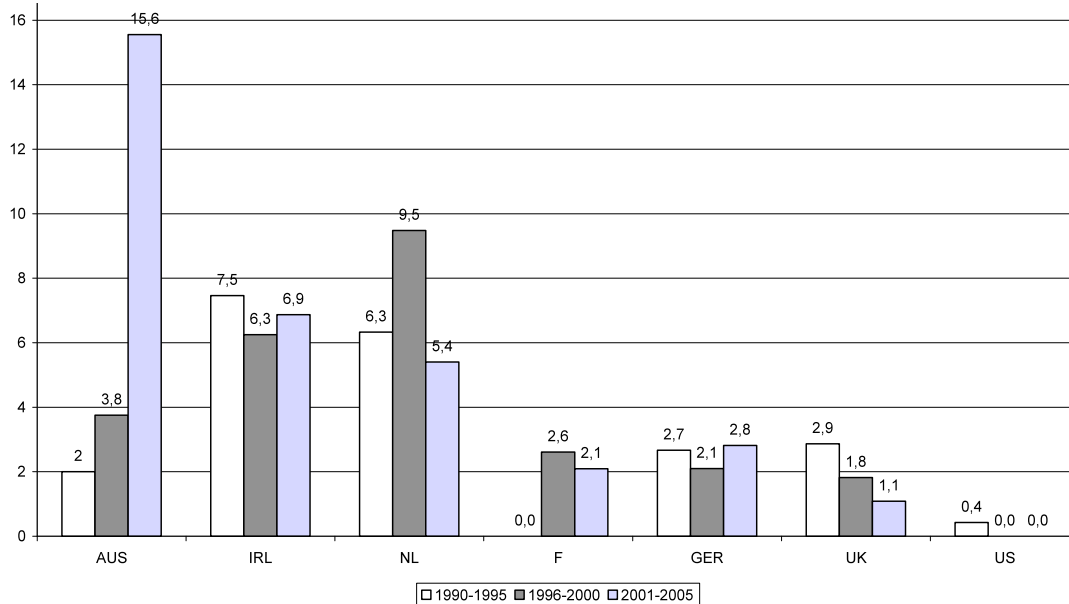

Figure 5: EU institutions as lead actor in %

Figure 6: EU institutions as initiating actor in %

Note *(both tables)*: N = 3,500, method used: human coding

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[14] The results for the category '*affected actor*' are not further assessed in this paper since it turned out that, both for EU institutions and for EU Member States, the figures are very small and do not display clear patterns. The comparison with other actors showed that 'other (non-EU) national actors' are most frequently portrayed as being affected by the issue at stake. This category encompasses, for instance, the crisis countries.
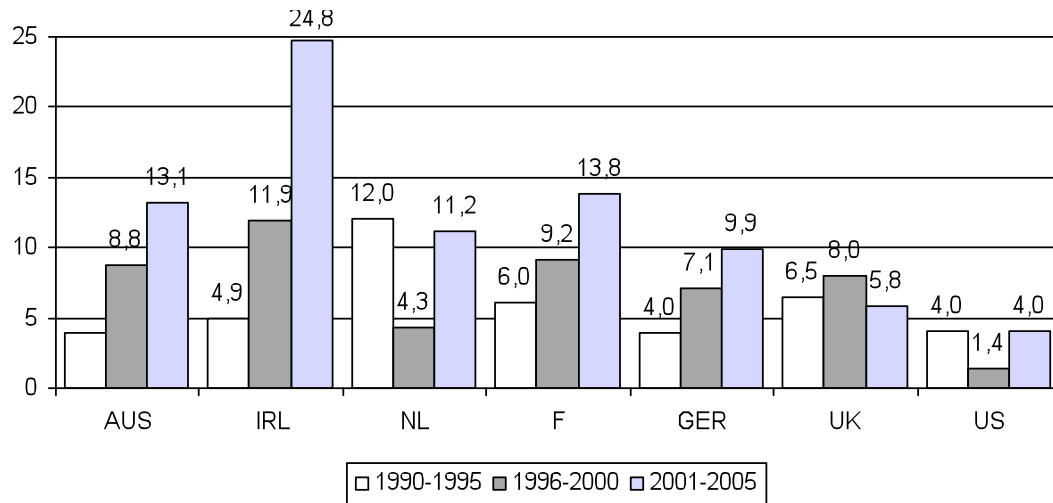
Figure 7: EU member states as lead actor in %

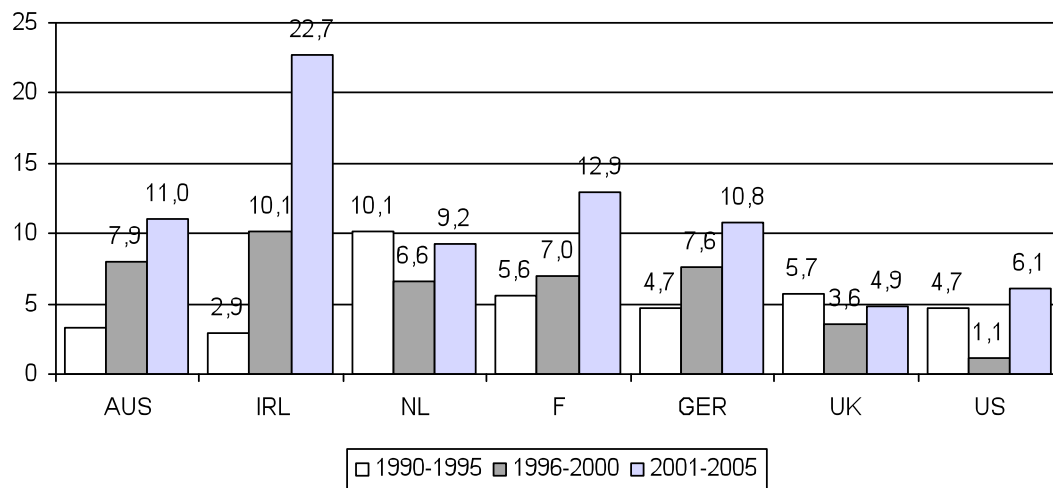**Note:**   N = 3,500, method used: human coding

Figure 8: EU member states as initiating actor in %

Note: N = 3,500, method used: human coding

lead actor is only 4.0 per cent across all seven countries in the years 1990-1995. This number slightly decreases to 3.9 per cent in the second period of investigation, but rises to 5 per cent of all *lead actors* from 2001 onwards. The increasingly frequent portrayal of EU institutions as *initiating actors* is a 'European' phenomenon only. In the European countries, the EU was portrayed as initiating actor in 3.6 per cent (1990-1995), 4.4 per cent (1996-2000) and 5.7 per cent (2001-2005) of cases, whereas it is virtually invisible in US newspapers.[15] Yet, Figures 5 and 6 also indicate that frequencies vary significantly between the European countries as well as over time.

When focusing on the portrayal of national representatives of EU countries, by contrast, we can discern a clearer pattern. The figures below illustrate that EU

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[15] US-American newspapers hardly refer to EU institutions as *lead* or *initiating actor*. The EU appears as initiating actor, for instance, in only 0.4 percent of articles in 1990-1995. From 1996 until 2005, not a single instance was found.

countries are more frequently presented as *lead actors* and/or as *initiating actors* than EU institutions. They further indicate that four out of six 'European' countries increasingly portray EU Member States as lead (Figure 7) and/or initiating actor (Figure 8). However, Dutch and British reporting develops in the opposite direction, confirming the results produced by the word cluster based analysis (see Figures 3 and 4).

In the US newspapers, the relative share of EU Member States both as *lead* and *initiating actors* remains very low across all three time periods. Their portrayal as initiating actors slightly increased to 6.1 per cent in the last period, compared to 4.7 per cent in the years 1990-1995. Unlike the EU institutions, however, they *are* visible in the US press. This confirms the trend discerned in Figure 1: While the frequency with which EU institutions are mentioned has hardly changed (with Austria being an exception), the representatives of EU Member States have gained 'perceived actorness', in all countries except the UK, particularly during the third period.

Do we have to conclude from this that European politics is 're-nationalising' as recently suspected in scholarly and public debate? Based on the findings presented in this article, we would suggest a different conclusion. Next to the intergovernmental character of the EU's external policies, the results reflect the type of conflicts at stake. While the coverage in the first and the second period is dominated by the Yugoslav Wars, which were predominantly dealt with multilaterally, the coverage in the third period is dominated by the second Iraq War that was conducted by an US-led coalition of states. More importantly, in most cases the increase in the Member States' actorness does not occur at the expense of EU institutions. Therefore, our results are proof of increasing 'horizontal Europeanization'. Mutual observation among EU Member States corresponds to the intergovernmental structure of decision-making in the CFSP/ESDP.

A Problem-Solving Community? Conclusions

This paper comprehensively mapped the perception of the EU in news on military and humanitarian interventions in order to find out whether the EU has become a reference object in external security affairs and whether it has been (increasingly) portrayed as an actor in these issues since the end of the Cold War (1990-2005/6). We assumed that if the EU was sufficiently visible as an international actor and was given similar levels of coverage across the investigated EU Member States, this would be necessary (and sufficient) for the national publics to develop a common understanding of the EU's foreign policy role. This would lay the basis for public actors to engage in a transnational discussion of common security concerns and to critically observe institutionalisation processes of the CFSP/ESDP at the EU level. In this sense, they could be considered a problem-solving community.

The results derived from both a qualitative content analysis and a corpus-linguistic word frequency analysis of a large cross-national data set suggest that, indeed, the EU has become a reference object in media debates on military and humanitarian interventions since the early 1990s. It has increasingly been portrayed as an actor that should and can take part in international conflict management. The media already drew attention to joint European conflict management prior to the institutionalisation and implementation of the EU's security and defence policies (CFSP/ESDP). *Public recognition* of the EU as an international actor in the EU Member States is older and stronger than many presumed. Moreover, the study shows that the analysed media

accurately represented the EU's fragmented foreign policy role and the intergovernmental character of the CFSP/ESDP: media reporting fore-grounded EU Member States much more often than the supranational institutions. It observed the institutionalisation of the CFSP/ESDP from the very beginning and gave more and more attention to other Member States' representatives. Hence, in the field of external security there is evidence for the media's vertical and horizontal Europeanization.

Is this proof of rapprochement in perception and of a '*European problem-solving community*' with regard to issues of external security? If we take synchronous relevance attribution (to issues and actors) as an indicator for similar problem perception, then this community of perception clearly goes beyond the ensemble of EU states and also includes the US. The US media attribute relevance to the EU and other international actors at the same time as the EU-based media. However, they clearly deviate from EU-based media by the *degree and quality of reference to the EU*. The degree of attention and actorness they attribute to the EU is low compared to EU-based media. This difference is also apparent when comparing US and British media, despite the fact that the latter are otherwise very close to US patterns of news coverage. Hence, the *European* problem perception in issues of external security becomes apparent through the frequency and quality of reference to the EU as an international actor. EU-based media seem to share the perception that EU politics have to be taken into account when reporting on and discussing military and humanitarian interventions. Whether they share more than particular relevance attribution to the reference object EU, i.e. whether they are also developing common normative criteria for judging military and humanitarian intervention will be examined in our subsequent studies.

Appendix

Table 2: Sample Characteristics[16]

Newspaper		Digital availability[17]	Missing time periods	Cleansed full sample[18]	'Intervention' sub-sample[19]	Manually coded sample[20]
US	*Washington Post*	1990-01-01 to 2006-03-31	No missing years/months	80,532	17,703	496
	New York Times	1990-01-01 to 2006-03-31	No missing years/months	92,140	18,448	515
United Kingdom	*The Times and Sunday Times*	1990-01-01 to 2006-03-31	No missing years/months	61,946	12,023	520
	The Guardian	1990-01-01 to 2006-03-31	No missing years/months	52,111	10,876	532
Germany	*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ)*	1993-01-02 to 2006-03-31	1990 – 1992	24,142	6,520	542
	Süddeutsche Zeitung	1991-02-11 to 2006-03-31	1990; 1991: Jan	39,232	9,426	540
The Netherlands	*De Volkskrant*	1995-01-03 to 2006-03-31	1990 – 1994; 1995: Oct	12,434	3,342	244
	NRC Handelsblad	1990-01-08 to 2006-03-31	2002: Aug	22,255	6,529	248
Ireland	*Irish Times*	1992-06-01 to 2006-03-31	1990 – 1991; 1992: Jan – May	28,313	8,018	540
	–	–	–	–	–	–
France	*Le Monde*	1990-01-01 to 2006-03-31	No missing years/months	42,641	8,158	528
	Les Echos	1993-01-05 to 1996-12-30	French conservative papers: 1990 – 1992; 1994: Jul – Dec; 1995: Jan – May; Jul – Dec; 1996: Jan	942	215	39
	Le Figaro	1997-01-09 to 2006-03-31	1990 – 1996	20,129	3,724	498
Austria	*Die Presse*	1993-05-03 to 2006-03-31	1990 – 1992; 1993: Jan – Apr	7,527	2,259	299
	Der Standard	1992-09-17 to 2006-03-31	1990 – 1991; 1992: Jan – Aug; 1993: May – Dec; 1994: Jan – Jun; 2000: Jan – Feb; 2003: May	5,164	1,436	309
Σ				489,508	102,809	5,850

16 The countries were selected in order to record two possible sources of inter-country variance, namely the countries' foreign policy traditions and the length of their EU membership. As for the broadsheets, we chose a centre-left and a conservative newspaper so as to capture variance caused by different political-ideological orientations. Unfortunately for Ireland only data from one paper was available.

17 The data were sampled from Lexis / Nexis and Factiva. In the case of FAZ, the data were provided directly by the newspaper, thanks to the kind support of the FAZIT foundation.

18 The cleansed full sample on wars and interventions from January 1990 to March 2006 consists of the full sample minus articles cleansed by removing doublets and sampling errors (e.g. articles on sports or legal cases containing war-metaphors) by means of computational-linguistic procedures).

19 The 'intervention sample' is a sub-sample of the cleansed full sample. It was generated from the full sample by means of a key-word search. The key-word search entailed words and word clusters that had proven to relate more specifically to our definition of 'interventions' during a detailed concordance analysis. 'Intervention' in our working definition is characterised by the fact that a neutral, third party intervenes into an ongoing armed conflict with the aim of protecting civilians.

20 The manually coded sample is a representative sub-sample derived from the 'intervention' sample by means of a random, keyword-based sampling procedure. The manually coded data only include the years 1990-2005 as the three additional month of the year 2006 would have unnecessarily complicated calculation. The manually coded sub-sample includes all three possible article types (intervention as main issue, as secondary issue, or as reference only). The figures in this paper draw on only those 3,500 coded articles in which intervention was the main issue and in which *institutional* actors of various political levels were coded. This means that results for *non-institutional* actors (i. e., civil society actors, societies as a whole and so on which sometimes occurred as affected actors) are not a subject of this paper.

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RECON seeks to clarify whether democracy is possible under conditions of complexity, pluralism and multilevel governance. Three models for reconstituting democracy in Europe are delineated and assessed: (i) reframing the EU as a functional regime and reconstituting democracy at the national level; (ii) establishing the EU as a multi-national federal state; or (iii) developing a post-national Union with an explicit cosmopolitan imprint.

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