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BOOK REVIEW

Eva Gross - The Europeanization of National Foreign Policy: Contunity and Change in European Crisis Management

Zerrin Torun

Dr., Middle East Technical University, Department of International Relations

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The Europeanization of National Foreign Policy: Continuity and Change in European Crisis Management

Eva GROSS

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Prepared by Zerrin TORUN*

The book explores to what extent member states' positions have been Europeanized in favour of a greater EU role in crisis management and defines Europeanization as the impact of the EU institutions on national politics, both as a potential platform to export policy preferences and as a constraint. As the author rightly points out, EU member states straddle three potentially conflicting commitments at the domestic, transatlantic and European contexts that have to be continuously negotiated in the formulation of foreign and security policies. This assumption provides the backbone of the research both conceptually and empirically. Conceptually, Eva Gross relies on three analytical lenses - Europeanization, alliance politics, and governmental politics - in order to analyse conflicting pressures acting on member states and when and why they choose to privilege domestic, transatlantic or European institutional venues. The preferences and priorities of Britain, France and Germany are the focus of case studies as these were the member states that were most crucial in terms of their size and potential and actual commitments for the crisis management missions under the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). As for the crisis management missions, the 2001 crisis in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) and the war in Afghanistan provide the first group of cases from the early days of ESDP, whereas the war in Lebanon and the ESDP mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) from 2006 form the second group which are used to assess the progress of Europeanization.

The introduction and Chapter 1 set out the assumptions of the analysis and the conceptual framework in detail. Chapter 2 provides the analysis of crises which unfolded in FYROM, Afghanistan, Lebanon and the DRC. Contrasting the experiences in 2001 with those in 2006 reveals that the geographic scope of ESDP had expanded beyond the Balkans and sub-Saharan Africa to include the Middle East, Asia and the Caucasus. In addition, European foreign and security institutions, particularly the Political and Security Committee (PSC) had become increasingly important.

The research proceeds with the analysis of the British, French and German foreign policy decision-making with regard to these crises, highlighting the tensions between domestic, European and transatlantic choices. Chapter 3 concludes that there is a gradual adjustment in the British view of the overall utility of ESDP. However, while there is

* Dr., Lecturer, Department of International Relations, Middle East Technical University, Ankara. E-mail: zerrin@metu.edu.tr.

an increasing realization in Britain that the EU can make a difference with its ability to deploy a broad spectrum of instruments in a post-conflict theatre, the British selection of ESDP as a framework is made on a case-by-case and pragmatic basis, unlike France, which has a clear overall ESDP agenda. Chapter 4 reveals the dynamics of French projection of national preferences onto Europe in FYROM and the DRC, as well as the limits of Europeanization observed in cases of Afghanistan and Lebanon. In the latter two cases, the UN or national contributions weighed more heavily as political platforms for the French, since these frameworks allow greater national influence in shaping policy decisions. Chapter 5 points out a more active and an increasingly influential Germany even in the form of military contributions in NATO, ESDP and the UN between 2001 and 2006. Although Berlin cannot be seen as a passive bystander any longer, it does not push the ESDP agenda as an active agenda setter either.

The final and sixth Chapter presents the findings of the analysis in terms of continuity and change in European Crisis Management. The analysis demonstrates that specific European dynamics, which influence and shape member states' foreign policy co-exist with specific national contexts, which facilitate or hinder moves towards Europeanization of national foreign policies. Some national constants remain in place, examples of which include enduring British reservations on utilizing ESDP unless NATO does not want to be involved; German reluctance to adopt a proactive stance towards ESDP; and French willingness to push the European agenda in the Balkans and sub-Saharan Africa, but not in regions or policy areas that are dominated by transatlantic considerations or in situations where the UN represents a more useful platform to exert national influence.

In Afghanistan, it can be seen that the EU presented a useful political forum for member states with respect to political and economic aspects of the reconstruction, whereas none of the three countries advocated an ESDP operation or an EU label for European military contributions to the International Security and Assistance Force (ISAF). Since they had different conceptions on the appropriate institutional framework and did not think that the EU was ready for such a military task. In FYROM, on the other hand, these member states supported the political negotiations led by the EU High Representative in order to strengthen organizational capacity of the EU, which illustrates the impact of Europeanization processes. However, the goal of strengthening the EU organizational capacity in FYROM came into conflict with transatlantic preferences and priorities, the desire to ensure a successful first ESDP mission, and preserve regional stability. However, even when the member states argued for relying on NATO for a longer period as a result of the combined effect of these conflicting dynamics, this reflected utilitarian concerns. In addition, the fact that German policy makers frequently invoked Europe's capacity to act to justify German participation in the military operations, although they did not push for military instruments located outside NATO suggests Europeanization in identity formation.

The analysis of the second group of cases from 2006 demonstrates that although alliance politics considerations did not impact national decision-making as much as they did in 2001, this did not automatically result in a greater role for the EU Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and ESDP. In Lebanon, all three countries were in favour of

a role for the EU and deemed an EU policy towards the Middle East important, and the majority of the enhanced UNIFIL peace-keeping force was European. However, none of the three countries pursued their policy preferences through the EU platform. Reservations with respect to the deployment of military instruments under ESDP demonstrated that national reservations towards pushing for an EU label in high-risk theatres matter as much as the feared negative consequences on transatlantic relations. Therefore, this case leads to the conclusion that alliance politics can be a conditioning factor in the decisions on ESDP operations, but does not explain the absence of Europeanization in all cases of military deployments. The final crisis management mission under scrutiny, EUFOR RD Congo reveals successful projection of French national preference in favour of the operation onto the EU platform by pressuring another member state, Germany to lead the operation. Germany's consent to the mission reflect both the impact of the French pressure and its own preference towards ESDP, which confirm Europeanization in the form of identity formation as well as the salience of the European agenda in German foreign policy. British consent to the mission, on the other hand, demonstrates that there were no conflicting interests in terms of alliance politics or domestic reservations and points towards a weak Europeanization.

In light of these, Eva Gross argues that the creation of CFSP and ESDP has enabled the EU's performance in crisis management, but the EU has not become a privileged institution in the formulation of member-states' foreign policy responses to international and regional crises (p xi). The analysis demonstrates that although the EU and Brussels-based European institutions increasingly play a substantial part in international politics, and although the value of an ESDP mission was not contested in case of the crisis in the DRC, member states remain reluctant in particular, to deploy ESDP missions. For Gross, the fact that the UN emerged as the more influential platform for negotiations and the peacekeeping operation in order to deal with the crisis in Lebanon proves that the EU is not automatically privileged as an institutional platform, even when there is not any pressure arising out of transatlantic commitments. Although Alliance politics has become a less influential factor in decisions on ESDP operations, and both CFSP and ESDP have matured considerably since ESDP was declared operational in 2001, domestic reservations continue to restrict the geographic and functional scope of ESDP. The comparison of the two periods shows that basic national positions of France, Britain and Germany with regard to pushing the EU agenda in pursuit of a multi-polar world order; privileging transatlantic relations; and fence-sitting by simultaneously privileging transatlantic commitments, but also pushing for greater European involvement in world affairs remain intact, despite the increasing adaptation pressures emanating from the European level. However, the period between 2001 and 2006 also points out a change in views on ESDP in the form of the increasing realization that the value-added of ESDP (and European crisis management policies) is its comprehensive approach that combines security, political and economic policies in one institutional home. Even the UK is in favour of the current EU approach to crisis management which considerably relies on Security Sector Reform, an issue which was not part of the original ESDP agenda in 2001. On the basis of these, the author concludes that the Europeanization

approach is useful conceptually since it facilitates highlighting the influence of the EU on national foreign policy, even if this influence and by extension, the explanatory value of the Europeanization approach itself remains limited especially in terms of the application of military instruments under ESDP and uneven in terms of crisis decision-making.

The only problem in this well-detailed analysis in light of concepts is the absence of a thorough discussion of the utility of theoretical frameworks of International Relations and European Integration. The author hints at the possibility of a discussion of the utility of theoretical frameworks when she states that if “existing EU institutions result in policy adaptation on the national level, this would weaken state-centric, liberal intergovernmentalist analyses” or when she states “applied to the EU CFSP/ESDP, this approach attributes the major decision-making power to the member states, and assumes that domestic preferences are fixed and unaffected by normative concerns and interstate bargaining processes” (p 9). However, the readers are left to wonder the author’s conclusion as to the validity of these hypotheses, when she evades the issue in the concluding chapter by merely stating that “the challenge of providing a theory-driven, parsimonious explanation for foreign policy decisions in the CFSP/ESDP context remains for others to explore” (p 170). This is a result of the eclectic approach towards the definition of concepts. For instance, the definition of Europeanization as a concept [developed by Reuben Wong (2005)], which includes separate processes of projection of national preferences, adaptation of national policies, or emergence or change of national preferences that privilege a European approach (Europeanization as identity formation), benefits from the rational choice institutionalism’s emphasis on interests and sociological institutionalism’s focus on identities. Limited handling of theories can also be seen when the author accepts that potential indicators for “Europeanization as a result of identity formation” are “similar to the indicators one would expect to observe as a result of Europeanization conceptualized as national adaptation” (p 19-20). Another example is the definition of “salience or prominence” as “an increased importance of the EU CFSP/ESDP in the minds of decision-makers” which “leads to advocating increased application of CFSP/ESDP instruments” (p 17), that does not distinguish between normative or utilitarian concerns which determines salience or prominence.

Despite this problem, the book presents a solid empirical analysis of the dynamics behind the launching of the EU crisis management missions. It also benefits from well-developed assumptions and hypotheses which enable an elaborate scrutiny of the utility of conceptual tools, such as Europeanization, Alliance politics and governmental politics. Therefore, it is a welcome contribution to the literature in an under-explored issue area.