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A joined-up Union, a stronger Europe

Conceptualising the Multi-Actor Character of EU(rope)'s Foreign Policy

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Mathilde Tomine Eriksdatter Giske

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Abstract

While there exists a plethora of theories aiming to make sense of the European Union and its foreign policy, no single existing theory has yet managed to capture the multi-actorness of what can be referred to as "the broader area of EU and European foreign and security policy". A conceptual framework building on the current literature of differentiated integration, which has become a permanent feature of European integration, may fill that gap. Based on a holistic approach to EU foreign and security policy, looking at both formal and informal processes, such a framework explains the multi-actor character of the EU, while introducing five roles – leaders, followers, laggards, disruptors or leavers – that actors can play in the integration process, either to bring it forward or halt it.

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Introduction

Since the Treaty of Maastricht (1993), foreign and security policy has been a formal part of the European Union (EU). The EU's involvement in foreign and security policy, conventionally the business of sovereign states, has continued to confound scholars of European integration, in particular supporters of traditional theories of international relations.[1] Central to the debate of the EU as a foreign policy actor is how EU foreign policy relates to the foreign policies of its member states. The at times tense relationship between the various member states and between member states and EU institutions has made the Union unable to forge common points of view on questions regarding foreign policy and security in a world continually racked by crises.[2] Additionally, the lines between internal and external security in the EU have become increasingly blurred, as the Union increasingly stresses the need for a more joined-up approach where external and internal policies are reconciled.[3]

This paper seeks to unpack and conceptualise the multi-actor character of the European Union Foreign and Security Policy (EUFSP), a broad concept encompassing all external dimensions of policies (including internal policies) and extending to actions taken by member states outside the formal procedures of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). It identifies a gap in the literature and argues that existing theories – either the ones that see the EU as nothing more than the sum of its parts (the various realist approaches) or the ones that see the EU as something more (liberal intergovernmentalists, neo-functionalists and constructivists) – have been unable to capture the multi-actorness that has become a permanent feature of the broader area of EU and European foreign and security policy.

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[1] Hylke Dijkstra and Sophie Vanhoonacker-Kormoss, "The Common Foreign and Security Policy", in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*, 25 January 2017, https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.013.155.

[2] Alexander Reichwein, "Realism and European Foreign Policy: Promises and Shortcomings", in Knud E. Jørgensen et al. (eds), *The SAGE Handbook of European Foreign Policy*, London, Sage, 2015, p. 99-120.

[3] This approach is explored in detail by Kristina Kausch's paper "Collateral Damage: How EU Internal Policies Affect Conflict Abroad" (forthcoming).

In this paper, we propose a framework that takes a holistic approach to EU foreign and security policy. The framework is used *analytically*, without any normative connotations, as it helps us better understand the actual functioning of EU(ropean) foreign policy. While it builds on institutional approaches, such as the multi-level governance (MLG) literature and the literature of differentiated integration (DI), our framework adds a new dimension by applying a broad definition of European foreign and security policy. As mentioned above, this encompasses actions in different policy areas, at times carried out by actors and institutions at different levels. It also includes processes initiated by member states outside of the Union's traditional framework, but still closely linked to it, as well as areas which are traditionally or formally not part of the EUFSP. Finally, the framework also underlines the role of agency, conceptualising five roles that the various actors take in an integration process, either to help integration forward or to halt it – that as leaders, followers, laggards, disruptors, or leavers.

We conclude that such a framework is more suitable to capture the dynamics of today's increasingly complex European integration process, characterised by opt-outs and opt-ins, formal and informal processes, enhanced cooperation and various forms of governance led by actors at different levels.[4]

1. The limits of mainstream theories

The mainstream theories of European integration and International Relations (IR) have deeply informed the academic debate surrounding the EU foreign and security policy.[5] So far, however, no existing theory has been able to fully capture the multi-actorness of this field. We can distinguish between approaches that see EU foreign and security policy as nothing more than the sum of its parts and a series of approaches that argue that EU foreign and security policy is more than that. In the former group we mostly find thinkers from realist schools of thought, whereas in the latter group we find liberal, neo-functionalist and constructivist theorists, as

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[4]   This part of the paper builds on Pernille Rieker, "Differentiated Integration and Europe's Global Role: A Conceptual Framework", in *European Foreign Affairs Review*, Vol. 26, Special Issue (August 2021), p. 1-14.

[5]   Maciej Wilga and Ireneusz Paweł Karolewski, *New Approaches to EU Foreign Policy*, London/New York, Routledge, 2014.

well as proponents of approaches that put emphasis on the functioning of the EU as a multi-level or differentiated foreign policy actor or system. In this section we present an overview of what the different theoretical approaches have contributed to European integration studies in the field of foreign and security policy. As this overview suggests, most of the traditional theories of European integration tend to focus on *why integration takes place* but have less to say about *how* the EU and its different policy fields function. To compensate for this, we follow up by arguing that approaches focused on the process of European differentiated integration are more useful to investigate EU foreign and security policy.

1.1 EU foreign and security policy as the sum of its parts

Traditionally, it has been difficult to combine realism with European integration in general, as IR and EU scholars view realism, not least due to its over-emphasis on foreign and security policy, as a theory of non-integration.[6] Stanley Hoffman's distinction between "high" and "low" politics made it easy to explain why the EU for a long time was absent in the field of foreign policy.[7] "High" politics, which include external relations, is traditionally the business of sovereign states, which are extremely reluctant to surrender authority to a supranational institution in this policy domain. However, as the realist bloc has branched off in different directions, the apparent incompatibility between realism and EU foreign and security integration should not be overstated.[8] Following theoretical additions to the realist tradition, the gap between European integration and realism has (at least partially) been bridged, and the usefulness of the theory to the study of the EU has been acknowledged.

According to *neo-realism*, the behaviour of states is the result of their relative power and position in the structurally anarchical international system, which is in turn largely defined by the great powers. Consequently, the transformation of

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[6]   Lorenzo Cladi and Andrea Locatelli, "Bandwagoning, Not Balancing: Why Europe Confounds Realism", in *Contemporary Security Policy*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (2012), p. 264-288; Simon Collard-Wexler, "Integration Under Anarchy: Neorealism and the European Union", in *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 12, No. 3 (September 2006), p. 397-423.

[7]   Hylke Dijkstra and Sophie Vanhoonacker-Kormoss, "The Common Foreign and Security Policy", cit.

[8]   Alexander Reichwein, "Realism and European Foreign Policy: Promises and Shortcomings", cit.

the European space into a rule-based interstate system has puzzled neo-realists.[9] Revisions made to neo-realist theory during the 1990s and 2000s were necessary to explain cooperation in Europe, which resulted in the creation of the CFSP. Based on Kenneth N. Waltz's theory on the balance of power,[10] the creation of the CFSP has been linked to the member states' desire to act as a counterbalance to the United States, as well as an attempt to balance off one another.[11]

The revised neo-realist focus on European integration was short-lived, however. As a consequence, the EU remains under-theorised in neo-realist thought. Assumptions made by neo-realists predict that, the EU is structurally prone to eventually break down, as the member states' incentive to cooperate as a form of mutual counterbalancing or as a way to balance off against external powers may change over time.[12] Thus far, collapse has been averted, which shows that realist theories may have more limited prediction capacity than they claim. In addition, the main focus of realism has remained on the nation state and the cooperation (or lack thereof) of sovereign actors, neglecting the values and interests of the EU as a whole. As a result, realism is incapable of thinking of EU foreign and security policy as a multi-actor system. For realists the multi-character of EUFSP, so often found in the empirical reality, is a contradiction in terms.

1.2 EU foreign and security policy as more than the sum of its parts

Realist approaches see EU foreign policy as nothing more than the combined effort of the member states' foreign policies, with EU institutions only able to deliver

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[9] Adrian Hyde-Price, "Interests, Institutions and Identities in the Study of European Foreign Policy", in Ben Tonra and Thomas Christiansen (eds), *Rethinking European Union Foreign Policy*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2004, p. 99-113, https://doi.org/10.7765/9781526137647.00012; Jonathan Joseph, "Realism and Neorealism in International Relations Theory", in Michael T. Gibbons (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Political Thought*, Chichester, Wiley Blackwell, 2015.

[10] Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, Reading, Addison-Wesley, 1979.

[11] Alexander Reichwein, "Realism and European Foreign Policy: Promises and Shortcomings", cit.

[12] Marianne Riddervold, Jarle Trondal and Akasemi Newsome, "European Union Crisis: An Introduction", in Marianne Riddervold, Jarle Trondal and Akasemi Newsome (eds), *The Palgrave Handbook of EU Crises*, Cham, Palgrave Macmillan, 2021, p. 3-47; Neil MacFarlane and Anand Menon, "The EU and Ukraine", in *Survival*, Vol. 56, No. 3 (2014), p. 95-101; John J. Mearsheimer, "Why the Ukraine Crisis is the West's Fault", in *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 93, No. 5 (September/October 2014), p. 77-89; Barry R. Posen, "Ukraine: Part of America's 'Vital Interests'?", in *The National Interest*, 12 May 2014, https://nationalinterest.org/node/17585; Stephen M. Walt, "Would You Die for That Country?", in *Foreign Policy*, 24 March 2014, https://foreignpolicy.com/2014/03/24/would-you-die-for-that-country.

common denominator-based policies. By contrast, institutionalist approaches view institutions as central to international cooperation. Institutionalists disagree with the realist assumption that institutions are based on the interests of the great powers, that they reflect global power-distribution and lack the ability to directly affect states and state behaviour. According Michael E. Smith, for instance, the process of institutionalisation developed in Europe since the 1970s is the main cause for EU cooperation in the field of foreign and security policy.[13] Institutional approaches suggest that when faced with a crisis, the EU has traditionally responded with initiatives aimed at greater integration rather than breaking down, as realists of any sort would have it. The EU tends to react to shocks by intensifying exchanges within its institutional settings for cooperation. Crises make institutions stronger rather than weaker.[14] Governance systems tend to handle turbulence by strengthening already existing cooperation practices, arrangements and methods, following the logic of path dependency.[15] Institutions may also improvise, adapt and create novel ways of employing existing mechanisms.[16] This may in turn trigger more integration, as the experienced turbulence may cause institutional soul-searching and adaptation of existing structures.[17] However, this does not explain why some member states become more integrated than others.

The grand theory of *neo-functionalism*, developed by Ernst Haas, makes "generalisations about the processes by which political communities are formed

[13]   Michael E. Smith, "Institutionalization, Policy Adaptation and European Foreign Policy Cooperation", in *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (March 2004), p. 95-136.

[14]   Marianne Riddervold, Jarle Trondal and Akasemi Newsome, "European Union Crisis: An Introduction", cit.

[15]   James G. March and Johan P. Olsen, "The Institutional Dynamics of International Political Orders", in *International Organization*, Vol. 52, No. 4 (Autumn 1998), p. 943-969; Johan P. Olsen, "Change and Continuity: An Institutional Approach to Institutions of Democratic Government", in *European Political Science Review*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (March 2009), p. 3-32; Paul Pierson, *Politics in Time. History, Institutions, and Social Analysis*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2004; Stephen Skowronek, *Building a New American State: The Expansion of National Administrative Capacities, 1877-1920*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1982.

[16]   Christopher Ansell, "Institutionalism", in Marianne Riddervold, Jarle Trondal and Akasemi Newsome (eds), *The Palgrave Handbook of EU Crises*, Cham, Palgrave Macmillan, 2021, p. 135-152; Christopher Ansell, Jarle Trondal and Morten Øgård (eds), *Governance in Turbulent Times*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2017.

[17]   Yves Emery and David Giauque, "The Hybrid Universe of Public Administration in the 21st Century", in *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, Vol. 80, No. 1 (March 2014), p. 23-32; John W. Kingdon, *Agendas, Alternatives and Public Policies*, Boston, Little Brown, 1984; Martin C. Lodge and Kai Wegrich (eds), *Executive Policies in Times of Crisis*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.

among sovereign states".[18] Questioning realism, Haas was among the first to argue that (at the time, Western) Europe could be transformed by making the cross-border flow of money and people easier. Rather than seeing states as unitary and the only relevant players, neofunctionalism emphasised regional integration marked by multiple, diverse and changing actors (political parties, economic operators, civil society organisations, etc.) that interact in spite of national borders.[19] These players create functional links by developing a regional network across state borders. The network provides the demand for functionally specific regional institutions dealing with non-existential matters. Through the *spillover* effect, cooperation functionally spreads to other areas, leading to the eventual decline of national sovereignty and the rise of supranational institutions.[20]

Neo-functionalism presumes changes in expectations of the participating actors, such as elite groups and citizens.[21] As citizens place more of their expectations on the region rather than the nation state, governments would be pressured to give more authority to the regional organisations they themselves have created. This, in turn, creates a self-sustaining process of cooperation and spill-over, which then evolves into closer political integration.[22] National governments respond to these developments either by accepting and adapting to them, or by ignoring or sabotaging the attempts to integrate made by the regional institutions.[23] By the 1970s, neo-functionalism eventually fell out of favour, in part because of its lack of predictive abilities, as European integration had ostensibly not advanced as much as the theory assumed it would.[24]

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[18] Ernst B. Haas, *The Uniting of Europe. Political, Social and Economical Forces, 1950-1957*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1958, p. xxxi.

[19] Ernst B. Haas, "Technocracy, Pluralism and the New Europe", in Stephen R. Graubard (ed.), *A New Europe?*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1964, p. 62-88; Arne Niemann, "Neofunctionalism", in Marianne Riddervold, Jarle Trondal and Akasemi Newsome (eds), *The Palgrave Handbook of EU Crises*, Cham, Palgrave Macmillan, 2021, p. 115-133.

[20] John McCormick, *European Union Politics*, 2nd ed, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.

[21] Arne Niemann, "Neofunctionalism", cit.

[22] John Gerard Ruggie et al., "Transformations in World Politics: The Intellectual Contributions of Ernst B. Haas", in *Annual Review of Political Science*, Vol. 8 (2005), p. 271-296, https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.8.082103.104843.

[23] Walter Mattli, *The Logic of Regional Integration. Europe and Beyond*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999.

[24] John McCormick, *European Union Politics*, cit.

One of the most influential theories in the study of European integration, and an answer to neo-functionalism, is *liberal intergovernmentalism* (LI), developed by Andrew Moravcsik in the 1990s.[25] Following a liberal intergovernmentalist perspective, the degree of EU integration is decided by the preferences and relative bargaining power of the member states rather than spillover from one policy to another. In areas such as foreign and security policy, member states may choose to integrate further in order to minimise the potentially negative costs of non-integration, either through treaty changes or through less formal arrangements. The outcomes of bargaining processes usually mirror the pre-existing preferences of the member states, especially the members most likely to remain relatively unaffected.[26] LI thus posits a two-level game, where intergovernmental bargains are established based on pressures formed at the domestic level. The demands from interest groups, voters, parties and bureaucracies, which member states' governments face at home, determine their positions in international negotiations. European integration moves forward as governments use the information available to them in negotiations at the EU level to reach agreements which they in turn will promote to audiences at home.[27] Because LI explains the interplay between member states and EU institutions as fundamentally a one-way process whereby the latter are invariably the result of the former's preferences, it struggles to accommodate within its theoretical perimeter the notion that EUFSP is a multi-actor system in which interaction between member states and EU institutions is not always linear and one-directional.

Finally, *constructivism* challenges the idea that material interests are sufficient to explain European integration more extensively and resolutely than either neo-functionalism or LI. According to constructivists, the historical and social origins of political structures ultimately play a fundamental role in the integration process.[28]

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[25] Andrew Moravcsik, "Preferences and Power in the European Community: A Liberal Intergovernmentalist Approach", in *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 4 (December 1993), p. 473-524; Andrew Moravcsik, *The Choice for Europe: Social Purpose and State Power from Messina to Maastricht*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1998.

[26] Andrew Moravcsik and Frank Schimmelfennig, "Liberal Intergovernmentalism", in Antje Wiener and Thomas Diez (eds), *European Integration Theory*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009, p. 67-87; Frank Schimmelfennig, "Liberal Intergovernmentalism", in Marianne Riddervold, Jarle Trondal and Akasemi Newsome (eds), *The Palgrave Handbook of EU Crises*, Switzerland, Palgrave Macmillan, 2021, p. 61-78.

[27] John McCormick, *European Union Politics*, cit.

[28] Ibid.

Rather than arguing for counterbalancing or economic interdependence as the only drivers for integration, constructivist scholars have claimed that identity and norms are key factors in EU integration, and should therefore not be overlooked.[29]

Central to constructivist approaches is the idea that the EU is crucial when it comes to sharing and spreading norms, ideas and beliefs among both member and non-member states, while placing emphasis on the importance of social interactions. Contrary to the previously discussed theories, constructivist approaches maintain that membership in the EU has a deep impact on member states' self-representation as international actors. Following constructivism, the EU's common foreign and security policy is made possible through discourse and communication, which trickles down to the level of the member states, effectively redefining their interests.[30] Integration is explained through the creation of a common identity.

2. The added value of multi-level governance and differentiated integration

While theories previously discussed study the drivers of integration, such as security, interdependence, normative commonalities, some of the newer theoretical frameworks, at times referred to with the rather general term "post-functionalist" approaches, focus on the role of institutions and describe their importance in political, social and economic life.[31]

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[29] Tanja A. Börzel and Thomas Risse, "From the Euro to the Schengen Crises: European Integration Theories, Politicization, and Identity Politics", in *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol. 25, No. 1 (2018), p. 83-108; Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks, "Does Identity or Economic Rationality Drive Public Opinion on European Integration?", in *PS: Political Science and Politics*, Vol. 37, No. 3 (July 2004), p. 415-420; Theresa Kuhn, "Grand Theories of European Integration Revisited: Does Identity Politics Shape the Course of European Integration?", in *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol. 26, No. 8 (2019), p. 1213-1230, https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2019.1622588; Ulrike Liebert, "European Identity Formation in (the) Crisis", in Hubert Zimmermann and Andreas Dür (eds), *Key Controversies in European Integration*, 2nd ed., Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2016, p. 98-106.

[30] Michael E. Smith, "Institutionalization, Policy Adaptation and European Foreign Policy Cooperation, cit.

[31] Christopher Ansell, "Institutionalism", cit.; James G. March and Johan P. Olsen, "The New Institutionalism: Organizational Factors in Political Life", in *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 78, No. 3 (December 1983), p. 734-749; Mark A. Pollack, "The New Institutionalisms and European Integration", in Antje Wiener and Thomas Diez (eds), *European Integration Theory*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009, p. 125-143; Walter W. Powell and Paul J. DiMaggio, *The New Institutionalism*

One of the most successful attempts of capturing the European political order is provided by Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks.[32] Their claim is that, as European integration has moved into core areas of national state sovereignty, public opinion has become more sceptical of the integration project. As a result, where EU-friendly elites previously faced a general consensus, they now face more widespread dissent.[33] Consequently, for the first time, disintegration becomes a possibility, making scholars question *how* integration works, rather than just *why* it takes place.[34] Hooghe and Marks' multi-level governance (MLG) approach refers to the interconnectedness of the EU level and the national level.[35] Multi-level governance sees the political order as a complex system, "consisting of a patchwork of separate but interconnected political institutions at different levels of authority".[36] The approach explores the relationship between the various levels and policy areas involved, as well as how the interplay between different levels produces policies.[37] Multi-level governance is a direct result of the irregular pace of European integration, which has affected certain areas more than others. This process has gradually become more entrenched and even structural, to the extent that theorists have felt compelled to introduce Differentiated Integration (DI) as a

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in Organizational Analysis, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1991; Kathleen Thelen, "Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Politics", in *Annual Review of Political Science*, Vol. 2 (1999), p. 369-404, https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.2.1.369.

[32] Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks, *Multilevel Governance and European Integration*, Lanham, Rowman & Littlefield, 2001.

[33] Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks, "A Postfunctionalist Theory of European Integration: From Permissive Consensus to Constraining Dissensus", in *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 39, No. 1 (January 2009), p. 1-23; Frank Schimmelfennig, "Theorising Crisis in European Integration", in Desmond Dinan, Neill Nugent and William E. Paterson (eds), *The European Union in Crisis*, London, Palgrave Macmillan Education, 2017, p. 316-335.

[34] Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks, "Grand Theories of European Integration in the Twenty-First Century", in *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol. 26, No. 8 (2019), p. 1113-1133, https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2019.1569711.

[35] For theoretical conceptualisations of MLG, see Arthur Benz, "The European Union as a Loosely Coupled Multilevel System", in Henrik Enderlein, Sonja Wälti and Michael Zürn (eds), *Handbook on Multi-level Governance*, Cheltenham/Northampton, Edward Elgar, 2010, p. 214-226; Simona Piattoni, *The Theory of Multi-level Governance. Conceptual, Empirical, and Normative Challenges*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2010; Michael E. Smith, "Toward a Theory of EU Foreign-Policy Making: Multi-level Governance, Domestic Politics, and National Adaptations to Europe's Common Foreign and Security Policy", in *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol. 11, No. 4 (2004), p. 740-758.

[36] Simon Bulmer, "Building a Multi-level Polity in Europe", in Ulf Sverdrup and Jarle Trondal (eds), *The Organizational Dimension of Politics. Essays in Honour of Morten Egeberg*, Bergen, Fagbokforlaget, 2008, p. 170-185 at p. 173.

[37] Michael E. Smith, "Toward a Theory of EU Foreign-Policy Making", cit.

new subfield in EU studies.

2.1 Differentiated integration as a new subfield in EU studies

DI captures the key feature of the EU, namely the search for a certain balance between national autonomy, on the one hand, and regional integration, on the other. With the introduction of the pillar structure with the Maastricht Treaty, which established the CFSP and Justice and Home Affairs as two separate pillars alongside economic integration, DI became institutionalised. While the pillar structure was abandoned in 2009 with the Lisbon Treaty, the concept has remained relevant to describe a system of EU governance in which inner groups of member states participate in integration processes at different speeds across different policy areas.

The DI concept has been explored by a number of scholars.[38] In particular, Gänzle et al. provide an excellent and comprehensive overview of the history of the concept.[39] It can be argued that a certain level of scholarly consensus concerning the main dimensions of DI has emerged. First, DI has to do with differing degrees of transfer of power from the national to the European level of governance, a process that is referred to as vertical DI. Second, DI may include various types or degrees of participation by both member states and associated states with the possibility for opt-outs and opt-ins from certain parts of the integration process. This has been

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[38]   See for instance Kenneth Dyson and Angelos Sepos, "Differentiation as Design Principle and as a Tool of Political Management in European Integration", in Kenneth Dyson and Angelos Sepos (eds), *Which Europe? The Politics of Differentiated Integration*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, p. 3-23; Katharina Holzinger and Frank Schimmelfennig, "Differentiated Integration in the European Union: Many Concepts, Sparse Theory, Few Data", in *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (2012), p. 292-305; Katharina Holzinger and Jale Tosun, "Why Differentiated Integration Is Such a Common Practice in Europe: A Rational Explanation", in *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, Vol. 41, No. 4 (October 2019). p. 642-659, https://doi.org/10.1177/0951629819875522; Andreas H. Hvidsten and Jon Hovi, "Why No Twin-Track Europe? Unity, Discontent, and Differentiation in European Integration", in *European Union Politics*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (March 2015), p. 3-22; Christian B. Jensen and Jonathan B. Slapin, "Institutional Hokey-Pokey: The Politics of Multispeed Integration in the European Union", in *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol. 19, No. 6 (2012), p. 779-795; Dirk Leuffen, Berthold Rittberger and Frank Schimmelfennig, Differentiated Integration. Explaining Variation in the European Union, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013; Alex Warleigh-Lack, "Differentiated Integration in the European Union: Towards a Comparative Regionalism Perspective", in *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol. 22, No. 6 (2015), p. 871-887; Frank Schimmelfennig and Thomas Winzen, "Grand Theories, Differentiated Integration", in *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol. 26, No. 8 (2019), p. 1172-1192, https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2019.1576761.

[39]   Stefan Gänzle, Benjamin Leruth and Jarle Trondal (eds), *Differentiated Integration and Disintegration in a Post-Brexit Era*, London/New York, Routledge, 2020.

referred to as horizontal DI.

Relevant empirical case studies can be divided into two main categories: those focusing on how differentiation plays out with regard to specific models of membership (opt-outs) or association (opt-ins); and those that investigate how these models have been implemented in specific policy areas. What is missing, however, is an approach that enables us to incorporate the processes that occur in the broader area of foreign security and defence policy. As stated, this includes areas not traditionally thought of as being part of this specific policy area, as well as the processes initiated by individual member states outside the framework of the Union but that are closely linked to EU policies. It has thus been rightly observed that, while most research on differentiated integration sees non-differentiation as default mode, this is not the case in the field of foreign and security policy, where differentiation is so entrenched to have become the standard practice.[40]

2.2 Differentiated integration in the field of foreign and security policy

The EU has gradually adopted an integrated approach to security, indicating its aim of developing a policy that recognises the complexity of foreign and security policy challenges. This involves a broader security concept, which extends to areas where the Commission has full competence (trade, the externalisation of EU standards) or a certain degree of authority, such as civil protection, crisis response and humanitarian aid, as well as areas where the main competencies remain with the member states, as is the case with defence. Thus, it may be argued that the area of foreign and security policy, to some extent, has moved beyond intergovernmentalism in its pure form, and is better seen as some form of multi-level governance – a "polity-creating process in which authority and policy-making influence are shared across multiple levels of government".[41] In turn, this

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[40]   Nico Groenendijk, "Flexibility and Differentiated Integration in European Defence Policy", in *L'Europe en formation*, No. 389 (2019), p. 105-120; Sven Biscop, *Differentiated Integration in Defence: A Plea for PESCO*, Rome, IAI, February 2017, https://www.iai.it/en/node/7265; Joloyn Howorth, "Differentiation in Security and Defence Policy", in *Comparative European Politics*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (April 2019), p. 261-277.

[41]   Gary Marks, Liesbet Hooghe and Kermit Blank, "European Integration from the 1980s: State-Centric v. Multi-level Governance", in *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 3 (September 1996), p. 341-378 at p. 342.

complexity entails the need for more fine-grained empirical analyses to explain the mechanisms of differentiated integration in this area, why and how it occurs and how it impacts the EU as a global actor.

DI was most likely to take place in those areas where there was an urgent need to develop a stronger role for the EU. As such, DI remained "a promising instrument" to facilitate further enlargement and "kick-start integration" in new policy areas.[42] This has also been confirmed empirically, as the CFSP opened up for a certain degree of horizontal differentiation by allowing Denmark to opt-out from the defence cooperation (CSDP). Later, it also permitted opt-ins by closely associated non-members, like Norway. Additionally, it allowed for vertical differentiation by permitting certain member states to move forward with higher levels of integration, as with the establishment of the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO). There has also been a special focus on the implications of the United Kingdom's exit from the EU.[43] Nevertheless, when the focus of study has been security and defence policy, this has often been limited to the more specific field of CSDP.[44]

Although foreign, security and defence policies are still primarily dominated by intergovernmentalism, there has been a move towards greater involvement of the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the Commission. This was highly contested for a time but is now increasingly seen as necessary to make the EU a more capable actor. Even though integration in CSDP has moved forward, it is unlikely that we will ever see a full transfer of power to the EU in this area. Instead, a certain degree of vertical differentiation is more likely to be the norm – a mix between intergovernmentalism and community policy. The recent decision to activate enhanced cooperation or PESCO with greater use of quality majority voting

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[42]   Frank Schimmelfennig and Thomas Winzen, *Ever Looser Union? Differentiated European Integration*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2020, p. 187.

[43]   Stefan Gänzle, Benjamin Leruth and Jarle Trondal (eds), *Differentiated Integration and Disintegration in a Post-Brexit Era*, cit.

[44]   Joloyn Howorth, "Differentiation in Security and Defence Policy", cit.; Nico Groenendijk, "Flexibility and Differentiated Integration in European Defence Policy", cit.; Samuel B.H. Faure, Thibaut Joltreau and Andy Smith, "The Differentiated Integration of Defence Companies in Europe: A Sociology of (Trans) National Economic Elites", in E*uropean Review of International Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (2019), p. 135-162; Jozef Bátora, "Dynamics of Differentiated Integration in EU Defense: Organizational Field Formation and Segmentation", in *European Foreign Affairs Review*, Vol. 26, Special Issue (August 2021), p. 63-86; Steven Blockmans and Dylan Macchiarini Crosson, "PESCO: A Force for Positive Integration in EU Defence", in *European Foreign Affairs Review*, Vol. 26, Special Issue (August 2021), p. 87-110.

for certain decisions within this group, and the establishment of a Directorate General for Defence industry and Space as well as a European Defence Fund (EDF) within the Commission are examples of differentiated vertical integration in the area of CSDP.[45]

While DI has become an important subfield of EU studies, there still lacks a conceptual framework to capture the complexity of the current European foreign policy system. The framework should account for both the different levels of vertical and horizontal integration, while also taking *a holistic approach that includes the external dimension of internal policies, as well as the processes that are not formally part of the EU per se but are closely linked to it.* The aim of the remaining part of this paper is to attempt to fill this gap.

3. A new conceptual framework for EU(ropean) foreign policy

In this section we present a new conceptual framework for understanding the multi-actorness of EU(uropean) foreign policy and how the different parts of this complex framework are inter-linked. However, before the framework is presented, there are two important characteristics of the differentiated integration process in this broader area of foreign and security policy that cannot be overlooked. First, referring to the so-called "integrated approach" is insufficient, as it limits the focus to the traditional foreign policy and external action. Second, it is necessary to include more than just the formal (and treaty based) parts of integration.

3.1 Moving beyond the CFSP/CSDP and the "integrated approach"

In the Union's broader foreign policy, DI has become increasingly institutionalised, as previously stated. A greater role for EU diplomacy and EU foreign policy was secured by the Lisbon Treaty through the establishment of the EEAS and the strengthening of the mandate of the High Representative for CFSP, who also holds the position of Vice-President of the Commission and therefore holds a

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[45]   Steven Blockmans and Dylan Macchiarini Crosson, "PESCO: A Force for Positive Integration in EU Defence", cit.

say also over the EU's trade, development, neighbourhood and aid policies. Thus, the Union's foreign and security policy must be understood as a mix of CFSP/CSDP and of the areas that are developed and implemented by the Commission alone or in cooperation with the EEAS and the member states. In the field of crisis management or crisis response, this is referred to as the Union's integrated approach – an approach that has been developed as a consequence of a changing international context where there no longer are clear-cut borders between internal and external policies.[46] This also means that the borders between the areas where the Commission has a high degree of competence and power (development and humanitarian aid, civil protection and crisis response) and areas where the member states have the final say (major foreign policy decisions, deployment of CSDP missions) have become increasingly interlinked.[47]

However, even such an integrated approach may not be sufficient to capture the EU's global role. We must also include external relations more broadly, incorporating the external dimensions of various internal policies such as the internal security cooperation and the internal market dynamics, which have been referred to as the Union's regulatory power. This has also been called the "Brussels effect",[48] referring to the EU's power to shape global standards and regulations (e.g. the General Data Protection Regulation or GDPR, climate regulations, etc.). As these policy areas are usually characterised by greater integration and EU actorness, they contribute, together with the areas that are less integrated, to an EU foreign policy that is both differentiated and multi-faceted.

3.2 Moving beyond formal differentiated integration

Understanding EU foreign and security policy as a broad framework involving actions across different policy areas has now consolidated into scholarly consensus. What is less often recognised is the importance of including processes that are not

[46]   For more on this, see Kristina Kausch's paper "Collateral Damage: How EU Internal Policies Affect Conflict Abroad" (forthcoming).

[47]   Øyvind Svendsen. "The Politics of Competence in Global Health: The European Commission's Global Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic", in *European Foreign Affairs Review*, Vol. 26, Special Issue (August 2021), p. 15-30.

[48]   Anu Bradford, *The Brussels Effect. How the European Union Rules the World*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2020.

formally part of the EU under the EU foreign and security policy heading. We need to take an additional step and study how the foreign policy-making processes in the EU relate to the various initiatives and processes taken by member states outside of the EU framework, and whether this increased complexity in European responses leads to weaker or stronger European global actorness.[49]

The distinction between formal (treaty-based) and informal (not treaty-based) processes of DI is inadequately studied. The reason is probably that formal differentiation is easier to identify, as it involves flexible formats of integration that are specified in agreements or treaties. Informal differentiated integration may include many different types of processes and can therefore be more difficult to single out.

Here, we distinguish among several types of informal differentiated integration. First are opt-outs in the form of non-compliance with EU rules, norms and principles by certain member states (understood as informal opt-outs). While non-compliance of rules is most obvious in highly integrated areas (such as the internal market), non-compliance with the fundamental norms and principles may affect all policy areas. Examples of such informal non-compliance would be foreign policy decisions made by member states that are at odds with EU policies and/or principles.[50]

A second type of informal differentiation are differing views of the long-term objectives of the EU as a foreign policy actor. This situation, common in the history of European integration, has often resulted in vague compromises, with a certain degree of "constructive ambiguity" in official documents and official EU discourse which allows for differing interpretations, and thus some kind of informal opt-out. Here we may note the various interpretations of the development of a "European security and defence capacity", which means one thing in Sweden, and something

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[49]   Mai'a K. Davis Cross, "'United Space in Europe'? The European Space Agency and the EU Space Program", in *European Foreign Affairs Review*, Vol. 26, Special Issue (August 2021), p. 31-46; Pernille Rieker, "Differentiated Defence Integration Under French Leadership", in *European Foreign Affairs Review*, Vol. 26, Special Issue (August 2021), p. 111-126.

[50]   Nick Sitter, "Defending the State: Nationalism, Geopolitics and Differentiated Integration in Visegrád Four Security Policy", in *European Foreign Affairs Review*, Vol. 26, Special Issue (August 2021), p. 127-144.

quite different in France.[51]

Third, we find examples of informal differentiation with opt-ins in cases where non-members decide unilaterally to sign foreign policy declarations or follow EU policies. An example of this type of differentiation would be what Norway does with regard to the CFSP. Interestingly, Norway signs up to close to 100 per cent of all EU foreign policy declarations as well as sanctions, which makes it very much a part of EU foreign policy even though it is not a member state.

Finally, there are cases where certain member states push for integration initiatives outside the EU structure, seeking to kick-start a process seen as difficult to agree on within the Union. Such initiatives are often taken by one or several member states (sometimes also together with closely associated non-members), with the implicit or explicit aim of either integrating the area into the Union at a later stage or supporting the EU in strengthening Europe's role at the global stage.[52] Two obvious examples of the former would be the Schengen Cooperation and British-French St. Malo Declaration of 1998. The Schengen cooperation was initially signed by only five EU members in 1985 and was not included into the EU Treaty until 1999. The St. Malo declaration kickstarted European defence integration (ESDP), which became an integral part of the EU Treaty at the same time as Schengen (in 1999) and is now known as CSDP. Two examples of the latter would be the E3 Iran format and the European Intervention Initiative (EI2). Both cases are initiatives that aim at strengthening Europe's role in the world and have close (although informal) connections to the institutional framework of the EU. The E3, which has its origin in a 2003 initiative of France, Germany and the United Kingdom, embarked on collective negotiations with Iran over its nuclear activities and have been broadly construed as EU foreign and security policy actors – not least because the HRVP is also part of the negotiating team and the whole process started before Brexit).[53] The French project of establishing a European Intervention Initiative

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[51]   Pernille Rieker, "Differentiated Integration and Europe's Global Role: A Conceptual Framework", cit.

[52]   Ibid.; Alice Billon-Galland and Richard Whitman, "Towards a Strategic Agenda for the E3. Opportunities and Risks for France, Germany and the UK", in *Chatham House Research Papers*, April 2021, https://www.chathamhouse.org/node/25863.

[53]   Riccardo Alcaro, *Europe and Iran's Nuclear Crisis. Lead Groups and EU Foreign Policy Making*, Cham, Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.

aims at strengthening a common European strategic culture and thus might (if it succeeds) have an important impact on EU foreign and security policy and lay the groundwork for coordination in the future.

There are more examples of processes that are initiated by one or more member states outside the EU. For instance, the initiative taken by Germany on the externalisation of border management that led to the EU-Turkey migration deal of 2016; some initiatives taken by smaller member states, such as Sweden's push for a greater focus on conflict prevention in the early 2000s, which has now become a key feature of EU's foreign and security policy, or the more recent multilateral defence initiatives taken by the Nordic, the Benelux and the Visegrád Group (V4) countries.[54] All these initiatives have had an implicit or explicit intention of contributing to strengthening the European capacity to act. We may also go one step further to include the processes aimed at strengthening the European pillar in NATO, as all these initiatives contribute in different ways to a more differentiated, but potentially also stronger, European capacity in the field of foreign and security policy.

What this indicates is that as long as there continues to be widespread reluctance to transferring competence to the EU level in this area, combined with an increased demand for greater European responsibility for its own security and well-being, we are likely to see more DI in all parts of European foreign, security and defence policy.

In the remaining part of this section, we present a comprehensive conceptual framework for analysing processes that take place outside of the EU framework but have an impact on it, as well as the linkages between them, which may help to better understand how EU foreign policy can become more joined-up without necessarily implying a fully-fledged common policy in the traditional sense of federalisation. This perspective builds on the literature of differentiated integration but involves a broader scope. It is largely based on earlier work by Rieker,[55] and

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[54]   Pernille Rieker, "Differentiated Defence Integration Under French Leadership", cit.; Nick Sitter, "Defending the State: Nationalism, Geopolitics and Differentiated Integration in Visegrád Four Security Policy", cit.

[55]   Pernille Rieker, "Differentiated Integration and Europe's Global Role: A Conceptual Framework", cit.

it assumes that EU foreign policy may also include initiatives taken outside the EU framework. This differentiated feature of the integration process is particularly relevant for what is referred to in this paper as the broader field of EU foreign and security policy – a combination of policies that are partly intergovernmental and partly supranational and include various forms of participation by EU member states and institutions.

3.3 A framework for studying EU(rope)'s role in the world

Given the need to have a broader approach to European foreign policy, we need to apply a different concept of integration than the one we are used to. Instead of applying the conventional definition, which implies that integration amounts to some form of transfer of competencies from the member states to the EU as a whole, we want to broaden the scope so that integration refers to processes where we see a greater measure of the density and intensity of relations among some of the constitutive elements of the international (or regional) system in question. From such a generic definition, which is largely inspired by the work of Jim March,[56] European integration can be understood as a process or a continuum with full disintegration or fragmentation at one end and full integration (federation) at the other. Everything in-between these two extremes will then be some type of differentiated integration.

By adding the dimension of uniformity, as has been suggested by Schimmelfennig, we can also distinguish between different types of differentiated integration/ disintegration.[57] High uniformity would mean full harmonisation, and no uniformity would mean conflict. Everything in between would be different degrees of either cooperation or some type of competition, leading to either differentiated integration or disintegration (see Table 1). In such a perspective, we will be able to develop a framework than includes not only EU foreign and security policy but also various European processes closely linked to it. To make a point of this, we refer to this as *EU(rope's)* foreign and security policy or EU(rope's) role in the world.

[56]   James G. March, "A Learning Perspective on the Network Dynamics of Institutional Integration", in Morten Egeberg and Per Laegreid (eds), *Organizing Political Institutions. Essays for Johan P. Olsen*, Oslo, Scandinavian University Press, 1999, p. 129-155.

[57]   Frank Schimmelfennig, "Brexit: Differentiated Disintegration in the European Union", in *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol. 25, No. 8 (2018), p. 1154-1173.

Table 1. Differentiated (dis)integration as a function of levels of integration and uniformity

		Integration				
		No	**Low**	**Medium**	**High**	**Full**
Uniformity	**Full**	Harmonisation	Differentiated integration	Differentiated integration	Differentiated integration	Federation
	High	High level of cooperation	Differentiated integration	Differentiated integration	Differentiated integration	---
	Medium	Some cooperation	Differentiated integration	Differentiated integration	Differentiated integration	---
	Low	No cooperation	Differentiated (dis)integration	Differentiated (dis)integration	---	---
	No	Conflict/ competition	---	---	---	---

While Table 1 gives an overview of the "differentiated area" and the main types of differentiated (dis)integration, it is not detailed enough to capture the specificities of each category. For this, it may be useful to supplement it with the conceptualisation of integration provided by March, who uses the following dimensions of integration: *interdependencies*, *consistency* and *structural connectedness*.[58] Interdependencies refer to the degree to which member states are economically or politically dependent on each other. Consistency refers to the degree to which members' actions and beliefs reflect common rules, values and/ or objectives. Finally, structural connectedness refers to a network of integration where the focus is the number and pattern of different bilateral or minilateral relationships within the system of members and associated members. This may refer to the number and pattern of contacts and meetings, common resources, common institutions and the level of transfer of competencies/learning.

These three aspects of integration are crucial, but not necessarily strongly correlated: there may be high levels of integration in one dimension and less in another. For instance, we can see high levels of consistency in one area where we have lower levels of interdependence and structural connectedness. Sometimes this occurs within parts of the field of EU foreign and security policy and sometimes

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[58]   James G. March, "A Learning Perspective on the Network Dynamics of Institutional Integration", cit.

beyond, but still closely linked to it, thus contributing to a higher level of European integration.

From these three dimensions of integration – namely interdependencies, consistency and structural connectedness – we can develop a model to study the level of (dis)integration in the broader field of European foreign and security policy. According to March, a fully integrated system will require high scores on all three dimensions. While most processes will fall somewhere in the middle (see Table 1 above), a framework with different dimensions makes it possible to say something more about the different forms of DI (see Figure 1 below).

Figure 1. Dimensions of differentiated (dis)integration

DI
Fragmentation <---------------> Full integration
1. Interdependencies: · Economic · Political **2. Consistency:** · Common rules · Common values · Common objectives **3. Structural connectedness:** · Contacts and meetings · Common resources · Common institutions · Transfer of competencies

This broader definition of integration incorporates both the vertical/horizontal dimension, the formal/informal dimension, as well as the inclusive/exclusive dimension of the integration processes. This means that it can readily be applied to specific studies of processes within the EU, as well as for broader processes, including those that go beyond the EU as such but which could still be defined as European (differentiated) integration.

With such an approach, DI is applied as an *analytical concept* that can be used to capture the dynamics of the different parts of an increasingly complex European integration process, characterised by opt-outs and opt-ins, enhanced cooperation and various forms of multi-level governance, as well as processes outside but still closely linked to the EU institutional structure. It may help structure our empirical analysis and avoid having too narrow a conceptual framework that risks excluding important processes that are not formally part of the EU, but which is still part of the European integration process – which is increasingly the case in the area of European foreign and security policy.

3.4 Introducing the role of agency

Although these different dimensions of the integration process or continuum are useful and can facilitate a more comprehensive understanding of the concept of DI, they do not help us understand what drives these processes forward, what slows them down or what might reverse them. To answer such questions, we need to introduce the role of agency.

We assume that some kinds of push- and/or pull-factors from various levels of government (EU-level or member state-level) are relevant for which version of integration or DI which evolves. Here, we identify five roles that the various levels of government may take in this process of integration, namely as leaders, followers, laggards, disruptors or leavers. What motivates them – be it national interests, norms, path dependency or something else – will vary and can only be identified on a case-by-case basis.

The first category is *leaders*. This category covers actors that drive the processes of integration forward, including the EU institutions themselves. For instance, both the Commission and the EEAS propose specific courses of international action. Additionally, there may be a combination, as with the many joint initiatives that often come from the HRVP and the Commission. This equally occurs either in areas where the Commission has a certain degree of independent competence or in intergovernmental policy fields. In intergovernmental policy fields, where joint initiatives are presented for adoption by the member states, it is always a risk that the initiatives will be blocked or changed by certain member states. So far, most

of these joint initiatives have been adopted, which shows that the agenda-setting power of EU institutions (here: the Commission and the HRVP) is significant in these areas as well.[59] In the fields where the Commission has full competence, it is easier to take the lead. While the Commission has traditionally been rather reluctant in taking a very visible role, this has changed in the last years.

In the areas dominated by intergovernmentalism, individual member states often take the lead alone or as a group. Interestingly, smaller member states such as Sweden and Finland had a great influence over the shaping of the CSDP in the early 2000s when they worked for – and succeeded in – incorporating conflict prevention and civilian crisis management as core areas of this policy field. In the area of defence, France has often played an important role – alone or in tandem with other members to push for more integration in this field. For instance, as already mentioned, the French collaboration with the United Kingdom on the St. Malo declaration in 1998 was a crucial part of the process towards what later became the CSDP. France has also cooperated with Germany, strongly supporting the Commission's 2016 initiative to activate PESCO and establish the EDF. Additionally, France has initiated several processes outside the EU, with the intention of contributing to increase European defence capacity. Here, we may note the various attempts to strengthen the European pillar within NATO or independent moves to reinforce multilateral defence cooperation among European allies and partner countries, such as the European Intervention Initiatives.[60] The strengthening of bilateral defence cooperation/integration should also be mentioned, such as the Lancaster House Agreements with the United Kingdom from 2010 or the Aachen agreement with Germany from 2019. While France is at times perceived to promote its own interests rather than common European interests, it is undeniable that most of the progress made in this area in the EU would never have taken place without it.

Progress can take time, because many member states view integration processes (in general) with considerable scepticism. These countries are considered as

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[59]   Ruxandra-Laura Bosilca and Marianne Riddervold, "Crisis and Differentiation in the CFSP: Leaders, Laggards and Critical Junctures", in *European Foreign Affairs Review*, Vol. 26, Special Issue (August 2021), p. 47-62.

[60]   Pernille Rieker, "Differentiated Integration and Europe's Global Role: A Conceptual Framework", cit.

laggards. While some (like Denmark and the Netherlands) fear that a stronger role for the EU could undermine NATO and the transatlantic relationship, others (like Germany and Sweden) worry that France might push the EU in a more interventionist direction.

Finally, some member states are not merely sceptical of further advancement in EU foreign and security policy cooperation. They call into question the normative foundations of the EU (Poland and Hungary) or are open to leave the EU. *Disruptors* represent a greater challenge than the laggards, as they may have a more transformative impact of the processes.[61] With *leavers*, however, it is different. In principle leavers only become a challenge if they include the largest member states or if they grow in number. If France or Germany left the EU right now, the whole edifice of European integration would risk collapsing, whereas if, say, Hungary were to quit, the integration process would likely benefit from it. Likewise, given British traditional reluctance to bring integration forward without Brexit, PESCO or the EDF could probably not have been developed, and who knows how talks over Next Generation EU (a more than €800 billion temporary recovery instrument to help repair the immediate economic and social damage brought about by the covid-19 pandemic) would have gone. Through a differentiated integration perspective, the United Kingdom can still contribute to the strengthening of a European capacity to act, as it seems interested in, through an eagerness to continue to participate in a transformed E3 format and the EI2.

Conclusions

The purpose of this paper has been to conceptualise the Union's multi-actorness. The paper started by presenting an overview of the relevant academic literature and identified a gap in these contributions. While there is a rather substantial literature on multi-level governance and differentiated integration, none of these contributions have so far been able to capture the multi-actorness that now has become a permanent feature of what we may refer to as "the broader area of EU

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[61]   Nick Sitter, "Defending the State: Nationalism, Geopolitics and Differentiated Integration in Visegrád Four Security Policy", cit.; Alice Billon-Galland and Richard Whitman, "Towards a Strategic Agenda for the E3", cit.

and European foreign and security policy". The main reason for this is that they apply a too narrow understanding of both the concept of integration and what should be included in EU foreign and security policy.

For some time, it has been common to refer to the comprehensiveness of EU foreign policy. It has also become more common to move beyond the area of CFSP and external relations, recognising that the EU as a global actor has to include the Union as a global standard-setter in many fields. What has been less common is to include the foreign (security and defence) policy processes initiated formally outside the framework of the Union, but still closely linked to its policies, by one member state or a group of member states. In most of the existing analyses these initiatives are not considered as part of the integration process.

In this paper, we have included all these aspects of EU foreign and security policy in a single analytical framework to shed light on how they are linked together through a system of differentiated integration. By doing this we open up the possibility that the processes and initiatives that are usually studied separately, and sometimes even interpreted as signs of fragmentation, could be understood as different parts of a greater whole, contributing to making European foreign policies more joined up.

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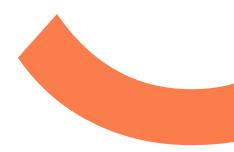
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