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Normative Power and Military Means: the EU's involvement with FYR Macedonia

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Abstract

Have military missions changed the character of the EU's foreign involvement? This study aims to answers this question by empirically assessing the EU's external policy objectives and the policy instruments employed in the case of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (fYROM), where it conducted its first military operation, Operation Concordia. This way it contributes to the debate between three contrasting theories of how military means will affect the character of the EU's foreign policies: anti-military Normative Power Europe, pro-military Normative Power Europe and Realist Power Europe. The study, on the basis of extensive document analysis, secondary literature and interviews, gives an in-depth account of the EU's involvement with fYROM over time, and concludes that Operation Concordia has not fundamentally changed the character of the EU's involvement with fYROM. With these findings, it calls for refinement of existing theories as they, on the one hand, raise doubts on the claim of anti-military Normative Power Europe and Realist Power Europe that military means necessarily implies a (further) shift towards the EU's narrow self-interest, while on the other hand, the claim of both types of Normative Power that the EU without military means was already a normative power is criticized as well.

Key words: Common Security and Defence Policy, fYROM, Normative Power, constructivism

Introduction

> Militarizing processes beyond the crossroads provided by the
> European Security Strategy are already weakening the normative
> claims of the EU in a post-11 September world (Manners 2006)

The European Union (EU) has only slowly developed into an actor in foreign affairs (Hill 1993; Zielonka 1998). As the process of European integration initially focussed on economic issues, the EU's foreign policy remained limited to the economic area for a long time as well. The proposal brought forward in 1950 to develop a European Defence Community (EDC) was rejected by the French parliament, and it was only in 1970 that the institutionalization of European Political Cooperation (EPC) indicated a gradual broadening of the scope of the foreign policy of the European Community (EC). A second important step was taken in 1993 when the EPC was transformed into the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) with the Treaty of Maastricht. Nevertheless, it took another ten years for the initial idea of a European Defence Community to become reality with the launch of the EU's first military mission in 2003.

Since 2003, 24 missions have been conducted under the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), of which seven have been classified as "military operations" (EEAS 2011). Whereas the EU has been classified as a civilian power (Duchêne 1973) and normative power (Manners 2002), the EU's access to ,and use of, military means has sparked a debate on what this development meant for the character of the EU's international actorness. On the one hand, Manners (2006) and Smith (2005) argue that this way the EU has lost its distinctiveness and can no longer be a normative or civilian power. On the other hand, others (Börzel and Risse 2009; Sjursen 2006b) exactly argue the opposite, stating that finally

the EU has become a civilian or normative *power*, as military means allow the EU to act to deliver its promises.

In order to contribute to this debate on the compatibility of military means with being a normative or civilian power, this article considers the EU's external policy objectives and the policy instruments employed by answering the following research question: *Do military missions change the character of the EU's foreign involvement?* Specifically, the research focuses on the EU's involvement with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYR Macedonia). As the EU conducted its first military operation in FYR Macedonia, Operation Concordia, this mission has been of critical importance for the development of later military missions; it has been a real test-case. Hence, a more in-depth account of whether and how this mission has changed the EU as an international actor is of great relevance for a better understanding of the relationship between military means and normative objectives. Whereas literature exists that deals with the EU's military missions (e.g. Merlingen and Ostrauskaité 2008), theoretically informed studies are less common (cf. Bickerton et al. 2011). Moreover, single case studies embedding the EU's military missions within its overall foreign policy are, to my best knowledge, scant.[i] This article aims to take up this challenge by "testing" three theories by examining the EU's relationship with Macedonia: realist power Europe, pro-military normative power Europe and anti-military normative power Europe.

The article has the following structure. In the next section the three theoretical positions on the EU's international actorness are discussed and hypotheses are derived on how military means are expected to affect the character of the EU's foreign involvement. Next, the case selection and operationalization are discussed. The article continues with the analysis of the EU's involvement with FYR Macedonia without using military means from 1999-2003 and with military means from 2003-2005 (section 3 and 4). After a discussion of the

findings (section 5), the final section links the findings back to the theoretical positions and concludes that Operation Concordia has not fundamentally changed the character of the EU's involvement with FYR Macedonia. The research also shows that the character of the EU's foreign policy is more ambiguous than the theories suppose, i.e. both evidence for the EU as a realist power and a normative power can be found, thus qualifies both the idea that the EU was an unambiguous normative power before it got access to military means as well as the opposite position that military means necessarily indicate a clear shift towards a realist power.

1. The character of the EU as a foreign policy actor

1.1 The EU an international changer of norms

In 1973, Duchêne introduced the notion of Civilian Power Europe (CPE) against the extremes of a European superpower and the EC as a neutral community. Duchêne (1973: 20) stressed that the main reason for the limited military power of the EC is not material, but is based on preferences of the populations which suffered from the two World Wars. The EC's inner characteristics constitute the EU's civilian power. Specifically, Civilian Power Europe aims to domesticate state relations, which means that international problems/conflicts are approached as a common responsibility and within structures of 'contractual' politics (Duchêne 1973: 20). This shows that the EC cannot be a neutral community either, as it aims to use its power to change the international system.

Arguing that Duchêne's (1973) notion of civilian power focuses too much on physical power in terms of actual empirical capabilities and given interests and hereby neglects the power of ideas and norms, Manners (2002) introduced the concept of Normative Power

Europe (NPE).[ii] What characterises a Normative Power is that it acts as a changer of norms and as such is able to "define conceptions of what is normal."

1.2 Realist critique

Neorealist critics have attacked the normative reading of the EU as an international actor. From the neorealist viewpoint, the anarchic structure of international power simply leaves no actor (state or regional union) the option to pursue its foreign policy on self-*dis*interested, normative grounds (Waltz 1959; Mearsheimer 1995).

While European political cooperation in its early, pre-1989 stages operated under the security umbrella provided by the United States and NATO, after the end of the Cold War Europe has had to take increased responsibility for its own regional environment (Hyde-Price 2007: 224). Certainly, after the Balkan tragedies in the 1990s, the EU has come to realise that it will not be able to secure these interests without access to military means (Hyde-Price 2007: 231). Thus, the main challenge of neorealism to the concept of normative power Europe is its insistence that the EU's foreign policy objectives remain eventually informed by a utility-based logic, i.e. a focus on geo-political security concerns, instead of the value-based logic that normative conceptions invoke.

1.3 Normative Power: with or without military means

Within the school of scholars that classify the EU as a normative or civilian power there is disagreement on what military means imply for the EU's normative power. On the one hand, the group of scholars we propose to label "anti-military Normative Power Europe", sees the EU's normative character has coming under threat now the EU has gotten access to military means. Thus, Smith (2005) argues that the mere possession of military instruments (even for

peacekeeping and humanitarian missions) precludes a label as civilian power as it sends a signal that military force is still useful and necessary, which is exactly opposite to what normative power Europe entails. Most notably, this is the position adopted by the godfather of the 'normative power Europe' concept, Manners, as he argues that the militarization as embodied in the European Security Strategy marks a "sharp turn away from the normative path of sustainable peace" (Manners 2006a).

On the other hand, the position we propose to label "pro-military Normative Power Europe" builds upon the premise that as the EU transcends traditional inter-state politics and invokes overarching universal values instead (cf. Manners 2002: 240) the addition of military means to its policy repertoire is only to be welcomed, especially because this way the EU foreign policy need not remain limited to promises and declarations but it can also, when situations so demand, intervene by force (Aggestam 2008; Börzel and Risse 2009; Sjursen 2006b).

Summing up, whereas the group of *anti-military NPE* focuses on the normative means, the group of *pro-military NPE* gives overriding precedence to the normative objectives.

1.4 Hypotheses

As the above discussed literature shows, there are three different approaches which formulate different expectations of the effect military missions will have on the EU's international actorness. In short, the debate can be captured by the following key hypotheses:

1) *Pro-military NPE* expects a) that the character of the EU's foreign policy is based upon a value-based logic, aimed at changing norms (i.e. promoting democracy and human rights); and b) that the access to military means has enhanced the EU's capability to act as

a changer of norms.

2) *Realist Power Europe* expects a) that the EU's foreign policy is based upon a utility-based logic, focussing on the narrow geo-political interests in its own security and the stability of its environment; and b) that the access to military means has made the EU more capable to promote these geo-political interests.

3) *Anti-military NPE* expects a) that the EU's foreign policy used to be based upon a value-based logic, aimed at changing norms; and b) that the access to military means has made the EU more focused on utility-based objectives like its own narrow geo-political self-interests.

2. Case selection and Indicators

This normative power debate has attracted a lot of academic attention, yet it has remained mostly theoretical (Sjursen 2006a: 172). Few contributions include a clear empirical test of the EU's normative power and/or focus on the issue areas of human rights and democracy promotion (e.g. Laïdi 2008; Niemann and De Wekker 2010). With some notable exceptions (e.g. Whitman 2011), the EU's military operations are often left unaddressed. This may not be surprising as the concept of normative power is not an easy concept to define, let alone, to operationalize. This study aims to meet this gap by empirically assessing the effect on the character of the EU's international power of one of the most recent developments, the acquiring of military means by the EU.

2.1 Case selection

This article examines the EU's involvement with the FYR Macedonia in general and its first military mission, operation Concordia, in particular. The reasons for selecting this case are

fourfold. First, since an important impetus for developing common security and defence capabilities was the EU's failure to act in the Yugoslav War's in the 1990s (Daalder and O'Hanlon 1999; Latawski and Smith 2003; Vanhoonacker 2005: 81), the Western Balkans has been of particular importance to the EU. Second, this region is relevant for answering the research question, as the military intervention can, in theory, be based on both utility-based grounds, i.e. stability in the direct neighbourhood and the tackling of organized crime, and a value-based logic of argumentation, i.e. a commitment to rectify its failure in the past to not let ethnic cleansing happen again. Third, as the first military mission ever conducted by the EU, operation Concordia has been an influential case in setting the stage for the EU's further deployment of military means, which has been confirmed by the findings of this research as well. Finally, a consideration of more practical concern has been that Operation Concordia has been completed by the end of 2003, which makes access to documents less restricted than in the case of the EU's ongoing military mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina, operation Althea.

To be able to grasp the change in the EU's foreign involvement, the time frame of this research runs from 1991, when FYR Macedonia gained its independence, until the end of 2005 in which the police operation Proxima was completed and, hence, FYR Macedonia's status was upgraded from 'potential candidate country' to 'candidate country'.

2.2 Indicators

Recalling the hypotheses, the two main concepts of this research are means (or policy instruments) and ends (or: objectives). Hence, to measure the character of the EU's foreign policy and assess whether it has changed as a result of enhanced capabilities, the following indicators are used: 1) kind of objectives, 2) consistency of policy, 3) authorization of military operation, 4) embeddedness of military operation within overall policy.

First, in the specific context of the EU's involvement with FYR Macedonia, the distinction can be made between two kinds of *objectives (*derived from Lerch and Schwellnus 2006). On the one hand, interventions based on achieving primarily border security and tackling organized crime point at a utility-based argumentation in line with a realist power profile, focusing on the EU's own security concerns. On the other hand, interventions based on achieving peace between ethnic groups, enhancing democracy and the rule of law point at a value-based argumentation in accordance with a normative power profile, focusing on European values and/or global UN-standards.[iii] Distinguishing between these two types of objectives does not mean that a normative power does not care for its own stability. However, it makes a difference whether you support "sustainable peace" which in the end ensures your own stability and security as well, or whether you are looking for your own stability and security and include "sustainable peace" when it fits. Nevertheless, if only reference is made in EU-document or by EU-officials to the security and stability of the EU, then the 'evidence' for being a normative power is very weak.

To distinguish between a normative and realist power we do not only have to look at the objectives, but also at the way they are pursued. We propose to label this indicator *consistency*. This indicator consists of two dimensions: *double standards* and *one size fits all.* A normative power is expected to apply its norms and values consistently (i.e. no double standards), while allowing for differences in how to reach those objectives (i.e. no "one size fits all approach"). In contrast, a realist power pursuing its own interests is likely to do exactly that: using double standards and a one size fits all approach.

The third indicator deals with the authorization of military intervention. A normative power is expected to only intervene militarily when that is *authorized*, both internally (by the European Parliament and the Member States) and externally (by the United Nations). In

contrast to this multilateral approach, unilateral action would give support to the EU acting as a realist power.

Finally, the fourth indicator, *embeddedness,* deals with the instruments used by the EU, i.e. the extent to which the military mission is embedded within the existing policy. If the military mission is crowding out existing policy (i.e. in terms of money spend on the mission and whether it is presented as supporting existing policy or vice versa), this points at militarization of the EU's engagement as argued by Manners (2006). On the other hand, when the military mission is complementary to existing policy, it indicates an enhanced capacity to act as a normative power. To assess the embeddedness of the military mission, other policy instruments that the EU is using in its relation with FYR Macedonia are taken into account as well, in particular economic instruments, (i.e. trade agreements and development aid), and diplomatic instruments, (i.e. political dialogues, high-level visits, making peace proposals, sending peace-fire monitors and offering EU membership)(Smith 2008: 62/63).

While the first two indicators, *objectives and consistency* regard both periods, the last two indicators, *authorization* and *embeddeness* relate specifically to the way military force is used and, hence, only apply to the period in which the EU actually used military means.

2.3Methods and Data

One of the most important sources of primary data for this research consists of official documents of the Council of the European Union (e.g. Council Joint Decision, Joint Action, Master Messages, Operation Plan), the European Commission (e.g. Stabilization and Association Agreement, PHARE Programme Reports) and the European Parliament (e.g. minutes from interparliamentary meetings, reports, resolutions and questions). The data are

analyzed by means of directed qualitative content-analysis, i.e. the analysis of documents is not open, but theory guided. Focussing on a single country, all relevant and accessible documents for the total time frame were analyzed.

Second, six semi-structured interviews were conducted with policy-makers and politicians from different EU-institutions[iv] who were involved with FYR Macedonia in 2001-2003 and preferable already before that time as the whole time frame of the research runs from 1991 until 2005. Additionally, another two interviews were conducted with people from the military working at the headquarter of Operation Concordia in Skopje by that time.

In addition to two types of primary data, official documents and interviews, secondary literature is used to answer the research question. Triangulating these three types of data, the (construct) validity of the findings is enhanced.

3. **FYR Macedonia and the EU before Operation Concordia (1999-2003)**

When Macedonia gained independence in 1991 it was economically the least developed of the Yugoslav republics (Eldridge 2002: 50). Although it gained its independence peacefully, international recognition did not follow spontaneously, as its neighbour to the south, Greece, disputed Macedonia's constitutional name and flag (Ramet 1999).[v]

Like the other former Yugoslav states, Macedonia consists of different ethnic groups and different religions. Macedonians make up 64,2% of the population of 2 million people (2002 Census data, Macedonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and Albanians form the largest minority group, consisting of 25,2% of the population. Two thirds of the population belongs to the Macedonian Orthodox religion, while one third is Muslim (ibid.). Although during the

several Yugoslav wars in the early 1990s Macedonia remained at peace, tension between several ethnic groups was not absent.

Discontent with the 1991-Constitution was an important internal factor contributing to the radicalization of Albanian nationalists after Macedonia's independence. In this Constitution the Macedonian language is mandated as the only official language. Furthermore, only the Macedonian Orthodox Church is mentioned by name, lumping together all other "religious communities and groups". This contributed to the feeling among the Albanians that they are discriminated as both their religion and language were not acknowledged (Eldridge 2002: 55; ICG 1998). The end of the UN Preventive Deployment mandate in 1998, in combination with NATO's apparent lack of interest in internal Macedonian stability, created a window for Albanian extremists to radicalise their political agenda (Gross 2007: 132; Eldridge 2002: 52). During the 7-month conflict, from January until August 2001, the National Liberation Army (NLA), consisting of Albanese Macedonians and closely related to the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), staged several attacks along the ill-defined Kosovo-Macedonian border. The conflict between the army, or rather the special operations forces consisting predominantly of Macedonians, and the Albanese NLA led to widespread violence, causing up to 170,000 people to flee from their homes in the north and west (Delegation of the European Union in fYROM 2011).

As the Skopje government could not cope with the insurgency, it asked NATO for assistance (Eldridge 2002: 59). Initially NATO was unwilling to provide the Skopje government with troops on a structural basis. However, when the conflict escalated again in June 2001, KFOR deployed Task Force Juno, with 400 soldiers from the UK, Sweden, Finland and Norway (Ibid.: 64).

While NATO brokered security arrangements between the NLA and government security forces, the EU and US took care of the political dialogue and confidence-building measures necessary to end the fighting (Ibid.: 65). In August 2001, the Ohrid Agreement was signed (Ohrid 2001), officially ending the conflict. In the Ohrid Framework Agreement, Macedonia is acknowledged as a unitary state while its multi-ethnic character "must be preserved" as well. To this end the Framework Agreement proposes a revised Law on Local Self-Government which "enlarges substantially" the competences of local officials and which reflects "the principle of subsidiarity in effect in the EU" (Ohrid 2001).[vi]

After the Ohrid Framework Agreement was signed, NATO conducted three military missions from August 2001 until March 2003 (NATO 2011). Whereas the first mission focused on collecting and destroying weapons handed over by armed groups, the subsequent missions aimed to protect the international monitors overseeing the implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement. Although officially the conflict was brought to an end, the situation remained rather fragile as another guerrilla group, the Albanian National Army (ANA), emerged. This group opposed the made agreements and claimed responsibility for kidnapping nearly 100 civilians and several attacks, one of which resulted in the death of at least 17 people (Eldridge 2002: 67/68).

3.1 The EU's involvement with FYR Macedonia in times of relative stability (1991-2000)
From 1991 until 2000 Macedonia was a poor but rather stable country, that was part of the EU's regional programmes towards the former Yugoslav Republics, but not high on the EU's agenda (Council of the European Union 1996; European Commission 1997). The EU's involvement was mainly driven by utility-based considerations, although there are some indications of value-based objectives.

While the ethnic tensions did already exist (cf. International Crisis Group 1997; 1998; 1999; 2000), they were not addressed by the European Commission's institution-building programmes, like the Stabilization and Association Process (SAP) and the PHARE-programme (European Commission 1996; 1998; 1999a/b; 2000; cf. IDC/DS 2001). Additionally, there was little consultation with stakeholders and government ownership was not addressed (IDC/DS 2001). Moreover, the specific needs of FYR Macedonia were neglected as standard pre-accession instruments were used, which fits with a realist power' "one size fits all" approach.

Furthermore, in the conflict between Greece and Macedonia, the EU in the first instance did use double standards as it declined to recognize FYR Macedonia after it fulfilled the conditions for recognition (Ramet 1999: 183-186). Moreover, the ECJ ruled that EU law did not prohibit Greece's trade blockade against FYR Macedonia. So, it is unable to judge the actions of EU Member States to non- EU Member States against its own normative standards.

In addition to the role of the European Commission and the Council, the European Parliament held six interparliamentary meetings with FYR Macedonia from 1996 until 2000 (European Parliament 2009). While the EP also increasingly focused on the SAP, the instrument used by the EP, namely dialogue and persuasion, fits well with a normative power profile.

In conclusion, during this first period of the EU's involvement with FYR Macedonia the Commission's policy, and the Council's involvement in the conflict with Greece point at a realist power that first and foremost focuses on its own direct interest. The strongest evidence for a normative power profile are the interparliamentary meetings between the EP and its Macedonian counterpart.

3.2 The EU's initial involvement with FYR Macedonia during the 2001-conflict

When the tensions escalated into a violent conflict in 2001, the EU became active as a humanitarian and diplomatic mediator, in the shadow of NATO's military operation of collecting weapons. The primary concern at this stage is bringing the ethnic conflict to an end. The EU consistently uses conditionality to encourage, both ethnic groups in FYR Macedonia to sign the peace-agreement (Interview C 2011; European Parliament 2001). Also, the appointment of an EU Special Representative for FYR Macedonia in 2001 and the awarding of the potential candidate status to FYR Macedonia indicates that the relative indifference of the EU in FYR Macedonia was over (Council of the European Union 2001; Interview C). Last but not least, the Ohrid Framework Agreement (Ohrid 2001) explicitly refers to the EU's example of subsidiarity as a way for FYR Macedonia to deal with its ethnic diversity. This portrays the EU as a model and demonstrates what Manners (2002) calls "living by example."

4. Operation Concordia and its aftermath (2003-2005)

After three NATO missions in FYR Macedonia the EU took over on March 31, 2003 to conduct its first military mission ever, Operation Concordia. After an extension with another 2,5 months the mission was completed by December 15, 2003 (Council of the European Union 2003b). Subsequently the kind of objectives and the consistency, and the authorization and embeddedness of the military operation are addressed. Next attention is paid to the civilian police mission, Operation Proxima, that was launched as successor of Operation Concordia.

4.1 Objectives & Consistency of Operation Concordia

The EU's first military operation was strongly informed by the EU's failure to act in the

Balkan wars of the 1990s, in the sense that "the EU had the responsibility to prevent it would

get out of control again" (Interview E 2011). The main objectives of Operation Concordia

were:

> Strengthening the operational capacity of the multiethnic police and
> stepping up efforts to fight organised crime (Council of the European
> Union 2003f)

While "strengthening the operational capacity of the multiethnic police" fits very well with a

normative power identity as it aims to remove one of the underlying causes of the violent

conflict in 2001, the "efforts to fight organised crime" point at a utility-based logic behind the

military intervention.

Notably, the scope of the mandate of the Operation was rather limited, which raises

doubts on the military character of the Operation. For example, the operation plan states that

the EU forces will not serve as a security buffer between any ethnic groups and that "the EU-

led force will not deal with serious widespread incidents" (Council of the European Union

2003e). In fact interviewees indicate that the EU did not have the means to intervene "when it

would have gone wrong" (Interview G 2011). What then were the military tasks of the

military send by the EU? The mission was primarily about visible presence and advising the

FYR Macedonia authorities (Council of the European Union 2003e). The main tasks of the

military were defined as "patrolling, reconnaissance, surveillance and reporting"(Ibid.).

There were between 15 and 18 teams of 5 á 10 soldiers who were visible by driving around,

keeping contact with the mayors to gather intelligence about possible tensions and living in

villages of their district (Interview G 2011).

Other interviewees confirm that the Operation was intended to be a low threat level-

Operation:

> Protecting Ohrid and confidence-building were the two main
> objectives of the military operation (Interview 2011 C).

> The problem was not about military force. There was so much
> distrust of the army and the police. Reassurance was the main
> objective; that the people knew that they could turn to someone
> (Interview B 2011).

> The main role was reassurance of local population. A kind of
> stabilization factor, allowing the local actors to negotiate in a more
> quiet atmosphere. Also an indication to the two parties that we
> would not tolerate the use of force (…) The lack of trust vis-à-vis the
> central administration and central police was such that you needed
> first a military and then police presence to guarantee this security and
> trust, and to rebuild this trust. (Interview A 2011)

The focus on the police, combined with the explicit fear for serious incidents raises questions

on the military nature of the operation. If there was only the police to be dealt with, would a

police mission not have been better suited? And if there was still enough potential for serious

incidents, why is this then explicitly rejected as being part of the operational mandate? This

indicates a more utility-based logic in which the focus is primarily on the EU's own cost-

benefit calculus. Several interviewees stated that the EU seems to be willing to do a military

operation as long as there is no real chance that it will need to intervene militarily:

> Resulting from the success of the Ohrid Agreement no deployment of
> large-scale fore was needed. Yet, this was not clear from the start.
> Hence, initially the EU left the military part to NATO (i.e. three

preceding missions). When it became clear that it wasn't that bad, the
EU made clear: let's do it (Interview E 2011)

No, a military intervention was not really necessary. Dayton[vii] had
been signed. So, it was quiet on that border. (...) It was more of an
exercise for the EU how to conduct such a military operation
(Interview F 2011)

Alternatively, the low threat military operation may also be argued to be line with being a

normative power as it kept the responsibility with the local government instead of a process

of de-responsibilization and occupation of the national administration:

This small presence was possible because we kept a deep dialogue
with the local actors. In the end we put them in their own
responsibilities. So there was no process of de-responsibilization, as is
the case in Bosnia and Kosovo (Interview A 2011).

In short, a value-based logic behind the operation appears to be dominant as the mission

primarily aims at confidence-building and focuses on the multi-ethnic police for a structural

solution for peace. Nevertheless, the restricted military mandate indicates that the EU was a

rather hesitant normative power.

4.2 Authorization and Embeddedness of Operation Concordia

Operation Concordia tends towards a normative power profile on the dimensions

authorization and *embeddedness*. The operation was based upon a broad authorization. It was

welcomed by a UN resolution (United Nations 2001) and based upon the invitation of the

host government (Council of the European Union 2003a). Also, the large number of

participating states indicates broad support from within the EU itself.

Next, the operation was well embedded within the existing EU policy; e.g. a Task

Force was established with representatives from the European Commission and the Council

Secretariat (Interview C). The embeddedness within existing policy is also emphasized in the Joint Action Statement (Council of the European Union 2003a) and in the Master Messages (Council of the European Union 2003d). Additionally, the total costs of the mission have amounted to a total of 6 million euro (Council of the European Union 2003c), which compared to the amount FYR Macedonia received under the CARDS-programme[viii], makes clear that there is no evidence for a crowding out of existing policy by the EU's military operation. This crowding out is even less plausible when taking into account that the ESDP-operations are financed separately from the Community-budget. While this has the disadvantage of no democratic control of European Parliament, it means that the Commission's programmes are not directly hit by the ESDP-operations.

4.3The continuation of the EU's involvement in FYR Macedonia: Operation Proxima

When Operation Concordia was completed in December 2003, a civilian police mission, Operation Proxima, took over (Council of the European Union 2003g; Council of the European Union 2004b). In Operation Proxima mission-staff was co-located at senior levels of management of the police in over 20 locations in Northwest Macedonia where fighting had taken place in the first half of 2001 to support a "further development of an efficient and professional police service, living up to European standards" and "a strengthening of the rule of law" (Solana 2003). As the fighting had taken place in the border region with Kosovo, special attention was paid to set up a well functioning border police. In Operation Proxima attention increasingly shifted from the ethnic conflict and policing to fighting organised crime. Already in 2003 Solana argued that "the main threat to stability is no longer armed conflict but criminality". After the mid-term review in 2004 (Council of the European Union 2004a: 28), the operational mandate was revised accordingly. So, compared to the military

operation, fighting organized crime was prioritized over the goal of establishing a well-functioning multiethnic police. The latter indicates a focus on the EU's own security concerns, rather than a continuing insistence on the full incorporation of the Albanian minority into the police.

Next, like Operation Concordia, Operation Proxima was widely supported. However, in terms of embeddedness there is more evidence for a realist power profile than for a normative power profile. Although Solana (2003) referred to the EU's technical and financial assistance via the Special Representative and the embeddedness of Proxima in the SAP to show that the police mission was not conducted in isolation from existing EC policy, sources within the Commission report: "The existing institution building programmes of the Commission did not coexist well with Operation Proxima" (Interview C 2011). The police mission put pressure on the Commission's project assisting structural changes at the Ministry of Interior covering police reform that was launched prior to Proxima (Gross (2007: 137).

5. **Discussion**

As little empirical research exists that "tests" the contrasting claims of normative and realist power, this article aimed to contribute to this debate by empirically assessing the effect of military means on the character of the EU's foreign policy. Comparing the EU's objectives and overall involvement with FYR Macedonia when it conducted its first military mission, Operation Concordia, to the period when it did not have military means at its disposal, this article has provided a first step for systematically studying the EU's proclaimed "power of ideas" in relation to its military means.

As the military Operation Concordia was well-embedded within the EU's overall policy towards FYR Macedonia, and did not involve a clear change in terms of objectives compared to the EU's civilian commitment in 2001 and 2002, the conclusion is that Operation Concordia has not fundamentally changed the character of the EU's involvement with FYR Macedonia. Rather than the military means, the Macedonian crisis itself constituted a normative shift in the EU's involvement with FYR Macedonia, from a rather utility-based logic to a more value-based approach.

The bottom-line of this study is that there is no necessary contradiction between a normative power identity and using military means. Hence, this study gives most support for the pro-military normative power position. Nevertheless, as all three theories cannot fully account for the character of the EU's involvement with FYR Macedonia over time, this study calls for a refinement of the existing theories.

First, little evidence was found for the anti-military normative power position, as the military operation did not result in a clear shift to a more realist power. Moreover, at first it was NATO that provided the necessary military means allowing the EU to commit its civilian instruments. It is questionable whether only the EU's civilian instruments would have been enough in the initial stage of the conflict to remove the violent angle of the conflict, supporting the claim of pro-military normative power that a normative power Europe with only civilian instruments is a rather powerless normative power. Furthermore, before the Macedonian crisis the EU's involvement was rather utility-based, which shows that the EU was not a unambiguous normative power either before it got access to use military means.

Second, whereas neorealism claims that, although it cannot explain all events, it can account for the main big events concerning "high politics" in foreign affairs, this study

shows that especially in times of crisis, the EU tends more towards a normative rather than a

realist power. Although there are some elements in Operation Concordia which are in

accordance with a realist power, largely neorealist' material understanding of self-interest

cannot account for the EU's deployment of military means in FYR Macedonia.

Nevertheless, this support for pro-military normative power is neither unqualified.

Operation Concordia's limited mandate, rather than the small number of troops, raises

doubts on the significance of the operation. The study suggests that Operation Concordia

seemed of more importance for the EU itself in showing that it was able to intervene

militarily and rectifying the European failure to act in the past, than that the security

situation in Macedonia itself required so, i.e. after the three NATO-missions escalation of

violence was no longer very likely (Interview B 2011). Notwithstanding, it shows that

military instruments are not necessarily crowding out the existing civilian instruments.

6. Conclusion

Building upon analysis of the EU's military mission in FYR Macedonia in 2003 and the

period before and shortly after, les us turn to answering the research question *do military

missions change the character of the EU's foreign involvement* and relates this to the three

hypotheses (presented in section 1). So, what change is there to understand and which of the

three theories best captures the relationship between means and ends in the EU's

involvement with FYR Macedonia?

This case study shows that Operation Concordia has not fundamentally changed the

character of the EU's involvement with FYR Macedonia. Moreover, it shows that the

character of the EU's foreign policy is rather ambiguous, containing both elements of a realist

power and of a normative power. However, this does not mean that there has been no change at all, as the balance between the two did change over time. During the EU's initial involvement in the crisis without CSDP-operation and, to a lesser extent, in the period of Operation Concordia, the character of the EU's involvement with FYR Macedonia comes close to a Normative Power. In contrast, during the EU's initial involvement, from its independence until the interethnic tensions got violent, and in the aftermath of the EU's military operation, when the civilian police mission Operation Proxima was launched, the EU tends more towards a Realist Power.

The research has not only academic relevance, it is of political interest as well. As the concepts of normative and realist power already indicate, there is power involved in presenting the EU as a certain power over alternative conceptualizations. The academic debate on what characterizes the EU's foreign policy has always been intertwined with debates among EU politicians and policy-makers as well, i.e. academic concepts can feed into the evolving self-perception of the EU's international actorness. Hence, in accordance with Manners (2002; 2006), I argue that, rather than declaring concepts like "normative power" obsolete, academic research has to take these political concepts seriously and the task to empirically assess and critically reflect on the proclaimed character of the EU's international actorness.

While the case of the EU's involvement with the FYR Macedonia has been of particular importance as it was the first country in which the EU intervened militarily, and hence of critical influence for the further development of the EU's military capabilities, additional research is needed. First, building upon the empirical framework of this article, which assesses the character of the EU's foreign involvement over time in a holistic way, more cases should be examined to assess the effects of military means in other contexts, e.g.

when the EU has no EU-membership to offer and when the military operation has a stronger

military character. Second, this article does not evaluate the effectiveness of the EU's power,

although that is of great interest as well. From a constructivist framework this would imply

the inclusion of not only the EU's own evaluation of its power, but also of the reception in

the countries concerned. For example, does the reception of the EU's power in countries in

which it is not militarily active differ from countries in which it uses military means as well?

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[i] One of the notable exceptions is Björkdahl (2011)

[ii] This article does not go into this conceptual debate. Since the answer to the question how the EU's international actorness as a 'power of ideas' relates to the use of military means cuts across the positions on whether the concept of normative power or civilian power is best suited for characterising the EU's international actorness, the two concepts, civilian power and normative power, are used interchangeably.

[iii] Compare Lerch and Schwellnus (2006) who distinguish between a rights-based and value-based logic of argumentation. In this research these two are taken together as they are both fundamentally different from the utility-based logic of argumentation.

[iv] The interviews are reported anonymously, yet the alignment with an EU-institution is reported

[v] Greece argued that Macedonia could not claim that name, because parts of Greece are called that way. As a compromise Macedonia has been recognized by the UN as the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYR Macedonia).

[vi] Other provisions include 1) the disarmament of the ethnic Albanian armed groups, 2) official establishment of the Albanian language and, consequently, the entitlement of the Albanian minority to education in the Albanian language, 3) the introduction of a double majority-threshold in parliament concerning key legal acts.

[vii] The Dayton Agreement, or General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, was signed in 1995

[viii] a stable amount of approximately 50 million euro a year (European Commission 2011)