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Making Sense of Multinational Cooperation

Ina Kraft

Identifying Gaps in the Research on Military Cooperation

The armed forces of Western European states exhibit a level of cooperation that is unparalleled globally. Multinational cooperation, characterised by direct and institutionalised collaboration among national armed forces below the threshold of security and defence policy, has been an enduring reality for European armed forces since the establishment of the integrated NATO command structure in the mid-1950s. This phenomenon gained even greater prominence after the Cold War, with NATO member states deciding at the 1990 London Summit to increasingly rely on multinational corps composed of national units.[1] Consequently, a proliferation of multinational units emerged across various military command levels, including corps, but also extending to divisions, brigades, and even battalions. Additionally, since the 1990s, numerous international military missions have been supported by European nations.

The trend toward military cooperation in Europe also prompted the emergence of scholarly discourse on multinational formats. Military sociologists and security policy scholars engaged in substantial empirical research spanning from the mid-1990s to the mid-2010s. In the realm of military sociology, investigations examined public opinions

[1] NATO, *Declaration on a Transformed North Atlantic Alliance. Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council ("The London Declaration") (6 July 1990)* (Brussels: NATO, 1990). https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_23693.htm.

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and attitudinal shifts concerning questions of military cooperation at the macro level of analysis.[2] Meanwhile, studies conducted at the meso and micro levels typically employed comparative approaches with limited case numbers to explore the impact of multinational cooperation within military units on organisational processes – both in routine and international operations.[3] Other researchers delved into the attitudes of soldiers within multinational settings.[4] Central to military sociological research is the conceptualisation of multinational cooperation as an independent, intervening, or contextual factor influencing the objects of investigation, that are of actual interest to the researcher including operational effectiveness, unity of command, military leadership, motivation, and job satisfaction. Only recently, Matías Ferreyra Wachholtz and Joseph Soeters adopted organisational theory to elucidate the global proliferation of the multinational model, offering a rare sociological contribution to the conditions of multinational cooperation.[5]

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[2] Sven Bernhard Gareis and Paul Klein, *Europas Sicherheits- und Verteidigungspolitik. Einstellungen und Meinungen in der deutschen Bevölkerung*, SOWI-Arbeitspapiere (Nr. 135), (Strausberg: Sozialwissenschaftliches Institut der Bundeswehr, 2003); e.g. Detlef Bald, *Ungenutzte Chancen? Die deutsch-französische Zusammenarbeit im Meinungsbild der deutschen Bevölkerung*, SOWI-Arbeitspapiere (Nr. 27), (München: Sozialwissenschaftliches Institut der Bundeswehr, 1989); Heiko Biehl, "United We Stand, Divided We Fall? Die Haltungen europäischer Bevölkerungen zum ISAF-Einsatz", in *Der Einsatz der Bundeswehr in Afghanistan*, ed. Anja Seiffert, Phil C. Langer, and Carsten Pietsch (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2012); Rüdiger Fiebig, "Die Deutschen und ihr Einsatz - Einstellungen der Bevölkerung zum ISAF-Einsatz," in *Der Einsatz der Bundeswehr in Afghanistan*, ed. Anja Seiffert, Phil C. Langer, and Carsten Pietsch (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2012).

[3] Ulrich vom Hagen et al., eds., *True Love. A Study in Integrated Multinationality within p. 1 (German/Netherlands) Corps Breda*, FORUM International (Strausberg: Sozialwissenschaftliches Institut der Bundeswehr, 2003); Sven Bernhard Gareis and Ulrich vom Hagen, *Militärkulturen und Multinationalität: das Multinationale Korps Nordost in Stettin*, (Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 2004); Gregor Richter, "Antecedents and Consequences of Leadership Styles: Findings From Empirical Research in Multinational Headquarters," *Armed Forces & Society* 44, no. 1 (2016); Chiara Ruffa, *Military cultures in peace and stability operations Afghanistan and Lebanon* (Philadelphia: Penn Press, 2018).

[4] Nina Leonhard et al., eds., *Military Co-operation in Multinational Missions: The Case of EUFOR in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, FORUM International (Strausberg: Sozialwissenschaftliches Institut der Bundeswehr, 2008); René Moelker and Schelte van Ruiten, "Dutch Prejudice," in *Cultural Challenges in Military Operations*, ed. Cees M. Coops and Tibor Szvircsev Tresch (NATO Defense College, 2007); Gianfranco Gasperini, Beno Arnejčič, and András Ujj, *Sociological aspects concerning the relations within contingents of multinational units* (Gaeta: A&P, 2001); Eyal Ben-Ari and Efrat Elron, "Blue Helmets and White Armor. Multi-nationalism and multi-culturalism among UN peacekeeping forces," *City & Society* 13, no. 2 (2001).

[5] Matías Ferreyra Wachholtz and Joseph Soeters, "Multinational Military Cooperation in the Global South," *Armed Forces & Society*, online first, (2022).

In the domain of security studies, researchers often view military cooperation as a phenomenon warranting exploration itself. International relations theory has proven instrumental in explaining the formation of alliances and military coalitions. [6] Furthermore, cooperation within the context of the emerging European Security and Defence Policy has been framed within the perspective of strategic culture[7], studied through an examination of discourses among security policy elites[8], or approached as an analysis of the balance of power in international politics[9]. Nevertheless, scholars within security studies seldom delve into explaining the genesis of multinational units[10] or internal processes within alliances[11], often focusing narrowly on the inquiry of why states cooperate, with less emphasis on the level of the armed forces. Consequently, their examination of alliances and coalition building encompasses just a small facet of military cooperation.

However, these limited perspectives fail to capture the intricate reality of multinational interconnectedness in Europe. Military cooperation encompasses a broader spectrum of activities, including collaborative efforts in military training, joint procurement projects, cross-border military exercises, and shared territorial defence tasks. Thus, to achieve a comprehensive understanding of multinational cooperation, it is important to consider this broad spectrum of cooperative efforts.

The purpose of this article is threefold: Firstly, it endeavours to reconceptualise military cooperation in a more comprehensive manner than previously attempted, achieved through the classification of multinational cooperation into structures,

[6] Patricia A. Weitsman, *Dangerous alliances : proponents of peace, weapons of war* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2004); Stephen M. Walt, *The origins of alliances*, Cornell studies in security affairs, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987); Randall L. Schweller, *Deadly imbalances: tripolarity and Hitler's strategy of world conquest* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).

[7] Bastian Giegerich, *European security and strategic culture: national responses to the EU's security and defence policy*, (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2006); Christoph O. Meyer, *The quest for a European strategic culture : changing norms on security and defence in the European Union* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

[8] Jolyon Howorth, "Discourse, Ideas, and Epistemic Communities in European Security and Defence Policy," *West European Politics* 27, no. 2 (2004).

[9] Barry R. Posen, "European Union Security and Defense Policy: Response to Unipolarity?," *Security Studies* 15, no. 2 (2006).

[10] Seth G. Jones, *The Rise of European Security Cooperation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

[11] Charles A. Kupchan, "NATO and the Persian Gulf: examining intra-alliance behavior," *International Organization* 42, no. 2 (1998); Steve Weber, *Multilateralism in NATO: shaping the postwar balance of power, 1945-1961*, (Berkeley: International and Area Studies, University of California at Berkeley, 1991).

processes, and activities. Secondly, it assesses the state of military cooperation in Europe after the end of the Cold War based on this novel conceptualisation. This article then conducts an analysis of multinational cooperation in Europe, delineating three distinct phases of cooperation (1990-2004, 2005-2013, 2014-) and presenting preliminary evidence of distinct cooperation motives underlying each phase. In doing so, the author seeks not only to rekindle the broader interest that military sociology once held for the subject of military cooperation but also to ignite a fresh exploration of the conditions driving military cooperation.

Given the limitations inherent in an article, it is essential to acknowledge that conducting an exhaustive examination of every existing multinational format in Europe is impractical. Therefore, the subsequent chapters offer an overview of noteworthy instances of multinational cooperation. Nonetheless, the proposed framework can readily incorporate elements from other instances of cooperation.

Mapping Multinational Cooperation

A Taxonomy of Multinational Cooperation

Multinational military cooperation is the direct and institutionalised cooperation of (parts of) the armed forces of different states. While it falls under the umbrella of broader defence cooperation, it does not encompass the entirety of such collaboration as states can engage in cooperative defence agreements without necessarily extending their cooperation to the operational level of their armed forces.

In the European context, multinational cooperation permeates many aspects of the armed forces.[12] For example, since 2004, aircraft from NATO member states have been regularly deployed as part of the Baltic Air Policing mission in the Baltic States.[13] In the

[12] It is essential to highlight that while this article primarily focuses on European military cooperation, NATO is not solely European; rather, it is a transatlantic alliance encompassing the US and Canada as members. Nevertheless, numerous multinational arrangements tend to involve European states exclusively or with limited contributions from the US and Canada. Furthermore, since the 1990s, the development of multinational capabilities has been driven by the mutual aspiration on both sides of the Atlantic for European nations to attain greater autonomy in the realm of defence from the US. For the sake of simplicity, the author refers to the cooperation arrangements covered in this article as European, acknowledging that it occasionally includes contributions from the US and Canada.

[13] John Michael Weaver, *NATO in Contemporary Times* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan Cham, 2021), pp. 75-76.

autumn of 2018, NATO conducted the expansive Trident Juncture military exercise in Norway, marking one of the largest multinational exercises in the post-Cold War era.[14] In September 2021, a German-French Air Transport Squadron was established in Évreux, France.[15] These three examples underscore the varied nature of military cooperation, highlighting the importance of a careful approach to differentiate among the distinct expressions of cooperation.

One of the widely embraced models in comparative politics is David Easton's political process model.[16] Easton's model conceptualises the political process as a three-staged flow, wherein (1) the political system (2) converts demands and support from its environment into (3) operational activities. Similar input-output models are also present in organisational theory.[17] This tripartite division into (1) structures, (2) processes, and (3) activities serves as a taxonomy for discerning the facets of multinational cooperation. Leveraging Easton's model enables the conceptualisation of military cooperation as a concept involving organisational structure, organisational process, and organisational activity.

At its core, military cooperation pertains to organisational structures, particularly when it involves the establishment of multinational units and commands. Armed forces additionally engage in various capability development processes to fulfill the tasks assigned to them by society and politics. Fundamentally, this entails providing military resources and trained personnel. In this pursuit, European armed forces are progressively collaborating with one another. Multinational cooperation also encompasses military activities. For instance, nearly all international operations undertaken by European states take on a multinational character. Furthermore, national militaries are increasingly undertaking national defence tasks with the assistance of allied partners. The ensuing

[14] Jack Watling, "NATO's Trident Juncture 2018 Exercise: Political Theatre with a Purpose," *Rusi Commentary*, 2018.

[15] See https://www.defensenews.com/global/europe/2021/09/02/france-germany-launch-joint-tactical-air-squadron-and-training-center/ (last accessed on 10August 2023).

[16] David Easton, *A framework for political analysis*, Prentice-Hall contemporary political theory series, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1965); Gabriel A. Almond and G. Bingham Powell, *Comparative politics: system, process, and policy*, 2d ed. (Boston: Little, Brown, 1978).

[17] Jeffrey Pfeffer and Gerald R. Salancik, *The external control of organizations : a resource dependence perspective*, ed. Gerald R. Salancik (Stanford: Stanford Business Books, 1978).

sections delve into the present status of military cooperation in Europe across the three dimensions.

Multinational Structures in Europe

In alignment with NATO's taxonomy, which distinguishes between command structure and force structure, multinational structures can be classified into planning and command structures, as well as multinational force structures. Furthermore, at the national level, multinational structures can emerge when national armed forces integrate foreign military units or personnel.

European states first established multinational organisational structures at the strategic-operational level, i.e., at the military command level.[18] Even as early as during the Cold War conflict, the members of NATO partially intertwined military planning and command functions in the International Military Staff, in NATO's strategic commands and in the subordinate NATO headquarters (NATO Command Structure, NCS). Personnel seconded to these staffs, while wearing their national uniforms, acted not as representatives of individual states but as NATO personnel.

Starting in the early 2000s, the European Union (EU) also embarked on developing military planning structures.[19] However, in comparison to the expansive NATO command structure, the EU's planning structures were comparatively less developed and resource-equipped. For instance, the EU is faced with a deficiency in viable command options when it comes to executive military operations. In this case, the EU relies either on the command capabilities of its member states or on NATO assets as per the provisions of the Berlin Plus agreement.[20] It is worth noting, however, that the departure of the UK

[18] Gregory W. Pedlow, *The Evolution of NATO's Command Structure, 1951-2009* (Brussels: NATO, 2009).

[19] Joylon Howorth, "The European Union's Security and Defence Policy: The Quest for Coherence," in *International Relations and the European Union*, ed. Christopher Hill, Michael Smith, and Sophie Vanhoonacker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017); Sophie Vanhoonacker and Karolina Pomorska, "The Institutional Framework," in *International Relations and the European Union*, ed. Christopher Hill, Michael Smith, and Sophie Vanhoonacker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

[20] See European External Action Service, *EU Concept for Military Command and Control (Rev-8), EAS/ CSDP/PSDC 194 8798/19, EUMC 44, CSDP/PSDC 194* (Brussels: European External Action Service, 2019). However, since Cyprus' accession to the EU, the application of the Berlin Plus agreement has been hindered by Turkey's veto. Sinem Akgul Acikmese and Dimitrios Triantaphyllou, "The NATO–EU–

from the EU in 2019, a country less inclined toward a robust EU defence policy, prompted EU member states to enhance the capabilities of the European Military Staff in terms of commanding EU operations.[21]

The development of multinational headquarters and units paralleled the establishment of planning and command structures. While European force structures during the Cold War primarily consisted of national headquarters and units, some multinational formats emerged, such as the Allied Land Forces Schleswig-Holstein and Jutland (HQ LANDJUT, 1962) and the Franco-German Brigade (1989). It was post-1990, however, that the proliferation of multinational formations gained momentum.

Throughout the 1990s and 2000s, multiple multinational corps emerged across the European continent, with nine of them still functioning as NATO Rapid Deployable Corps today.[22] These corps, led either by a single nation (e.g., the United Kingdom's Allied Rapid Reaction Corps, ARRC) or by multiple nations (e.g., the Eurocorps involving Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Poland, and Spain), assumed planning and command functions formerly held by NATO's command structure, which shrank from 33 to seven commands after the end of the Cold War.[23]

The establishment of multinational corporations also paved the way for NATO's increased flexibility and functionalisation.[24] In the past, multinational corps were characterised by their permanent assignment of divisions and brigades. However, a notable transformation occurred in the 1990s, with most multinational corps no longer retaining permanent command and control over tactical maneuver elements. Instead, units are now temporarily assigned according to specific tasks and roles, a process guided

Turkey trilogy: the impact of the Cyprus conundrum," *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 12, no. 4 (2012).

[21] Yf Reykers, "A permanent headquarters under construction? The Military Planning and Conduct Capability as a proximate principal," *Journal of European Integration* 41, no. 6 (2019); European External Action Service, *The Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC)* (Brussels: EEAS, 2023).

[22] See https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_50088.htm (last accessed on August 10, 2023).

[23] NATO, *The NATO Command Structure (Fact Sheet)* (Brussels: NATO Public Diplomacy Division (PDD) – Press & Media Section, 2018).

[24] Egon Ramms, "Multinational Corps Northeast. Multinationality: The only Way into the Future. The Danish-German-Polish Corps on its Way to Afghanistan in 2007," *NATO's nations and partners for peace* 2005, no. 4 (2005); Thomas Durell-Young, *Multinational land formations in NATO : reforming practices and structures* (Carlisle Barracks, Pa.: Strategic Studies Institute, 1997).

by NATO's strategic planning. Added to this flexibilisation was functionalisation. During the Cold War, national corps were grouped into NATO Army Groups along a geographic line, and national air forces were grouped into Tactical Air Fleets.[25] This regional structuring, the advantages of which were short logistic routes and local training of forces, characterised NATO until the end of the Cold War. As NATO transitioned from territorial defence to global crisis management, strategic redirection prompted a reallocation of tasks and headquarters across the Alliance.

Despite their importance regarding the changes in NATO's command structure, multinational corps represented merely a fraction of the surge in multinational unit formation throughout the 1990s and 2000s. Table 2.1 illustrates the dynamic evolution of multinational land formations within the European defence landscape by presenting key details, geographical regions, and echelons.[26] By the mid-2000s, Europe boasted over 20 multinational land formations. While the establishment of permanent multinational troops subsided in the mid-2000s, the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation and the continued aggression in Eastern Ukraine sparked a renewed interest in forming new multinational units. These new units exclusively appeared in NATO's eastern territories, near Russia, and among states that joined NATO after 1999.

[25] Pedlow, *The Evolution of NATO's Command Structure, 1951-2009.*

[26] It is important to emphasise that alongside multinational land formations, there are numerous multinational maritime, air and joint formations. Examples include the NATO Standing Naval Forces, which trace their origins to the 1960s, the NATO Airborne Early Warning & Control Force established in 1980, air transport units like the Multinational Multirole Tanker Transport Unit (2019), as well as joint formations such as the NATO Response Force and the EU Battlegroups, to which member states assign forces on a rotational basis. See Gustav Lindstrom, *Enter the EU Battlegroups*, Chaillot Papers no.97, (Paris: European Union Institute for Security Studies 2007); Jens Ringsmose and Sten Rynning, "The NATO Response Force: A qualified failure no more?," *Contemporary Security Policy* 38, no. 3 (2017).

Table 2.1 Permanent Multinational Land Formations in Europe

Name	Inauguration (dissolution)	Region	Echelon
Allied Command Europe Mobile Force	1960 (2002)	West	Brigade
Corps LANDJUT	1962 (1999)	West	Corps
Franco-German Brigade	1989	West	Brigade
Allied Rapid Reaction Corps	1992	West	Corps
Eurocorps	1993	West	Corps
V US-German Corps	1993 (2005)	West	Corps
II German-US Corps	1993 (2005)	West	Corps
Baltic Battalion	1994	East	Battalion
Multinational Division (Central)	1994 (2002)	West	Division
1 German-Netherlands Corps	1995	West	Corps
Spanish-Italian Amphibious Force	1996	West	Brigade
Standby High Readiness Brigade for UN Operations	1996 (2009)	West	Brigade
Lithuanian–Polish Peace Force Battalion	1997 (2008)	East	Battalion
Multinational Land Force	1998	West	Brigade
Polish–Ukrainian Peace Force Battalion	1998 (2010)	East	Battalion
South-Eastern Europe Brigade	1999	West	Brigade
Multinational Corps Northeast	1999	East	Corps
Romanian-Hungarian Joint Peacekeeping Battalion	2000	East	Battalion
NATO Rapid Deployable Corps Spain	2000	West	Corps
NATO Rapid Deployable Corps Turkey	2001	West	Corps
NATO Rapid Deployable Corps Italy	2001	West	Corps
TISA Multinational Engineering Battalion	2002	East	Battalion
Czech-Slovak-Polish Brigade	2002 (2005)	East	Brigade
NATO Rapid Deployable Corps Greece	2003	West	Corps
European Gendarmerie Force	2005	West	Brigade

NATO Rapid Deployable Corps France	2005	West	Corps
Multinational Military Police Battalion	2007	East	Battalion
Lithuanian–Polish–Ukrainian Brigade	2014	East	Brigade
Multinational Division Southeast	2015	East	Division
Multinational Brigade Southeast	2016	East	Brigade
NATO eFP Battlegroup Poland	2017	East	Battalion
NATO eFP Battlegroup Lithuania	2017	East	Battalion
NATO eFP Battlegroup Latvia	2017	East	Battalion
NATO eFP Battlegroup Estonia	2017	East	Battalion
Multinational Division North East	2017	East	Division
Multinational Division North	2019	East	Division
Multinational Division Center	2021	East	Division
Multinational Corps South-East	2021	East	Corps
NATO eFP Battlegroup Bulgaria	2022	East	Battalion
NATO eFP Battlegroup Slovakia	2022	East	Battalion
NATO eFP Battlegroup Romania	2022	East	Battalion
NATO eFP Battlegroup Hungary	2022	East	Battalion

Source: the author

It may sound paradoxical at first, but since the 1990s multinational structures have also increasingly emerged within national frameworks. Particularly noteworthy here is the mutual subordination of units of the German and Netherlands armed forces. In the year 2016, the Dutch 43rd Mechanized Brigade, comprising approximately 3,000 soldiers, was integrated into the 1st Armored Division of the Bundeswehr (German armed forces). Simultaneously, German Tank Battalion 414, which also includes Dutch personnel, was placed under the command of this Dutch brigade.[27] Another case of multinational cooperation within a national framework is the employment of foreign military personnel in a national headquarters. The Baltic Maritime Component Command (BMCC), for example, is the national headquarters of the German armed forces. Yet, military

[27] Hagen Ruppelt, "Deutsch-niederländisches Panzerbataillon 414. Praxistest bei der NATO-Mission in Litauen bestanden," *Europäische Sicherheit und Technik* 2022, no. 7 (2022).

personnel of associated nations make up more than 25 percent of its peacetime personnel.[28]

Multinational Processes

The provision of military capabilities encompasses a wide array of activities, spanning doctrine development, organisational structuring, training and education, or military procurement. [29] The subsequent section focuses on defence planning, procurement, military education and training, and military exercises, shedding light on how European states collaborate within these pivotal capability areas.

Defence planning is a central element, which guarantees that military organisations possess the right capabilities to fulfill their missions. Multinational cooperation permeates the defence planning of European states, which is harmonised through steering processes in NATO and the EU. NATO conducts defence planning using the cyclic NATO Defence Planning Process. [30] At the outset, NATO defense ministers determine the military tasks to be tackled by the Alliance. The NATO Defence Policy and Planning Committee (DPPC) then translates these tasks into capability requirements for the armed forces. NATO distributes the individual requirements among the member states. Ideally, member states then implement these planning goals.[31] Every two years, the DPPC reviews the progress made by NATO member states. The EU's planning instrument known as the Headline Goal Process (HLGP) is a similar, albeit less binding process. [32] Through the utilisation of the NDPP (and to a certain extent the HLGP), European states have forged multinational defence planning mechanisms, aimed

[28] See https://www.bundeswehr.de/resource/blob/5218404/a6a5ad4353a45a725ab32fc14c1a1b93/broschuere-deu-marfor-eng-data.pdf (last accessed on 10August 2023).

[29] e.g. NATO Allied Command Transformation, *What is Transformation? An introduction to Allied Command Transformation* (Norfolk: Allied Command Transformation, Transformation Network Branch, 2015).

[30] Alexander Mattelaer, "Preparing NATO for the next defence-planning cycle," *The RUSI journal* 159, no. 3 (2014).

[31] Jordan Becker and Robert Bell, "Defense planning in the fog of peace: the transatlantic currency conversion conundrum," *European Security* 29, no. 2 (2020).

[32] Sven Biscop, *EU and NATO Strategy. A Compass, a Concept, and a Concordat*, Egmont Institute (2021); Sten Rynning, "Why Not NATO? Military Planning in the European Union," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 26, no. 1 (2003).

at harmonising their military capabilities, mitigating redundant efforts, and ensuring an efficient and comprehensive range of capabilities.

In the realm of defence procurement, Europe witnessed the inception of numerous collaborative ventures already during the Cold War, primarily focusing on larger-scale military assets like military aircraft.[33] Since the 1990s, novel mechanisms of cooperation have emerged. One such mechanism involves pooling selected military capabilities, allowing participating nations to share resources within a multinational framework, thereby coordinating their distribution efficiently. A prominent illustration of this is NATO's Strategic Airlift Capability (SAC), as part of which Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, and the US have jointly procured and currently deploy three Boeing C17 aircraft.[34] In contrast, NATO's Framework Nations Concept (FNC), introduced by Germany in 2014, embodies a concept of division of labour rather than pooling. Within this framework, a nation with a diverse array of military capabilities acts as the cornerstone, bolstering capability development for smaller partner nations by serving as an essential military pillar of a capability cluster. Smaller partners, in turn, contribute specialised resources to this cluster.[35] Presently, framework nations encompass Germany, the United Kingdom, and Italy.[36]

There is a multitude of cooperation formats in the military education and training dimension. During the Cold War, national education and training centres began welcoming military students of allied armed forces. An instance illustrating this is the training of European jet pilots at Sheppard Air Force Base in the US. This initiative began

[33] Frequently, such collaborations encountered challenges like cost overruns and time delays, primarily stemming from the complexities of multinational cooperation involving numerous stakeholders. An illustrative case is the development of the Multi-Role Combat Aircraft Tornado W. B. Walker, "The multi-role combat aircraft (MRCA): a case study in European collaboration," *Research Policy* 2, no. 4 (1974).

[34] Vasilescu Cezar, "Strategic Airlift Capability. From Theory to Practice," *Journal of Defense Resources Management* 2, no. 2 (2011)..

[35] Claudia Major and Christian Mölling, *The Framework Nations Concept. Germany's Contribution to a Capable European Defence*, SWP Comment 2014/C 52, (Berlin: SWP, 2014).

[36] Tormod Heier, "Britain's Joint Expeditionary Force: A Force of Friends?," in *The United Kingdom's Defence After Brexit: Britain's Alliances, Coalitions, and Partnerships*, ed. Rob Johnson and Janne Haaland Matlary (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2019); Diego A. Ruiz Palmer, *The Framework Nations' Concept and NATO: Game-Changer for a New Strategic Era (Research Paper No. 132)* (Rome: NATO Defense College, 2016).

in 1978 with the establishment of the Euro-NATO Joint Jet Pilot Training Program (EN-JJPT) by 13 participating states.[37]

Europe has also witnessed the emergence of several multinational institutions focused on military training and education, indicative of a trend towards the internationalisation of military education and training efforts.[38] These institutions include the NATO Defense College (1951), the NATO Communications and Information Systems School (1956), the NATO School (1975), the George C. Marshall Center (1993), the Baltic Defence College (1997), and the European Security and Defence College (2005). In addition, nearly 30 Centres of Excellence (COE) have emerged over the past two decades, each focusing on specific military areas such as air operations, explosive ordnance disposal, and military engineering. These expert institutions, often comprising multinational collaborations, not only contribute to doctrine development and lesson learning but also offer education and training opportunities.[39]

Military exercises stand as a pivotal process in preparing armed forces for deployments, primarily aimed at providing rigorous training and practical experience for executing procedures, and testing concepts, doctrines, and methodologies, while concurrently forging interoperability among participating units.[40] During the Cold War, the European continent bore witness to the frequent occurrence of expansive multinational NATO military maneuvers and strategic exercises, complemented by a multitude of national exercises. However, with the changing strategic landscape in the post-Cold War era, not only did NATO's exercise activity decrease but there was also a shift in focus. Exercises were redirected to the battalion level, and scenarios evolved from

[37] George Karavantos, "NATO's Texan training," *Combat Aircraft Journal* 22, no. 4 (2021).

[38] Academies and schools indeed constitute process *structures*. In the context of this article, they function as indicators of heightened cooperation within the education and training process dimension. Further insights into the establishment of multinational training cooperation in Europe could be gained through the examination of the evolution of multinational training courses, participant mobility, and the number of graduates.

[39] NATO, *2020 COE Catalogue* (Norfolk: Supreme Allied Commander Transformation, 2020); Marian Corbe, *NATO centres of excellence: a new organisational model and vehicle for multinational knowledge exchange (Dissertation)* (Hamburg: Helmut-Schmidt-Universität, 2018).

[40] Beatrice Heuser, "Reflections on the Purposes, Benefits and Pitfalls of Military Exercises," in *Military Exercises: Political Messaging and Strategic Impact*, ed. Beatrice Heuser, Tormod Heier, and Guillaume Lasconjarias (Rom: NATO Defense College, 2018), p. 9.

conventional battles against major adversaries to more specialised contexts such as counter-insurgency.[41]

As the military engagement in Afghanistan receded, NATO defence ministers agreed in 2013 to revitalise the NATO exercise program to uphold interoperability among member states.[42] A significant impetus emerged the subsequent year, following Russia's assertive actions in Ukraine, compelling NATO's leaders at the Wales summit to further ramp up exercise activities, thereby reaffirming solidarity among NATO Allies in Central and Eastern Europe.[43] Consequently, a series of high-profile exercises based on collective defence scenarios were conducted to underscore the collective commitment and resolve of NATO nations.[44]

Multinational Activities

The realm of multinational activities comprises the third distinct category that delineates the landscape of multinational cooperation. Guided by national politics and strategic circumstances, armed forces may assume a diverse array of roles.[45] In the European context, military organisations are primarily mandated by their respective governments to fulfill three core functions: defence and deterrence, crisis management, and engagement in humanitarian operations and disaster relief. Notably, multinational cooperation also plays a significant role in facilitating these activities.

In the realm of defence and deterrence, two areas of European cooperation stand out: nuclear sharing and air defence. The US has stationed up to 150 airborne tactical nuclear weapons in Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and Turkey as part of a

[41] Beatrice Heuser and Diego A. Ruiz Palmer, "Introduction," in *Military Exercises: Political Messaging and Strategic Impact*, ed. Beatrice Heuser, Tormod Heier, and Guillaume Lasconjarias (Rom: NATO Defense College, 2018), pp. 4-6.

[42] NATO, *The Secretary General's Report 2013* (Brussels: NATO Public Diplomacy Division, 2014).

[43] NATO, *Wales Summit Declaration. Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Wales 05 Sep. 2014* (Brussels, 2014).

[44] For example, the large-scale multinational NATO exercise Trident Juncture 2018 involved around 50,000 military personnel. See Watling, "NATO's Trident Juncture 2018 Exercise: Political Theatre with a Purpose."

[45] Timothy Edmunds, "What are armed forces for? The changing nature of military roles in Europe," *International Affairs* 82, no. 6 (2006).

nuclear-sharing arrangement.[46] Not only do these countries host the weapons, with the exception of Turkey they also provide dedicated combat aircraft capable of delivering the nuclear bombs. Furthermore, seven other NATO states, namely Denmark, Greece, Norway, Poland, Romania, the Czech Republic, and Hungary, are capable of escorting operations and missions aimed at suppressing enemy air defence under the nuclear sharing policy.

Air defence involves the use of air, ground, or sea-based weapon systems to counter threats from the air, such as enemy aircraft and missiles. Within the framework of NATO, member states collectively carry out the air defence of the European NATO territory.[47] A well-known example is Baltic air policing. Initially conceived in 2004 as a temporary arrangement, designed to provide air defence support for the Baltic states, who had just joined NATO, until they established their own capabilities, this mission was formalised into a permanent commitment in 2012.[48] In response to Russia's assertive actions in Ukraine in 2014, Baltic air policing underwent intensification and geographic expansion as an integral component of NATO's reassurance measures.[49]

Engagement in international military operations is another important task of European armed forces. Since the conclusion of the Cold War, European nations have actively participated in around 200 international operations.[50] As depicted in Table 2.2, the first transformative shift occurred already during the Cold War when European states transitioned from unilateral military operations towards collaborative endeavours in the 1970s, either joining multinational coalitions or operating within the framework of the

[46] See Alexander Mattelaer, *Articulating the logic of nuclear-sharing*, Security Policy Briefs, (Brussels: Egmont Institute, 2019). While the weapons remain under US custody, allied members participating in the Nuclear Planning Group (NPG) collectively decide about potential nuclear missions. See Weaver, *NATO in Contemporary Times*, p. 23.

[47] Friederike C. Hartung, *Ein Dach über Europa: Politische Symbolik und militärische Relevanz der deutschen bodengebundenen Luftverteidigung 1990 bis 2014*, (Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2022).

[48] Martin Scharenborg and Ramon Wenink, "Baltic Guardians," *Air International* 88, no. 4 (2015).

[49] https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_132685.htm (last accessed on 10 August 2023)

[50] This number is based on a dataset compiled by the author for a research project on multinational cooperation in Europe. The Database comprises all military operations since 1945 in which at least one European state has been involved by deploying military forces. Main sources were the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (https://ucdp.uu.se/) and the database of the Arbeitsgemeinschaft Kriegsursachenforschung (https://www.wiso.uni-hamburg.de/fachbereich-sowi/professuren/jakobeit/forschung/akuf/kriegearchiv.html) (both last accessed 10 August 2023).

United Nations (UN). However, the 1990s marked a pivotal turning point in the evolution of military operations. The post-Cold War period saw a substantial surge in NATO-led initiatives, with the Alliance assuming a central role in conflict management and resolution. Furthermore, the (WEU)/EU category highlights the growing impact of the Western European Union (WEU) and subsequently the European Union (EU) in contributing to peacekeeping and conflict resolution. Interestingly, the past decade has witnessed a noticeable rise in unilateral operations, attributed partly to France's enhanced military engagement in Africa and the individual roles of various European states in the War against the Islamic State. In summary, Table 2.2 demonstrates that multinational cooperation became a prominent hallmark of European states' military operations after the end of the Cold War.

Table 2.2 Military Operations by European States (1945-2019)

Operation Framework	1945-49	1950-59	1960-69	1970-70	1980-89	1990-99	2000-09	2010-19
Uni-national	4	11	13	8	5	5	5	13
Military Coalition	2	2	3	4	3	11	7	3
NATO	-	-	-	-	-	12	12	12
(WEU)/EU	-	-	-	-	-	(6)	9	11
UN	2	4	7	6	10	44	29	23

Source: the author

While European military cooperation in defence, deterrence, and international operations has increased significantly, the trend toward cooperation is somewhat less pronounced in the realm of humanitarian aid and disaster relief. NATO has progressively refined its mechanisms for the coordination of disaster relief efforts since the 1950s, culminating in the establishment of the Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre (EADRCC) in 1998.[51] Notably, the EADRCC has managed and coordinated over 70 disaster relief operations within and beyond Europe.[52] However, in scenarios where

[51] Francesco P. Palmeri, "The Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Capability," *NATO's nations and partners for peace* 2000, no. 1 (2000).

[52] For an overview of EADRCC operations see: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_117901.htm.

military assets become essential for disaster relief operations, military organizations continue to operate within the framework of their respective national structures.

In conclusion, a notable trend toward intensified multinational cooperation in Europe has become increasingly evident since the 1990s. It is also becoming clear that the realm of military cooperation extends beyond the conventional boundaries acknowledged by military sociology and security studies, encompassing a notably broader array of multinational structures, processes, and activities as summarised in Table 2.3. One might be tempted to criticise the use of Easton's model as too simple. However, in the realm of multinational cooperation, where the categorisation of complex interactions among various armed forces has remained an uncharted territory, simplicity can indeed be a virtue. Easton's model offers an intuitive foundation as it allows researchers, policymakers, and practitioners to quickly grasp the fundamental components of multinational cooperation, and also provides them with a common language.

Table 2.3 Areas of Military Cooperation in Europe

Military Structures	Military Processes	Military Activities
Planning and command structures of NATO and EU Multinational units Multinational features of national structures	Defence planning Acquisition and procurement Training and Education Military exercises (…)	Defence and deterrence International operations Humanitarian aid and disaster response

Source: the author

Towards Explaining Multinational Cooperation

Discerning 3 Phases of Military Cooperation in Europe

Within the realm of European military cooperation, three phases have emerged since the 1990s, each characterised by unique patterns of both quantity and quality of

collaborative endeavours.[53] This chapter embarks on an examination of these phases, delving into illustrative case specifics to unveil their nuances and significance in the evolution of multinational cooperation in Europe. The first phase (1990 to circa 2004) witnessed a surge in the establishment of multinational units, and an upswing in international operations. In the following phase (circa 2005 to 2013) the tempo of cooperation was more moderate, albeit accompanied by a distinct shift: While fewer multinational units emerged, the commitment of European states to foreign missions reached an apex. This phase exemplified a delicate equilibrium between scaled-back unit formation and intensified participation in international operations, underscoring the multifaceted nature of military cooperation. The third phase (since 2014) has borne witness to a renaissance in the establishment of multinational units, new initiatives of collaborative capability development, and heightened exercise activities, signalling a renewed drive towards military cohesion in Europe.

This chapter embarks on an exploration aimed at revealing the motivations and underlying rationale driving European multinational cooperation. At its core, the decision-making process for military cooperation originates from the realm of politics, where strategic imperatives and political considerations converge. As stated earlier, multinational cooperation ultimately is part of defence cooperation. Yet, in the case of multinational cooperation, the military organisation itself also emerges as a potent institutional player, driven by its unique interests and ambitions. Notably, multinational cooperation emerges as a strategic pathway navigated by armed forces, effectively ensuring the survival of their organisational structures.

Focussing on military structures, processes, and activities in each of the three phases the following sections aim to synthesise and categorise the diverse array of arguments that surfaced during the genesis of multinational arrangements in Europe, leveraging existing research and official documents. It is important to note that the aim is not to fully explain the emergence of multinational formats but rather to take the initial

[53] These phases were derived inductively, primarily based on observations of fluctuations in the development of structures, processes, and activities. It is important to acknowledge that while these phases provide a framework for understanding the evolution of European military cooperation, the delineation is not rigid and multinational developments may overlap.

steps towards such an explanation. To accomplish this, the motives are broadly categorised into strategic, political, and organisational interests.

Phase 1 (1990 - 2004)

The first phase, spanning from 1990 to 2004, is characterised by a series of transformative events that set the stage for increased European multinational cooperation. The conclusion of the Cold War conflict, the accession of Central and Eastern European states to NATO and the EU, and widespread force reductions across Europe marked a significant turning point. Simultaneously, the Balkans became a focal point of conflict, prompting the participation of numerous European states in international crisis management operations. The culmination of this phase saw the engagement of several European nations in major military operations beyond European borders, including Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003).

In the structural dimension, phase 1 was marked by the downsizing of NATO's command structure and a significant uptick in the establishment of multinational force structures. Between 1990 and 2004, 21 multinational military units were established in Europe, including the formation of eight multinational corps (see Table 2.1). The European Union developed its own security and defence policy in 1999, leading to the creation of essential military planning structures, such as the EU Military Staff.[54] Turning to military processes, there was a noticeable decrease in the frequency and scope of multinational military exercises. However, there was a notable upsurge in collaborative education and training endeavours during this phase, examples including the establishment of the George C. Marshall Center in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany, in 1993, and the Baltic Defense College in Tartu, Estonia, in 1999. These institutions played a pivotal role in fostering military expertise and cross-national collaboration. In addition, European countries were notably engaged in 104 international missions, not only highlighting a commitment to collective security at the level of security policy but also a commitment to multinational cooperation at the operational level.

[54] See Cologne European Council Declaration in Maartje Rutten, ed., *From St. Malo to Nice. European Defence: core documents (Volume I)*, Chaillot Papers no. 47 (Paris: Institute for Security Studies of the Western European Union, 2001), p. 41.

One significant motivation during the first phase was the utilisation of multinational structures to symbolise political unity among participating nations. The Eurocorps serves as a prime illustration, officially described as an *important impetus for further progress in the European unification process* by the German Federal Ministry of Defense.[55] Similarly, the Franco-German Brigade, a component of the Eurocorps, was subscribed to a signal function and hailed as a model for European armed forces.[56] Apparently, the brigade was oriented towards the (non-military) goal of achieving German-French integration.

Especially noteworthy in this context is the following quote by Daniel Austin, who was an expert on Baltic States' issues at the NATO headquarters at the time, regarding BALTBAT, a battalion established by the Baltic states Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania in the early 1990s: "(…) BALTBAT is really a multinational effort designed for United Nations peacekeeping missions and to demonstrate good neighbourliness in the region. It is not a battalion for the purpose of defending the Baltic states and certainly not the embryonic stage of any army. It is a multinational effort of symbolic and political importance, otherwise BALTBAT is militarily useless."[57]

In a similar way, an integration motive served as a modified argument for political cohesion, aiming to bring together both *old* NATO members and new or aspiring members within multinational units. For instance, the Multinational Corps Northeast, based in Szczecin, Poland, gained recognition as the "Integration Corps."[58] It played a crucial role in acclimatising Polish military personnel to NATO doctrine and professional ethos.

Moreover, the strategic intent to showcase political cohesion through military cooperation was evident in multinational exercises. Multinational exercises underscore a

[55] Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, *Das deutsche Heer. Sicherheit durch Multinationalität* (Bonn: Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, Inspekteur des Heeres (FüH III 1), 1995)., transl. by the auth; see also Durell-Young, *Multinational land formations in NATO : reforming practices and structures*, p. 35.

[56] Paul Klein and Ekkehard Lippert, *Die Deutsch-Französische Brigade als Beispiel für die militärische Integration Europas*, SOWI-Arbeitspapiere (Nr. 53), (Strausberg: Sozialwissenschaftliches Institut der Bundeswehr, 1991), p. 2.

[57] Daniel Austin, *NATO Expansion and the Baltic States* (Sandhurst: Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, 1999), p.1.

[58] Martin Wróbel, "Das Integrationskorps," *Österreichische Militärische Zeitschrift* 39, no. 1 (2001).

shared will to cooperate and promote transparency among participating nations.[59] Evidence suggests that this dynamic extended to exercises such as the US-led maritime series Baltic Operations in 1993, involving non-NATO and former adversary states such as Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and even Russia, at the invitation of NATO.[60]

Another compelling motive was the preservation of organisational structures. Multinational cooperation emerged as a means of protecting military entities that were facing potential suspension or dissolution due to reduced defence budgets. The effect was twofold: integration into multinational frameworks provided a route for national structures to endure, and established multinational entities were often shielded from subsequent national armed forces reforms. This exemption stemmed from the complexity of dismantling multinational headquarters and addressing resulting gaps, necessitating significant political effort. Many well-known multinational units today trace their origins to repurposed military structures. For example, the British I Corps stationed in Germany evolved into the Allied Command Europe Rapid Reaction Corps, while the Headquarters Allied Land Forces Schleswig-Holstein and Jutland formed the nucleus of the Multinational Corps Northeast[61]. The concept of multinational cooperation, as Ruiz Palmer aptly observed, acted as a "stroke of genius" at that time as it sustained military structures amid widespread force reductions across Europe.[62] Particularly, the setup of multinational land formations helped to preserve army structures, which were more severely affected by force reductions than naval and air force structures.[63] However, Belgian-Dutch naval cooperation suggests that the motive of organisational survival was not limited to the land forces.[64]

[59] Heuser, "Reflections on the Purposes, Benefits and Pitfalls of Military Exercises," p. 19.

[60] Ryan W. French and Peter Dombrowski, "Exercise BALTOPS: Reassurance and Deterrence in a Contested Littoral," in *Military Exercises: Political Messaging and Strategic Impact*, ed. Beatrice Heuser, Tormod Heier, and Guillaume Lasconjarias (Rom: NATO Defense College, 2018), p. 197.

[61] John R. Deni, *Alliance management and maintenance: restructuring NATO for the 21st century* (Aldershot; Burlington: Ashgate, 2007), pp. 37, 50; Durell-Young, *Multinational land formations in NATO: reforming practices and structures*.

[62] Ruiz Palmer, *The Framework Nations' Concept and NATO: Game-Changer for a New Strategic Era (Research Paper No. 132)*, p. 9.

[63] Ina Kraft, "Germany," in *The Handbook of European Defence Policies and Armed Forces*, ed. Hugo Meijer and Marco Wyss (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), p. 66.

[64] Tom Sauer, "Deep cooperation by Belgian defence: absorbing the impact of declining defence budgets on national capabilities," *Defence Studies* 15, no. 1 (2015).

Phase 2 (2005 - 2013)

In phase 2, the security policy landscape was defined by military operations beyond Europe, sparking an animated discourse about military burden-sharing within Europe. This discourse ultimately shifted the security policy focus from threats to the enhancement of capabilities. Military transformation, a technology-focused military modernisation programme that originated in the US, became a defining motor for change in many European armed forces, with the overarching goal of bolstering operational effectiveness.[65]

Between 2005 and 2013, the establishment of three land formations coincided with the dissolution of six existing formations (see Table 2.1). During this phase, the emphasis of multinational efforts shifted away from structures and instead focused on activities. Numerous European nations participated in major international military campaigns, notably in Afghanistan and Iraq. However, cooperation in international operations did not seem to align with a strategic or operational agenda, as it often appeared to impede strategic and operational objectives, given challenges like national caveats that hindered effective mission execution.[66] Political motives took precedence as the underlying drivers for cooperation during this second phase. The formation of international coalitions not only bolstered legal and societal acceptance of military endeavours[67] but also served as a political expression of solidarity. Research on the Polish involvement in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan suggests that Poland's coalition participation was underpinned by a desire to demonstrate solidarity with the US and strengthen transatlantic cohesion rather than serve its own strategic interests in the Middle East.[68] Central and Eastern European

[65] Terry Terriff, Frans P. B. Osinga, and Theo Farrell, *A transformation gap? : American innovations and European military change* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2010).

[66] Stephen M. Saideman and David P. Auerswald, "Comparing Caveats: Understanding the Sources of National Restrictions upon NATO's Mission in Afghanistan," *International Studies Quarterly* 56, no. 1 (2012); Regeena Kingsley, *Fighting against allies: an examination of "national caveats" within the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) campaign in Afghanistan & their impact on ISAF operational effectiveness, 2002-2012 (Doctoral Thesis)* (Palmerston North; Wellington; Auckland: Massey University, 2014, 2014).

[67] Peter Kent Forster and Stephen J. Cimbala, *The US, NATO and military burden-sharing*, Cass contemporary security studies series, (London; New York: Frank Cass, 2005); Sarah E. Kreps, *Coalitions of convenience : United States military interventions after the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[68] Agnieszka Bienczyk-Missala, "Poland's foreign security policy: main directions," *Revista UNISCI*, no. 40 (2016); See also Bolesław Balcerowicz, "Iraq 2003-2010: A Disastrous War of Choice," in *Western military*

states were preoccupied with their own security policy interests, including safeguarding against Russian aggression, which necessitated close ties with the US.[69] Thus, in some cases, engagement in multinational operations emerged as a comprehensive security policy package.[70]

Multinational cooperation also emerged as a catalyst for defence modernisation. The NATO Response Force (NRF), operational since 2006, appeared as a conduit for military transformation. Unlike a standing force, the NRF features units assigned by NATO member states for 12-month intervals. Participation in the NRF compelled national armed forces to modernise, as it necessitated certifying numerous military units according to NATO standards.[71] Thus, collaboration within the NRF enabled NATO member states to generate operational forces for an alliance deeply engaged in a series of crisis management operations. It was thus a vehicle to improve burden sharing in the transatlantic defence community.

The matter of burden-sharing also played a pivotal role in driving a series of advancements in the process domain of military capabilities. In 2008 and 2009, the EU and NATO unveiled cyclical capability planning processes with the objective of streamlining capability development procedures within and among their respective member states.[72] Also concurrently, both the EU and NATO introduced innovative strategies to leverage existing capabilities, as witnessed through the inception of the

interventions after the Cold War : evaluating the wars of the west, ed. Marek Madej (London; New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group, 2019), p. p. 115.

[69] Marek Madej, "Afghanistan: The longest war, the greatest fiasco?," in *Western military interventions after the Cold War : evaluating the wars of the west*, ed. Marek Madej (London; New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group, 2019), p. 79.

[70] Atsushi Tago, "Why do states join US-led military coalitions?: The compulsion of the coalition's missions and legitimacy," *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* 7, no. 2 (2007): p. 185, Marina E. Henke, "Buying Allies: Payment Practices in Multilateral Military Coalition-Building," *International Security* 43, no. 4 (2019).

[71] Ringsmose and Rynning, "The NATO Response Force: A qualified failure no more?"; Jens Ringsmose, "NATO's Response Force. Finally getting it right?," *European security* 18, no. 3 (2009).

[72] It is worth noting that in the context of NATO, the NATO Defence Planning Process simply represented an augmentation of pre-existing planning procedures. In reality, defense planning had been a central aspect of the allied defense effort since the 1950s. See Holger Pfeiffer, "Defence and Force Planning in Historical Perspective: NATO as a Case Study," *Baltic Security & Defence Review* pp. 103-120 (2008); Dragoș Ilinca, "Structuring the NATO defence planning process during the Cold War," *Annals Series on Military Sciences* 14, no. 1 (2022).

Pooling and Sharing Initiative (2010, EU) and the Smart Defence Initiative (2012, NATO).[73]

Phase 3 (since 2014)

The emergence of phase 3 was marked by a rapid response to the Russian annexation of Crimea and the ensuing conflict in Eastern Ukraine in 2014. NATO swiftly implemented a series of measures aimed at reassurance and adaptation, triggering a significant surge in multinational collaboration across Europe.[74] Commencing in 2015, a notable transformation unfolded within the Eastern Alliance territory with the establishment of 15 new multinational units (see Table 2.1). Moreover, between 2015 and 2017 an additional eight NATO Force Integration Units, designed to facilitate the seamless movement of Allied forces within their respective host nations, took root in Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Hungary, and Slovakia.[75] A particularly noteworthy outcome of this resurgence was the revival of the division level through the establishment starting with the Multinational Division Southeast in Romania in 2015.

The strategic recalibration prompted NATO to partially revert the flexibilisation and functionalisation of its command structure. Notably, the Multinational Corps Northeast was granted permanent command over the newly formed Multinational Division North East and Multinational Division North. Tasked with commanding and controlling four eFP battlegroups and several National Home Defense Brigade headquarters, the Multinational Corps Northeast also assumed responsibility for six

[73] Claudia Major and Christian Mölling, "Synergies between EU and NATO? Specialisation as the litmus test for 'Smart Defence' and 'Pooling and Sharing'," *note n°12/13 (La Fondation pour la Recherche Stratégique)* (2013).

[74] NATO, *Madrid Summit Declaration. Issued by NATO Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Madrid 29 June 2022* (2022); NATO, *Brussels Summit Declaration. Issued by NATO Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Brussels 11-12 July 2018* (2018); NATO, *Warsaw Summit Communiqué. Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Warsaw 8-9 July 2016* (Brussels, 2016); NATO, *Wales Summit Declaration*.

[75] Weaver, *NATO in Contemporary Times*, pp. 87-88.

NATO Force Integration Units.[76] Remarkably, in the wake of the Russian aggression, the once low-readiness integration corps, which primarily served a political function, evolved into the role of the "NATO Custodian for Regional Security"[77].

This period also bore witness to advancements in military processes, highlighted by novel capability initiatives like the Framework Nations Concept (FNC) and PESCO. The FNC, prominently introduced at the NATO Wales Summit in 2014, aimed to bolster the defence capabilities of smaller European states, propelling them forward in the realm of military prowess. In 2017, 25 member states of the EU also decided to embark on enhanced cooperation in the field of military capability development through Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), as envisioned in the 2009 EU Treaty of Lisbon.[78] The PESCO states intend to invest 35 percent of their procurement expenditure in cooperation with other EU states. In addition, a European Defence Fund (EDF) was established to finance collaborative capability research and development projects.[79]

Furthermore, as part of NATO's efforts to reassure its members, there was a notable increase in exercise activities. Consequently, the Eastern European Alliance territory became the stage for more frequent large-scale military live exercises. These exercises were designed to encompass high-intensity combat scenarios against symmetrical adversaries, as well as emphasise military mobility in the region.[80]

During phase 3, shifts in multinational activities were also distinctly evident. The military operation in Afghanistan underwent significant downsizing in 2014, transitioning from the International Security Assistance Force to Operation Resolute Support. Meanwhile, European nations intensified their defensive measures on the

[76] Jack Watling and Sean MacFarland, "The Future of the NATO Corps," *RUSI Occasional Paper*, no. 237 (2021).

[77] DtA HQ MNC NE, "HQ MNC NE als 'NATO Custodian for Regional Security'," *Zu gleich: Zeitschrift der Artillerietruppe und der Streitkräftegemeinsamen Taktischen Feuerunterstützung* 2017, no. 2 (2017).

[78] Council Decision (CFSP) 2017/2315 of 11 December 2017, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32017D2315&from=EN (last accessed on August 10, 2023); Steven Blockmans and Dylan Macchiarini Crosson, "PESCO: A Force for Positive Integration in EU Defence," *European Foreign Affairs Review* 26, no. Special Isse (2021).

[79] European Commission, *EU Budget for the Future (Fact Sheet)*, (Brussels: European Commission, 2018).

[80] NATO, *Key NATO and Allied exercises in 2018 (Fact Sheet)* (Brussels: NATO Public Diplomacy Division (PDD) – Press & Media Section, 2018); NATO, *Key NATO and Allied exercises (Fact Sheet)* (Brussels: NATO Public Diplomacy Division (PDD) – Press & Media Section, 2015).

continent. NATO expanded and extended its air policing activities in the Baltic states and set up allied air policing in Bulgaria and Romania.[81]

Contrary to PPhases 1 and 2, the predominant motive driving multinational cooperation in Phase 3 has been strategic in nature: the enhancement of Europe's deterrence capability. Deterrence, a strategy aimed at influencing the decision-making of potential adversaries by highlighting the anticipated high costs and losses associated with any hostile action, took center stage. In response to Russia's aggression against Ukraine in 2014, European nations strategically deployed smaller multinational units, the eFP battlegroups, in proximity to the Russian border, effectively creating a defensive 'tripwire' in the Eastern part of the Alliance. Following Russia's escalation of conflict in Ukraine in 2022, the tripwire strategy gave way to a more robust defence approach, prompting a heightened NATO presence in the Eastern Alliance territory.[82]

From an analytical perspective, the deterrence motive bears a dual nature of intrigue. While it significantly shapes the power dynamics between military adversaries, deterrence measures simultaneously carry substantial political weight. Not only do they convey a message of potential military response in the face of aggression, but they also underscore the unity and coherence of participating states before both internal and external audiences.

Summarising Comments

In this article, a taxonomy has been presented with the intention of providing a nuanced understanding of multinational cooperation. This taxonomy has been applied to navigate the intricate expanse of European multinational initiatives. Furthermore, the article has traced the trajectory of multinational cooperation across three distinct phases in Europe.

The introductory section has highlighted the inherent limitations within both military studies and security studies in adequately encompassing the multifaceted

[81] Daniele Faccioli and Giovanni Colla, "Bulgaria prepares for the bear," *Air Forces Monthly* 2021, no. 2 (2021); Liviu Dnistran, "Black Sea Defenders. Enhanced Air Policing: Romania," *Air Forces Monthly*, no. 9 (2017).

[82] Emily Holland, "Strategic Competition and basing in Central and Eastern Europe," *Brookings Policy Brief*, (2023).

dimensions of multinational cooperation. Particularly, questions surrounding the genesis of multinational cooperation (as distinct from defence cooperation) remain largely unanswered. In response, this article has succinctly delved into the motives that underlie the establishment of multinational frameworks during the delineated phases. A culmination of these insights is presented in Table 4.1, where the empirically derived phases of European multinational evolution are harmonised with the theoretically derived taxonomy of multinational cooperation, highlighting the principal drivers of cooperation within each phase.

Table 4.1 Phases of Multinational Development in Europe Since 1990

Period	Multinational Developments	Political and Strategic Factors	Motives for Cooperation
Phase 1 1990-2005	**Structures** - Increase of multinational units - development of EU planning structures **Processes** - Increase of multinational training and education - Establishment of European Defence Agency **Activities** - Increase of multinational operations	- End of the Cold War conflict (1990) - Europe-wide reduction in the number of armed forces - NATO's eastward expansion (1999, 2004) - Wars in the Balkans (1991-1999), Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003)	- Political interests: symbolism of cohesion and integration - Organisational interests: survival of organisational structures
Phase 2 2005-2013	**Structures** - Decrease of multinational units **Processes** - Pooling and sharing initiatives - EU & NATO capability planning processes **Activities** - Increase of multinational operations	- NATO Transformation - War in Afghanistan	- Political interests: symbolism of cohesion

Phase 3 since 2014	**Structures** - Increase of multinational units **Processes** - Framework Nations Concept - PESCO - Increase of multinational exercises **Activities** - Decrease of multinational operations - Increase of multinational defence and deterrence	- Russia's aggression in Eastern Ukraine (2014) - Russia's war against Ukraine (2022)	- Political interests: symbolism of cohesion - Strategic Interests: deterrence and defence

Source: the author

Further investigation is needed to better understand when and how defence cooperation leads to military cooperation. For example, organisational preservation as a motive for cooperation points to a principal-agent problem structure in European multinational cooperation.[83] Deeper exploration is warranted to fully assess the actual influence of military organisations on decision-making processes pertaining to multinational cooperation. This involves the examination of the interplay between strategic, political, and organisational interests in shaping the formation of multinational military initiatives.

[83] Darren G. Hawkins, *Delegation and agency in international organizations*, Political economy of institutions and decisions, (Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006); James Burk, "Theories of Democratic Civil-Military Relations," *Armed Forces & Society* 29, no. 1 (2002); Ryan C. Hendrickson, "NATO's Secretary General and the Use of Force: Willy Claes and the Air Strikes in Bosnia," *Armed Forces & Society* 31, no. 1 (2004/10/01 2004); Peter Feaver, *Armed servants : agency, oversight, and civil-military relations* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003).

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