
Foreign Policy Actions of the European Community

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1

Introduction

Foreign policy studies usually focus on the policies of individual nation-states. One body of states that does not lend itself to such traditional study is the European Community (EC). And because EC foreign policy activity defies easy categorization and explanation, it has been neglected as an area of research among political scientists.

Foreign policy activity in the EC is a process of integrating policies and actions of the member states toward the outside world.¹ The resulting EC policies and actions are generated toward nonmembers and international organizations on political, diplomatic, economic, trade, and security-related issues. Foreign policy activity is based on the need to protect and defend the common interests of the member governments abroad and to respond adequately to global demands and pressures on the EC. This convergence of interests enables a diverse membership to act as one in a number of international issue areas.

Although the EC is a civilian actor in the international system, it has taken several foreign policy actions that influence and are influenced by strategic security concerns in such areas as the Middle East, Central America, southern Africa, and the Mediterranean Basin. A civilian actor, according to Twitchett, has no military dimension but is able to influence states, global and regional organizations, international corporations, and other transnational bodies through diplomacy, economic resources, and legal considerations.²

The EC has no explicit treaty-based foreign policy powers in a strictly political sense. Member governments retain sovereignty in most aspects of political and economic foreign policy. When the logic of joint activity does not point to mutual benefit, and very often even when it does, member

governments conduct foreign policy on their own. Nevertheless, the EC, not the member governments, has treaty competence to execute foreign trade policy for the member states. The EC maintains diplomatic relations with 130 nation-states and has close bilateral relations with many of them. In an international system in which trade, economics, politics, and diplomacy fuse to make distinction among these areas almost illusory, the EC's presence in international affairs is more pronounced. As the world's largest importer and exporter, the EC has used its economic weight to influence foreign affairs.

When the member states can agree to act in unison, the EC has fashioned policy responses to the demands of participation in the international order through specific foreign policy actions. Often, the EC is forced by outside pressures to act as a unit to address demands of outsiders, to act responsibly as a prosperous and mature group toward the outside world, and to act on behalf of the Western bloc of advanced capitalist democratic states, particularly when the United States' hands are tied. It has well-formed individual policies toward other parts of Europe, both West and East, the Mediterranean Basin, sub-Saharan Africa, the Caribbean and Pacific states, the Middle East, and toward other parts of the world from Central America to Southeast Asia. It has, for instance, formulated and executed policy responses to the Portuguese revolution, repression in Franco's Spain, the coup d'état in Grenada, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the Argentine invasion of the Falklands/Malvinas, political repression in Vietnam, and to the question of a Palestinian homeland.

Joint foreign policy activity refers to the process by which EC members and their common bodies coordinate and implement joint civilian foreign policy actions to reap benefits from politics of scale. Joint actions and policies are outcomes of foreign policy activity. They carry the combined weight of the EC members and bodies, are based on EC law, and require membership approval. But an important distinction must be drawn between joint action and joint foreign policy. A joint action is a specific, conscious, goal-oriented undertaking putting forth a unified membership position toward nonmembers, international bodies, and international events and issues. It may be unrelated to other joint actions or may be an end in itself, such as the EC Afghan Peace Plan. It may be part of a broader composition of policy, such as tariff preferences under the EC Mediterranean Policy. A joint foreign policy is a composition of mutually related joint actions that set forth a unified position intended to serve predetermined objectives—for example, the EC Middle East Policy. Both action and policy are taken under the purview of the Rome Treaty; treaty additions (such as the Single European Act) and interpretations (by the European Court of Justice); implied and discretionary powers; and evolved habits and customs (such as those developed in European Political Cooperation). Thus, the EC takes many foreign policy actions but has only a few fully developed foreign policies, which do not together

constitute an integrated foreign policy in the sense that a nation-state may be said to have a single foreign policy.

Politics of scale refers to the benefits of collective over unilateral action in the conduct of civilian foreign policy. Politics of scale enables members to conduct joint foreign policy actions at lower costs and risks than when they act on their own. Members generally perceive that they carry more weight in certain areas when they act together as a bloc than when they act separately. Politics of scale in the conduct of EC foreign affairs has been a major drawing card for such members as the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG); Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg (BENELUX); Italy; and the United Kingdom (UK).

In this study, joint foreign policy actions taken from 1958 to 1985 are identified and tabulated to determine trends in activity, test theoretical explanations, and provide a data base for others to draw on for further analysis.³ Much of the analysis is based on original interviews and quantitative data. Interviews of officials in the EC Commission, Council Secretariat, and Committee of Permanent Representatives; members of the European Parliament; and European and U.S. academic experts were conducted in 1981 and 1986 on the question of EC foreign policy activity.⁴

Foreign policy activity may be measured by foreign policy actions taken collectively by the members over time. Indicators of foreign policy activity during 1958–1985 include: (A) number and content of EC foreign policy actions; (B) trends in EC imports as a percentage of total world imports and total EC imports; (C) trends in EC exports as a percentage of total world exports and total EC exports; and (D) food, raw material, and labor self-supply rates. In order to make a large amount of data manageable, it is necessary to stipulate that foreign policy actions meet two criteria for inclusion in the data base: First, the action must be goal-oriented; second, it must have been made operational. It must exert physical activity, such as economic leverage (for example, granting or withholding of economic benefits) or follow-up work (for example, dispatching an EC official to confer with a foreign leader on an EC diplomatic initiative). Whether or not the joint action achieved its desired result, it is still included in the inventory, so long as common policy and procedure prevailed in its execution. Further inclusions and exclusions are detailed in Chapter 4.

A total of 480 joint actions stretching across a wide swath of civilian international relations were taken during 1958–1985. Of these, 313 (65 percent) were taken in the twelve-year period from 1973 to 1985, compared to 167 (or 35 percent) taken in the fourteen-year period from 1958 to 1972.

The relative explanatory powers of three logics—regional integration logic, global interdependence logic, and self-styled logic—are tested in investigating the causes behind the expansion and variety of EC foreign policy activity. The logic of regional integration emphasizes the negative

effects of internal EC policies on outsiders, who in turn press the EC for compensation, forcing members to pull together to develop joint defensive responses. The logic of interdependence suggests that the current of global politics influences the EC to respond with policies that are rooted not in the internal market but in the international system. The self-styled logic underscores the EC's own sense of mission and independence in the world, whereby foreign policy actions not taken in response to outside pressures are products of the EC's own internal decisionmaking and political dynamic; self-styled actions are initiated by the EC, reflect EC interests, and are implemented within the context of the EC's own style of diplomacy. The logic of integration explains 99 percent of all EC foreign policy activity during the 1958–1972 period. After 1972, this logic as an explanation of foreign policy activity has steadily declined, although it still accounted for about 65 to 70 percent of all actions in the early 1980s. When the logic of integration cannot explain foreign policy activity, explanations may be drawn from the interdependence and self-styled logics as the EC copes with foreign policy questions rooted in either the current of international politics or in the EC's own internal dynamic.

Three sets of EC relationships with outsiders warranted close scrutiny because they point to the strengths and weaknesses of EC foreign policy activity and test the relative merits of the three logics. The EC policy toward the Mediterranean region was initially triggered by the logic of regional integration but has since become a self-styled, well-formed foreign policy based on a high degree of internal consensus. The Mediterranean Policy meets the definition of a full-blown EC foreign policy because it comprises a set of mutually related, predetermined foreign policy actions designed to serve coherent policy goals.

The EC relationship with the United States is not guided by a coherent policy because: (A) the members cannot agree on a common approach; (B) the strategic side of the relationship falls outside the EC's legal purview—rendering it difficult for the EC to respond to certain policy areas affected by the logic of interdependence; and (C) the United States is far from the reassuring shores of the EC, European Free Trade Association (EFTA), Mediterranean, and African states for which EC policies are more cogent and effective. The EC relationship with the United States illustrates the limits of EC foreign policy activity and the influence of complex global interdependence on European policymaking.

The third set of EC relationships with outsiders, EC policy toward enlargement, is both a cause and an effect of foreign policy activity. Enlargement is mostly the result of external pressures placed on the EC by nonmember European countries to join the club, thus confirming the logic of integration at work. Evidence shows that the EC's first enlargement prompted an increase in the number of joint EC foreign policy actions. The EC has had

three enlargements: the first (referred to as E1) incorporated the United Kingdom, Ireland, and Denmark in 1973; the second (E2) incorporated Greece in 1981; and the third (E3) incorporated Spain and Portugal in 1986. This study reveals that E1:

- *encouraged defensive EC policies toward certain nonmembers*, because consolidation of the internal market adversely affected outsiders, requiring the EC to act defensively, triggering foreign policy activity;
- *created new conflicts of interest between members and nonmembers*, as insiders enjoy exclusive privileges not available to outsiders;
- *increased the EC's international political and economic clout*, as new members brought to the EC their own sets of foreign relations, and EC trade as a percentage of world trade grew such that few countries were untouched by the effects of EC foreign trade policy;
- *broadened the EC's foreign policy base of operations and expertise*, as new members brought to the EC their own diplomatic experiences and specialties; and
- *demarcated the EC from the outside world*, as the EC became increasingly self-sufficient, resulting in tighter market access for nonmember imports.

The period 1973–1974, during which enlargement, OAPEC's (Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries) oil embargo, and OPEC's (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) price increases occurred, is used as a reference point from which a comparison of the number and types of joint actions is made. This comparison helps to determine if indicators of EC foreign policy activity have increased or decreased. If such indicators show a jump after 1973–1974, enlargement and the oil embargo may be viewed as key catalysts to unified EC action.

Key influences on foreign policy activity identified in this study are foreign economic and political pressures and internal economic conditions. The EC is sensitive to the supply and price of raw materials, to global economic recession, and to global political conditions, such as threats to European security and superpower influence. EC vulnerability to strategic-goods imports means that many EC foreign policy actions are formulated with its import and export dependencies in mind. On the other hand, internal economic conditions have had the effect of insulating the EC from the outside world. The EC has achieved or exceeded self-sufficiency rates for many food and industrial products. Rising percentages for intra-EC trade as a portion of total EC and of total world trade and rising self-sufficiency rates for such needs as labor and food point to this growing independence. A European Community less dependent on the outside world bodes well for foreign policy actions that are more independent of external pressures.

The browbeating that the EC receives from many leaders and thinkers on both sides of the Atlantic is often deserved, especially when the political will so patently needed to achieve more fully the original goals of the Rome Treaty is lacking. However, despite the EC's many political and institutional dilemmas, what the majority of Europeans have achieved at and since midcentury remains one of the most significant peacetime developments in modern international relations. A rebuilt and reconciled Western Europe should neither be taken for granted nor be dismissed as politically insignificant, lest we forget lessons of less peaceful times before the EC existed. Surely, the EC continues to distinguish itself from other forms of international cooperation as it formulates and executes joint foreign policy actions. This study shows that the EC, despite its aches and pains, is still alive and kicking in this critical policy sector.

This study comes at a time when new political will is being breathed into the EC, by the member governments themselves, to eliminate internal barriers to trade by the end of 1992. Even if some intra-EC nontariff barriers (NTBs) remain, the EC of 1993 and beyond is expected to be a much more growth-oriented, prosperous economic body than it has been at any time since the early post-war economic boom. A stronger economic community, alongside a community whose foreign policy activity continues to intensify and deepen, will help bring Europeans what they could not achieve as separate states: power and influence in the world based on benefits derived from economies of scale and, of course, from politics of scale. The EC is again on the move.

Notes

1. What is meant by a process of integrating? Integration, by definition, must lead to a terminal condition. One of the reasons integration theory lost much cogency by the 1970s was that the EC was not moving toward the terminal condition of the integration process it predicted—that is, political and economic union. In this book, there is no interest in predicting the terminus of the process of foreign policy activity, at least in the long term. The EC might one day, in the far future, form a common foreign policy framework for the membership. Indeed, it already has individual foreign policies toward some of the world's regions and issues. For our purposes, the terminus of the process of foreign policy activity is the individual joint foreign policy action it produces. Whether the joint actions taken together will one day form a broader terminal European foreign policy is too speculative for scientific inquiry. This limitation should not, however, detract us from investigating outcomes and causes of foreign activity given the data available and the evolving theoretical construction covered in this book.

2. Kenneth Twitchett, ed., *Europe and the World* (London: Europa Publications, 1976), p. 8.

3. More complex statistical analyses, such as regression, were not undertaken in this study. Its chief statistical purpose was to present a wide variety of data on EC foreign policy activities in a parsimonious way and to maintain a balance between presentation of aggregate data and case study.

This study does not focus on the intended effects of EC actions, nor on when and where the EC should have or could have taken joint action but did not. Nor does it address the relationship between trends in EC foreign policy activity and the separate foreign policy activities of the member states. It also excludes occasions when the member states chose to act on their own or in conjunction with other groups of states outside the EC and EPC frameworks. These actions are important and should be investigated given the findings of this book, which is designed to be but one step in a broader reexamination of EC foreign policy behavior.

4. The author interviewed fifty-four officials at the Commission, Council Secretariat, European Parliament, and Permanent Representatives. Between one and two hours were spent with each respondent. Most of the Commission interviews were with officials in the Directorate-General for External Relations (DG-I), although several were held with officials from the Directorates for Economic and Financial Affairs (DG-2); Agriculture (DG-6); and Development (DG-8). Interviews were also held with officials at the Commission's Washington Delegation. Interviews with the European Parliament members were held during the June 1981 session—all were members of either the Political Affairs, External Relations, or Development Committees. Officials from all ten offices of the Permanent Representatives were interviewed. In each case, interviews were held with either the Deputy Permanent Representative or the First Political Counsellor. Of all respondents, twelve were from the UK, eleven from West Germany, seven from France, six each from the Netherlands and Italy, five from Denmark, three from Belgium, two from Ireland, and one each from Luxembourg and Greece.

2

Causes of EC Foreign Policy Activity

The search for conceptual explanations of EC policy behavior was derailed in the 1970s, when the EC fell short of full-blown economic and political union predicted by U.S. integration theorists of the 1960s. Many dismissed the EC in one fell swoop, either writing off the EC as secondary in political importance to its member governments or subsuming the politics of the EC to those of the international system. Others tried to squeeze the enormous complexity of the EC either into unconnected atheoretical case studies or into the narrow and inappropriate concept of international regime.

Apathy toward European affairs in the 1970s, indignation by theorists that the EC had not reached federal statehood by its third decade, and realization that the EC itself was becoming more complex and diverse all made production of grand conceptual works on European integration problematic. In retrospect, the mass abandoning of scholarly interest in the EC was too abrupt, leaving many key developments in the 1980s unexamined, especially in the area of foreign policy activity, an area begging for empirical and conceptual scrutiny.

The search for theory or concepts to provide formulas for explaining foreign policy actions is difficult. Most foreign policy theories or concepts are formed with the nation-state in mind. Joint foreign policy behavior of a group of states is so unorthodox in international relations that it defies traditional political science theory. Most conceptual frameworks explain why action eludes—rather than captures—groups of states. As political scientists cannot agree on foreign policy theory at the state level, it would be too optimistic to expect consensus on a theory of European foreign policy.

Our central theoretical question is not what causes the absence of EC

foreign policy activity but what causes its presence? What triggers joint action? What conceptual perspectives describe and explain the empirical evidence of joint actions?

The EC's multidimensional nature—twelve sets of national interests sometimes converge and sometimes diverge—means that no one conceptual perspective can fully describe and explain its foreign policy behavior. David Allen writes that EC foreign policy activity is a process that involves elements of integration, intergovernmentalism, transnationalism, and bureaucratic politics, all operating within a framework that encompasses international organizations and nation-states struggling to maintain independent identities in an interdependent world.¹ Leon Lindberg and Stuart Scheingold write that the EC defies categorization as it is neither federal nor confederal, integrated nor supranational, sovereign nor dependent but shares characteristics of all these.²

Should the search for such a conceptual perspective be abandoned because it is elusive? Should we rely instead on case studies that simply detail behavior? Conceptual frameworks help produce various explanations of behavior and allow broader understanding. Case studies unlinked to conceptual frameworks construct knowledge so that there is depth but no breadth; knowledge generated stops with the case study itself.

The main propositions of seven conceptual perspectives on EC foreign policy activity are encapsulated into Table 2.1 to compare how different perspectives, on different levels of analysis, illuminate different explanations of behavior. Christopher Hill cautions us that a catalogue of paradigms may evade the issue of how to distinguish between the more fruitful and less fruitful approaches.³ How then may we determine which patterns of behavior tend to be dominant in which circumstances? What you see may well depend on where you sit, but which seats give the best view in the house?⁴ This study tests the relative merits of the integration, interdependence, and self-styled logics in explaining what causes EC foreign policy actions.

The integration logic, by focusing on the effect of common market policies on outsiders, offers a cogent partial explanation of what spurs joint action. The level of analysis is regional. The common denominator of these actions is the impact of the EC's very existence on those outside.

The interdependence logic, concentrating on EC participation in the global interdependent order, gives another partial explanation of joint action. The level of analysis is the international system. The common denominator of these actions is the impact of the world on the EC.

The self-styled logic focuses on the EC's internal dynamic, its own foreign policy interests, and its own mission and initiative in the world independent of the phenomena that trigger other actions. The level of analysis is the symbiosis that goes on between the national and regional actors. The self-styled logic connects the national-interests and elite-actor models (see

Table 2.1) to the dynamics of decisionmaking at the regional level to illuminate the process whereby certain EC actions are taken. The common denominator of these actions is the EC's initiation of action in relation to the outside world independent of external pressures *per se*.

Table 2.1 also outlines the main propositions of four classical but less ambitious models: national interests, elite actor, domestic politics, and bureaucratic politics. These models are less useful in explaining what triggered action than they are helpful in describing the national and subnational contexts in which action is considered. More often, they suggest what in the matrix of conflicting interests played out in the domestic context impedes or eludes joint action. These models tend to glaze over (A) the process by which separate national interests are hammered into joint actions; and (B) international pressures on the EC to act as a unit despite opposition from national and domestic actors. Models at the national and subnational levels of analysis help frame the internal context in which EC actions are considered, yet they cannot be relied on to frame the external context.

We cannot draw on realist or neorealist theory for explanations of EC foreign policy activity. Hans Morgenthau writes that "international politics, like all politics, is a struggle for power. Whatever the ultimate aims of international politics, power is always the immediate aim."⁵ The concept of pursuit of national interest by use of force is central to the realist approach to understanding the behavior of nation-states. Realist theorists stress that international politics is a state of perpetual conflict. Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye, Jr. maintain that if international politics were a state of conflict, institutionalized patterns of cooperation on the basis of shared purposes should not exist except as part of a larger struggle for power.⁶

Pursuit of national interest and the centrality of national sovereignty, hallmarks of realist thought, help to explain when EC foreign policy activity either breaks down and the member states go their separate ways, or is not attempted at all. Of course, national self-interest was the chief reason that members joined the EC in the first place. However, realist precepts do not explain members' acceptance of costs associated with participation in the EC. Realism cannot account for trade-offs between national interests and those common to all of Europe that are facts of life in European politics.

The purpose of this book is to demonstrate that there is foreign policy activity at the EC level—a concept that breaks through certain assumptions about the EC that have become engrained in the political science literature of the 1970s and 1980s in the United States. These assumptions have produced misperceptions about the actual role and function of the EC as a foreign policy player for the membership and in the international system. The EC has been dismissed as ineffective in harmonizing common policies and as irrelevant to the foreign policy of the European states and to international relations.

But, indeed, joint foreign policy activity has produced a significant number of EC actions over time. EC behavior in international affairs, backed by a body of law and the habit of cooperation, cannot be explained by realist theory. Realism does not fully account for changes in the international system since the 1960s. It does not provide an adequate framework for analyzing the contemporary multipolar interdependent international system and the EC role in it. This system accommodates noncoercive regional cooperation, fusion of high and low politics, and the economic aspects of national or regional security. In this system, unlike the bipolar era and its *realpolitik*, EC influence is elevated because of the EC's economic and diplomatic weight. The EC need not be a military power to have influence or to act in defense of its interests. It is not necessary to discard realism, only to go beyond it to understand why regional cooperation exists outside the charge of power politics.

Neorealist theory, likewise, fails to explain the existence of the EC as an international actor.⁷ Neorealist premises, like realist ones, posit states as actors, anarchy as the state of international life, and power maximization as the goal of state action. These premises cannot account for the rise and growing importance of the EC in international affairs. Set against an international backdrop that is anarchic and power hungry under neorealist rubrics, the EC is an example of interstate cooperation even when the costs are high to its constituent members. Not a military body, the EC does not seek to increase military power, but rather concentrates on achieving economic goals such as growth and development.

Neither can we rely on the notion of hegemony, which has become so prevalent in the political science literature, to explain the EC—unless, of course, the EC becomes a hegemonic power in the international system or returns to a 1950s patron-client relationship with the U.S. hegemon.⁸ But the EC is not likely to do so in the foreseeable future. It has neither the aspiration nor the capability under its own law. In the literature on hegemonic thought, the EC is treated as an international regime. We know international regimes—such as the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the International Energy Agency (IEA), or Bretton Woods—as sets of explicit or implicit principles, norms, rules, and decisionmaking procedures around which actors' expectations converge in given areas of international relations.⁹ But the EC is more than an abstract set of rules, norms, and procedures well beyond the generally loose, informal, and nonobligatory nature of international regime. It has sovereign powers (outlined in Chapter 3) and long-term organizational goals that cannot be squeezed into the narrower and really inappropriate concept of international regime, which stresses intergovernmental rather than supranational cooperation. Webb argues that there are dangers in too wholehearted an application of the international regime concept to describe the aggregate level

of EC activity. It would be tempting to underestimate the significance and influence of EC law and the normally high rate of national compliance with frequently detailed EC legislation.¹⁰

The EC escapes regimes theory, it cannot be accounted for in terms of hegemonic power, and it defies notions of neorealism. Other perspectives will have to be examined for cogent explanations of EC foreign policy activity.

The Classical Political Science Models

National Interests

Based closely on Morgenthau's realism and Graham Allison's rational actor, the national-interests model helps to explain joint action. It points to the national decisionmaker, in an intergovernmental setting, as the determinant of joint action. The decisionmaker will work to maximize benefits for and minimize costs to the nation-state. Joint EC actions have to achieve support, or at least escape opposition, from national interests in the member states. When cooperation points to mutual benefit and the utility of joint approaches, then members will support joint foreign policy actions. The EC itself is the result of the convergence of national interests. Its power base is, according to the perspective of this model, purely national. When it is not in a member's interest to move EC policy ahead, use of veto power in the Council of Foreign Ministers (CFMs) and a variety of delaying tactics prove effective. The national-interests model suggests EC development is held hostage to member states' interests. Examples of how the model explains the existence and breakdown of joint action follow.

The response in four of the member states to the 1973–1974 OAPEC oil embargo of the Netherlands (and the quadrupling of oil prices by OPEC) was the lowest point in the history of EC foreign policy activity. By rushing to conclude separate trade deals with oil-producing states, the French, West German, British, and Italian leaderships chose national self-interest over EC solidarity and so violated the spirit, if not the letter, of the Rome Treaty. Despite attempts by the EC Commission and other member states, the four large member governments dispatched their foreign ministers to the Middle East to obtain the best possible bilateral supply agreements (bartering delivery of oil for arms and other shipments). "Perhaps the most deplorable spectacle was in the establishment of an uninvited delegation of Arab Foreign Ministers of oil producing states who insisted that they be heard at the December 1973 Copenhagen Summit. They turned the meeting into a circus in which the majority of actors were Arab Foreign Ministers, not leaders of the EC governments who were suppose to be meeting to promote European unification."¹¹