EMBARKING ON PESCO IN 2017: AN INVESTIGATION OF THE LINK BETWEEN NATIONAL INTERESTS AND EU DEFENCE POLICY FROM AN INTERGOVERNMENTALIST PERSPECTIVE

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I, the undersigned István Pósfai hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. To the best of my knowledge this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where proper acknowledgment has been made. This thesis contains no material which has been accepted as part of the requirements of any other academic degree or non-academic program, in English or in any other language.

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Abstract

This thesis addresses the question of why the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) as part of the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) was launched in December 2017 and not in 2010. The puzzle arises from the fact that the option to develop this new framework was included in the Lisbon Treaty and PESCO was already on the agenda during the implementation of the Treaty in 2010. The study chooses a primarily liberal intergovernmental approach to formulate hypotheses, thus focusing on factors and conditions of domestic politics driving governments to dismiss PESCO in 2010, but support it in 2017. The research explores the potential causal mechanism of PESCO's emergence as a problem-solving response to increasing negative externalities of insecurity. The research does not support the hypothesis that national preferences would have converged on the substantive scope of defence cooperation, thus increasing the likelihood of the alternative hypothesis of understanding PESCO as an instrument for revitalising integration. Shedding light on the temporality of PESCO is a way to contribute to the broader CSDP literature and improve the understanding of the current trajectory of EU defence policy.

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List of abbreviations

CARD   Coordinated Annual Review on Defence

CEE   Central and Eastern Europe

CSDP   Common Security and Defence Policy

EDA   European Defence Agency

EDC   European Defence Community

EDF   European Defence Fund

EDIDP   European defence industrial development programme

EP   European Parliament

ESDP   European Security and Defence Policy

FAC   Foreign Affairs Council

HQ   Headquarters

HRVP   High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice-President of the Commission

IR   International Relations

MPCC   Military Planning and Conduct Capability

MS   Member State

NATO   North Atlantic Treaty Organization

PESCO   Permanent Structured Cooperation

TEU   Treaty on European Union

1 Introduction

In November 2017, ministers from 23 member states (MS) of the European Union (EU) signed a notification stating their wish to launch a 'permanent structured cooperation' (PESCO) on defence. One month later, the Council of the European Union (Council) took a formal decision and established PESCO with 25 participating MSs.[1] This has been regarded as the crowning moment of the developments taking place over the course of a few years in the area of defence policy within the EU.

The momentum felt in this policy area is due to a list of measures such as the creation of the 'Military Planning and Conduct Capability' (MPCC) as a permanent headquarter (HQ) for non-executive military missions, the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD), the European Defence Fund (EDF), the decision to establish the permanent structured cooperation (PESCO) as well as the European defence industrial development programme (EDIDP). All of these developments are significant, but PESCO seems to be receiving the most attention and also praise both from academics and politicians (Tardy 2018; Biscop 2017, 2018a; Howorth 2017b; Fiott, Missiroli, and Tardy 2017; Barigazzi 2017b). While it might not be a "panacea" according to Jolyon Howorth (2017, 5), he does note that many see it as a major breakthrough. Others support this claim saying that it does seem to insiders "as a giant leap forward for the EU" (Fiott, Missiroli, and Tardy 2017, 53) and the High Representative/Vice President (HRVP) Federica Mogherini called it a 'historic' day when the 23 MSs signed the notification (Barigazzi 2017a). But what is PESCO and why was it activated in December 2017?

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[1] Participating member states: Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, Greece, Spain, France, Croatia, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland and Sweden (Council of the EU 2017). Non-participants: Denmark, Malta, United Kingdom.

PESCO is an institutional framework intended to structure and incentivise military cooperation among EU member states. The cooperation builds on two components: developing military capabilities (based on the binding commitments participants accept) and making those capabilities available for operations in a co-ordinated manner (EEAS 2018). It is relevant for understanding the current developments that PESCO has been an option since the Lisbon Treaty and was already on the agenda in 2010, but was dropped due to a "lack of enthusiasm" on the part of member states (Andries 2011). Yet in 2018, it is already in the implementation phase with 17 projects up and running within the framework, so a change has clearly taken place between 2010 and 2017. Looking at the drivers of PESCO's development from a primarily liberal intergovernmental perspective, the goal of this thesis is to find key differences between the situations in 2010 and 2017 that would provide insight into PESCO's true nature and inform expectations of its future based on the theoretical framework. Essentially, the central question of my thesis is why did the MSs decide to embark on PESCO now and not before?

While acknowledging the momentum in defence policy, Tardy (2018, 1) argues that it "says little about the form and finality of military operations" the EU wishes to conduct and that defence lacks meaning in the European context due to under-conceptualisation by the relevant actors. Do current developments, especially PESCO really not bring added value to the concept of EU defence? Exploring the temporal dimension of PESCO can shed light on the implicit conception of defence and the role of military force in the EU.

To date, literature concerning PESCO has been primarily descriptive in an effort to pin it down (Mauro and Santopinto 2017; Fiott, Missiroli, and Tardy 2017; Tardy 2018; Lazarou and Friede 2018) or prescriptive (Institute for Security Studies 2016; Biscop 2017; de France, Major, and Sartori 2017) with both approaches including an evaluative, normative tone. Analysing PESCO from a theoretical perspective is relevant in going beyond descriptive analyses and gaining deeper understanding of it. Drawing on the theoretical frameworks applied to explain the

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development of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), a case study of PESCO as the most recent and most significant development within CSDP is a highly relevant contribution to the broader literature on EU defence.

Following the introduction, the study takes stock of the most relevant theoretical frameworks applied to account for the developments of CSDP and derives their implications for PESCO. The research design of the study is described in chapter 3, focusing on the hypotheses deducted from the chosen theoretical framework. The presentation of the empirical evidence follows in chapter 4 according to country cases. The discussion of the hypotheses based on the evidence assembled takes place in chapter 5, and the thesis concludes in chapter 6.

2 Literature review

2.1 Theorising CSDP and PESCO

Theories help us make sense of the world by organising the empirical evidence in a way to gain deeper understanding of a specific issue. Finding the adequate explanations for different phenomena in the world not only generates systematized knowledge, but makes it possible to make informed predictions. This is no different in the case of PESCO: one is faced with a complex set of events and changes which might relate to the emergence of it, but existing theories help focusing on specific important aspects and factors, streamlining the scientific inquiry. The theories available to apply to PESCO are provided by the wide range of existing literature on the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP).

Another use of theory-based analysis is that the underlying assumptions are made explicit and this way the research opens up to scrutiny (Kurowska 2012). This is especially relevant in studying CSDP, a policy area where normative evaluation and prescriptive scholarly work is prominent and where academic and policy communities act in relative closeness (Kurowska 2012).

Theorising CSDP has always been at the intersection of international relations (IR) and European integration studies (Kurowska 2012; Merlingen 2012; Weiss 2011). Realist interpretations have been at the forefront of studying CSDP (Posen 2004, 2006; Art et al. 2005; Hyde-Price 2006; Merlingen 2012; Jones 2007; Mearsheimer 2010; Rosato 2011; Rynning 2011), but consequently they have also faced considerable amount of criticism (Howorth and Menon 2009; Moravcsik 2010; Weiss 2011; Cladi and Locatelli 2012; Pohl 2013a, 2013b; Hyde-Price 2013).

Neofunctionalism, while traditionally a powerful theoretical framework for explaining European integration, has been relatively excluded from the CSDP literature due to its reliance

on 'spill-over' happening in depoliticised areas of 'low' politics (Bickerton, Irondelle, and Menon 2011). A few transnational or supranational approaches highlight the agenda-setting role of supranational institutions or transnational interest groups, such as the defence industry potentially pushing for common market rules in defence – but they are also quick to note the weak influence of these actors compared to national governments in the area of CSDP (Hofmann 2012; Leuffen, Rittberger, and Schimmelfennig 2013).

Liberal intergovernmentalism has also faced a level of setback in explaining the emergence of CSDP, as it is better equipped to analyse economic matters with a clear 'market' of interest groups than questions of security (Weiss 2011). Nonetheless, notions of interdependence, different understandings of national preference formation or intergovernmental bargaining found in liberal IR theory, liberal intergovernmentalism and even new intergovernmentalism carry relevant theoretical leverage for EU defence policy (Moravcsik 1993, 1997, 1998; Bickerton, Irondelle, and Menon 2011; Weiss 2011; Merlingen 2012; Bickerton, Hodson, and Puetter 2015).

While both realist and liberal traditions have their important place in the CSDP literature, the greatest proliferation of theoretical contributions has happened within the context of a broadly defined constructivist framework (Juncos and Reynolds 2007; Anderson 2008; Mérand 2008, 2010; Meyer and Strickmann 2011; Juncos 2011; Menon 2011; Kurowska and Kratochwil 2012; Breuer 2012; Larsen 2014; Del Sarto 2016; Mälksoo 2016). Constructivists understand identities and interests to be socially constructed, they consider the relevance of both structure and agency and highlight the mutually constitutive relationship between institutions and identities of actors participating in those institutions (Weiss 2011; Merlingen 2012).

The research takes an intergovernmental, rational-choice perspective and only deals with realism, liberal intergovernmentalism and briefly with agency-driven constructivism in more

detail. The reason for this is that the decision to establish PESCO was a very 'top-down' initiative coming from the governments of MSs (Biscop 2018b) and a highly 'political' decision, taken strictly on an intergovernmental basis. PESCO really only took off after the European Council endorsed it in June 2017 (European Council 2017), after which the details were negotiated in the Foreign Affairs Council (FAC). The rationality assumption is usually an abstraction aimed at achieving greater parsimony in theoretical frameworks and as such, does not strive to be descriptively fitting. However, in this case a framework with actors weighing costs against benefits and making a choice based on their preferences while taking constraints into consideration does seem to be very adequate for the analysis.

This is not to say that the influence of Brusselised diplomats (Meyer 2006; Juncos and Reynolds 2007), internationalised attitudes of national armies (Mérand 2008, 2010) or even experiential learning and socialisation at the highest levels of EU decision-making (Smith 2015; Puetter 2016) could not be in a causal relationship with the eventual launch of PESCO. It only means that intergovernmentalism and the rational-choice assumption lend themselves more naturally for analysing the decision to establish PESCO and promise greater explanatory leverage than other potential approaches.

2.2 Two decades of CSDP

Traditionally, integration or cooperation in the field of defence in Europe tends to be analysed according to two stages: (1) the post-war period with the failure of the European Defence Community (EDC) and the emergence of NATO; (2) and the post-Cold War period of the 1990s with the revival of the pursuit for European security autonomy (Rosato 2011; Leuffen, Rittberger, and Schimmelfennig 2013; Howorth 2017b). After the breakthrough of the Franco-British declaration in St-Malo supporting the establishment of military capabilities for autonomous action the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) was launched in 1999 (Leuffen, Rittberger, and Schimmelfennig 2013; Merlingen 2012). The policy was

subsequently renamed Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) in the Lisbon Treaty. While it is still a relatively young aspect of European integration compared to economic policies, in 2018 CSDP has been around for nearly two decades over the course of which a significant body of empirical and theoretical literature has been produced on the topic (Bickerton, Irondelle, and Menon 2011; Merlingen 2012; Kurowska and Breuer 2012; Weiss 2011).

2.2.1 Realism

2.2.1.1 Realist interpretations

Different strands of realism would agree that the world of international politics is anarchical where states as primary actors make decisions in order to ensure their survival. In this sense, the international environment is a self-help system, where the agents are primarily concerned about the balance of power (Waltz 1979; Mearsheimer 2001; Hyde-Price 2006; Merlingen 2012). Neorealism or structural realism understands the state as a unitary actor and deals with structural pressures affecting these actors (Hyde-Price 2012). Hyde-Price (2012, 23) admits that "how states respond to structural pressures depend on a range of domestic political factors, including decision-making competence, ideology and sectional interests", but primacy is given to structural factors when analysing state behaviour. While classical and neoclassical realism could also be employed to analyse developments of CSDP, it tends to be researched from a neorealist perspective (Rynning 2011). From a neorealist perspective, two distinct structural characteristics of the post-Cold War international order are global unipolarity and regional balanced multipolarity in Europe (Posen 2004, 2006; Jones 2007; Hyde-Price 2012).

The emergence of CSDP can be regarded as a response to an unreliable and capricious US foreign policy emanating from global unipolarity (Hyde-Price 2012). As the survival or territorial integrity of EU states are not threatened by the US, CSDP is not seen as a case of 'hard balancing', rather as a case of 'soft balancing'. While there is no clear agreement among

realists of the definition of soft balancing, the core idea is that due to uncertainty, states will seek capabilities for autonomous action to gain leverage over the hegemon (Posen 2004; Jones 2007; Howorth and Menon 2009). Uncertainty about how the US is going to use its superior capabilities is seen to have two channels prompting efforts of EU states to be less dependent on their ally: a 'fear of abandonment' and a 'fear of entrapment' (T. Dyson 2010; Hyde-Price 2012).

A different type of realist claim is that CSDP is not for balancing, but for bandwagoning (T. Dyson 2010; Cladi and Locatelli 2012). Dyson (2010) designates the 'fear of abandonment' as the primary driving factor for increased cooperation, while incentives to pool resources decrease with higher levels of 'external vulnerability'. The bandwagoning claim is dismissed by Hyde-Price (2013) on the basis that evidence shows CSDP as aimed at providing EU countries with the possibility of autonomous action and missions carried out independently of the US with the goal of milieu-shaping and not in support of US interests.

Realist interpretations of CSDP are available abundantly, yet they have not fared well in the face of evidence. A few empirical points contradicting the balancing claim: more traditional capability development allowed the US to pull troops out of Europe, enabling the dominant power instead of constraining it; the handful of military missions the EU has committed to were either in partnership with NATO and/or more about the stability of third states than supporting narrowly defined European interests and countering US policy; the Headline Goals were never achieved, the Battlegroups never used (Howorth and Menon 2009; Pohl 2013a; Cladi and Locatelli 2012). Critiques of realist interpretation argue that CSDP is not a response to threats or increasing unipolarity, instead a policy innovation enabled by the lack of threats and the conditions of security provided by the US security umbrella (Anderson 2008; Howorth and Menon 2009; Moravcsik 2010; Merlingen 2012; Pohl 2013a).

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Does PESCO constitute as supportive evidence for realist explanations of bandwagoning or soft balancing? The bandwagoning claim of Dyson (2010) or Cladi and Locatelli (2012) still falls short of a comprehensive explanation, as the central goal of PESCO – as mentioned routinely – is to achieve 'strategic autonomy' for Europe, while highlighting its complementarity with NATO (EEAS 2018). While the emergence of PESCO might be influenced by a 'fear of abandonment' after the election of Donald Trump, PESCO does not aim to appease US interests (it does not even reiterate the 2% defence spending target of NATO), rather suggests that in case of diverging interests Europe has to be able to 'go it alone'. As for soft balancing, there have been some evidence for it in EU diplomacy with regards to issues of free trade or Iran's nuclear programme. Yet in defence policy the explanation again faces the conceptual limits of soft balancing with PESCO not directed in any way to contain or counteract US power, only to provide a tool to serve European interests. On every possible platform it has been stressed that PESCO does not threaten the primacy of NATO providing collective defence for the continent, and representatives of NATO are even invited to the ministerial discussions on the implementation of the framework. Gaining a level of independence from US foreign policy while ensuring the continued smooth operation of the Alliance does not seem to fit comfortably either realist category.

2.2.2 Liberal intergovernmentalism

2.2.2.1   Liberal interpretations

Liberal intergovernmentalism builds on two core components: interdependence and intergovernmental bargaining (Merlingen 2012). While the primary actors shaping state behaviour are governments, they are both driven and constrained by domestic and transnational political forces and interests groups at the same time (Moravcsik 1993). Assuming rational actorness, governments take national preferences and costs into account, just like realists – the

difference is that preferences are not informed by the goal to survive in an anarchical system, but first and foremost by the domestic societal pressures (Moravcsik 1993).

Another important aspect of liberal theories is the inclusion of negative externalities in the costs, derived from the notion of interdependence (Merlingen 2012). With increased levels of interdependence globally but especially in Europe the goal to avoid negative externalities and achieve potentially increasing positive externalities of cooperation has become essential. This is especially true for security policy in the age of non-traditional and 'hybrid' threats in a "more connected, contested and complex world" (EEAS 2015, 2016).

From a liberal perspective the initiation of CSDP can be traced back to an increasing level of security interdependence, with an ever-growing number of nations and actors being involved in global security management. In this new environment, new types of security challenges have also emerged. Lists of transnational security threats usually include terrorism, climate change, energy scarcity, but even economic volatility (Merlingen 2012). These threats require cooperative responses and international institutions, as states cannot solve them by themselves. So liberal accounts do not consider these security threats as existential threats, instead as side-effects of a globalised world, the negative externalities of interconnectedness. CSDP as an international institution addresses these externalities with conflict prevention, peacekeeping, post-conflict stabilisation and reconstruction (Moravcsik 2003; Smith 2011).

The low level of pooling or delegating competences is explained with preference heterogeneity. From this perspective, the emergence of CSDP can actually be attributed to converging interests (Moravcsik 2010). MSs with stronger preferences on a given issue are willing to offer higher side-payments in the bargaining process (Moravcsik 1998, 66). The political-military establishment, political parties and voters, or civil society organisations and other ideologically

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motivated, so-called dramatic-political actors can all influence national preferences on security and defence cooperation (Moravcsik 1993; Weiss 2011).

Weiss (2011) criticizes the internal consistency of applying traditional liberal intergovernmental perspective to security issues on the basis of security issues not having a clear 'market' of domestic interest groups like other policy areas. Instead, he proposes a framework of transaction costs, building on institutionalist traditions. Weiss argues that the institutional form of defence integration will be determined by the interaction of the level of asset specificity (specialisation in military capabilities) and the level of uncertainty regarding the free-riding behaviour of partners. Higher levels of specificity and uncertainty will call for increasingly binding rules and more comprehensive institutional framework (Weiss 2011). Furthermore, according to Weiss (2011) costs of providing security alone (nationally) weighted against the costs of cooperation will determine the preferences regarding the substantive depth of defence integration, while the trade-off between governance costs and risks of opportunism will inform the institutional set-up of the cooperation.

New intergovernmentalism also casts some doubts on the traditional understanding of national preference formation. Bickerton, Hodson and Puetter (2015) argue that representative democracy has been experiencing contradictory developments with governments pushing for pan-European policy-making while being constrained by the end of the societal permissive consensus and growing Euroscepticism. The growing distance between pro-integration elites and domestic societies results in high sovereignty and identity costs for governments if they attempt to carry out integration in areas of core state powers – to which defence policy also belongs (Bickerton, Hodson, and Puetter 2015; Schimmelfennig 2015).

2.2.2.2   Implications for PESCO

The primary implication arising from liberal intergovernmentalism for PESCO is that increased cooperation in defence policy should be expected due to a convergence of national interests

propelled by increasing negative externalities in an interconnected world. Based on this understanding, PESCO can be seen as the acknowledgment of the rising costs of providing security and prosperity by independent states. Between 2010 and 2017, insecure conditions in the broader European neighbourhood have increased significantly: political instability after the Arab Spring, civil wars, a proliferation of terrorist groups such as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), Boko Haram or al-Shabaab, the Ukrainian crisis, the migration crisis or new types of cyberattacks like the WannaCry provide plenty of examples where the impacts on European states can be regarded as negative externalities of insecurity.

Another interpretation for PESCO fitting the liberal intergovernmentalist framework would be the tilting of relative balance of bargaining power in favour of supporters of PESCO. This would suggest that with the UK leaving the EU the French position advocating for more defence in the EU has finally gained traction vis-á-vis the German culture of restraint. It could also be shown that the constraining power of domestic politics has weakened after the French elections providing more leeway for President Macron, while conditions have tightened for Chancellor Merkel with the 2017 September Bundestag elections. However the results seem to be counterintuitive, with the debate on an ambitious or inclusive PESCO apparently ending with the German perspective of an inclusive framework having emerged (Howorth 2017a; Biscop 2018b). The Sorbonne speech of Macron actually opening up potential for parallel structures of defence cooperation and France having been reportedly disappointed with how PESCO has developed also do not suggest an increased French bargaining power (Biscop 2018b). Nonetheless, this avenue could also be explored in detail to provide theory-based explanation for how PESCO turned out to be after the negotiations, but this is not the focus of this study.

2.2.3 Constructivism

2.2.3.1 *Agency based constructivist interpretations*

Instead of taking stock of a very wide variety of constructivist accounts of CSDP development, the focus is on agency-centred constructivism, where agents use norms and ideas instrumentally. Following Del Sarto (2016) the rationalist-constructivist divide thus is overcome through conceptualising the construction of identities as an outcome of governments rationally pursuing their interests. This way it is possible to remain within the confines of the intergovernmental boundaries of the study, while still taking constructivist approaches into consideration.

Asking the question of 'why now' in 2008, Anderson claims that the motivations behind developing CSDP are neither for defence purposes nor for policing the world. Instead, she claims that in the post-Cold War world, the lack of emerging threats provided an opportunity for elites to bridge the gap between their conceptions of the European project and the perception of the common man and woman, "who associated European integration not with peace and progress but with bureaucracy and regulations" (Anderson 2008, 6). In this sense, CSDP exists for nation-building purposes which require a pan-European political identity.

Merlingen (2012, 237-240) provides a liberal-constructivist scenario for the future of CSDP where on the one hand in a Transatlantic division of labour the EU develops more sophisticated intervention capabilities to engage in more demanding missions for managing global security interdependence. On the other hand apart from delivering security, the goal of the EU with strengthening CSDP is also to uphold and reinforce the liberal world order in a potentially post-hegemonic world (Merlingen 2012).

2.2.3.2 *Implications for PESCO*

Such constructivist interpretation of PESCO would argue that a new institutional framework was required to reinvigorate the integration project. In this case, the 'why now' question would not be answered with shifting threat perceptions or negative externalities but with evolving

concepts of roles and ideas. More specifically the self-conceived role of governments in Europe would inform how they respond to shrinking popular support for government policies and the EU. The launch of PESCO in this understanding is a result of a critical mass of countries bound together and constrained by the structure of the EU responding to Euroscepticism by choosing the high-politics area of defence policy to showcase the relevance of integration. It is also a good opportunity for governments to depict themselves as relevant and influential members of the community.

3   Research design

The research design of this thesis follows a deductive logic. The hypotheses are derived from the theoretical framework of liberal intergovernmentalism with its rational, agency-driven perspective. Applying a broad, liberal intergovernmental lens does not mean that this theoretical tradition is the only one capable of explaining the defence policy developments, but it is chosen as the perspective most likely to carry substantial explanatory value for PESCO. The hypotheses attempt to provide causal explanations and are developed with a falsificationist epistemology in mind. Two alternative hypotheses are formulated, but only one of them is tested in the empirical analysis.

Recalling the goal of the thesis, which is to uncover the primary driving forces of PESCO and to consequently contribute to a better understanding of the EU defence trajectory, the null-hypothesis of the research is partially informed by Tardy's (2018) scepticism, suggesting that informative conclusions and expectations cannot be drawn from current developments in EU defence policy so far.

> H0: defence in the EU context continues to be under-conceptualised and PESCO carries no additional conceptual leverage.

Accepting any of the alternative hypotheses developed below will result in the rejection of the null-hypothesis. The alternative hypotheses are to an extent competing narratives of PESCO, however they are not necessarily mutually exclusive. This thesis only tests H1, but its confirmation or disconfirmation implicitly bears consequences for the validity of H2.

In each case the dependent variable is the countries' support for PESCO. This can be interpreted in two ways: either as a categorical variable assuming the values of 0 and 1 or it can also be an interval variable where the values assigned are the number of projects out of the first 17 a country is participating in. The independent variables are determined by the hypotheses.

3.1 Hypotheses

H1: negative externalities of security interdependence have aligned national interests to launch PESCO.

This explanation fits well with official justifications for PESCO as well as accounts such as the one by Fiott, Missiroli and Tardy (2017, 52): "the momentum for PESCO has been driven by necessity and a deteriorating strategic landscape in and around Europe…" The authors conclude that "PESCO will be judged a success if it leads to the creation of a more effective, capable and joined-up Union in security and defence" (Fiott, Missiroli, and Tardy 2017, 53). In this context national preferences are formed in a 'positive' manner with the costs and externalities defining what PESCO 'needs' to achieve.

Negative externalities should be understood as increased costs of providing security in a non-cooperative context borne by European countries due to violent conflicts or other conditions of insecurity in the neighbourhood of the EU. Material costs can include shrinking volume of trade, costs of energy dependency, expenses of asylum policies, border patrol or counter-terrorist measures as well as increased spending on traditional defence, cyber defence or foreign aid at the expense of other policies. Other, non-material forms that negative externalities can take could be an increased feeling of insecurity among citizens, the political costs of anti-immigration opposition parties gaining support, or just a loss of support for government policies, especially regarding the EU.

Based on Weiss' (2011) framework of transaction costs this hypothesis focuses on the substantive scope of cooperation determined by the costs of insecurity and costs of cooperation. The trade-off between governance costs and risks of opportunism (shaping the institutional set-up) although implied throughout the study due to PESCO's binding commitments, is not tackled directly.

The causal pathway of preference formation would include public polls, research by experts, media coverage or lobby activity of interest groups transmitting the societal interests to the government, resulting in relevant government statements, change in party manifestos or election promises. As part of the dependent or outcome variable these changes would result in policy responses aimed at reducing the impact of negative externalities on domestic society, including the support for a problem-solving, outcome-oriented PESCO that is expected to deliver security at lower costs than the frameworks before it. The link that has to be established here is whether governments actually believe that PESCO is an adequate tool to address these costs and take on future situations generating negative externalities. Inability to establish this link would result in rejecting the hypothesis.

> H2: PESCO is a tool for governments to state their concepts of their respective national role in the EU and to revitalise the European integration project.

In June 2017 the authors of a European Parliament (EP) report wrote that "as envisaged now, [PESCO] seems unlikely to be [of] much use, at least not for setting up autonomous capability for managing crises, […]. As it stands, the only point of it is political…" (Mauro and Santopinto 2017, 37). Others see it similarly as a political project aimed at overcoming the current *status quo*, demonstrating progress to the citizens and trying to convince them of the continued relevance of the European integration project (de France, Major, and Sartori 2017, 2).

This alternative hypothesis, builds on the agency-centred constructivist interpretation of PESCO as described in Chapter 2.2.3. The argument understands the development of PESCO as an instrumental step on the part of governments to promote their interests and ideas – primarily suggested to be fostering support for the EU in disenfranchised domestic societies.

This hypothesis is not explored in detail in this study for the primary reason of lack of space and because it would require a different methodology for testing it than H1. While H1 is

analysed through process-tracing, H2 requires a more in-depth discourse analysis of governments' communication. However, conclusions on H1 either strengthen or weaken the validity of any alternative hypothesis, thus providing an avenue for future research.

3.2 Process-tracing

As the goal of this research is to go beyond the generic explanations of "changing strategic context" and to understand where PESCO effectively comes from it is necessary to establish causal links between the variables of interest. In order to unpack the complex causal mechanisms derived from theory, process-tracing is a suitable method (Ulriksen and Dadalauri 2016).

Causation at its most basic can be understood as an event or condition that raises the probability of a specific outcome (Gerring 2005). Gerring (2005, 170) argues that in order to exclude correlative relationships, a "cause in question must generate, create, or produce the supposed effect". This type of relationship between variables is difficult to establish in social sciences, but process-tracing can be helpful to formalise our level of confidence in that a 'contribution claim' holds in the face of evidence (Befani and Stedman-Bryce 2017). While love-to-see evidence has the power to confirm a hypothesis 'beyond reasonable doubt', this research mostly operates with expect-to-see evidence. Observing the latter type of evidence is known in process-tracing as the hypothesis passing the Hoop test (Befani and Stedman-Bryce 2017). Passing the Hoop test strengthens the confidence in the validity of the hypothesis, but does not confirm it, while not observing the evidence results in the disconfirmation of the hypothesis.

3.3 Case selection

In order to explore domestic politics shaping national preferences and thus influencing governments' decision, one has to look at specific country cases. Country case studies enable the research to generalise certain conclusions without having to examine the whole 'population' of EU member states. In order to do so however, the case selection process has to be transparent.

Based on the 'menu' provided by Seawright and Gerring (2008) the most adequate technique for analysing PESCO is the 'diverse' case selection, as the central interest of the research is to uncover a potential convergence of highly diverse interests and positions. In applying the 'diverse' approach, case selection is based on achieving the maximum variation in the independent or explanatory variables present in the hypothesis (Gerring 2008; Seawright and Gerring 2008).

In the case of PESCO and the liberal intergovernmental hypothesis, such variation would happen along the dimensions of how exposed a country is to negative externalities. Regarding exposedness there are a number of indicators that could be considered. The most obvious one is the geographical location of the country. It seems reasonable to choose a country exposed to the migratory pressures of the Mediterranean, a country in geographical proximity to Russia and a country exposed to the fewest potential sources of externalities. Other indicators could include the number of terrorist attacks on the countries' soil or even long-existing popular views of EU integration as determinants of national preferences.

In order to cover the most categories, three countries are selected for analysis. (1) Germany as one of the most influential and supportive country of European integration with significant economic and energy security ties to Russia. At the same time it is the most sought-after destination of migrants arriving in Europe and also the location of a number of terrorist attacks in 2016 and 2017. (2) Poland is selected as a middle-sized EU country, but as the largest Central and Eastern European (CEE) country relevant to EU policy making. Poland is also considered as a strong Atlanticist country, supporting NATO and considering Russia as the most relevant threat to national security, and neighbouring the conflict-ridden Ukraine, while at the same time having been avoided by migration flows from the South. (3) Ireland, as a Western, but small country on the periphery of the EU and also as an island is expected to be one of the countries

least subjected to the costs of insecurity in the European neighbourhood, while also being a traditionally neutral country.

As selection on the dependent variable is not advisable, support for PESCO was not considered during the case selection – however, two out of the three country cases are among the least expected supporters of PESCO (Mauro and Santopinto 2017, 26) which potentially makes the analysis less representative of all the diverging interests. It would have been better to include a Southern, willing country such as Spain or Italy and a smaller, "core" country such as Belgium or the Netherlands in the analysis, but due to lack of space the number of case studies had to be limited to three.

Data for the empirical analysis was collected through desk-based research, focusing on opinion polls and publicly available data on government budgets, trade balances as well as official government documents, political statements, election manifestos. Country-specific data is complemented with scholarly papers used as secondary sources.

4 Empirical analysis

4.1 The road to PESCO: variance on the dependent variable

In order to observe an effect or co-variance there has to be variance in both the independent and the dependent variable. In this case the dependent variable is support for PESCO and variance is observed over time as the central question of the thesis is 'why now'? Why did countries' support for PESCO change over time? To answer this question, one first has to know *how* it changed.

There are two points of observation in time essential to this study: the second half of 2010 and the last months of 2017. The implementation of PESCO was first raised during the Spanish Presidency of the Council in the first half of 2010, but it was only indefinitely dropped from the agenda after the Belgian Presidency in the second half of the year due to lack of support from the MSs (Biscop and Coelmont 2011). There is very little public information available on individual country positions both leading up to the discussions on PESCO in July and September 2010, so in any case where no explicit evidence for a country supporting PESCO can be found their position is assumed to be negative (or zero as in a categorical variable). PESCO returned to the EU agenda in 2016 and there are more data available on countries' stance on it leading up to the eventual launch of PESCO in December 2017, when all signatories expressed support for the specific version of PESCO that has emerged from the negotiations.

Out of the three countries under inspection only Poland supported PESCO explicitly from the beginning in a position paper published in June 2010 and co-authored by Belgium and Hungary. While wording was cautious, the signatories did "believe PESCO to be an instrument that could offer a considerable added-value both at European and at national level" (Belgium 2010, 1). Poland pushed for other areas of defence integration as well during its presidency in 2011 and sent a letter in September 2011 asking the High Representative Catherine Ashton to look into the options of using PESCO to "develop critical CSDP capabilities, notably a permanent

planning and conduct capability" (Poland 2011, 1). The letter was authored by Italy, Spain, France, Germany and Poland as a response to the UK blocking Poland's push for a permanent headquarter (HQ; O'Donnell 2012). Germany is only considered to have expressed interest and not explicit support for PESCO based on this letter.

After the Polish presidency the 'sleeping beauty of Lisbon' fell asleep until 2016. It was awakened over the summer of 2016 with joint proposals of the Foreign Affairs ministers of France and Germany in June (Ayrault and Steinmeier 2016), a joint proposal of the Defence Ministers of the same two countries in September (Rettman 2016) and the White Paper on German Security Policy and the Future of the Bundeswehr in July (German Federal Ministry of Defence 2016): all mentioning PESCO as a potential framework for willing and able countries to move ahead with defence integration.

Informed observers of the process of bringing PESCO to life reveal that contrary to the original position of Poland in 2010-11, the country did not support PESCO during the negotiations in 2016-17, and only joined last-minute in November 2017, "after having tried in vain to have the texts modified" and after everybody else signed the notification (Mauro and Santopinto 2017; Biscop 2018b, 179).

Ireland's support was even more of a surprise in December 2017, due to the country's military neutrality. The Irish lower house, the Dáil, took a vote in support of the country joining PESCO on the 7th December, only four days ahead of the Council officially establishing the framework (Finn 2017b).

A different way to express the countries' support for PESCO in the end is to look at the specific projects they have signed up for in the first Foreign Affairs Council held on PESCO format in March 2018 (Council of the EU 2018; Figure 1). A number of 'core' projects seem to emerge based on two attributes: either a large number of countries joining the project (military mobility,

logistic hubs, training missions centre) and/or at least three of the four largest MSs[2] participating in them in some format (medical command, secure software radio, logistic hubs, military mobility, training missions centre, crisis response core, strategic command and control, energy operational function). In the following sections of the analysis the understanding of what PESCO is aimed at is largely informed by these core projects, which means focusing on the development of capabilities and assets enabling any kind of co-ordinated military operation. This first generation of strategic enablers can be regarded as the first steps towards actual EU strategic autonomy.

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[2] Without the UK, as it is not a participant of PESCO.

Figure 1. Established projects of PESCO and the respective participants (Council of the EU 2018).

Project	BE	BG	CZ	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	HU	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	Total
European Medical Command			x	L				x	x	x	x										x		x		x	9
European Secure Software defined Radio (ESSOR)	x			x					L	x	x								x	x				x		8
Network of logistic Hubs in Europe and support to Operations	x			L	x		x	x	x	x	x	x				x	x			x		x				13
Military Mobility	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	L	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	24
European Union Training Mission Competence Centre (EU TMCC)		x	x	L		x	x	x	x	x	x			x		x		x			x					13
European Training Certification Centre for European Armies							x					x														2
Energy Operational Function (EOF)		x						x	L		x															4
Deployable Military Disaster Relief Capability Package							x	x		x	L							x								5
Maritime (semi-) Autonomous Systems for Mine Countermeasures (MAS MCM)	L						x	x			x									x	x					6
Harbour & Maritime Surveillance and Protection (HARMSPRO)								x			L	x								x						4
Upgrade of Maritime Surveillance							L	x	x		L	x								x			x			7
Cyber threats and Incident Response Information Sharing Platform							L	x			x	x					x	x							x	7
Cyber Rapid response Teams and Mutual Assistance in Cyber Security	x						x	x	x					L			x							x		7
Strategic Command and Control (C2) System for CSDP Missions and Operations							x	L			x						x									4
Armoured Infantry Fighting Vehicle / Amphibious Assault Vehicle / Light Armoured Vehicle							x				L												x			3
Indirect Fire Support (EuroArtillery)																x							L			2
EUFOR Crisis Response Operation Core (EUFOR CROC)				L				x	x		x						x									5
Total	6(1)	3	3	7(4)	1	2	9(2)	12(1)	8(2)	5	15(4)	6	1	3(1)	2	3	7(1)	4	2	6	5	2	5(1)	3	3	

BE – Belgium, BG – Bulgaria, CZ – Czech Republic, DE – Germany, EE – Estonia, IE – Ireland, EL – Greece, ES – Spain, FR – France, HR – Croatia, IT – Italy, CY – Cyprus, LV – Latvia, LT – Lithuania, LU – Luxembourg, HU – Hungary, NL – Netherlands, AT – Austria, PL – Poland, PT – Portugal, RO – Romania, SI – Slovenia, SK – Slovakia, FI – Finland, SE – Sweden.
Project lead nations highlighted in orange, number of projects a country is lead nation in indicated in brackets.

4.2 National preference formation

The core independent variable is the level of negative externalities experienced by the examined country. Negative externalities are defined according to section 3.1 as increased costs of providing security in a non-cooperative context, borne by European countries and emanating from violent conflicts or other conditions of insecurity in the European neighbourhood. Common among these situations is that they impact EU countries either directly (terrorism, piracy or military threat) or indirectly (through migration, shrinking trade, transnational crime, etc.) and military intervention could potentially resolve them in some form. Such an intervention, following from the type of projects launched in PESCO could be conceived as training or advising local authorities, peacekeeping, post-conflict stabilisation or even as direct military confrontation. A shortcoming of this study is that it does not consider several security threats in detail which might call for a military involvement (or could lead to increasing military capabilities). Such threats or conditions include for example cyberattacks, information warfare and energy insecurity. Threats in the cyber space are especially relevant for PESCO with two projects aimed at increasing military capabilities in these areas.

4.2.1 Germany

4.2.1.1 Negative externalities

In a sense, Germany is the country that has been hit by the crises both to the East and to the South of the EU. Two very tangible material prices of conflict: the costs of managing the asylum system, sheltering and integrating the large number of refugees and the economic price of damaged relations with Russia (Fritz et al. 2017; Noack 2017). Increased budgetary commitments of foreign policy have happened in the field of foreign aid (OECD 2018; Eurostat 2018b) and also in defence expenditure: first increased by USD 1.8bn from 2015 to 2016, than a USD 2.75bn in 2017. This is potentially a significant change in German policy, as defence expenditure as the share of GDP has been steadily decreasing in Germany for decades (SIPRI 2018).

In the years following the financial crisis and during the European sovereign debt crises, German public opinion was predominantly concerned about rising prices, government debt and unemployment, with the salience of immigration issues steadily rising from 2013, increasing to become technically the single most important issue in 2015 (Eurobarometer 2018; Figure 2). The salience of terrorism has also jumped in numbers after the second half of 2015, assumed to be the impact of the terrorist attacks in Paris, with Germany also becoming the theatre of a number of terrorist attacks in 2016. A Special Eurobarometer survey conducted in 2017 specifically on issues of security reveal that while 89% of Germans agree that their country is a safe place to live in, only 80% think the same thing about Europe (Eurobarometer 2017).
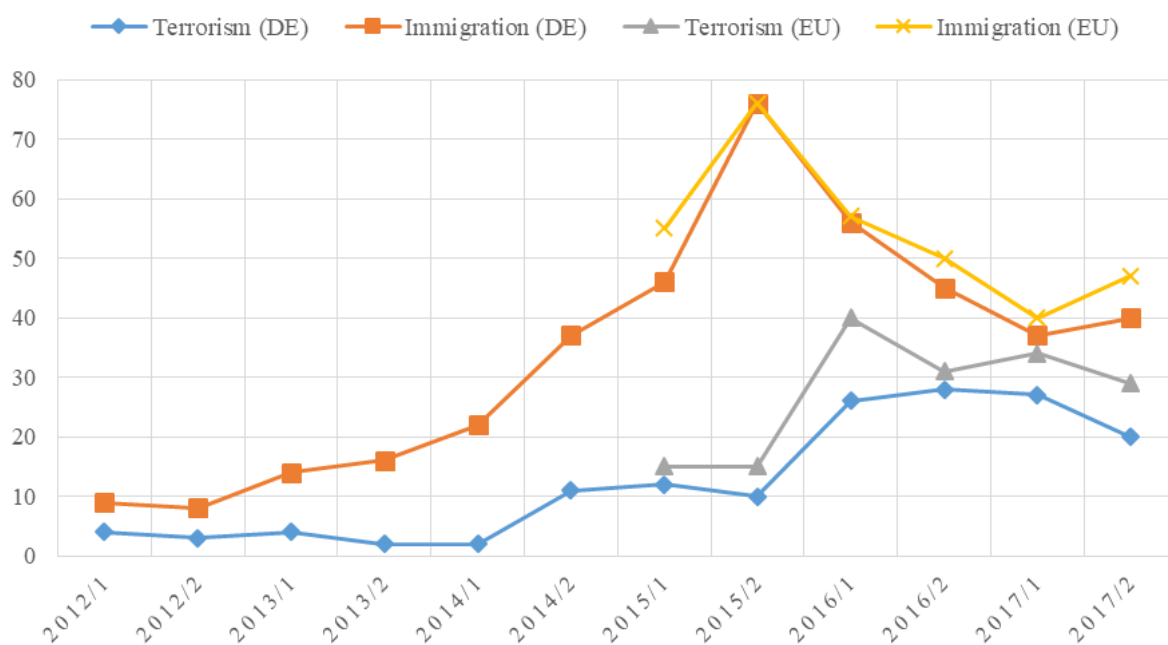

Figure 2. Salience of immigration and terrorism in Germany 2012-2017. Source: Standard Eurobarometer No. 77-88. Author's figure.
Q: What do you think are the two most important issues facing [OUR COUNTRY] / the European Union at the moment?

4.2.1.2   Domestic politics

Public opinion for has been traditionally suspicious towards assertive German foreign policy – especially a foreign policy employing military tools – and has rather favoured the "civilian

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power" strategic culture (Hyde-Price 2015; Keohane 2016; Karp 2018). Oppermann and Vierhig (2009) have shown based on opinion polls that the public salience of foreign policy only decreased in Germany since the Kosovo War, 9/11 and the Iraqi invasion, with the combined share of responses designating terrorism and foreign or defence policy amongst the two most pressing issues of Germany only reaching 4% in 2010 (Oppermann and Viehrig 2009; Eurobarometer 2018).

Another factor influencing German perceptions about coercive use of military force abroad was the country's involvement in Afghanistan. Opinion polls conducted by PEW Research Center between 2008 and 2010 reveal that the percentage of Germans wishing to withdraw German forces from Afghanistan increased from 54% to 58%, and German support for the war shrank from 48% to 40% over two years (PEW 2008, 2010). The high-profile incident of the Kunduz airstrike, where over 100 civilians died in an American airstrike ordered by a German commander resulted in serious political consequences and further erosion of public support for expeditionary warfare in Germany (Gebauer 2010; Schüßler and Heng 2013; Grigo 2013).

The 2014 Review of German foreign policy, initiated by Foreign Affairs Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier, indicates that the German public is becoming more and more engaged with foreign policy issues, with especially the younger generations having "markedly different priorities than the older generations" (German Federal Foreign Office 2015, 7). The Körber Stiftung's research shows an increase in approval for a more engaged Germany in international crises with support rising from 37% to 43% between 2014 and 2017 – however, shrinking from 60% to 52%, the majority of Germans still seem to prefer Germany to show restraint (German Federal Foreign Office 2015; Körber Stiftung 2017). The election themes support this trend with defence policy largely missing from the agenda in 2009 and 2013, but occupying a central role in the 2017 September federal elections (Henley 2017; Sanders and Martin David 2017).

German public opinion seems to be shifting very slowly towards supporting a more active foreign policy, however, ambivalence towards the use of military force apparently remains. Research by IFOP in 2013 revealed that 77% of Germans opposed German military intervention in Syria (IFOP 2013). In 2014, while a large majority of respondents favoured increased German engagement in humanitarian assistance, diplomatic negotiations or promotion of disarmament in general, only 13% supported any kind of military operation by the army or supplying arms to allied countries as opposed to the 82% who would actually like to see decreased engagement in these area (German Federal Foreign Office 2015). Furthermore, while both governing parties pledged to increase defence spending during the 2017 election campaign, only 34% of the German public supported such a policy in 2016 and 32% in 2017 (Körber Stiftung 2017; Körner 2017). It is also clear that Germans feel that most of their security issues can be resolved by the police and the judiciary, while they attribute significantly lower responsibility to the army for delivering their security than other EU countries (Eurobarometer 2015, 2017).

The revision of German foreign policy did start as a bottom-up demand from citizens, rather it seems to have driven the agenda. After years of avoiding leadership in international context, Germany has been called out by experts and political elites both at home and within the international community by its allies for not pulling its weight in difficult international situations – essentially accusing the country of free-riding (Hyde-Price 2015; Kunz 2015; Bendiek 2015). In the Review, Steinmeier actually writes about the difficulty of responding to the high expectations coming from abroad to "revitalise Europe", "Europeanise Russia" or "multilateralise America" (German Federal Foreign Office 2015, 7).

Observers of German politics highlight the constraining factor of coalition politics (Techau 2015). FPD's (Free Democratic Party) Guido Westerwelle as Foreign Affairs Minister epitomised the culture of restraint. He opposed German participation in the Libyan NATO

intervention and also a German role in the destruction of Syrian chemical weapons with the German public opinion and electoral considerations in mind (Hyde-Price 2015). Conversely, it was Frank-Walter Steinmeier from SPD (Social Democratic Party), the new Foreign Affairs Minister in 2013 who started the foreign policy review process. It was also him who in tandem with the new defence minister, Ursula von der Leyen, listened to international criticism and proposed the ideas of increased German involvement in defence cooperation and EU operations to Merkel in early 2014 (Hyde-Price 2015; Techau 2015). In short, the original revitalisation of German foreign policy can be linked not so much to externalities experienced by Germany, but induced by foreign pressures, and has been led by ambitious individuals at the top of German foreign policy administration.

The specific forms of cooperation and engagement in contentious issues in the meantime relied on traditional multilateral diplomacy (Minsk II process), bilateral cooperation with France in their annual Security Council, and using existing tools of EU foreign and security policy (responding to France's activating the mutual defence clause after the Paris attacks and supporting the EU-Turkey deal on migration).

4.2.1.3   On PESCO

The first time Germany expressed interest in PESCO was to circumvent British opposition to a permanent HQ for CSDP missions (O'Donnell 2012). Ironically, the next high-profile public mention of it happened right after Brexit by the joint Franco-German ministerial proposal. The timing is relevant, as the political leadership has been supportive of a more active German role in EU defence since early 2014, yet the activation of PESCO was not mentioned before publicly. The defence White Paper published in July 2016 evokes the relevant articles of the TEU in the context of the long-term goal of a common European Security and Defence Union which is supposed to deliver a more coherently acting EU and "maintain the political weight of the countries of Europe" (German Federal Ministry of Defence 2016, 73). Additionally, closing

capability gaps was mentioned in relation to the European Defence Agency (EDA) projects as well as in the context of bilateral and multilateral cooperation, while operational responsiveness was linked to the future creation of a permanent HQ (German Federal Ministry of Defence 2016, 73-74). In this sense, PESCO is rather seen as a vehicle of integration than focused on increasing operational capacity. Keohane (2016, 4) supports this interpretation noting that the white paper gives the "impression that EU defense is primarily a political integration project for some in Berlin".

4.2.2 Poland

4.2.2.1 Negative externalities

The 2017 Polish Defence Concept identifies the number one priority as preparing Poland to defend its own territory and the aggressive foreign policy of Russia as the primary threat to Polish national integrity (Polish Ministry of National Defence 2017). Consistently perceiving Russia as a threat over time is central to Polish foreign policy. Accordingly, ahead of both occasions when PESCO was discussed in the EU, two events have been discussed relevant to Polish threat perception: the war between Russia and Georgia in 2008 and the Russian annexation of Crimea and the ensuing armed conflict in Eastern Ukraine since 2014.

According to estimations, Poland has lost a significant share of exports going to Russia, estimated between 15 and 17.5% relative to the potential trade volumes without the conflict and sanctions (Fritz et al. 2017; Crozet and Hinz 2017) – however, bilateral economic ties were never too extensive, and Polish businesses managed to orient their activities toward different markets successfully (Buras and Balcer 2016). Meanwhile, increasing numbers of Ukrainians arrived in Poland due to adverse conditions in Ukraine in order to work usually in seasonal jobs. They actually provide a much needed economic solution to the problem of emigrating Polish workforce (MacDowall 2015; Huber and Buckley 2017). Considering these developments, the purely economic impacts of the crisis in Ukraine have not been clearly negative.

While Polish respondents of Eurobarometer surveys regard immigration and terrorism as the most significant challenges facing the EU, the relevance of these issues domestically remains relatively low (Figure 3). In Poland, topics of social security, healthcare, unemployment and pensions have clearly dominated public concerns over the past decade (Eurobarometer 2018). On the other hand, public opinion is aligned with official communication with the share of Poles perceiving tensions with Russia as a 'major threat' having been more than double than those in Germany (71% and 31%, PEW 2016).

Share of immigration and terrorism as part of the 'two most important issues' facing Poland and the EU (%)
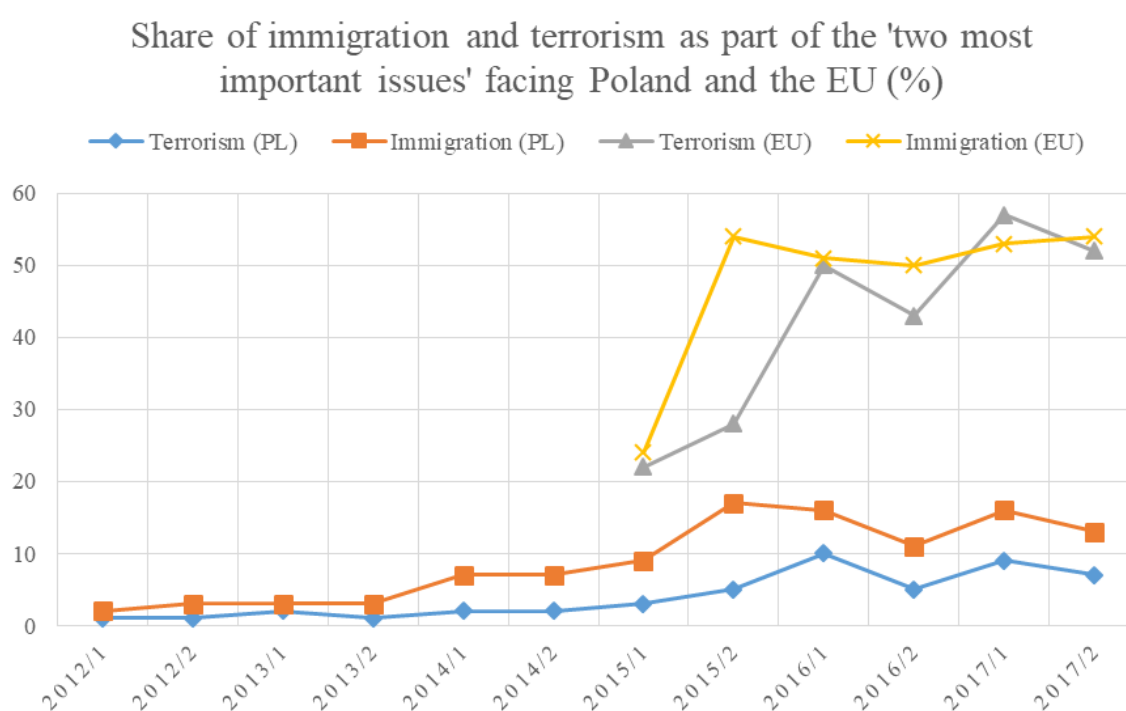
Figure 3. Salience of immigration and terrorism in Poland 2012-2017. Source: Standard Eurobarometer No. 77-88. Author's figure.
Q: What do you think are the two most important issues facing [OUR COUNTRY] / the European Union at the moment?

Similarly to the other EU countries, citizens feel highly secure both in their immediate neighbourhood and their country, with the perceived security of Poland as a country actually experiencing a 10 percentage point increase between 2015 and 2017. Conversely, the share of respondents agreeing that the EU is a safe place to live in dropped by 25 percentage points, the largest margin alongside Bulgaria, bringing the total share of Poles considering the EU a safe

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place to 59% in 2017. The results are even more striking when only looking at the portion of respondents 'totally agreeing' with the statement: Poland, Slovakia and the Czech Republic are tied in the last spot with 11% (Eurobarometer 2017).

4.2.2.2 Domestic politics

The cornerstones of Polish stance on defence cooperation are relatively stable – identifying Russia as the main threat to national security and relying on NATO and specifically on the US for collective defence. Both the public and the government seem to consider the military threat of Russia as "genuine" (Buras and Balcer 2016). The Polish response is clear: increasing defence budget is viewed as a necessity, with the goal of raising it to 2.5% of the GDP by 2030, modernising the army as well as increasing the military personnel from 100,000 to 200,000 (Polish Ministry of National Defence 2017; Terlikowski 2017; Keohane 2017). However, the Polish government's relation towards defence cooperation outside of the framework of NATO has been subject to fluctuation according to the beliefs and position of the governing party concerning the EU.

According to both O'Donnell (2012) and Buras (2017) the approach of the Tusk-governments (2007-2015) towards defence cooperation in the EU has been on the one hand based on an insurance policy in the case of decreasing US commitment to European collective defence. But on the other hand it was very much a strategy aimed at making a substantial contribution to European integration in a relatively new EU policy area. With the Polish goals not achieved during 2010-2011, Poland's NATO-first policy was reinforced. Combined with the changing geopolitical context and the election victory of the Kaczynski-led Law and Justice (PiS) in 2015, these changes resulted in a serious shift towards 'de-Europeanisation' of security and defence policy (Buras 2017). Elements of this shift included Poland scrapping a helicopter deal with the French Airbus in favour of Lockheed, withdrawing most of its officers from Eurocorps, the procurement policy explicitly being geared towards strengthening the domestic defence

industry, and the defence white paper favouring bilateral defence cooperation even between EU countries such as Poland and Germany instead of duplicating NATO structures in the EU (Balcer et al. 2016; Buras and Balcer 2016; Buras 2017; Keohane 2017; Terlikowski 2017).

The difference in the political stance of the two governments is highlighted by episodes such as Radislaw Sikorski, then Foreign Affairs Minister saying (even if in relation to the Eurozone) that he fears German power less than German inactivity (The Economist 2011). In contrast, the PiS manifesto in 2014 stated that the direction taken by previous governments to strive for recognition from Berlin and Brussels has led to erroneous decisions.[3]

4.2.2.3   On PESCO

Poland has made interesting turns in their support for European defence cooperation. While they were one of the first few countries to support PESCO, they were among the last ones to join it in 2017. The defence white paper, although published in 2017, contains no reference to PESCO, neither does it propose future directions for CSDP other than the need to "complement and enrich" NATO operations (Polish Ministry of National Defence 2017, 32).

However, the shifting interest of the Polish government in PESCO does not seem to represent a significant change on the substantive scope. The Tusk-Sikorski-led foreign policy did consider increased EU defence cooperation as an insurance policy in the case of the US pivoting towards Asia and tried to gear CSDP's direction towards collective defence. At the same time, defence policy and the Eastern Neighbourhood Policy during the 2011 Polish presidency presented an opportunity for the government to make their mark on European integration. Combined with the fact that neither the Tusk nor the Kaczynski-governments have been enthusiasts of the EU intervening in the South of the continent, the changing approach to

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[3] See: "Program Prawa I Sprawiedliwości", PIS.org, 2014, p.23, available at
http://pis.org.pl/document/archive/download/128.

PESCO seems to be stemming from the governments' differing position on EU integration itself.

With English-language government communication scarce on PESCO (and focused on conditions under which the country is willing to join), it is difficult to draw other conclusion than that the Polish government did not want to be left behind in such a significant step forward in EU policy. Ahead of the signing of the the notification in November 2017, the sole remark of a government spokesman highlighted the fact that Poland will be a founding member of the new framework (Radio Poland 2017; Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Poland 2017).

4.2.3 Ireland

4.2.3.1 Negative externalities

Ireland's 2015 White Paper on Defence and also its Foreign Policy Review takes an explicitly liberal approach to laying out the strategic context for Irish defence policy referring to a broadening 'range of security threats' as inherent to 'globalisation' and 'interdependence' as well as to the blurring of boundaries between internal and external security. The defence paper makes the need for collective engagement in the face of complex threats and challenges a key conclusion. Based on the two documents it is relatively clear that while Ireland as a neutral state still maintains the priority of territorial defence, it does not consider traditional existential threats to sovereignty as concerns anymore, instead perceives Ireland's prosperity as dependent on a stable and secure international environment. The paper is also very explicit on budget constraints, and how cooperation can deliver higher efficiency for the same costs (Government of Ireland 2015).

Ireland has been relatively spared from the negative impacts of both the turmoils to the South and to the East of the EU. While the number of asylum applications lodged in Ireland have increased two-fold from 2014 to 2015, the 8450 applications lodged between 2015 and 2017 basically equals the 8470 applications submitted between 2008 and 2010 (Eurostat 2018a). The

geographical location of Ireland also granted the country a level of autonomy (not necessarily enjoyed by other countries) to choose to invite refugees from abroad (Pollak 2018).

The EP report (Fritz et al. 2017) on the effects of Russian sanctions estimated Ireland to have lost 8.2% of its exports due to the sanctions, setting Ireland below the EU-average. The firm-level estimations of Crozet and Hinz (2017) on the other hand actually seem to suggest that Ireland gained on trade relations with Russia since the onset of the conflict.

The Irish also seem to be utterly unconcerned by terrorism threatening the Republic. Based on Eurobarometer data between 2010 and the first half of 2015 on average only 0.6% of the respondents designated terrorism among the top two concerns of Ireland (Figure 4). The number only increased to 4 and 6% in 2016 and 2017, while unemployment and the economic situation of the country has been leading as the top concerns of Ireland for the past 10 years continuously (Eurobarometer 2015). However, the Irish do attach above-average concern to terrorism and migration at the EU-level, showing a large disconnect between feelings of domestic security and perceptions of security at the EU-level. This is also confirmed by the Eurobarometer surveys on security showing that Irish people have perceived both the security of their immediate neighbourhood and of their country as steadily improving over the years (reaching 97% and 92% respectively in 2017) as opposed to the EU: the share of respondents agreeing that the EU is a secure place to live in has dropped from 87% to 69% between 2015 and 2017 (Eurobarometer 2017).

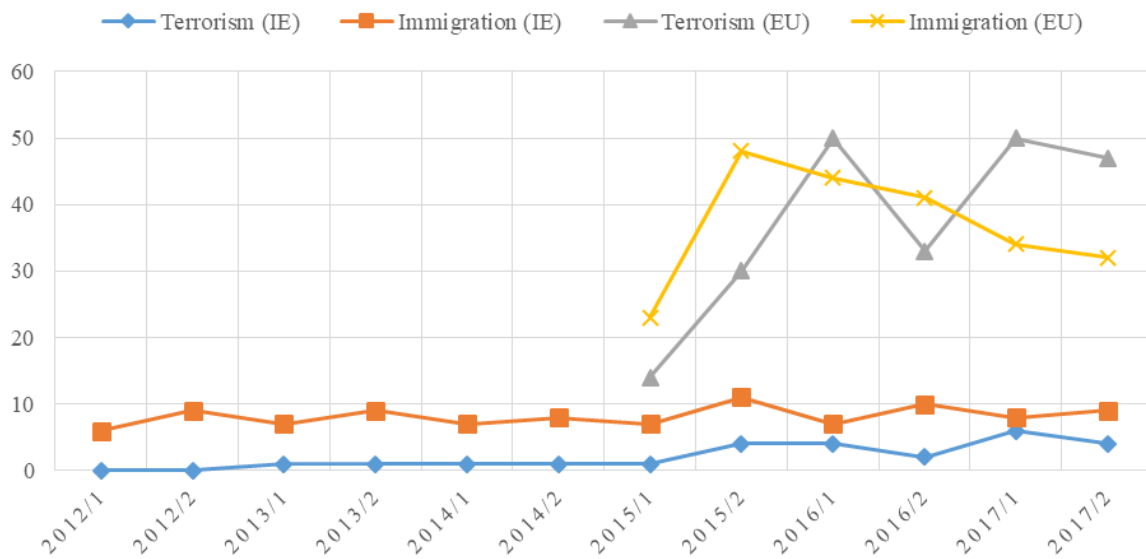Share of immigration and terrorism as part of the 'two most important issues' facing Ireland and the EU (%)

Figure 4. Salience of immigration and terrorism in Ireland 2012-2017. Source: Standard Eurobarometer No. 77-88. Author's figure.
Q: What do you think are the two most important issues facing [OUR COUNTRY] / the European Union at the moment?

4.2.3.2 Domestic politics

Public attitudes in Ireland regarding defence policy have been fairly stable in supporting the country's neutrality. In 2008 Ireland rejected the Lisbon Treaty on a referendum with a margin of 53.4% against and 46.6% in favour of it (Devine 2013). While in a second referendum in 2009 support was given with a large margin, it was argued that the Irish people were given no other chance, and they saw no other way out of the economic crisis than with the help of the EU (Craig 2009). In 2008, before the crisis hit, the defence-related articles of the Treaty were actually among the divisive elements leading to rejection (Devine 2013). According to Karen Devine (2013), the Irish government cooperated with the European Commission in toning down communication on the defence provisions in order not to hinder the Yes campaign. Against the background of the double referendum and the financial crisis, it is no surprise that Ireland did not support PESCO in 2010.

Devine's (2013) paper was one among many other contributions submitted by members of the public and by different organisations for the review of Irish foreign policy.[4] The submissions address a broad range of policy issues focusing on human rights, climate change, emphasising Ireland's history of overcoming colonisation and internal conflict and how this makes the country the perfect neutral, honest broker in peace-building (Concern Worldwide 2014; Irish Congress of Trade Unions 2014; Front Line Defenders 2013). The EU is not mentioned in defence-related context, only in the context of avenues EU diplomacy could take in the future or criticising EU decisions on free trade agreements and workers' rights (Irish Congress of Trade Unions 2014). These submissions do not suggest a shift in public perception regarding defence cooperation.

In line with this assessment of the Irish public's stance on defence, Eurobarometer surveys show the Irish to be generally less supportive of the common security and defence policy than of the EU as an institution in general. A significantly larger share of Irish support a common foreign policy than the common defence policy with the former fluctuating around 70% (a few percentage point above the EU average), while support for common defence policy has been on average 9.6 percentage points lower than the EU mean between 2015 and 2017 (Eurobarometer 2018).

While the 2016 election manifestos of the two largest parties represent the public opinion, only mentioning defence cooperation in multilateral setting of peacekeeping missions and reinforcing their commitment to Ireland's neutrality, official government documents place significantly larger emphasis on cooperating within the EU (Government of Ireland 2015; Irish Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2016). The defence white paper and the statement of strategy argues that to safeguard Irish security and interests "positive engagement by Ireland in

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[4] Submissions available at: https://dochas.ie/irelands-foreign-policy-review-submissions. Accessed: 14/06/2018.

the Union's CSDP is essential" (Government of Ireland 2015, 27) and pledge "strong contribution to the implementation of the EU's external policies" (Irish Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2016, 4). It is stressed that EU defence policy is in accordance with the UN Charter and is not directed at territorial defence, only focuses on out-of-area crisis management.

There seem to be two competing narratives on Ireland's foreign policy priorities representing a slight disconnect between the broader population and the Fine Gael-led governments (2011 - present): the first one argues that Ireland's interests are better served if it stays non-aligned, and builds on its own credibility within a multilateral environment while the other argument goes that Ireland's prosperity depends on a strong and capable EU which is influenced by Irish values and priorities. The first approach also does not specify needs as much as it derives foreign policy goals from 'values' and can generally be regarded as a normative approach.

4.2.3.3 On PESCO

While this research has found no public statement or debate on the Irish government's position on PESCO prior to December 2017, both the 2015 defence white paper and the 2016 Statement of strategy commits very clearly to increasing defence cooperation with Ireland's partners within the UN, but especially in the EU.

The Irish government decided to bring PESCO to a vote in the Dáil only four days before the launch of PESCO by the Council – with critiques claiming that the government delayed the vote deliberately in order not to leave enough time for debate (Allen 2017). With the support of the largest opposition party, the parliament approved of Ireland joining PESCO with a margin of 75 for and 42 votes against it. Despite being the last one to join,[5] the Irish government reportedly expressed interest in five projects: EU training mission centre, military disaster relief

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[5] Portugal also sent the official notification of their intention to join on December 7th, but the government already expressed their wish to join in November and conducted the parliamentary debate earlier. See: https://www.politico.eu/article/eu-defense-pact-tests-portugals-left-wing-government-alliance/ and see also: https://news.err.ee/647993/pesco-established-by-25-eu-member-states. Accessed: 13/06/2018.

capability programme, harbour and maritime areas surveillance and protection, upgrading maritime surveillance and development of the cyber threats and incident response information sharing platform (Leahy 2017). While they ended up only participating in the training mission centre and the upgrading of maritime surveillance projects this does indicate substantial interest on the part of the Irish government despite the country's neutrality.

Part of this does seem to support the idea that Ireland wishes to make a contribution to international security on a normative basis through supporting EU defence cooperation with their experience in humanitarian missions according to the published strategies. On the other hand it also seems to support the notion that Ireland hopes to improve military capabilities in joint development with other EU states – as a cost-efficient solution to the problem of the underfinanced Irish army. Highlighting the latter option's problematic nature in Ireland is the Taoiseach's (prime minister) remarks in the Dáil: "[…] we are not going to be buying aircraft carriers, […] and we are not going to be shopping around military trade fairs […], as that is not in our interest" and stressing that "Ireland will not join an EU army" (Leahy 2017; Finn 2017a).

5 Discussion

The empirical analysis presented three country case studies. For a hypothesis to be confirmed in process-tracing, a temporal sequence of causes and effects have to be observable. In order to confirm the hypothesis of this study the causal mechanism should be traceable from emerging negative externalities of insecurity in the broader neighbourhood of the EU leading to MSs' support for PESCO. For different reasons, but such conditions are not satisfied in any of the examined case studies, thus leading to the rejection of the hypothesis.

In Germany, negative externalities are clearly present and domestic politics has been influenced by them. However the link to PESCO is missing in three aspects: the broader domestic population did not encourage the type of military responses or solutions indicated as the goal of PESCO, increased defence cooperation was rather propagated by experts and the international political community and the government seems capable of responding to various needs of defence policy cooperation without new institutional framework with PESCO actually after different types of pressures.

Poland has shifted from one of the earlier supporter of PESCO to become a reluctant participant. Externalities are present, but neither PESCO nor the EU's CSDP seems to be considered by the current Polish government as a solution to the country's actual defence needs.

In Ireland, while the government's position is consistent with the hypothesis of this study, but it actually seems to go against societal interests. More importantly, the proposed causal mechanism fails at the first step, as the presence of increasing costs of providing security cannot be established with confidence. In both the cases of Poland and Ireland it is possible to observe a significant disconnect between domestic threat perceptions and the perceived security of the EU which could suggest that PESCO is an EU-level response to EU-level concerns, but this

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does not alter the fact that the hypothesis built on costs and preference formation happening at the domestic level fails to be validated.

Governments do seem to expect that improved military capacities through cooperation will enable a more credible and effective foreign policy, but evidence is lacking to show that they expect to achieve to do this with the help of PESCO. Options for cooperation exist outside of this new framework, and evidence indicates that they have only turned to the institutional option of PESCO when they specifically needed the EU to become more relevant. While the EU-level communication is talking about threats, necessities and European strategic autonomy within the changing geopolitical landscape, the national narratives often highlight the 'role' the specific country wishes to play in shaping the future of the EU. Leaders reiterate that PESCO is not directed at the creation of an EU army or that it will not impair neutrality or the effectiveness of NATO.

PESCO seen and understood as driven by the need to tackle and pacify conflict situations in the EU's neighbourhood to prevent negative externalities spilling over to Europe is not supported by the cross-national empirical analysis. This is not to say that PESCO cannot lead to increased capabilities utilised to such ends, but based on the three case-studies examined, the hypothesis in its generalised form suggesting an EU-wide needs-based convergence of interests pointing towards higher levels of military integration and a more active expeditionary CSDP is rejected.

6 Conclusion

As for the original question of why was PESCO launched in 2017 and not in 2010 it is not possible to give a definitive answer based on this assessment, it is only possible to reject one of the potential explanations. In 2010 the European agenda was dominated by the aftermath of the financial crisis and there were no significant conflict situations breeding negative externalities for EU countries and calling for a new framework of defence cooperation. In 2017, security and defence was high on the European agenda with the geopolitical context presenting a number of cases generating new costs for providing national security. The security of the EU is generally seen as compromised and governments seem to reflect on the agenda with developing new forms of defence cooperation within the EU, including PESCO. Yet the 2017 emergence of PESCO cannot be fully explained by rising costs of insecurities driving converging national interests, as there are missing links revealed by process-tracing between the supposed causes and the outcome that is PESCO.

While there might be converging views at the level of political elites on questions of increased defence spending and capability generation, the specific framework of PESCO does not seem to be driven by needs for a new institutional setting to structure effective cooperation in the field of defence. Those who wish to do so seem to be capable of engaging in increased cooperation outside of PESCO, while others have to downplay certain aspects of it in domestic settings, in order not to be seen as acting against national interests.

The alternative hypothesis of PESCO being an instrument of signalling commitment for continued integration seems to make for a better explanation. The tentative answer for the question of 'why now' points toward decreasing trust in the integration process and towards Brexit, with the salience of security and defence issues providing governments with the policy area in which they can make their statements on the EU and on their respective national role.

Future research could explore this avenue through in-depth discourse analysis of how governments have utilised PESCO for communication and identity-creating purposes.

This study suggests that as the core driving force behind PESCO is not to make use of increased capabilities more actively in out-of-area operations, it should not be evaluated based on the number of missions it deploys and the military capabilities it generates. Instead, in the future PESCO should be evaluated on the level of coherence it assists EU countries to achieve in foreign policy and the trust it can rebuild in the future of the EU weighted against the costs of this cooperation: including the money spent on defence and the risk that the produced weapons and capabilities will generate the incentive to actually use them eventually.

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