ABSTRACT

Since its creation in 1999, the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) has evolved rapidly. This new policy area presented Sweden, once a neutral state, with a challenge to its security policy tradition. In responding to the challenge, the Swedish government was initially reluctant about the ESDP, but today has become one of its staunchest supporters and active members. In this article, I examine Swedish participation in the ESDP since its inception, i.e. the impact Sweden has had on the ESDP, but also the extent to which the ESDP has influenced Swedish security policy. Furthermore, I seek to shed light on why the Swedish government has become so active and supportive of the ESDP despite initial reluctance. Drawing on Reuben Wong’s multi-dimensional model of Europeanization and new research undertaken primarily through interviews with key officials, I argue that Sweden has embarked on a journey from sceptical and hesitant participant to one of its main driving forces. Although the ESDP has had a major influence on Swedish security policy, I argue that the Swedish government has had a major impact on shaping the current character of the ESDP. I point to an interwoven relation between European and domestic levels, thus confirming the bi-directional character of the process of Europeanization.

Keywords: ESDP; EU; Europeanization; security policy; Sweden

1. Introduction: Europeanizing Swedish Security Policy

‘If you want to do something in the [area of] the ESDP […], it needs to fit into a triangle of France, the UK and Sweden’ (Interview no. 2).

To many readers, and not just Swedes, the above remark may seem surprising. At first sight, it is doubtful whether a relatively small member state of the European Union (EU), and, moreover, one not a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), would be considered in the same league as two of the largest and most powerful member states of
the EU. This is all the more remarkable because, in the late 1990s, Sweden, which joined the EU only in 1995, was highly sceptical of the creation of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), even indicating that it would be prepared to block it. Following the decision by the Cologne European Council in June 1999 to launch the ESDP, the Swedish government distinguished itself from other EU member states by declaring that the new policy focused mainly on ‘minesweeping, police training and the interpretation of satellite images’ (Sandberg, 1999).

Despite this narrow appreciation of the coverage of the new policy, the record since then paints a different picture. Sweden has contributed personnel to all ESDP operations to date, including military engagements. In 2003, it was the only other EU member state to join France in deploying combat forces to Operation Artemis in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) (Strömvik, 2005c: 228). In 2004, the Swedish government announced that not only would it take part in one of the EU Battle Groups (EUBG), it would actually lead one of them. Sweden contributed the lion’s share of troops (2,300 out of 2,800) to the Nordic Battle Group (NBG) on standby in the first half of 2008. From a position initially of great scepticism and reluctance, Sweden has today become one of the ESDP’s most active participants. There is thus a clear indication of a policy shift since 1999, which raises questions regarding Sweden’s relationship with the ESDP.

Since its creation in the late 1990s, the ESDP has evolved with the ‘speed of light’, as Javier Solana, the EU’s High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), once put it. This is striking, in particular viewed against the incremental steps taken since the failure of the European Defence Community in the 1950s. The development is even more remarkable given that security and defence policy is at the core of national sovereignty and thus an area that many would have considered the least likely to be subject to such rapid progress (Solana, 2004: 5). Since the first ESDP operation was launched in 2002, there have been over 20 missions.

This new policy area presented Sweden, a long-standing neutral state, with a challenge to its security policy tradition. It had to consider what role to play in Europe’s evolving security order and how to respond to the new security context. At the time of accession, it was argued that the Swedish security policy tradition of non-alignment would make it impossible for Sweden to claim a place at the core of the EU, and later that Sweden lacked a strong commitment to the ESDP. Furthermore, several scholars (e.g. Tiilikainen, 2005; Rieker, 2006) have argued that Swedish foreign policy today is more the EU’s than its own. This claim is not without merit. Certainly, the ESDP is likely to have had an impact on Sweden’s security and defence policy, but this fails to explain why Sweden has played such an active role in the ESDP. Moreover, it would be remarkable if activism had not translated into some form of influence. This perspective is thus to ignore the possible impact that Sweden has had on the ESDP and the role Sweden has played in its development. It is therefore necessary to search for alternative approaches if we are to better understand Sweden’s role and the development of the ESDP.
In recent years, the concept of ‘Europeanization’, previously used for the most part in studying various policies of the first pillar, has also been applied to the CFSP/ESDP. The process of policy convergence (national adaptation) has so far received most attention in the academic literature. Indeed, most works (e.g. Graeger et al., 2002) tend to view the ESDP as a new policy to which member states have had to adapt and react to, but with little possibility of influencing its development. According to this school of thought, Europeanization is a top-down process of national adaptation and policy convergence (‘downloading’) focusing on the increasing influence of the EU level on national structures and procedures and the adaptation of member states. Initially, Europeanization was considered to be a concept describing the convergence of national policy-making styles and content that EU membership leads to (sometimes referred to as ‘Brusselsization’) (Wong, 2005: 145). The state is thus perceived largely as reactive, underlining the dilution of the ‘national’ in favour of the ‘European’, a transformation that usually translates as an ‘incremental process of adjustment and adaptation reorienting member states’ politics and policies towards the EU’ (Wong, 2005: 145).

Another group of scholars has focused instead on Europeanization as a bottom-up process (national projection), whereby states are the primary actors and agents of change rather than mere passive subjects. This emphasizes the roles played by the member states themselves. Europeanization is thus seen as a process by which member states use the EU as an instrument to export domestic policies, models, preferences, ideas and details to the EU level (Wong, 2005: 137). This is perhaps the most interesting dimension, given the expectation that only ‘states which command large resources, strong domestic pressure or dogged commitment’ are able to change or forge a certain EU policy (Wong, 2005: 150). Following this concept, the larger EU member states use the European level to further their national interests and increase their international influence. However, as Wong writes, sometimes the EU also gives ‘small states the necessary institutional resources […] to project their own interests as European interests’ (Wong, 2005: 147), though this has received much less scholarly attention to date, particularly with regard to the second pillar (Björkdahl, 2008: 135 f.).

Perhaps in reaction to these different conceptions of Europeanization, a new generation of scholars has sought to move beyond this divide in order to achieve a more refined theory. They make the case that the various dimensions of Europeanization — some scholars add a third dimension on identity construction and elite socialization — should be combined in order to better comprehend the complex relationship between the CFSP/ESDP and member states’ foreign policies. According to Reuben Wong, Europeanization under the CFSP can be understood as ‘a process of foreign policy convergence’ being a ‘dependent variable contingent on the ideas and directives emanating from actors […] in Brussels, as well as policy ideas and actions from member state capitals’ (2007: 322). With this definition, Europeanization becomes a concept encompassing both the ‘process of
change manifested as policy convergence (both top-down and sideways) as well as national policies amplified as EU policy (bottom-up projection)’ (2007: 322). In the relationship between a member state’s foreign policy and the CFSP, Europeanization is thus understood as a process with at least two directions.

From such a perspective, the Europeanization of Swedish security policy triggers an interest in three key questions. The first is the extent to which the ESDP has influenced Swedish security policy in terms of procedures and substance, the dimension that Wong calls ‘downloading’. The second question concerns the impact of Sweden on the ESDP, which corresponds to Wong’s ‘uploading’ dimension. Finally, the third question addresses the reasons why Sweden has become so active and supportive of the ESDP. The first two questions examine the extent of the redefinition of Swedish security policy in response to the CFSP, and in particular the ESDP, but also the projection of Swedish interests as being European. The third question flows from the other two and focuses on the motives behind Swedish participation in the ESDP, but also on possible explanations as to the policy shift that seems to have taken place. Since there is reason to believe that Sweden has also exerted some influence on parts of the institutional and political features of the ESDP, and not just quietly adapted to the policy, Europeanization needs to be conceptualized as a bi-directional process. Wong’s model of Europeanization as a multidimensional process therefore serves as the appropriate analytical framework approach for this study. For each dimension, there are a number of indicators set out in Table 1 which guide the study.

### TABLE 1
Dimensions of Europeanization in National Foreign Policy

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspects of Europeanization</th>
<th>National foreign policy indicators</th>
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<tr>
<td>I. Adaptation and policy convergence ('downloading')</td>
<td>(a) Increasing salience of European political agenda</td>
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<tr>
<td>Harmonization and transformation of a member state to the needs and requirements of EU membership</td>
<td>(b) Adherence to common objectives</td>
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<td>(c) Common policy outputs taking priority over national <em>domaines réservés</em></td>
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<td>(d) Internalization of EU norms and policy ('EU-ization')</td>
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<tr>
<td>II. National projection ('uploading')</td>
<td>(a) State attempts to increase national influence in the world</td>
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<td>National foreign policy of a member state affects and contributes to the development of a common European foreign policy</td>
<td>(b) State attempts to influence foreign policies of other member states</td>
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<td>(c) State uses the EU as a cover/umbrella</td>
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<td>(d) Externalisation of national foreign policy positions onto the EU level</td>
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As the topic of Sweden’s involvement in the ESDP has so far generated limited interest — with the exception of a few works — this article has been researched primarily through interviews with key officials in Stockholm (the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Justice) and Brussels (the Permanent Representation of Sweden to the EU), as well as in the EU institutions (the Council and the Commission).

The article first explores the journey from initial scepticism to overt enthusiasm towards the ESDP that Sweden has embarked upon. The influence that Sweden has had on its development, but also the impact of the ESDP on Swedish security policy, is then discussed. Finally, the underpinning reasons and motives behind Swedish participation in the ESDP are examined briefly and some conclusions are drawn.

2. A Journey from Scepticism to Enthusiasm

The Bumpy Road to Cologne (1995–99)

For Sweden, the future security and defence dimension of the EU was highly problematic, and in the early years the government did not seem entirely convinced of either the desirability or the necessity of such a development (Jonson, 2006: 197 ff.). Indeed, the government was reluctant and wanted to stop progress towards an EU security and defence policy (Interview no. 13).

Sweden’s starting point, shared by several other member states, was that crisis management should be clearly distinguishable from a common defence, i.e. understood as territorial defence or mutual defence guarantees (Ojanen, 2002: 164). The Swedish government explicitly excluded mutual defence guarantees and the Finnish–Swedish initiative in 1996 (Hjelm-Wallén and Halonen, 1996), proposing that the EU could undertake the ‘Petersberg tasks’, was an attempt to block progress towards a collective defence (Interview no. 3). This had to be viewed in a context where proposals of a merger of the Western European Union (WEU) and the EU were being discussed and, as new EU members, Sweden and Finland were not in a position to block these but instead had to consider how to limit their development (Graeger et al., 2002: 16). The result of the Finnish–Swedish proposal was that the ‘Petersberg tasks’ were transferred to the EU, but the WEU’s territorial defence mission remained outside the treaties (Ojanen, 2002: 165). From the Swedish government’s side, inclusion of the ‘Petersberg tasks’ in the Amsterdam Treaty was perceived as a major diplomatic success and a form of demilitarization of the EU’s security dimension (Rieker, 2006: 72).

Swedish reaction to the Anglo-French St. Malo declaration in 1998 was thus tepid, because it raised concerns as to whether its military non-alignment might be endangered (Jonson, 2006: 204). In November 1998, the Swedish government tried to stop the informal meeting of EU defence ministers in Vienna during the Austrian EU Presidency — though without actually vetoing it — a move which did not get much sympathy from other EU member states (Jonson, 2006: 65 f.). At the Cologne European Council
in June 1999, the issue of a WEU–EU merger was again on the table. Even though the Cologne European Council saw the birth of the ESDP, the idea of a collective defence guarantee again failed, as the decision was taken to include ‘those functions of the WEU which [would] be necessary for the EU to fulfil its new responsibilities in the area of the Petersberg tasks’ (Cologne European Council, 1999: 35). The then Swedish Prime Minister, Göran Persson, tried to play down the significance and novelty of the Presidency conclusions and told the Riksdag that the ESDP aimed at ‘mine clearance in Bosnia and the training of border guards in Macedonia and police officers in Albania’ (Ljungberg, 1999a). The Swedish government was thus still largely hesitant and reluctant. Foreign Minister Anna Lindh declared that a ‘clear dividing line between crisis management and territorial defence should be upheld’ (1999).

The Swedish government's reluctant approval of the ESDP, and its cautious remarks made in public, should also be seen through the prism of the domestic political scene. The government's parliamentary majority depended on two eurosceptic parties and there were internal divisions in the ruling Social Democratic Party itself on the development of the ESDP. The timing was important, too, as elections to the European Parliament were coming up in June 1999, thus coinciding with the Cologne European Council, which politicized the issue further. Indeed, a week before the elections the former Swedish Defence Minister Thage G. Peterson attacked his colleagues publicly for accepting increasing militarization of the EU (Ljungberg, 1999b). Furthermore, the media published articles warning of a 'common EU defence' and an 'EU army', which pushed the government into taking a defensive stance (Interview no. 1).

**Promoting the Civilian Dimension (1999–2001)**

Although the Swedish government had succeeded in preventing the WEU–EU merger and the development of a common defence in Cologne, it was still reluctant with regard to the heavy emphasis on the military dimension of the ESDP, such as the set-up of the EU Military Committee (EUMC) and the EU Military Staff (EUMS) (Ojanen, 2002: 170). In order to counter this development, the Swedish government became eager to emphasize the non-military aspects. It was also perceived as being easier to sell the ESDP politically if it was not too military and thus not seen as calling into question the policy of military non-alignment (Interview no. 8). However, there was also genuine belief that the civilian instruments were lacking if the ESDP was to be a serious tool in crisis management (Interview no. 3). Sweden argued that a comprehensive security approach was needed and that by promoting the civilian aspects the EU was a suitable actor, since its strength lay in its ability to deploy both civilian and military instruments (Interview no. 8). They also questioned whether the military aspects of the ESDP, which were being strongly pushed for in some quarters, were actually what was required — whether there was indeed a demand for purely military crisis management.
Although the Swedish government had already pushed for recognition of the civilian aspects of crisis management in Cologne, it now embarked on a lobbying campaign for conflict prevention, civilian crisis management (CCM) and the possibility of strengthening the United Nations’ (UN) role in peace-keeping. However, this was not a perception shared by other member states at the time, states that questioned Sweden’s motives (Interview no. 1). Indeed, Sweden's vocal promotion of the civilian aspects met with stiff resistance and even animosity. Swedish diplomats felt ridiculed by their colleagues, in particular those from member states that wanted to focus and devote their energy on developing the military dimension of the ESDP. As Sweden championed a civilian dimension for the ESDP, it was thus clear it was swimming against the tide (Jonson, 2006: 205).

Ahead of the Helsinki European Council in December 1999, Sweden, together with like-minded member states, pushed for promotion of the civilian aspects of the ESDP. These attempts were met with relative success. Not only did the Presidency conclusions state that the ESDP process would ‘not imply the creation of a European army’ (Helsinki European Council, 1999: para. 27), the ‘non-military crisis management’ aspects were recognized, too (Helsinki European Council, 1999: para. 28). Furthermore, the Swedish government proposal of a committee for civilian crisis management, in parallel with the new military bodies, was agreed to (Helsinki European Council, 1999: para. 29) and eventually established in May 2000 (Council Decision, 2000). The Swedish EU Presidency in the first half of 2001 undoubtedly offered Sweden a unique opportunity to give strong impetus to CCM aspects (Björkdahl, 2008: 146–7). The government was particularly active on these issues and there was a clear focus on the civilian dimension (European Council, 2001: para. 47–54). A major Swedish diplomatic success was adoption of the action programme for conflict prevention by the Göteborg European Council in June 2001 (Björkdahl, 2008: 146–8). Sweden was also one of the member states initiating Civilian Headline Goal 2008 (CHG 2008) in order to match development on the military side. The so-called Civilian Response Teams (CRT), an idea borrowed from the EUBG concept and aimed at establishing a civilian rapid reaction capacity, was launched together with Germany (Strömvik, 2005a: 210).

3. Towards Unequivocal Enthusiasm

Embracing the ESDP (2001–03)

The Swedish government’s initial hesitation towards the ESDP had therefore faded as the civilian dimension became more recognized and the need to justify its existence lessened (Interview no. 11). Holding the EU Presidency had led to a change in attitude not only in political circles but also among the Swedish public, who had also grown more positive towards the EU in general (Interview no. 3). However, there was still a certain anxiety with regard to the military dimension of the ESDP, which would finally be overcome in 2003 (Interview no. 9).
The shift in attitude first arose in response to the situation in Macedonia (FYROM) and Operation Concordia, and was considered a watershed. The Swedish Foreign Minister, Anna Lindh, had played an active role during the Swedish EU Presidency in negotiating the Ohrid peace agreement in FYROM (Interview no. 9). This was important, since Lindh and Sweden had been in the driving seat and thus able to steer the process from the start (Interview no. 8). When the decision was taken in January 2003 to launch Concordia (Council Joint Action, 2003a), the first military ESDP operation, it was a ‘Berlin plus’ arrangement and largely conformed to expectations. However, for the Swedish government there were still sensitive points regarding conformity with its policy of military non-alignment, but also concerning the EU’s independence of decision-making (Interview no. 9).

If Concordia started to reduce fear of the ESDP’s military dimension, Operation Artemis would definitely help eliminate it, and this operation had major significance for Sweden’s relationship with the ESDP. The decision to launch the operation in the DRC in June 2003 (Council Joint Action, 2003b) took place only a few months after EU disagreement over the Iraq War, and there was thus a wish among EU member states to show some clout (Interview no. 10). Artemis was unique in several ways: it was the first time the EU deployed troops out-of-area, the first time an ESDP mandate was based on a UN Chapter VII resolution and the first time without recourse to NATO assets (Strömvik, 2005c: 229). While France was willing to launch the operation on its own, it was wary of this being perceived as neo-colonialism (Interview no. 9). It was on a Swedish initiative that the EU began looking at options for an operation, and talks between Sweden and France eventually led to the two being the only member states contributing combat troops to Artemis (Strömvik, 2005b: 177).

For the Swedish government, Artemis was, as one official put it, a ‘form of trifecta: it was the UN asking the EU for help, it was an autonomous operation and it was Africa’ (Interview no. 13). These three factors suited Swedish motives as well as Lindh’s profile perfectly, and she thus pushed for Swedish participation — according to some sources, against the Prime Minister’s wishes (Interview no. 7). For Lindh, it was fundamental that it was at the direct request of the UN, given the traditional emphasis placed on the UN in Swedish foreign and security policy. Furthermore, the Swedish government had been cautious about the ‘Berlin plus’ arrangements and reluctant to let NATO, of which it was not a member, interfere or make decisions for the EU. Finally, it was Africa, traditionally a Swedish priority, and not only had Lindh visited the DRC a few weeks earlier, she had also telephoned the UN Secretary General, who had warned against a repetition of Rwanda (Interview no. 9). It should not be forgotten that there was parallel discussion in the Convention on the Future of Europe on common defence guarantees (Interview no. 10). These factors contributed to Lindh seeking to influence the process and pushing the ESDP in the direction that she favoured (Interview no. 10).

Hence, there is general agreement that Artemis had far-reaching implications and that its effects should not be underestimated. First, widely perceived as a major success — the EU was said to have stopped potential...
genocide — it restored the EU’s self-confidence after the debacle over the Iraq War. However, it also had an amplifying effect and gave Sweden greater influence not only within the ESDP but also in the wider CFSP (Interview no. 9). Furthermore, Artemis showed that being a military non-aligned state did not mean fear of military engagement. In particular, as a result of its strong push for the civilian aspects, Sweden had been perceived as a country with an aversion to the military aspects (Strömvik, 2005a: 211). Whether merited or not, this perception largely changed in 2003. Moreover, Artemis also had effects on the Swedish Armed Forces (SAF), whose focus previously had been mainly on NATO’s Partnership for Peace (PfP). The SAF started seeing the value of the ESDP, as it entailed being fully involved in the entire process, including decision-making (Interview no. 3). Artemis would also influence the Swedish position on the EUBG (Interview no. 10). Finally, Artemis resulted in France and Sweden moving closer to each other on ESDP issues, whereas previously Sweden had more often ended up on the Anglo-Saxon side (Interview no. 8).

However, the main consequence of Artemis was that it led to a decisive change in attitude towards the ESDP and the military dimension. As one official put it, ‘Artemis led to a change, and from that moment Anna [Lindh] started to love the ESDP and Sweden became one of the most ESDP-friendly countries’ (Interview no. 10). The ESDP became uncontroversial, and the cautious and hesitant approach eventually gave way to enthusiasm.

**Shifting into Higher Gear (2003–)**

The clearest symbol of how Sweden’s view of the ESDP and in particular its military dimension had changed came with Swedish support of the EUBG concept proposed by France and the UK. Following Concordia and, in particular, Artemis, the ESDP project was seen in a more positive light (Interview no. 8). Operation Artemis had also demonstrated to the Swedish government the importance of a European rapid reaction capacity. In April 2004, Sweden, along with Finland, declared its intention to create an EUBG and assume responsibility as a Framework Nation (Hedström, 2004), and in November 2004 the NBG was presented (Bøe, 2004).

On the Swedish side, this decision was motivated by both foreign policy and defence policy motives (Interview no. 3). The Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA), wanting Sweden to be as active as possible in the ESDP and, considering this as an opportunity to support the UN, favoured Swedish participation. However, this does not explain the Swedish government’s decision to take the lead in a battle group, because the MFA would probably have been satisfied with a number of smaller contributions to a couple of battle groups (Interview no. 3). As one official said, ‘the decision [to lead a battle group] would never have come about if the Defence Ministry would not have wanted it’ (Interview no. 10). First, this was an opportunity for the SAF to plan and lead a military unit of battalion size, unlikely to happen in the PfP (Interview no. 3). It was therefore perceived that leading an EUBG would strongly contribute to development of the Swedish military capacity
to take part in international crisis management operations (Interview no. 4). Following Artemis, the SAF had become much more interested in the EU, and indeed France had praised the Swedish contribution (Nandorf, 2004). Furthermore, the NBG presented an opportunity to improve Nordic cooperation and integration in the military area for cost-saving reasons, building on the NORDCAPS initiative in 1997, and in particular cooperation between Norway and Sweden (Ljung, 2007: 54 ff.).

However, the main reason was that it coincided with the government’s efforts to transform the SAF from a territorial defence force into an intervention force (Interview nos. 3 and 4). Transformation of the SAF had been difficult, and the objective of increasing the number of troops deployable for international duty was never accomplished (Interview no. 10). No defence minister had managed to overcome the resistance within the SAF, and the reformist camp thus saw a unique window of opportunity in the EUBG initiative to make a decisive push for defence reforms (Interview nos. 4, 10 and 12). The Commander-in-Chief of the SAF, General Håkan Syrén, took on board the EUBG concept as well as the European Security Strategy (ESS) (Interview nos. 8, 9, 10 and 13). Even though the ESS is not a legally binding document, it was used as a ‘smokescreen’, an imaginary constraint, by the Ministry of Defence to make politically difficult domestic reforms under cover of the EU prerogative (Interview nos. 9, 10 and 13).

4. Activism and Europeanization

The Changing Character of Activism

It seems clear from this overview that there has been development over time and that Sweden has made quite a significant journey in the ESDP. As one official has said:

[W]e have moved quite remarkably [in the ESDP], from the initial ideas when we were concerned that it was only focusing on military aspects to pushing for the civilian dimension and more recently also the military one. (Interview no. 3)

Perhaps this journey is best personified by the late Foreign Minister Anna Lindh, who went from initially suspecting where the project would lead to, to realizing the great potential of the instrument (Interview no. 8).

There had been concerns in the EU that the non-aligned member states (Austria, Finland, Ireland and Sweden) would become problematic and ‘sources of nuisance power’, as Hanna Ojanen called it, because their military non-alignment could hamper further development of EU security and defence policy (2002: 155). It was said that in the early years of the ESDP Sweden would receive the ‘Maginot medal’ for its defensive behaviour, since it always threw its weight behind wording that would halt any possible expansion of the ESDP (Jonson, 2006: 199). With this infamous attribute attached to its policy, concerns that Sweden would be isolated seem to have
pressed its government into taking a more proactive stand on the ESDP. The civilian dimension became a means of shaping and influencing the ESDP in a way conducive to traditional Swedish foreign and security policy thinking. However, it also contributed to greater openness, as one official noted: ‘we did not want to be perceived as anti-military or fearing the military aspects’ (Interview no. 3). This pushed Sweden into demonstrating to the other member states that it was credible when it advocated its broader concept of security, encompassing both civilian and military instruments (Interview no. 3). A second reason was that there was a lack of understanding of the ESDP in both administrative and political circles, leading to an instinctive reaction from Stockholm to hold back (Interview no. 4). As one official stated, ‘we thought that it was only about common defence and that the ESDP would equate to a common defence’ (Interview no. 3).

Nor should the domestic context be underestimated. With a major shift in Swedish security policy taking place, it took some time to gain widespread approval and support (Interview no. 3). As time passed, the government adapted to it, as did the Riksdag and the two Eurosceptic parties supporting the government. The more people understood and could see that the ESDP worked, the more acceptable it became, the military dimension included (Interview no. 9). There is also wide consensus that the experience of holding the EU Presidency had an impact, as it forced Sweden into taking responsibility for the EU and laid the groundwork for a more positive attitude among the public towards the EU, including the ESDP (Interview nos. 8, 9 and 10).

The ESDP’s Impact on Swedish Security Policy

As Reuben Wong writes, ‘there is merit in making a distinction when speaking of a change in foreign policy as to whether it regards procedures and structures or the actual substance of a policy area’ (2007: 324). On a structural level, it is clear that EU membership and development of the CFSP and ESDP have had a clear impact on all aspects of Swedish foreign and security policy. As one official stated:

Holding the EU Presidency forced the whole government administration, from the lower levels to the highest level, to think in EU terms and to manage the acquis communautaire. (Interview no. 9)

There was a learning process and the early years of membership were mainly devoted to ‘keeping Sweden’s head above the steadily rising EU water level’ (Ekengren and Sundelius, 2005: 240). The scope and scale of the changes required by membership took Swedish government officials by surprise; it quickly became clear that the EU was not just another international organization (Ekengren and Sundelius, 2005: 243). It introduced a completely different way of working; very intense and, above all, time-consuming (Interview no. 10).
As regards policy on a macrolevel, the effects of the ESDP seem less marked, because it is rather EU membership, as such, that has provoked changes in the Swedish security policy tradition. The policy of military non-alignment seems to have had little impact on the conduct of Swedish security policy with regard to the ESDP. As Swedish diplomats have noted, the term ‘military non-alignment’ is never used when discussing the ESDP, only in matters relating to the PfP. The only time military non-alignment has been brought up, following the creation of the ESDP, was in connection with discussions – in the Convention on the Future of Europe – on mutual defence guarantees (Interview no. 10). On a microlevel, however, the change is more substantial, in particular as regards operations. As one official notes:

In the EU, we participate fully. In the UN, it is different as the DPKO [Department of Peacekeeping Operations] takes the decisions and in the PfP, we are involved but only to a certain extent. In the EU, we sit as a member around the table, we take part in the process of developing concepts and we take decisions. We are involved not just in the later stages. This has had an enormous impact. (Interview no. 4)

The fact that in the ESDP the member states are involved from beginning to end, from idea to implementation, seems key. The ESDP contrasted with Sweden’s observer status in the WEU as well as its participation in the PfP, where, as a troop contributor, it had to struggle to gain insight into NATO-led operations. This last aspect is pertinent, as the Swedish government had initially feared not being considered on an equal footing with the NATO members in the ESDP (Interview no. 9). The impact of EU membership in this regard should not be underestimated.

Perhaps the clearest example of the ESDP’s impact on Swedish security policy is in the area of defence reform. It is clear that transformation of the SAF is largely taking place as a result of the development of the ESDP. According to a Swedish officer, the change is the ‘biggest in the history of the SAF for the last 500 years’ (Stenberg, 2005). The commitments made to ESDP operations have been used as a tool by the Swedish government for introducing controversial national defence reforms (Wedin, 2008: 46–8). The transformation of the SAF was, if not brought about, at least accelerated by the development of the ESDP and in particular the NBG (Interview no. 8). The ESDP process has thus served as an important vehicle for reforms, or, as one official described it, as a ‘transformer’ (Interview no. 4).

From this overview, it can be said that at least three of Reuben Wong’s indicators for adaptation and policy convergence, set out in Table 1 above, can be found (although less so, the one on common policy outputs taking priority over national domaines réservés). First, there has been growing salience of the European political agenda, as Sweden has embraced the ESDP. Second, there has been an adherence to common objectives, as Sweden first reluctantly recognized in the late 1990s. Third, there has been an internalization of EU norms and policy in terms of both procedure and content. This may hint at a relatively strong degree of the first aspect of...
Europeanization; indeed, Hanna Ojanen has even argued that Swedish foreign policy today is more the EU’s than its own (2002: 155). However, this may be an exaggeration. Europeanization is not such a unidirectional and clear-cut process, as Sweden has also been active in shaping the ESDP.

Sweden’s Impact on the ESDP

It is also clear from the overview above that Sweden has had a substantial influence on the development of the ESDP. This points to an interwoven process, because it is a question not just of the ESDP influencing Sweden, but also of Sweden influencing the ESDP. The country has participated actively in shaping the process and influencing other member states. The Swedish government quickly recognized that the ESDP was a dynamic framework that was relatively flexible and possible to influence, much simpler than, for example, the UN (Interview no. 1).

As pointed out above, Sweden has contributed personnel to all civilian and military ESDP operations launched to date. On the civilian side, Sweden has supplied 7.1% of personnel and is thus the fifth biggest contributor, as shown in Table 2. More interestingly, not only has Sweden contributed to all five military ESDP operations so far, it is also at the top of troop contributions in relative numbers (Marangoni, 2008: 13 f.). This means that Sweden is the only EU member state, together with France, to have contributed to all ESDP operations.

In terms of conceptual contributions, it is clear that Sweden has played a leading role in development of the civilian dimension. As one official put it, the ‘fact that there is a civilian dimension of the ESDP today is almost a Swedish accomplishment’ (Interview no. 10). While the Swedish government considered it crucial for the success of the ESDP that there be both a military and a civilian dimension, there was, as we have seen above, a strong degree of incomprehension from the other member states fearing that this would dilute the military dimension (Interview no. 9). However, the situation today is very different, as the comprehensive security approach and the broad range of civilian and military instruments of the EU are touted in most keynote speeches. Furthermore, of the 20 ESDP operations launched so far, only 5 have been military. Although most civilian operations have been fairly small, it nevertheless shows that Sweden and other like-minded member states have been correct (Interview nos. 8 and 9). Swedish diplomats thus take a certain pride, perhaps rightly so, in having succeeded in ensuring both a civilian and a military approach in the ESDP (Interview no. 2).

It was highlighted above how the ESDP and the process associated with the NBG have contributed to the rapid transformation of the SAF. However, the NBG also made Sweden more proactive on the military side (Interview no. 10). Implementing the EUBG concept meant that Sweden could play a very active role and contribute to discussions at EU level (Interview no. 8).

Given its size, Sweden has thus exerted quite a substantial influence on the ESDP. As one official has said, ‘Sweden is recognised, it is a great power within the CFSP’ (Interview no. 12). A recent study by Daniel Naurin seems
to confirm this, putting Sweden as one of the most sought-after member states (after Germany, the UK and France) in the CFSP (Naurin, 2007: 10). This seems to defy previous research on Europeanization, where only the larger member states are said to be powerful enough to fashion structures and influence EU policies according to their interests, in particular in areas of ‘high politics’ (Björkdahl, 2008: 135 f.). This is particularly interesting in light of what was mentioned above about the challenges that member states face in regard to the CFSP policy-making process. Indeed, for several smaller member states, the capacity to launch initiatives is hampered in the CFSP by the limited resources of their ministries. However, the case of Sweden proves that if you are a player ready to contribute with ideas to the policy process, and with personnel to operations, you can wield influence much beyond your size.

In terms of the second aspect of Europeanization, national projection, we find a strong presence of more or less all four indicators. First, Sweden has attempted to increase its national influence in the world through the ESDP, such as in the case of Artemis. Second, it has attempted to influence the policies of other member states by being one of the most active members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member state</th>
<th>Total contribution in personnel</th>
<th>Average of shares per operation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. France</td>
<td>510</td>
<td>1. France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Germany</td>
<td>424</td>
<td>2. Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. United Kingdom</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>3. Italy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Italy</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>4. Portugal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The Netherlands</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>5. <strong>Sweden</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6. Sweden</strong></td>
<td><strong>166</strong></td>
<td>6. Belgium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Spain</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>7. Spain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Finland</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>8. United Kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Belgium</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>10. Finland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Portugal</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>11. Denmark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Romania</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>12. Greece</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Poland</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>13. Romania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Greece</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>14. Poland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Czech Republic</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>15. Hungary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: SIPRI’s Multilateral Peace Operations Database, http://www.sipri.org*

*Note: Whereas the first column shows the absolute numbers in personnel (and the respective shares), the second column calculates the average of the relative shares in each operation. All 14 ESDP civilian operations to date (end of 2008) have been included (except for EUJUST LEX and EU Support to AMIS due to their specific character).*
in the ESDP, pushing the development of its crisis management capacity. Third, it has used the EU as a cover, as we have seen, with regard to defence reforms. Fourth, it has externalized its national foreign policy positions onto the EU level by pressing for issues that fitted well with traditional Swedish security policy, such as conflict prevention, civilian–military cooperation and EU–UN relations. It therefore seems that Sweden has made its mark on the ESDP, emphasizing the bi-directional process of Europeanization.

5. Explaining Swedish Activism in the ESDP

The EU as a Foreign Policy Platform

From attempts in the late 1990s, when the focus was on stopping all progress towards a common defence, Sweden today embraces the ESDP. The conclusion that such a change of attitude has taken place, in particular to its military dimension, raises the question why this occurred. Some indications have already been given, but there are also broader underpinning reasons. One reason for Swedish activism in the ESDP was a generally positive attitude towards the CFSP and belief in the EU as an actor on the international stage, including in terms of security policy (Interview no. 1). The experience of the EU presidency in this regard was important in recognizing the EU as a global actor (Interview no. 9). In the political discourse, this is also possible to observe in the declarations and speeches made, with Foreign Minister Carl Bildt emphasizing the special position of the EU in Swedish foreign and security policy (Bildt, 2007).

However, it has to be noted that Sweden has a long tradition of pursuing an active and independent foreign policy in the belief that smaller states can make a difference (Strömvik, 2005a: 199). Sweden also has a long tradition of participation in international peace-keeping operations within the frameworks of both the UN and NATO (Interview no. 10). This tradition has facilitated Swedish participation in ESDP operations, as there were no taboos with regard to sending military troops abroad. The experience of taking part, first in UN-led, then NATO-led, operations in the Balkans, also contributed to awareness that the UN was not well equipped to handle the new types of complex threat arising (Jonson, 2006: 203). This led Sweden to become genuinely interested in strengthening the EU’s crisis management capabilities. Furthermore, whereas peace-keeping enjoyed considerable public support, the EU itself was less warmly appreciated. As such, participation in the ESDP was also a way of influencing domestic opinion and showcasing the EU as a project for peace. With its tradition of an active foreign policy, but recognizing that as an EU member it was no longer possible to act in the way it once had, Sweden thus needed to find a new approach.

Although perhaps reluctantly in the early years, the Swedish government came to recognize that the EU offered the best way to channel Swedish foreign policy (Interview no. 3). As a smaller country, it was probably easier to accept international cooperation (Interview no. 8). For Sweden, the
CFSP and the ESDP thus presented an opportunity, i.e. as a new platform, for continuing to pursue an active foreign and security policy (Interview no. 8). However, the Swedish government also became more active, realizing the possibility it had to influence the EU’s broader agenda for international peace and security.

**Realizing the Potential of the ESDP**

At first sight, it may seem paradoxical that Sweden has taken such an active part in a policy that strikes at the core of national sovereignty. On the other hand, the Swedish government has been careful to stress the intergovernmental basis of the ESDP, rejecting the use of qualified majority voting. As one official stated, the intergovernmental structure of the ESDP has been a *sine qua non* and that Sweden has been able to be active in the ESDP because it has been intergovernmental (Interview no. 3). The fact that the ESDP has been in the hands of the member states has given them a sense of retaining control over its development, particularly so in the case of a Sweden keen not to see any progress towards a common defence. Furthermore, it has created a strong sense of ownership (Interview no. 9).

Another important explanation for the Swedish government’s appreciation of the ESDP has been that it proved to be an efficient instrument in terms of both resources and results. As one official noted, it is a ‘cheap form of foreign policy’ as the CFSP budget covers all civilian ESDP costs, except for the salaries of the personnel, which the Swedish government is funding out of the development aid budget (Interview no. 3). For a small member state, there is thus clear added value, as it would cost more to act alone. Moreover, the Swedish government realized that the ESDP functioned well and that its operations delivered results (Interview no. 10). Finally, the development of the ESDP was in line with Swedish views of a wider concept of security (Interview no. 9). The combination of different instruments suited Sweden well and, as the civilian dimension grew to become the dominant one, thus rewarding a hard-fought struggle, this made the ESDP a very attractive option for Sweden (Interview no. 9).

**6. Conclusion: Bi-Directional Europeanization**

The case of Sweden and the ESDP demonstrates the bi-directional nature of Europeanization. There has been an adaptation of Swedish security policy, due not just to EU membership itself but also to the pressures arising from development of the ESDP. Sweden has had to reform and to reshape its security policy as a result of EU membership. However, Sweden has also played an active role in the ESDP in trying to bring its own foreign policy orientations to bear on ESDP development. As the Swedish government began to realize that it was not possible to stop the establishment of the ESDP, the second best option was to ensure that the policy reflected Swedish priorities. This meant being active in the policy process and contributing to missions, including the military ones.
There is also a more psychological phenomenon linked to this. As the former chairperson of the Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs put it: ‘[if the EU needs troops, the] question is posed to all around the table: the country that does not raise its hand will count as a lightweight – even in other political issues’ (Strömvik, 2005a: 212). This example highlights the peer pressure put on member states in the EU context and indicates that the way to gain influence in the ESDP is by playing a proactive role and thus potentially securing influence out of proportion to the country’s size.

Swedish activism in the field of the ESDP also highlights the question of partners and relations with other actors in the ESDP. In this regard, Sweden has been careful about maintaining good relations with both France and the UK, the two main players in the ESDP and nations with perhaps the most sharply contrasting views on the finalité of the ESDP (Interview no. 8). In the debate between what scholars refer to as ‘Europeanists’ and ‘Atlanticists’, Sweden seems to have exploited the gap existing between the two in the ESDP by supporting both a stronger EU crisis management capacity and a stronger transatlantic link (Interview no. 10). Sweden has thus gained some room for manoeuvre by not belonging to either of the extreme sides of the spectrum and by playing the role of a ‘third actor’ (Interview no. 8).

In 1994, a study on the consequences of EU membership was prepared by two retired Swedish diplomats. While emphasizing the potentially sweeping changes for Swedish security policy, the study underlined that the EU would help promote Sweden’s security interests:

No one should be mistaken that EU membership will bring about far-reaching obligations of a character that Sweden hitherto has not needed to consider or undertake. But no one should either believe that Sweden hereby abandons the control over its foreign policy. What is at stake is to assemble the European states to collective action through the promotion of common values and interests. (Leifland, Åström and Hagelberg, 1994)

While penned long before either the ESDP or the concept of Europeanization came into being, 15 years later these lines are no less accurate in their assessment of Swedish foreign policy in the context of the EU.

Notes

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1. The NBG also includes troops from Finland (200), Norway (150), Ireland (80) and Estonia (50).

2. In this context, I am indebted to M. Strömvik, who helped identify an initial list of potential interviewees. As regards any possible bias due to the fact that several interviewees were from Swedish government offices, it should be kept in mind that
the institutions they have been associated with are often in competition with each other. For example, the ministries of Defence and Justice have contested the leading role of the Foreign Ministry in the ESDP and emphasized different issues (e.g. Defence pushing for military aspects and Justice for the civilian dimension).

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