The paradox of the persistence of the European Battlegroups
- A study of tensions between integration and disintegration within the European Union

Ellen Lidegran
Acknowledgements

I would like to extend my gratitude to...

- My partner, family and friends for unremitting support.
- My fellow students and supervisor for valuable insights and knowledge.
- The respondents of this study for your time and participation.

- Without you, this work would not have been possible.
Abstract

In 1998/99 the European Union (EU) acknowledged a need for an autonomous military action force. In 2007 the European Battlegroups (EUBG) were ready for ‘rapid reaction’. Today, in the year of 2016, they have still never been deployed. – How come the EUBG still exist, even though they have never been used? By an approach of explaining outcome process tracing, this study address – How can we understand the persistence of EUBG within the European Union in terms of integration and disintegration of regional organisations? By the developed theoretical framework of Security Communities (SC), it is argued that the EU, as a ‘tight, pluralistic, mature security community’ possibly cannot revise the renowned EUBG; disintegrate the Union, due to external and internal pressures and integrated features. This is shown by a method of a triangulated approach of surveys, interviews and textual analysis. The research concludes that deep-rooted integration and strong loyalty prevent members, of a regional organisation, to express contingent dissatisfaction and/or leave cooperation.

Key words: EU, EUBG, security community, disintegration, integration, regional organisations, development, loyalty, voice structuring, exit
Table of Contents

Abbreviations

1. INTRODUCTION ............................................................................................................................................. 1
   1.1 PURPOSE .................................................................................................................................................. 1
   1.2 THE CASE OF THE EUROPEAN BATTLEGROUPS .............................................................................. 2
   1.3 RESEARCH QUESTION, CONTRIBUTION AND HYPOTHESIS ....................................................... 3

2. THEORETICAL DESIGN AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK ................................................................. 4
   2.1 SECURITY COMMUNITIES ....................................................................................................................... 4
   2.2 INTEGRATION VS. DISINTEGRATION .................................................................................................... 6
   2.3 REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND SECURITY COMMUNITIES .......................................................... 9

3. RESEARCH DESIGN ...................................................................................................................................... 11
   3.1 CASE SELECTION ................................................................................................................................... 11
   3.2 RETRODUCTIVE RESEARCH STRATEGY .............................................................................................. 11
   3.3 A TRIANGULATED PROCESS TRACING APPROACH ......................................................................... 12
       3.3.1 Qualitative Content Textual Analysis ............................................................................................. 13
       3.3.2 Surveys and Interviews .................................................................................................................. 14
   3.4 STRATEGY OF DATA COLLECTION .................................................................................................... 14
       3.4.1 Operationalization .......................................................................................................................... 15
   3.5 LIMITATIONS ......................................................................................................................................... 16

4. THE CSFP OF THE EU .............................................................................................................................. 18
   4.1 THE COMMON SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY OF THE EUROPEAN UNION ......................... 18
       4.1.1 The European Security Strategy ................................................................................................... 19
   4.2 THE EU, THE UN AND NATO ............................................................................................................. 20
   4.3 THE EUROPEAN BATTLEGROUPS ........................................................................................................ 21
       4.3.1 Deployment .................................................................................................................................. 22
       4.3.2 The ATHENA mechanism ............................................................................................................ 24

5. AN EMPIRICAL VIEW ............................................................................................................................... 25
   5.1 WHAT SEEM TO BE THE PROBLEM OF THE EUBG? ......................................................................... 25
   5.2 DISINTEGRATION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION ............................................................................... 28

6. AN EU VIEW .................................................................................................................................................. 30
   6.1 WHY ARE NOT THE EUBG DEPLOYED, REVISED? ............................................................................ 30
   6.2 THE PERSISTENCE OF THE EUBG ....................................................................................................... 32

7. A THEORETICAL EXPLANATION ........................................................................................................... 38
   7.1 AN ASCENDANT SECURITY COMMUNITY? ........................................................................................... 38
   7.2 A POSSIBILITY OF DISINTEGRATION? .................................................................................................... 39
   7.3 THE MERGE; AN ASPECT OF LOYALTY .............................................................................................. 40

8. CONCLUSION .............................................................................................................................................. 41

References

Appendix 1. Questionnaires and Replies

Appendix 2.1 Analysis Chart; The Theoretical Merge

Appendix 2.2 Analysis Chart
### Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BGCC</td>
<td>Battlegroup Co-ordination Conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFSP</td>
<td>Common Foreign and Security Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMC</td>
<td>Crisis Management Concept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSDP</td>
<td>Common Security and Defence Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDCC</td>
<td>Europe Direct Contact Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EEAS</td>
<td>External European Action Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESS</td>
<td>European Security Strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESDP</td>
<td>European Security and Defence Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EUBG</td>
<td>European Battlegroups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EUMC</td>
<td>EU Military Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FN</td>
<td>Framework Nation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOC</td>
<td>Full Operational Capability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IOC</td>
<td>Initial Operational Capability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IR</td>
<td>International Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS</td>
<td>Member States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSO</td>
<td>Military Strategic Options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NATO</td>
<td>North Atlantic Treaty Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NBG</td>
<td>Nordic Battlegroups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NRF</td>
<td>NATO Response Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OSCE</td>
<td>Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RDC</td>
<td>Rapid Deployment Capability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PfP</td>
<td>NATO’s Partnership for Peace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSC</td>
<td>Political and Security Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSR</td>
<td>Security Sector Reform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC</td>
<td>Security Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEU</td>
<td>Western European Union</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Intentionally left blank
1. Introduction

The ‘new regionalism’ is a truly world-wide phenomenon, that is taking place in more areas of the world than ever before. In times of extended globalisation and growing and changing security threats, the development of regional organisations has come to play an increasingly greater role on the international arena. Enhanced regional integration has resulted in deeper transnational bonds, relationships and cooperation between states. Theories within regional development claim that the ‘end state’ of a regional organisation is a mode of a ‘mature community’, which have outgrown to be characterised by institutions on a trans- and/or supranational level, where a sense of security mechanism is enabled.

Today, the European Union faces growing criticism throughout the migrant crisis, a descending but still current euro crisis and a possibility of that one of the largest contributors to the Union might leave. From post World War II, until today, the regional organisation of the EU is known for its growing interdependency, expanding borders and deepened transnational cooperation within several policy areas between the member states (MS) of the Union. The integration process is acknowledged to be a schoolbook example of regional development. Regional development in turn, is referred as institution building within a programme and/or strategy. The scope of this research acknowledge a lack of perspectives, both within theories and literature, that deals with ‘reversed development’ – a spill-back in integration; disintegration.

The increasing euro scepticism questions if the tight, pluralistic, mature security community of the European Union, may face a (major) step-back? The field of International Relations (IR) and scholars of EU studies are criticised to neglect the question of how the EU might disintegrate. Theories of European integration and overviews of EU mention it briefly, but mostly do not bring the question at all.

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this research is to address the scope of what factors that are due to that integrated institutions and elements still persist, despite that they are not used as planned. The study will investigate the issues of disintegration within the European Union, and further implications of the EU and the European Union. The study will be a critical analysis of the EU and its policies, and an evaluation of the implications of the UK leaving the EU on the European Union.

References:

show how both external and internal pressure plays an important role of how a regional organisation is perceived. By studying the ‘non-use’ and persistence of the European Battlegroups the theory of security communities will be developed by a neo-functional approach of the component of disintegration. The overarching ambition of the research is – 

How can we understand the persistence of EUBG within the European Union in terms of integration and disintegration of regional organisations?

1.2 The case of the European Battlegroups

During the 1990s, the world community faced terrible actions against human kind; the genocides in former Yugoslavia and Rwanda. Within the EU, a lack of capability to act on the international arena in order to prevent such crimes was acknowledged. A new security paradigm grew within the framework of EU Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), which laid a foundation of the development of the European Battlegroups.

Setting up a Battlegroup package is an opportunity for enhanced military cooperation between Member States. This improves mutual knowledge of each other’s capabilities with regard to military means and political decision-making.

The EUBG has been standing ready for ‘rapid reaction’ since 1st of January 2007. However, they have never been deployed. Most of the previous research regarding the EUBG brings the discussion of why the battlegroups have not been used during the nine years of readiness. Findings engender the understanding of the many factors that are to be considered when and if, the EUBG are to be deployed. For example, the great financial expend and the extensive decision-making process. Some claim that the need for consensus within the Union is the key issue of not using the troops. Further, the differences between the MS ‘strategic cultures’, such as the perception of war, armies, defence and security are said to not – and will never, be similar. Another explanatory perspective is the view of the ‘normative EU’ and its use of soft power, which possible could not use military forces as a tool in crisis management. There are also those who question the very existence of the EUBG; that, within the CSDP, it may have been a step too far?
1.3 Research Question, Contribution and Hypothesis

Due to the overarching ambition, this study aims to extend the discussion even deeper by further examining the puzzling research question of – *How come the EUBG still exist, even though they have never been used?* In the framework of the research and method, the question of – *Why the battlegroups has not been used* is also taken into account. These questions’ will further contribute to the concatenated research question of – *Is the persistence of the battlegroups a sign of that European Union cannot disintegrate?*

This study deeper investigates the non-use and in addition; *the persistence* of the EUBG within an understanding of regional development. The research aims to contribute to how tensions between integration and disintegration are interpreted and shown, within a regional organisation in a globalised world with changing security threats. The conclusions thus are generalizable to other regional organisations, however, in the scope of the method of explaining outcome process tracing, this is not the primary focus.

The EU could not possible wind up the battlegroups without further ado. That would be an acknowledgement of the many different opinions of the EU Council. Also, the fundaments of the CSDP, together with the Petersberg tasks, are of the character of humanitarian values, peacekeeping and peace-making. Such values are of the core basis of the foundation and developments of the EU in the first place back in 1950s. The following hypothesis are thus that the EUBG cannot be removed from the EU CDSP, first due to that the credibility of the Union, as a powerful region, would decrease externally. Second there is a large-scale risk of loosing internal loyalty, reliability and trust to the Union. Third, due to that the concept of the EUBG has developed a forum where the MS’ benefit the transparency of military means, capabilities and assets within the Union.  

---

16 *4. Research Design*

17 *2.2 A Triangulated Process Tracing Approach*
2. Theoretical Design and Conceptual Framework

States are not the only actors in international politics, and international organisations are increasingly active in asserting their own goals, which main aimly to develop transnational linkages, to form regionalised identities.\(^\text{18}\)

Theories within regional development are often of classic IR theories, such as realism, liberalism (historical liberalism) and/or constructivism.\(^\text{19}\) However, when approaching the research problem of disintegration disputes within a regional organisation (EU) by addressing a certain institutional elemental issue, (EUBG) there is a need of investigation on a different level, where the theoretical framework enables the study to incorporate factors of non-state-centric character. The research does not focus on the realistic view of balance of power or the between-state interaction or a federalist organisation. Instead the EU, as a regional organisation, is acknowledged as a part of the theoretical framework, not proven and/or tested if so. Moreover, the theory of security communities of Adler and Barnett’s set the foundation in the research, developed with an additional component of features of disintegration.

2.1 Security Communities

Membership of a security community frames who we think ‘we’ are in terms of the political boundaries of the community, the values that ‘we’ cherish and the resources and strategies we use to appropriate them, and the way that ‘they’ are doing, and whether or not ‘they’ constitute a problem.\(^\text{20}\)

The scholar of security communities was developed in the 1950s by the social- and political scientist Karl Deutsch. The SC concept is closely related to collective security where Deutsch found that when integrated enough, MS of a SC are highly unlikely to physically fight each other, but will find other solutions to interstate disputes.\(^\text{21}\)

Deutsch acknowledged the difference of the amalgamated and the pluralistic SC. The first is a description of a merge of “two or more previously independent units into a single larger unit, with some type of common government after amalgamation”\(^\text{22}\). The USA is perceived as an amalgamated SC, where the states have unified into a single government that is composed of a merge of formerly independent governments.\(^\text{23}\) Within the pluralistic version, the MS still maintain their sovereignty, however, the degree of deep integration result in that all differences are settled in short of war.\(^\text{24}\) The theory further defines clusters’ of states of where it is very unlikely that war will occur due to close bonds of common interests,

\(^\text{18}\) Adler & Barnett (1998) p.16f
\(^\text{21}\) Adler & Barnett (1998) p.6
\(^\text{23}\) Deutsch et al. (1957)
\(^\text{24}\) Adler & Barnett (1998) p.3
mutual sympathy and trust. Adler and Barnett redefined the concept of security communities in 1998, by adding the notions of shared values, identities and meanings, which matters a great deal in the development of interdependence and relationships. Furthermore, the different types of security communities was developed; loosely and tightly coupled. In the loose SC, states expects nothing more than a peaceful change, whereas in the tight; states are more demanding to mutual aid and a form of supranational governance. Adler and Barnett also identify the developmental steps towards becoming a SC; from nascent, to ascendant and lastly, mature. The range stretches from nascent basic understanding of the peaceful change and common coordination of increased mutual security. To the mature community, that also characterise transnational, and/or supranational, institutions, elements and security mechanisms. Moreover, when a state is accomplished within a mature SC, the behaviour becomes a habit among the MS’ and institutions.

The concept definition of a ‘Community’ is presented as a phenomenon that is acknowledged by three characteristics. The first two, already mentioned; shared values, identities and meanings and the extended interdependence and strong relationships. In addition, the third characteristic is the perception of great reciprocity and long-term interest of solidarity of the members of the community.

Member states seek legitimacy for their actions from the community by justifying their actions in terms of the community’s norms.

[...] international society is characterised by an increasing number of transversal relations through which elements of civil societies housed in different states relate to each other in ways that make viewing those relations through the lens of boundaries between states unhelpful.

Bellamy stress the notion that security communities not only can be measured in terms of fear and/or respect between the members, but rather of shared values, languages and a deepened transnational institutionalisation. Thus, the study of security communities allows a broad focus of processes, transactions and interactions between states. Moreover, the mix of idealism and realism offers a view of both taking account for the sole interest of a state, but in the same time also the meaning of developed transnational institutions, as well as possibilities of peaceful changes and new political organisations.

26 Adler & Barnett (1998)
27 Bellamy (2004) p.8f
30 Bellamy (2004) p.81
31 Bellamy (2004)
2.2 Integration Vs. Disintegration

The common understanding of integration and disintegration involves first; ‘merging and bringing things together’, and on the latter; a ‘spilt into parts’ or when ‘things cease to exist’.33 In this research the concepts of both integration and disintegration are defined within the school of neo-functionalism, in relation to regional development. Hence the concepts of regions, regional development, integration, institutionalisation and disintegration are outlined below.

The European Union is defined to be an international regional organisation, that is admissible to act on the global arena. According to T.V. Paul, regions are defined as follows;

Cluster of states that are proximate to each other and interconnected in spatial, cultural and ideational terms in a significant and distinguishable manner.34

The region of the EU has evolved through a manner of regional development, where a deepened form of integration has appeared within the Union. Hence the following definition of regional development;

An empirical process that leads to patterns of cooperation, integration, complementarity and convergence within a particular cross-national geographic space.35

To bare in mind is thus that only because there is a lack of on-going processes of development, does not align to a ‘negative’ situation, (as in development antonyms; regression, return and recession36). Hence, there is also a possibility of positive or negative status quo, and/or a development that does not necessarily connect to further integration. This research acknowledges regional development to be related to a ‘betterment’ and ‘improvement’ of a certain situation, institution, cooperation, relation etc. Betterment and improvement in regional development within the EU in turn correlates to how MS voice their dissatisfaction.37 If the change (development) results in less dissatisfaction on member state level; the improvement is a fact.

In regard to European integration, functionalism was one of the first theoretical approaches to address the phenomena. However, Vollaard underlines the importance of not get biased by the ‘state-fixation’ when speaking of integration and disintegration (functionalism, (neo)-realism and federalism). Hence neo-functionalism offers a possibility of ‘climbing the ladder of abstraction’, by ‘Haas-ian’ terms; adding the notion of how to

33 Vocabulary Dictionary; Disintegration Online: 2016-05-12
34 Paul ed. (2012) p.4
35 Hettne & Söderbaum (2000)
36 Merriam-Webster Thesaurus Dictionary; Development Online: 2016-05-12
37 Vollaard (2008) p.17
understand disintegration by the MS’ rate of *loyalty*, *voice structuring* and possible *exits* in regards to a regional organisation.

The approach of neo-functionalism within regional development is that the dynamic is explained by internal pressure, inherent tensions of various institutions that push different needs into ‘spill-over’ effects.³⁸ Cooperation in some policy areas will increase the likelihood of extended integration in neighbouring areas.³⁹ Haas define the neo-functionalist view of European Integration as;

> Political integration is the process whereby political actors in several distinct national settings are persuaded to shift their loyalties, expectations and political activities toward a new center, whose institutions possess or demand jurisdiction over the pre-existing national states.⁴⁰

Sweet and Sandholtz claim that European integration is due to three main features; transnational exchange, supranational organisations and intergovernmental rule-making. This is due to that first, communications and transactions across MS borders demands a platform of supranational institutions, which in turn needs rules and regulations. The process of institutionalisation follows as the rules are set, and thus also a notion of integration.⁴¹ This conceptualisation of institutionalisation gives an understanding of the issues of possible disintegration spins; once an institution is set, it is problematic (or, - according to Sweet and Sandholtz, even impossible) to revise. Further in connection to the study, the EUBG will be referred to as an element of a bigger institutionalised scope of the CSDP and CSFP.

Disintegration however, is not as easy defined as ‘reversed integration’. Possible shifts may turn not only ‘back to the state’, but to other trans-national or regional organisations.⁴² In that sense, the definition of disintegration is a process of what outcome gives a decrease in trans-national activity and interdependence in a certain area. Hence, in the long run; a less need of supranational rules and common institutions between MS.⁴³ In addition, Lindberg and Scheingold claim disintegration to eventuate:

> […] to a situation in which there is a withdrawal from a set of specific obligations. Rules are no longer regularly enforced or obeyed. The scope of Community action and its institutional capacities decrease.⁴⁴

---

³⁹ Paul (1993); Lindberg, Leon & Scheingold, Stuart (1971) Regional Integration Harvard University Press: Cambridge
⁴² Vollaard (2008)
⁴³ Ibid p. 10
In neo-functional terms, the concept of disintegration is interpreted to refer to a kind of ‘spill-back’ within regional development. Put simply; MS could drop of the process of integration, choose not to be a part of it, or there is a spill-back effect when institutions gets removed or are reformed.

Spill-back occurs when member states no longer want to deal with a certain policy issue at the European level. Due to changed or diminished interest in certain policy issues, previous interest coalitions among member states shift, undermining the deals and commitments underlying European rules.

The spill-back effect is understood to be a result of two key factors, presented in the literature; voice structuring and exits. Hirschman argues that it is of great importance to understand the magnitude of satisfied members of an organisation in order to aim for further development and integration. If this is not the case, the members will use the mechanisms of voice; express dissatisfaction and/or exits; physical, institutional or behaviour moves. Hirschman defines voice as;

Any attempt at all to change, rather than to escape from, an objectionable state of affairs, whether through individual or collective petition to the management directly in charge, through appeal to a higher authority with the intention of forcing a change in management, or through various types of actions and protests, including those that are meant to mobilize public opinion.

The concept of voice structuring refers to a process of making “individual voice to achieve systematic relevance”. There is thus a choice between voice and exit. Moreover, this is interpreted to correlate to the MS’ degree of loyalty to the organisation. And vice versa, this is also claimed to be expressed in terms of how authorities ‘foster loyalty’ within an organisation; enforcing and generating loyalty through high fees for entering and/or leaving. The concept of exit is in this sense defined as a member that finds other solutions to not be a part of the development, institution or organisation as a whole.

In sum, the phenomenon of voice structuring and exits are a result of decline in/a lack of loyalty to/within the organisation. Loyalty is in turn represented by the public (Europeans),

---

46 Ibid p.7
48 Ibid p. 30
50 Rokkan (1999) p.99f
51 Ibid
thus the degree of integration and cooperation somewhat depends on the satisfaction of the individual.\textsuperscript{54}

\section*{2.3 Regional Development and Security Communities}

\textit{The European Union as a ‘Tightly coupled, Pluralistic Mature Security Community’}

The research acknowledges the EU to have developed to be a tight, pluralistic mature SC in regard to the definitions’ above. Due to the Union’s complex web of relationships and institutions, it is claimed that this is the only region that “unproblematically can be labelled as a security community”\textsuperscript{55}. In the aftermath of the World War II, the Union first began its cooperation due to common notion of how peace and conflict should be handled inside its borders, as a first step of a nascent SC.\textsuperscript{56}

\[\ldots\] the existence of common values as the wellspring for close security cooperation, and, conversely, anticipate that security cooperation will deepen those shared values and transnational linkages. Security is becoming a condition and quality of these communities; who is inside, and who is outside, matters the most.\textsuperscript{57}

The EU is to be seen as a well-developed SC, due to the unlikeliness of internal large-scale use of violence, which in turn depends on the transnational boundaries and coexistence between the MS.

In the beginning of the 1990s, the ascendant SC broadened and deepened its institutionalised network within the Union due to new treaties and expanded cooperation.\textsuperscript{58} In 1998, the EU was perceived to have developed ‘beyond a pact of states, governments and interstate bargain’, to instead be a mixture of multidimensional, quasi-federal polity and supranational governance.\textsuperscript{59} Further, the mature SC underlines the importance of the features’ of a ‘post-sovereign system’ of collective transnational security institutions.\textsuperscript{60} The common identity of being a ‘European’, the shared values, strong relationships, mutual trust, an institutionalised network of cooperation and collective learning builds the notion of the tight bonds of pluralistic sovereign nations, as well as the acknowledgement of being a mature SC.\textsuperscript{61}

\textsuperscript{54} 3.4.1 Operationalization; Appendix 2.2 Analysis Chart; 4.2 Disintegration of the European Union
\textsuperscript{55} Bellamy (2004) p.63
\textsuperscript{56} See phase 1: Nascent Security Community in Adler & Barnett (1998) p.50
\textsuperscript{57} Adler & Barnett (1998) p.4
\textsuperscript{58} See phase 2: Ascendant Security Community in Adler & Barnett (1998) p.53
\textsuperscript{60} Adler & Barnett (1998) p.17;30f
\textsuperscript{61} See phase 3: Mature Security Community in Adler & Barnett (1998) p.55; Jean Monnet was one of the key figures of the idea of creating the vision of a common European identity after the Second World War in Bellamy (2004) p.66
For Monnet, European integration and the construction of a common European identity was not about balancing or trading sovereignty and national identity but about creating a new type of political community.62

The public support, in terms of deep-rooted democratic values that contributes to a strong trust and loyalty among MS within a community, is important.63 The intergovernmental institutions within the EU clearly show tight and high level of common willingness of close and comprehensive cooperation. Power, structure and knowledge are claimed to play a central role of the development and strength of the SC. This is perceived as a part of the integration process within a community. Moreover, the theoretical framework of security communities thus fits well when incorporating the concepts of disintegration.

The tightly coupled, mature SC puts great value to the indicators’ of ‘changes in military planning’ and enhanced degree of ‘cooperative and collective security’.64 The notion of the access to power is interpreted to be a magnet of ‘weaker’ states joining, in order to take part of the provided security of the more powerful ‘strong’ states.65 Thus in connection to the research; within the framework of EU Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and CSDP the EUBG shows the high level of military integration and the joint desire of pooling military resources.

64 Adler & Barnett (1998) p.56
3. Research Design

The research is executed through an *explaining outcome process tracing* approach in order to investigate the causes of a particular outcome; - Why do the EUBG still exist, despite the fact that they never have been used? In order to conduct the research, the process tracing is triangulated with analytical parts of both textual, as well as survey-, and interview character, where official EU documents, secondary sources and brief statements from MS regarding the issue at question are at focus.66

3.1 Case Selection

The selection of case is motivated by four defining criteria. First, the European Union is one of the most regionalised international organisations in the sense that cooperation, coordination and transparency among MS permeate the Union and its forthcoming challenges. EU is referred to be “an outlier in the population of international organisations”67 hence the theory of SC aligns well with the regional development that is seen within the EU. Thus the case selection, together with the theory makes a good match.68

Second, incorporating the research question(s) and component of the EUBG, the study takes a view of how to understand the regional development in terms of having an element, that is not used (- and maybe not even planned to be either). Due to the hypothesis of credibility and reliability of a regional organisation, this view will be applicable of how to understand other regional organisations and their inter- and/or disintegration.

Third, the case of investigating the EUBG as an element of the EU, there are not only scientific interests. The societal significance is only partly based on the massive financial inputs from the taxpayers of the Union. Further, both the national and international shifting security situation demands an understanding of how the regional military cooperation within the EU appears.

Fourth, the increase of critical happenings and rise in crisis within the EU, e.g. new threats of terrorism, migration flows and national political right-shifts, has brought the question of a spill-back of European integration (disintegration) to its very tip.

3.2 Retroductive Research Strategy

There is retroductive reasoning throughout the study where the understanding of the problem at question is incorporated of how to describe the context and discover underlying mechanisms.69 The retroductive approach grows from both inductive and deductive reasoning with an added focus of how to understand the structures and mechanisms of possible

---

66 4.3 Data Collection
68 See EU as a mature Security Community
explanations of observed regularities. The logic discovery is based on a cycle process, rather than a linear, in order to allow the research to use subtle realist ontology and an epistemology of neo-realism and constructionism.\textsuperscript{70} In regard to the overarching research question and theory, the aim is to reach a possible explaining approach of how issues of disintegration of a regional organisation are to be understood. The theoretical framework set the structure of how the EU and its EUBG are understood in connection to the discussion mentioned above. Thus the retroductive research strategy, together with the process tracing, enables the ideal foundation of how to use theory and reality in symbiosis to understand the research problem at hand.

3.3 A Triangulated Process Tracing Approach

Process tracing have had a somewhat increased popularity among qualitative political science during recent years.\textsuperscript{71} The method of explaining outcome process tracing enables the researcher to work backwards in order to reach out for diagnostic evidence that will build descriptive explanations to the outcome of issue.\textsuperscript{72} The method is thus used due to its contribution of both describing political and social phenomena, as well as the evaluating mechanisms.\textsuperscript{73} The study recognise the definition of process tracing as “an analytic tool for drawing descriptive and causal inferences from diagnostic pieces of evidence - often understood as part of a temporal sequence of events or phenomena”\textsuperscript{74}. The branch of explaining outcome is, in contrast to its two other variants (theory-testing and theory building), aiming to “craft a minimally sufficient explanation of the case”\textsuperscript{75}.

The study takes abreast of being criticised due to a somewhat lack of equifinality.\textsuperscript{76} However, due to the theory development approach within the framework of process tracing, together with the case-centric focus, the study will contribute with making “decisive contributions to diverse research objectives, including identifying novel political and social phenomena and systematically describing them”\textsuperscript{77}. Moreover, the ambition of the research is not to provide an explanation for difficulties of not using institutional elements in all cases of regional organisations, rather this study makes a contribution of a wider understanding of the issues of EU disintegration by using the non-use and persistence of the EUBG.\textsuperscript{78}

The hypothesis, formulated within the process tracing approach, is thus that the dependent variable $Y$, is the fact that the EUBG still exist, (despite that they never have been used). This is mainly due to three aspects; one external and two internal. First; $X_1$, the

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{70} Blaikie (2014) p.82f
\bibitem{3} The three variants of process tracing methods and their uses and limitations
\bibitem{5} Collier (2011)
\bibitem{6} Ibid
\bibitem{7} Beach & Pedersen (2013) p.169
\bibitem{8} Checkel, Jeffrey T. “Mechanisms, process, and the study of international institutions” in Bennet & Checkel (2015) p.74
\bibitem{9} Collier (2011) p.624
\bibitem{10} Beach & Pedersen (2013) p.156;159
\end{thebibliography}
regional organisation, EU, one of the worlds biggest global actors, doesn’t allow a spill-back in its exhaustive integrated network. A disintegrating move would harm the Unions’ credibility within the international arena. Second; X₂, the Unions’ internal loyalty, reliability and trust in the supranational institutions’ would decrease, which could escalate the MS to seek for other options of cooperation (exits), outside the EU. Third; X₃, even though the EUBG has not been used in its full scale, the MS acknowledge the value of having the institutional set-up as a platform for military cooperation and transnational coordination of material, troops and resources. This implication of the variable X₃ is thus perceived to exceed the major financial requirements of the contributing nations’. In sum, X₁, X₂ and X₃ independently affect the outcome of why Y is accurate. Furthermore, the variables are interpreted to be a part of the mechanism of how difficulties of regional disintegration are expressed.

The reliability is connected to the accuracy of the result and analysis, thus also in accordance with how the textual analysis, surveys and interviews are executed in terms of design and categorisation. The reliability is connected to the accuracy of the result and analysis, thus also in accordance with how the textual analysis, surveys and interviews are executed in terms of design and categorisation. Verification and the goal of reaching a valid scientific knowledge are integrated throughout the research process with control of credibility, plausibility and reliability. Furthermore, the observations made are thus connected both latent and manifest due to the research question and in correlation to the variables and phenomena that are of interest in the study.

### 3.3.1 Qualitative Content Textual Analysis

The key features of qualitative textual analysis entail an approach of careful reading, as well as an understanding of the context where the text takes its expression. This method enables the researcher to read actively, ask questions to the text and identify how the chain of arguments guides the reader, as well as investigate on what premises the conclusions are based on. Further, the method of “systematically clarify the thought of structure” underlines the importance of highlighting and makes the essential arguments in the text understandable, in relation to the research question. In studies that are of explaining outcome character, the preciseness is increased due to methodologically thinking of incorporating variables within the textual analysis. Thus textual analysis enhances the understanding of how the independent variables affect the dependent variable. In this sense, this technique allows the possibility to systematically bring order in the text, as an analytical tool, which further

---

80 Appendix 3. Analysis Chart; Appendix 4. Analysis Chart; The Theoretical Merge
81 Esaiasson et al. (2010) p.237
82 Esaiasson et al. (2010) p.238
83 Esaiasson et al. (2010) p.240
will evolve into developed and understandable conclusions. Furthermore, this aligns with the process tracing approach of the method as a whole.

### 3.3.2 Surveys and Interviews

One of the most common ways of gathering information within the scholar of social science is by questions and conversation. There are two main types of respondent investigations; surveys and interviews. Due to the character of this study, the addition of both oral and written investigation contributes with depth and understanding of the current situation, and how participants of a regional organisation (MS’ of the EU) view the issued research question. The surveys and talks are of the approach of a respondent investigation, where the focus is the aim, grade of standardisation, structure and dialog. Furthermore, the study does not aim at critically investigate how the different EU MS reflect upon the research question, rather the ‘floor is open for interpretation’ of both the surveys and interviews.

When dealing with interviews and surveys, there are some moral and ethical issues that need to be considered. In regard to that there are only a few interview respondents, it is important to recognise how to substantiate certain arguments in the result and analysis, so that no one that have been a part of the study is harmed or personally exposed. The gathered information is considered to be a representation of a MS within the EU; therefore it is not necessary to point out who said neither what, nor what position the respondent is representing for his/her country. During the data collection, (and especially in connection to the interviews) there has been an informed consent as well as an openness, respect and awareness of what topics and statements that was ‘off record’.

### 3.4 Strategy of Data Collection

The data collection within the textual part is based on second-source literature and articles, which entail discussions and investigations regarding the emergence, the use (non-use), persistence and coming future of the EUBG. The research turns to lap acknowledged social scientists, specialised in the EU, particularly within the area of EU CSFP and CSDP, as well as scholars within regional development that are linked to theories used in the study.

A survey was executed in order to gather statements, as answers to the research questions by representatives from MS of the Union. This was partly done in order to motivate a legitimate conclusion of the current discourse of the EUBG in the EU. The suitable representatives were authorities in close connection of representing national policy opinions and preferably in regards to the Ministry of Defence of each member state. Thus the questions were sent to each embassy representation in Sweden. The Europe Direct Contact Centre

---

84 Esaiasson et al. (2010) p.242
85 Esaiasson et al. (2010) p.258
86 Esaiasson et al. (2010) p.257
87 Appendix 1. Questionnaires and Replies
(EDCC) and the Swedish representation of the European Commission in Stockholm was also asked of a contribution, as appoint of view from the supranational level. Due to that Sweden has been a Framework Nation both in 2008 and in 2015; a special contact was made to the Operational Commander for the Nordic Battle Groups (NBG) during these two occasions. Also, the Top Coordinator of the EUBG in Brussels (2011-2015) has also given his view on the research question at hand. These meetings also contributed with widened and enhanced understanding of the EUBG and the actual practical work.

All contact was established through a first-hand email correspondence with the person, organisation or embassy at interest. The contact details of the embassies were gathered through their official websites of each member state of the EU in Stockholm. All were given the very same conditions of how to proceed with their answers, however, the response rate was differentiated were some answered in direct mail correspondence and some requested a second and a third mail to get to the correct respondent. The interviews were developed through a request of some of the respondents that preferred a meeting rather than a written responding answer.

In the outline of the survey and interviews, it was needed to incorporate both the question of why the EUBG never have been used and why they still exist. This is due to that the latter is a further elaboration of the first, and also, the first one is more receptive to discuss on an official basis, i.e. by support of economic, decision-making, consensus-factors etc. This is interpreted to be of positive character for the respondent to feel comfortable in their reply. In order to frame the interest of the respondent, a very brief introduction of the puzzling research question was given, however, the extent of the survey was also considered to be as short and uncomplicated as possible. It is acknowledged that the more simplicity, the greater the chances are to get as many answers as possible and thus, a significant data collection to the research as a whole.

3.4.1 Operationalization

In accordance with the formation of concepts, the operationalization of the theory of security communities is closely connected to the neo-functional perspective of regional development, integration and disintegration. However, it is acknowledged that disintegration is somewhat forgotten when speaking of regional development. In order to address the overarching ambition of – How can we understand the persistence of EUBG within the European Union in terms of integration and disintegration of regional organisations, the tool of analysis will be

88 A Framework Nation, FN, is the ‘lead nation’ in charge of the Operational Command
89 The reason why the contact was established with the offices in Stockholm is due to the distinguished positive Swedish reputation of the Swedish Defence University.
90 Appendix 1. Questionnaires and Replies
91 Appendix 1. Questionnaires and Replies
92 3. Empirical Foundation
93 2. Theoretical Design and Conceptual Framework
a merge and developed understanding of the theory of security communities, with an added incorporation of the key features in disintegration theory.94

3.5 Limitations
The generalizability of an explaining outcome process tracing approach is rather limited due to the case-centric focus.95 However, the aim of the study aligns with the method of providing a minimally sufficient explaining outcome of why the EUBG are kept.96 And further, in the bigger picture of the issues of disintegration within regional organisations. On the other hand, due to the case selection of the European Union and the extensive impact of the research problem, the aspects of not being able to generalise, are perceived to be minimal.

Many entry angels of this kind of study often includes other, more common IR theories, such as realism, liberalism or constructivism. However, aspects of this research; the issues of disintegration, the regional organisation as a SC and the common denominator that bind these together; the EUBG, builds an approach of a study that never has been executed before.

The conduct of the method of triangulation gives the research a wide spectrum and a cover for possible pitfalls. All respondent candidates were contacted within the same period, nevertheless, when working with surveys, there is a need to count for some loss. The statements gathered are representative for 19 of the MS of the EU. That is 68%, which is acknowledged to be a sufficient data sample in this study. Also in terms of the representation spread of geographical- and degree of development (economic prosperity, democratisation etc.).97

One must also consider the difference of a face-to-face meeting to a written survey-answer. The research could have been conducted solely through textual analysis and interviews. Nonetheless, it would have been needed to settle the meetings in great advance due to the working position of the respondents, and assumed full calendars. Some of the respondents were not even Swedish residents, which would have increased the difficulties of conducting such a study. The method of triangulated process tracing is considered to have proven its efficiency due to the different approaches of findings that each branch has contributed with. Another alternative could have been to incorporate a discourse analysis instead of textual analysis in order to connect the phenomenon of the persistence of the EUBG to the actual discourse of how political and social constructions are made in the EU. However, due to the hermeneutic feature in interpreting the material of the surveys and interviews, the textual analysis is considered as a sufficient and adequate complement.

94 Appendix 2.1 Analysis Chart: The Theoretical Merge
95 Beach & Pedersen (2013) p.159
96 Beach & Pedersen (2013) p.156; 4.1 Case Selection; 4.2 A Process Tracing Approach
97 Appendix 1. Questionnaires and Replies
Due to requested restrictions by the respondents, the interviews has not been recorded or transcribed. This could be identified as a negative aspect of the research due to a certain lack of inter-subjectivity. However, it was preferred to follow through with MS-requested meetings and visits, as well as the interviews with the Swedish NBG Commander and the Coordinator for the EUBG in Brussels, rather than to exclude their participation from the study. This aspect has been taken into close consideration during analysis and conclusion.
4. The CSFP of the EU

Regional development has brought supranational organisations to a level where the interdependence of MS within unions and organisations are deepened and extended. Politics, economy, trade and erased national borders bring states closer together and forms transnational boundaries throughout the whole spectra of cooperation, coordination trust and loyalty. Research within regional transformation has broadened widely during the past decade. This section outlines the emergence of the security, defence and military cooperation’s within the EU, as well as to external partners.

After the World War II, the European Coal and Steel Community, ECSC, was founded in order to bring peace and stability to the continent. Today, EU is one of the most distinguished regional organisations on the international arena. Alongside with the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), the United Nations (UN), the EU and its 28 MS play a part of the global foreign policy.

4.1 The Common Security and Defence Policy of the European Union

Since the treaty of Brussels in 1948, the EU has had a comprehensive approach towards a common defence policy. The Western European Union (WEU) was created as a defence alliance of ten MS, where the main purpose was to create a foundation of transnational military assistance, if one of the MS were to be attacked by external powers. This laid the foundation for the development of cooperation within European defence policy. However during the conflicts in the Balkans the EU acknowledged a need for enhanced conflict prevention and crisis management.

In line with the European Council meeting in Maastricht 1991, the CFSP was set in motion. In 1992, the Petersberg Tasks was integrated in the WEU Petersberg Declaration, composing the guidelines for how military EU forces were to be used; for peacekeeping, humanitarian and rescue tasks, conflict prevention and strengthening international security. However, there were not any combined joint forces to speak of during this agreement. The MS thus relied to the cooperation between the MS. In connection to the Treaty of the European Union (TEU) in 1993, the CFSP was included into the pillar structure. This was then spoken of as a first step “which might in time lead to a common defence”.

102 Howorth (2014) p.5
103 Article J.4 of the Maastricht Treaty in Kertunnen et al. (2005) p.6
The final move towards common policies within defence was laid out in 1997, in the Amsterdam Treaty, in accordance with the establishment of CSDP (formerly known as the European Security and Defence Policy, ESDP), and the position of the EU High Representative (HR). This was a big step in the integration process, since it brought the MS together in the framework of becoming a military actor, though consisting of sovereign states. The treaty of Lisbon in 2009 expanded the tasks of the Union further to become more of humanitarian rescue, conflict prevention, post-conflict stabilisation etc.

### 4.1.1 The European Security Strategy

[...] Security is a precondition for development, which in turn is essential for Europe’s own security.

In 2003 there was a cleavage within the EU due to the US-led invasion of Iraq. The identification of internal fragmentation led the way to the first common strategy of security issues on a EU-level. The European Security Strategy (ESS) was drafted by the first HR for the CFSP, and laid the EU strategy for the EU regarding the identification of threats and security issues, as well setting political and strategic objectives. The ESS was adopted in December of 2003 and provides the conceptual framework the CSDP, as well as outlining the difficulties of handling security threats alone, thus also underlined the great importance of a functional international cooperation and a united and active Union.

Over the last decade, no region of the world has been untouched by armed conflict [...] The increasing convergence of European interests and the strengthening of mutual solidarity of the EU makes us a more credible and effective actor. Europe should be ready to share in the responsibility for global security and in building a better world.

[...] to transform our militaries into more flexible, mobile forces and to enable them to address the new threats.

[...] there was a need for a roadmap, which would give a signal that the EU wished to be a credible independent security policy actor. After all, there was an obvious need among the member states to enhance their common security policy understanding as well as a common culture for crisis management. The European Security Strategy was created for these purposes.

---

104 Howorth (2007)  
105 Ortega (2004)  
107 In the document of ESS, five key tasks are identified; Terrorism, Proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), Regional conflicts, State failure and Organised crime.  
109 Ibid  
110 European Union External Action European Security Strategy Online: 2016-02-23  
111 Ibid  
112 Kertunnen et al. (2005) p.13
The implementation of the ESS was evaluated in 2008, in the *Report of the Implementation of the European Security Strategy: Providing Security in a Changing World*. The document emphasised the enduring validity and once again stressed the importance of “a more capable, more coherent and more active” Union on the international arena.113

### 4.2 The EU, the UN and NATO

In regard to international security cooperation’s, EU works closely together with the UN and NATO. Within the Plan of Action from 2012, the MS agreed to move towards a more reliable interlocking peace keeping mechanism with the United Nations.114 Thus it was discussed how to enhance EU CSDP in order to support the UN peacekeeping missions as well as the European External Action Service (EEAS).115 The UN has repeatedly requested increased contributions of European military capabilities for its missions. However, the trend rather appears to move towards bilateral cooperation’s among the MS, to answer these requests. Further, European countries contributed, individually to UN peacekeeping operations by 5667 troops in 2014.116

Out of the EUs’ 28 MS, 22 are also members of NATO. Out of the six remaining EU MS, four of them are part of NATO’s Partnership for Peace (PfP), which is a programme of bilateral cooperation between Euro-Atlantic partner countries and NATO. The outline of PfP allows country-individual settings of priorities, thus the purpose is to increase stability, strengthen security relationships and decrease threats to peace.117 In 1996 the WEU and NATO formed a cooperative relationship within the frame of the Berlin Agreement. In regards to the new pillar structure and formation of the EU CSDP, the ‘Berlin Plus Agreement’ was reached in 2003, which allows EU to make use of NATO planning support, capabilities and assets in EU-led crisis management operations.118 This important step was made after difficult negations and speculations regarding the EU-NATO relationship (considering the disagreements of the crisis in Iraq). This agreement is claimed to be of great magnitude for future autonomous EU operations.119

Debates concerning the different roles of the EU and NATO on the security arena not only comprise the many two-hatted MS, but also the many resemblances between the EUBG and the NRF, thus there are questions of unnecessary overlaps of resources.120

---

113 ESS, European Security Strategy (2008)
115 EU-upplysningen EU agerar i internationella organisationer Online 2016-05-11
118 European Union External Action *About CSDP – The Berlin Plus Agreement* Online: 2016-03-22
119 Kerstenen et al. (2007) p.7
The EUBG and NRF should be complementary and mutually reinforcing, with both providing a positive impetus for capability improvement.121

4.3 The European Battlegroups

Europe was already a prominent player in world politics, being a major donor of international aid and assistance and producing a large share of the world’s GDP. Still, regarding the capacity to affect military crises elsewhere, the EU and its individual member states lacked the necessary resources.122

The Battlegroup concept provides the EU with a specific tool in the range of rapid response capabilities, which contributes to make the EU more coherent, more active and more capable.123

The bloody wars and genocides in Yugoslavia and Rwanda was considered as an eye-opener to the leaders of the EU that despite being a salient international actor, when it comes to joint military forces, the EU had nothing to contribute. In late 1999, at the Helsinki Council Summit, the MS of the EU concluded of the need of a rapid reaction capacity124 of the Union.125 This in order to be able to answer to the Petersberg tasks. During the Franco-British summit meeting in February 2003, the need of this capacity was considered as a priority of the Union.126 In June 2003, the first EU-led operation was launched, on a request of the UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan. The main goal of Operation Artemis was to stabilise security conditions in the DRC in Africa. Artemis was seen as a success127 and in February of 2004, the UK, France and Germany formed a proposal of a EUBG concept128 where EU-led battlegroups could be deployed where needed, on short notice. The positive response of forming the battlegroups as a contribution to the development of the EU rapid response forces, resulted in the EU Military Staff to progress the EUBG concept and in 2007, some battlegroups was ready to be operational.129

They are considered to be ‘the minimum militarily effective, credible, rapidly deployable, coherent force package capable of stand-alone operations’.130

121 Kertunnen et al. (2007) p.15
122 Kertunnen et al. (2005) p.7
123 European Union External Action (2013) EU Battlegroups
124 Rapid reaction capacity; Defined as a military unit, ready to be deployed for rapid reaction on a short notice
130 Council of the European Union 2007, p.2 in Chappell p.422
4.3.1 Deployment

The deployability of the EUBG is either multi-nationally or unilaterally. Each battlegroup is combined of 1500 armed forces personnel and they should be sustainable in at least 30 days with a possible extension of maximum 120 days. The ‘standard’ EUBG are composed by a headquarters company, three infantry companies and corresponding personnel (mechanised infantry, combat support elements’ and combat service support elements’). This composition is due to the possibilities of independent action and the wide spectra of tasks that the battlegroups are made for. The rapid reaction answers to a schedule of 5-10 days after a EU decision of launching an operation.

The EUBG reached Initial Operational Capability (IOC) in January 2005, followed by Full Operational Capability (FOC) two years later. From January in 2007 the ambition for the EU was/has been to “have a capacity to undertake two concurrent single Battle-group-size rapid response operations, including the ability to launch both such operations nearly simultaneously”. Since the inaugural Military Capability Commitment Conference in 2004, the MS announce their contribution twice a year through Battlegroup Co-ordination Conferences (BGCC).

Within the frame of missions, the EUBG answers to the tasks in Article 17(2), as well as the ones identified in the ESS.

Table 1. EU Treaty and ESS tasks

<p>| |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Humanitarian and rescue tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peacekeeping tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peace-making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint disarmament operations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for third countries in combating terrorism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security Sector Reform (SSR), which would be part of a broader institution building</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

131 Lindström (2007)
134 Treaty of the European Union, the Petersberg Tasks; 5.1 The Common Security and Defence Policy of the European Union
135 4.1.1 European Security Strategy
To summarise, three categories of potential EUBG missions are acknowledged;  

**Table 2. Categories of EUBG missions**

- Bridging operations: in order to support troops already deployed
- Initial entry rapid response operations: due to the capability of rapid response, the EUBG can play the role of an initial entry force, prior to a larger follow-on force
- Stand-alone operations: when an operation of limited scale demands the rapid response force.

In order to deploy the EUBG there are three military and strategic steps that need to be considered in the planning process.

1. **Crisis Management Concept, CMC**

First, EU objectives for the operation must be set within the frame of a Crisis Management Concept, prepared by the HR and the Council General Secretariat in coordination with the European Commission. The EU Military Committee (EUMC), the Political and Security Committee (PSC) and the Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management evaluate the CMC, before it is suggested to the Council. When approved by the Council, the CMC lays the foundation for a EU Joint Action.

2. **Military Strategic Options, MSO**

Second, the EUMC and EU Military Staff develop different Military Strategic Options. These will outline the risks, force requirements, control and command structures. Also, if the operation entail explicit civilian dimensions, Civilian Strategic Options or Police Strategic options are developed separately. These will be evaluated by the PSC that in turn, will present the preferable option to the Council.

3. **Initiating Military Directive, IMD**

Finally, due to the MSO of choice, the EUMC is requested by the PSC to outline an Initiating Military Directive, as guidelines for the Operation Commander, thus this is the beginning of the process of operational planning, which in itself then contains further steps of planning.  

Due to the rapid reaction and standby feature of the EUBG, there are some phases that not need to be consolidated. For example, the MSO could be included in the CMC if the decision-making process was to be accelerated.

---

137 Lindström (2007) p.20
138 Lindström (2007) p.21
4.3.2 The ATHENA mechanism

ATHENA was set up in 2004 by the EU Council and is the financing mechanism that administers the common costs of EU military and defence operations. It is administered by a special committee, composed by representatives from the 26 of the 28 MS that contribute by financing means. The economic rate is based on Gross National Income scale for each member state.

Within the frame of ‘common costs’, ATHENA acknowledges specific financial rules regarding what is applicable within the mechanism. Some examples of financial support are transport, infrastructure, medical services, lodging, fuel etc.\(^{139}\) However, the mechanism only covers about 5-10% of the total expenditures in regard to the EUBG.\(^{140}\) Further, individual costs are solely financed by the contributing countries, where each member state pays for the preparations, personnel and equipment.

\(^{139}\) European Union External Action ATHENA Online: 2016-03-22
\(^{140}\) Gen Bengt Andersson, Interview 2016-05-16
5. An Empirical View

This empirical foundation will present a developed presentation of why the EUBG has not been used, as well as an overview of how European disintegration within regional development is understood of the scholars of international relations. This is done as a background to the research problem as a whole, to connect the case to the theories, as well as to substantiate further conclusions.

5.1 What seem to be the problem of the EUBG?

When problematizing the EUBG, the presented discourse mostly focus of why the battlegroups have not been used. As briefly discussed in the introduction, looking at the debate of the EUBG, the most mentioned factor is the lack of common interest among the MS; there is no consensus of when, where and how the EUBG should be deployed.

Therefore, member states must share common views regarding when (operational scenarios), where (location of EU operations) and how (multilateralism and the rule of law) the EU as an independent security actor uses force.

The Europeans are interpreted to be increasingly worried about security threats, especially in regard to terrorism and religious extremism. Keukeleire and MacNaughtan stress the limitation of how the EU is incapable of using its foreign policy tools in conflicts and crises, this despite pillar procedures’, institutional set-up and budgetary resources. They also underline the importance of member state-based consensus in political and operational support. However, this is not an easy task for the Union. Howorth and Chappell talk of the differences’ in military strategic cultures between the MS of the Union. Chappell also stress the divergence between the perception of when, where and how the elements, tools and mechanisms of CSDP should – and could be used. Both Chappell and Meyer discuss the problematic intergovernmental function of the policies of CSDP, thus it is up to the MS of the Union to decide how and when the concept of battlegroups should be deployed.

[...] the Battlegroups may be one step too far in the development of CSDP.
Bion et al. problematize the gap between political rhetoric and actions ‘on the ground’. They mention the missions’ of the EU CSDP as laboratory, in terms of meeting the ambitious, but also ambiguous character of the CSDP guidelines and documents.\textsuperscript{149}

The EUBG are not a cheap history. There are great financial costs of each member state to consider when contributing with troops, material, equipment and training, especially as a Framework Nation (FN). During the Swedish participating as a FN within the coalition of the NBG,\textsuperscript{150} in 2008, the Swedish government spent almost 900 millions of Swedish kronor, (approximately 100€) during 6 months of readiness.\textsuperscript{151} The biggest economic input is based on contributing MS’ own defence budgets, however there are expenditures on EU level as well.\textsuperscript{152}

Both practical and political issues challenge the use of the EUBG. In addition to factors mentioned above, practical challenges comprising the operational standards, certifications and training requirements are also an issue that is tricky to handle among the MS.\textsuperscript{153} There are many scholars that stress that the lengthy decision-making process does not coordinate to the ‘rapid response’ requirements of the EUBG.\textsuperscript{154} Neither seems the strategic concept and operational priorities align to the problematic issues of having independent MS contributing. Also, it is interpreted that the political will of deploying the EUBG was quite weak, already by the time they were developed.\textsuperscript{155}

\[\ldots\text{the first few years post-FOC will be vital to gauge whether or not the EUBG will become an active part of the ESDP crisis management toolbox.}\textsuperscript{156}\]

The observations above were in 2007, before the EUBG had reached their Full Operation Capability (FOC). However, the problematic aspects of the political, strategic and operational characteristics were assumed to be developed and adjusted during the first years of FOC. Other external factors were also considered of affecting the evolvement of the EUBG over time, such as conversion on the global security arena, together with national and international military transformations.\textsuperscript{157}

The first EU-led military operation in 2003, Operation Artemis in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), was seen as a success in the sense that EU proved its capability of act within the international theatre.\textsuperscript{158} However, Artemis also showed a lack of some key

\textsuperscript{149} Mérand (2008) & Grevi (2009) in Boin et al. (2013) p.76f
\textsuperscript{150} NBG, Nordic Battle Group is the Northern Countries contribution to the EUBG during 2008, 2011 and 2015
\textsuperscript{151} Gen Bengt Andersson, Interview 2016-05-16
\textsuperscript{152} 4.3.2 The ATHENA Mechanism
\textsuperscript{153} Lindström (2007) p.73
\textsuperscript{155} Lindström (2007) p.73
\textsuperscript{156} Lindström (2007) p.6f
\textsuperscript{157} Lindström (2007) p.73
\textsuperscript{158} Chappell (2009); Barcikowska (2013); Lindström (2007); Howorth (2007) p.234
rapid response capabilities that needed to be developed before reaching FOC. Barcikowska claim that the vision of actually deploying the EUGB, as a rapid reaction force, diminishes the longer the battlegroups only stand by.\textsuperscript{160}

Whereas militarily, Battle Groups have been “ready-to-go” for quite some time now, politically they are far from it. Yet, the longer EU Rapid Response remains a hypothesis, the more Europeans will fall short of their ambition to make a major contribution to global security.\textsuperscript{161}

Kertunnen et al. problematize the practical issues of the somewhat 2,500 tons of material, personnel and equipment that was transported by aircraft to the DRC during Artemis.\textsuperscript{162} Thus, the rapid deployment capability requires the access to so-called ‘oversized/outsized transport air-crafts’, something that is of limited access of the EU.\textsuperscript{163}

Some of the political-strategic challenges are mentioned to be the battlegroups many similarities the NATO Response Force (NRF). The possibility of overlapping in missions and operations are quite vast when the operation design of the NRF, and the illustrative scenarios of the EUBG both share the potential that is required for certain mission profiles.\textsuperscript{164} In 2013, Howorth brings the question of “what the EU CSDP really is”, in relation to the phase of limbo in the relation to NATO and the neighbouring areas of south and east. He acknowledges a power transition in the world and asks what the EU is aiming to accomplish in this transition in connection to the promotion and defending the EU values.\textsuperscript{165}

The first concerns method: do not generate grandiose schemes, but focus on pragmatic baby steps, preferably one at a time. The second has to do with vision: do not attempt to define a strategic objective because the EU could never agree on one. The third, as a consequence of the first two, addresses expectations management: do not anticipate any major steps forward in order to avoid disappointment.\textsuperscript{166}

He also, in 2013, criticise the notion of that few knows about the CSDP globally, even though the EU has spoken out loud to be a regional security and defence actor.\textsuperscript{167} Chappell also emphasise the difference of theory and practise:

Nonetheless, once the EU member states have decided upon political documents and military concepts, it is still of relevance to compare a country’s views on the use of force to these. In particular, it is one thing for a member state to sign up to a concept and another to enact it.\textsuperscript{168}

\textsuperscript{159} Barcikowska (2013)
\textsuperscript{160} Ibid
\textsuperscript{161} Ibid
\textsuperscript{162} Kertunnen.et al. (2005)
\textsuperscript{163} Lindström (2007) p.31
\textsuperscript{164} Lindström (2007) p.46f
\textsuperscript{165} Howorth, Jolyon (2013) The December 2013 European Council on Defence: Avoiding Irrelevance E-International Relations Online: 2016-04-11
\textsuperscript{166} Ibid
\textsuperscript{167} Ibid
\textsuperscript{168} Chappell (2009) p.420
In sum, there are some addressed issues of deploying the battlegroups of the European Union. Due to the discussion above, it may not be surprising that the EUBG has not had the curve of development that was expected from the beginning. However, one could also question – what the expectations were when setting the concept? Further, it is not until recent years that the notion of not using the EUBG has been discussed. This further underlines the importance and contribution of this research; of viewing the concept of the EUBG from a more critical angle.

5.2 Disintegration of the European Union

The notion of European disintegration is interpreted to exist within the field of EU studies; however, EU scholars mostly neglect and set the perspective aside. Even though it is mentioned that international cooperation, European integration and comparative politics are appropriate platforms to address the concept.\textsuperscript{169} This research acknowledge disintegration to be perceived in three ways; either member state chooses not to follow the process of integration within a region, or there is a ‘spill-back’ effect of when MS ‘drop-off’ or institutions gets removed or are reformed.\textsuperscript{170}

In order to maintain the state of a mature SC, it is important to maintain the core values; identity and cooperation within the community, as well as keeping neighbours and external actors on a good mode, due to that SC can be “disrupted from both within and without”\textsuperscript{171}. The appearance of mutual trust and strong cooperative institutions within a community are not static, ones established. In order to maintain status quo, there is a need for further social processes of integration and transboundary developments.\textsuperscript{172}

[...] the same forces that build up security communities can tear them down.\textsuperscript{173}

Ever since the cooperation among MS within the EU started in the 1950s, there has been some euro scepticism of the extension of the integration process.\textsuperscript{174} However, in the broader picture, extended institutionalisation, deepened integration and increased interdependence within the EU has been an on-going success story until today.\textsuperscript{175} In 2008, the global financial crisis laid the foundation of the euro crisis in 2013, which in turn led to the greatest backdrop of the EU’s credibility both internal and external. Hence, questions of ‘– A Europe in collapse’ and ‘ – Can Europe be saved?’ rose, together with a growing doubt to deepened transnational relationships.\textsuperscript{176} Zielonka conjures a scenario where a collapse of the

\textsuperscript{169} Vollaard (2014) p.2ff
\textsuperscript{170} Vollaard (2014); 2. Integration and Disintegration
\textsuperscript{171} Adler & Barnett (1998) p.58
\textsuperscript{172} Ibid
\textsuperscript{173} Ibid
\textsuperscript{175} Vollaard (2014) p.1
\textsuperscript{176} Zielonka (2012); Vollaard (2014)
euro would lead to abrupt disintegration and “[…] likely to prompt a spiral of events fatal for the entire project of European integration”\textsuperscript{177}. If the EU would change from suffering an increase in crisis, Zielonka acknowledge a phase of disintegration that would have the most negative implication for the Union. In order to combat with such issues, it is suggested that a medievalist future is to prefer (in comparison to a total disruption or a federal Union), in the sense that areas such as trade and energy policies will integrate deeper, whereas foreign and defence policy will be kept on MS-level.\textsuperscript{178}

According to Bartolini, the Eurosceptic dissatisfaction is derived from how the Union is processing voice structuring and exits. By this, Bartolini claim that the EUs’ inability of keeping resources, capital and MS ‘locked in’ undermines its overall credibility as a firm and strong union.\textsuperscript{179}

The use of exit and voice by actors such as Member States, companies, citizens and regions depends of the mutual dependence between the external consolidation and internal structuring of the EU.\textsuperscript{180}

As far as the case of today, however, it is quite unlikely that MS will complete full exit from the EU, due to lack of belief in national efficacy and the low supply of credible, external alternatives.\textsuperscript{181} Vollaard identifies a truncated Union, due to partial exits by dissatisfied actors.

Even if Eurosceptic dissatisfaction manifests itself forcefully, the EU is much more likely to become a truncated union due to a full British exit and manifold partial exits.\textsuperscript{182}

Due to the interdependency between internal structuring and external consolidation, a partial exit would lead to a decrease in stabilisation, reliability and loyalty for the Union.\textsuperscript{183} Incorporating the theory, the EU is clearly not an amalgamated SC. The pluralistic Union is dependent on the MS’ and on the sovereign nations’ well being. In this sense, the intergovernmental institutions and platforms of transnational cooperation are important for internal structure and belief as well as external reliability.

The EU operates at a number of levels […] it is predicated on the voluntary harmonisation of activities on the part of its members, which in turn are predicated on common understandings of the European idea.\textsuperscript{184}

\textsuperscript{177} Zielonka (2012) p.54
\textsuperscript{178} Zielonka (2012) p.55ff
\textsuperscript{179} Bartolini, Stefano (2005) Restructuring Europe: Centre Formation, System Building and Political Structuring between the Nation-State and the European Union Oxford: Oxford University Press
\textsuperscript{180} Vollaard (2014) p.14
\textsuperscript{181} “The only exception is the United Kingdom” in Vollaard (2014) p.14
\textsuperscript{182} Ibid
\textsuperscript{183} Ibid
\textsuperscript{184} Bellamy (2004) p.77
6. An EU view

This section outlines the EU view, as the result of this research.

The global and European security environment has changed dramatically in recent years. This calls for a stronger Europe, with a stronger and more effective Common Security and Defence Policy.\(^{185}\)

In line with the worsening relationship with neighbouring states around the European borders, long-term declines in European defence budgets and a deteriorating security context, the European Council are now tasked to evaluate the current progress of the ‘European Defence’.\(^{186}\) In 2013, EU leaders still recognised CSDP as a policy that needed to be developed and further invested in, in order to enhance effectiveness and visibility.\(^{187}\) In times of environmental changes of security threats around the globe, the European citizen is, among others, greatly affected of the European southern and eastern borders, growing extremism, evolving climate challenges, and increasingly revisionist power and fragile states around the world.

The EU and its Member States need to be able to plan and deploy the right civilian and military assets rapidly and effectively. The European Council emphasises the need to improve the EU rapid response capabilities, including through more flexible and deployable EU Battlegroups as Member States so decide.\(^{188}\)

Current developments puts great deal of pressure on the European Union to acknowledge the necessity to adapt the CFSP and CSDP to new challenges.\(^{189}\) Both the European Parliament and the Council recognises the seriousness of the situation.

6.1 Why are not the EUBG deployed, revisited.

In general, the MS of the EU agrees upon the economy\(^{190}\) and the need for a consensus-based decision-making within the EU Council,\(^{191}\) as key factors within the discussion of the non-use of the EUBG. Further, there are also some additional aspects presented below.

**Financial issues**

[...] it is expensive to train and certify a BG, and even more costly to deploy it. Since those states represented in the BG on standby must pay the bill, they must be both able and willing to pay.\(^{192}\)

---

\(^{188}\) Ibid
\(^{189}\) Ibid
\(^{190}\) EDC; Belgium; Croatia; Estonia; Greece; Italy; Poland; Spain; Sweden; Cyprus; Germany; Italy
\(^{191}\) Belgium; Croatia; Czech Republic; Greece; Italy; Poland; Cyprus; Germany; Sweden; The Netherlands, Bulgaria
\(^{192}\) Croatia
It is already noted that it is very expensive to not only deploy the troops, but also to train, equip and maintain the rapid capability. The main contribution of added value regarding the financial issues is that the ATHENA mechanism is specifically criticised for not covering enough of the expenditures demanded by the contributing nations, specifically for the FN. 193

A significant number of EU member states (ITA, FRA, LUX, BGR, POL, CZE, ROU, EST) believe that the current system of joint funding for military operations applied to EUBG (ATHENA mechanism) limits its decision to offer a BG and/or to deploy it. It has been estimated that, at the moment, the ATHENA mechanism allows a minimum refund of the total costs incurred by a country that contributes to EUBG in case it would be deployed. 194

It is suggested that by implementing a wider spectra of joint funding will enhance the possibility of actual deployment. 195 One of the main factors is in regard to the costs of strategic transport and the start-up of the OHQ and FHQ. 196 Further, it is noted that the cooperative sharing of these features can be significantly improved among the MS. 197

The need of a EU consensus

Previous discussions have outlined the heterogeneity within the Union as something that never going to change due to national interests, defence budgets and member ships in other international security organisations (NATO). 198 In regards to this, the MS have expressed an annoyance of that the efficiency of the CSFP ‘gets hurt’ by the impact of the MS’ national interests on EU-level. 199

Every time a potential opportunity to deploy the EUBG arises, there is a clear division between national interest and EU interest which results from persistent difficulty in establishing an effective common foreign policy aimed to give priority to European interests over national. 200

In addition, a frustration is emphasised of the (growing) gap between the political and military will. 201 Some claim that the lack of civil and political understanding for military capabilities and actions prevent the development of CSDP and the tool of the EUBG.

Insufficient political will and commitment. Although member states pledge their contributions, the commitments do not materialise when called in. […] Member states willingness to engage in rapid response operations varies according to perception of national interests and threat. There are also different views when it comes to the need of use of military force. 202
This further ‘pours water on the mill’ for the scholars within this area of research. What is interesting by this study is, however, the perception of that those differences, of national strategic defence and security, seem to come to light within the forum of EUBG. Thus one again asks the question if the Union really is ready for this type of regional military force of the EU CSDP?

**Added perspectives**

It is claimed that there is a risk that if they were to be deployed, other potential priorities of the EU could be jeopardised. Others question if the concept of the EUBG really is the right way to manage a crisis, especially when NATO, UN and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) aim to do the “same thing”.

The political will is not always described as issues of the consensus-based decision-process. The national perspective of possible and presumed risks is also something to consider.

There is not enough political will! The EUBG demands a physical, economic and political risk – this will doesn’t exist.

### 6.2 The persistence of the EUBG

Despite the many explanations and critical reviews of why the EUBG has not been deployed, the fact stands; they still exist. One could ask for what purpose is there to have a regional military force, if it cannot be used? Below, some key features are acknowledged to be identified reasons why the EUBG are kept.

**A platform of cooperation, interoperability and understanding**

One of the most mentioned reasons to that EUBG still exist is the possibility of enhanced cooperation of military matters among MS. Battlegroup concept is also a driver for capability development, improved interoperability and to transform the Member States’ armed forces from a "cold war" to an expeditionary configuration, i.e. the Member States’ capability to undertake rapid deployments and operations.

The EUBG’s are very useful tools as they continue to force Member States to think/work/jointly/collectively/together about European security and defence.

With the creation of this Rapid Response crisis management tool, the EU became more flexible.

---

203 Introduction
204 Belgium
205 Croatia
206 Hungary; The Netherlands
207 Lt Col Tomas Abrahamsson
208 EDCC, EU Commission, Belgium, Croatia, Estonia, Greece, Lithuania, The Netherlands, Slovakia, Spain, Cyprus, The Netherlands, Sweden, the UK
209 European Union External Action (2013)
210 Belgium
and independent in its decision taking, and also added value to its political credibility.\textsuperscript{211} This is interpreted to bridge the great financial costs. The cooperation in security and defence generates enhanced understanding and further integration between MS, which is one of the greatest values of keeping the EUBG.\textsuperscript{212} Further, there is a common notion that the EUBG are needed for future development; “losing the BGs would have a serious impact on CSDP”\textsuperscript{213}.

They exist because member states find them useful, despite the fact that they never have been used in operation. The EUBGs are important and valuable tool of the CSDP, and they have positive impact on further increasing the interoperability among member states’ armed forces, on developing cooperation among member states and supporting further development of capabilities, both nationally and at the EU level.\textsuperscript{214}

The existence of EUBG helps Member States to adapt each other’s main military concepts, participate in several warfare exercises and improves the dialogue between those partner countries which decided to create an EUBG […]\textsuperscript{215}

Poland believes that despite critical opinions the Battlegroups concept proved its validity. For many countries they became instrumental in building crisis response capabilities, often stimulating regional cooperation. Certainly, this is the case of Poland. What is also important - the Battlegroups have raised the CSDP profile in these countries. For these reasons, we don’t believe that Battlegroups are a failure. We still need them.\textsuperscript{216}

\textit{An EU-proudness}

The European Union is a global actor, ready to undertake its share of responsibility for global security. With the introduction of the Battlegroup concept, the Union formed a (further) military instrument for early and rapid responses when necessary.\textsuperscript{217}

It is acknowledged to be a great deal of proudness, both from EU-level and by MS within the Union, of that of what the EUBG represents (and how they are planned to be used). The EDCC underline the increased security and military cooperation among the MS. Further, it is interpreted a somewhat neglect of that the capability of EU rapid response requires a rapid – and consensus-based decision.

With the full commitment of Member States, the Battlegroup concept has already shown its potential value in securing increased cooperation and capability development among Member States. It has contributed to enhancing the EU’s capability to deal with rapid response and will continue to do so.\textsuperscript{218}

\textsuperscript{211} The EU Commission
\textsuperscript{212} Lithuania
\textsuperscript{213} Estonia
\textsuperscript{214} Croatia
\textsuperscript{215} Hungary
\textsuperscript{216} Poland
\textsuperscript{217} European Union External Action (2013)
\textsuperscript{218} EDCC
However, the respondents of the surveys and interviews are in great agreement of that the EUBG enables a valued deepened military and security cooperation within the Union.219

EU Battlegroups remain important for CSDP as the only military capabilities on stand-by for possible EU operations and as they are helping to reinforce the effectiveness of Member States’ military forces.220

The EUBG - a defence, an army, a tool in crisis management?

Since the emergence of the pillar structure in the EU, the CFSP and CSDP has been discussed of forming the possibilities of an European army – a defence for the Union. The EUBG are said to be a “very important tool within the CSDP”221. However, there are some differences of interpretation among the MS of how to actually deploy the troops. Therefore, it is a need to sort out how they are suppose to work. One perspective that is ‘one of a kind’ is the Hungarian view of that they never have been deployed due to that there hasn’t been any identified threats directly to the EU as a regional organisation, nor to the single MS.

The reason behind the non-deployment of the EUBG is that it is necessary to detect and identify certain threats towards the EU or an adequate number of Member States.222

This is interesting due to that they in fact was created to serve EU-interests of humanitarian aid and peace enforcement on the global arena. Thus the question is brought of if the MS really knows – or have a common idea of how it is going to be?

During the first time of FN in 2008, the support from the EU and Brussels was exhaustive […] Much of the support back then was to get the MS in the Union to understand what they have agreed upon. This wasn’t clear in the first place.223

Other aspect is the need for strengthening the EU’s ability to deploy the right capabilities rapidly and effectively on the whole spectrum of crisis management action.224

One could criticise the EU for not covering for the use of the EUBG. They are not mentioned either in the European Agenda on Security nor the European Security Strategy.225 Thus, there is a perception of a somewhat disparity within the Union. Further, far from everyone views the EUBG in only positive terms.

219 EDCC; Belgium; Croatia; Estonia; Greece; Lithuania; The Netherlands; Slovakia; Spain; Cyprus; The Netherlands
220 EDCC
221 Belgium; Greece; Estonia; Croatia; Lithuania
222 Hungary
223 Sweden; Gen Bengt Andersson, Interview 2016-05-16
224 Lithuania
225 European Agenda on Security nor the European Security Strategy, ESS
The EUBG is like a home insurance, you probably will never use it, but it would come quite in handy if something would happen.\textsuperscript{226}

Either we use it or loose it. However, in realistic terms, it is close to impossible to deploy the EUBG.\textsuperscript{227}

However, there are some that do not share this critical view;

Italy believes that the EUBG constitutes an essential resource for the quick response to crisis and for the implementation of the European Security Strategy.\textsuperscript{228}

Due to that the EUBG are a part of the EU Crisis Management, there are three ways that EU can act; in a NATO-led operation due to the ‘Berlin-Plus’ agreement, in an autonomous EU-led operation with either a European or national (framework nation) headquarter. Thus, it is said the EUBG has quite a wide range of missions where they could work\textsuperscript{229}, however, they are dependent on that the EU MS take their full responsibility.

(...) due to the rotating nature of the Battlegroups, it is essential that all member states have the ability and willingness to deploy.\textsuperscript{230}

When looking at the aim and purpose, the EUBG was in the first place planned to serve as a ‘pre-troop’ to a bigger EU-force of about 50-60 000 troops.\textsuperscript{231} This original plan has not been developed, thus this could also contribute to the explanations of why they have not been used. Again there is a gap between the politicians and military understanding. A rapid reaction force of 1500 troops would have a hard time in achieving “anything at all in only 120 days”\textsuperscript{232}. There is thus a need for a bigger plan of how to proceed at site.

**The future for the EUBG**

As shortly mentioned, when studying official EU documents regarding the EU CSDP it is a bit surprising that there is so few plans – or even mentioning of the EUBG. Thus it is not surprising the there are some disagreements’ of the concept and the use of the EUBG.\textsuperscript{233}

(...) the EU and its Member States should have a better defined and common approach to security and defence. The EU Global Strategy of June 2016 may be a step in the right direction.\textsuperscript{234}

The issue of having available adequate rapid response capabilities for EU action will stay high on the EU agenda, also in light of the European Council's assertion that in today's changing world the

\textsuperscript{226} Lt Col Tomas Abrahamsson, Interview 2016-05-23
\textsuperscript{227} The Netherlands
\textsuperscript{228} Italy
\textsuperscript{229} Lindström (2007) p.26; European Union External Action European Security Strategy Online: 2016-02-23
\textsuperscript{230} Chappell (2009) p.420
\textsuperscript{231} Gen Bengt Anderson, Interview 2016-05-16; Helsinki Headline Goals 1999
\textsuperscript{232} Gen Bengt Anderson, Interview 2016-05-16
\textsuperscript{233} The EUBG - a defence, an army, a tool in crisis management?
\textsuperscript{234} Belgium
EU is called upon to assume increased responsibility in the maintenance of international peace and security.\textsuperscript{235}

Taking into account today’s changing security environment and the need for the EU to assume increased responsibility in the maintenance of international peace and security, the issue of having available and adequate rapid response capabilities for EU action will stay on the EU agenda.\textsuperscript{236}

[…] we should accept the fact that they are a long-term investment in CSDP and in our security. We should not desperately look for an opportunity to use them, simply for the sake of “proving” their relevance.\textsuperscript{237}

It is true that EU has yet to proceed with the deployment of EU Battlegroups in EU-led operations. Nonetheless, it is clear that Member States continue to see their usefulness, as demonstrated by their investment in them.\textsuperscript{238}

There are many of the respondents that underline the importance of keeping the EUBG, despite the non-use and the economic pressure. Much of this is connected to the discussion above, together with a perspective of rather further deepening the integrated cooperation within security and defence.

Abandoning the concept is definitely not the way to go, further improving and operationalizing it are the right options.\textsuperscript{239}

The political signals of a possible dissolvent of the EUBG are said to be devastating for the Union as a regional organisation, both internally and externally. Further, it is also identified a notion of a within-MS interest, a national view of using the EUBG as a legit reason of still keeping a certain degree of troops at home.

We believe that it would send a very negative political signal if the EU/ESDP were to turn its back from an operational concept such as the EUBG.\textsuperscript{240}

A potential abolishment of Battlegroups would negatively impact the EU defense identity and prospects.\textsuperscript{241}

It would be a disaster to confess “we don’t need it anymore”. It would be the same as to say that we chose to “shut down the military cooperation”. It would be much better for the credibility of the Union if we could develop it instead; long-term surveillance.\textsuperscript{242}

Terminating the EUBG concept would waste all the invested efforts (financial, political, military).

\textsuperscript{235} EDCC
\textsuperscript{236} Lithuania
\textsuperscript{237} Poland
\textsuperscript{238} The EU Commission
\textsuperscript{239} Belgium
\textsuperscript{240} Belgium
\textsuperscript{241} Cyprus
\textsuperscript{242} Germany
Besides this it would cease all high and low level interaction in related issues, and would cease all possible chance to evolve in the future.\(^{243}\)

It is thus interpreted that besides the military cooperation, the political aspect is almost as important, if not the most important in terms of national and international reputation, credibility and respect.

The whole situation is said to reflect a discussion that is of 99 % political, and 1 % of military character.\(^{244}\)

An external pressure of responsibility is also identified, due to the many inhabitants of the European Union.

The NATO and US would be very disappointed in the EU if the EUBG were to be dissolved. Due to the population; the US, somewhat 300 millions and EU, about 500 millions. – We have to take our responsibility!\(^{245}\)

Instead, the MS are more interested in further develop the EUBG, so that it will be easier to use and to deepen the integration in the Union.

The level of a battlegroup is the lowest useful level for a military force, a brigade sized force would send a more credible message and provide the Member States with a more useful instrument.\(^{246}\)

Battlegroups have to be prepared for a wider spectrum of operations. They definitely cannot lose their combat capabilities, but they could be better prepared for more likely and less demanding operations. Battlegroups’ modularity and the idea to equip them with civ-mil elements have been on the table for quite a long time and should be analyze further.\(^{247}\)

The only situation that is acknowledged to ‘set the sparkle’ of dissolving the EUBG is if the attendance of contribution nations and willing FN’s would decline and leave the EUBG without a lead.\(^{248}\) Thus it is suggested that a possible and realistic future would be to at least decrease

The future of the EUBG would contain a partly form of dissolve; namely to decrease the level of ambition from holding two EUBG (1 standby) to only have one single rapid response force. It is not a long-term realism of keeping the two.\(^{249}\)

\(^{243}\) Hungary
\(^{244}\) Gen Bengt Andersson, Interview 2016-05-16
\(^{245}\) Ibid
\(^{246}\) Belgium
\(^{247}\) Poland
\(^{248}\) Gen Bengt Andersson, Interview 2016-05-16
\(^{249}\) Lt Col Tomas Abrahamsen 2016-05-23
7. A theoretical explanation

The main key factor of still keeping the EUBG shows to be the integrated notion of close security cooperation within the Union, (which in turn aligns to the neo-functional approach of institutionalisation)\textsuperscript{250}. The other most mentioned issue is that the Union wouldn’t be able to handle the spill-back of dissolving the EUBG, due to internal and external pressures. The theoretical framework is now applied in order to fully grasp this phenomenon of the persistence of the EUBG.

7.1 An ascendant Security Community?

The European Union is interpreted to be a tight, pluralistic, mature SC. The common values, shared identities, transnational cooperation and deep integration are partly identified by the fact that the Union has got a joint regional military force, the EUBG. Thus, if the EUBG were dissolved, the spill-back effect, disintegration would be a fact.

*The tightly coupled SC*

The common military planning is one significant feature of being a *tight* community. It is clear that the EUBG outlines an important foundation of this particular transnational security element. In where, sometimes it is even referred of as having an imperative effect on the MS to work together on the issues of European security and defence.\textsuperscript{251} The EUBG also contributes to the military transparency among the MS, thus also shows the deep mutual trust within the Union. In connection to the pluralistic Union of sovereign states, this shows the feature of a collective transnational security institution.

*Pluralism*

Despite the close relationships and deep integration, the MS of the EU still keep their national sovereignty within the transnational security institutions. The notion of that the ‘differences are settled in short of war’ is even more shown due to the cooperation within the CSDP and EUBG. A potential spill-back do not directly correlate to a decrease in sovereignty in the EU. However, one might interpret that a possible option probably would lead to an even more supranational organisation (NRF and NATO). Which in turn could lead to a possible decrease in national sovereignty within the foreign and security policy areas.

*Nascent – Ascendant - Mature*

The mechanisms and elements within transnational security are some of the key features within the mature SC. If EUBG would dissolve, it is then perceived that the foundation of the CSFP and CSDP rather aligns with the ascendant type of SC. The habit and behaviour of keeping the EUBG, despite the non-use indicates a mature SC, which would be somewhat ruined if the EUBG was removed.

\textsuperscript{250} Sweet & Sandholtz (1997)

\textsuperscript{251} Belgium
**External and Internal indicators**

- What would happen to the tight, pluralistic, mature SC of the European Union if the EUBG were dissolved? Shown indicators underline the importance of keeping the EUBG both as a way of military and security cooperation within the Union, but also – to cope the demand of EU taking its responsibility on the global security arena. This habit of keeping the EUBG is interpreted to represent and send a strong political message of the deep integrated and powerful Union.

**In sum**

Directly speaking, as indicated above, if the EUBG was acknowledged as a ‘failure’ or if they were removed it would most likely generate negative effects for the Union and its MS. Less transnational military and security cooperation and reciprocity, a decline in shared, common identity and values in terms of that the Petersberg tasks was ‘not as valuable as thought’. Finally, the interdependence in cross-border military exercises would decrease. In sum; the SC of the EU would face a phase of spill-back; disintegration.

**7.2 A possibility of disintegration?**

Disintegration occurs when there is a ‘spilt into parts’ or when ‘things cease to exist’.

The illustrated situation above shows clear signs of disintegration where it is identified a great decrease in trans-national activity and interdependence. However, in regard to the conceptual framework, voice structuring and exits are taken into consideration below.

**Voice Structuring**

The dissatisfaction regarding the use and non-use of the EUBG are not something that is widely voiced among the MS, at least not noted by the ‘regular European’ or in the literature. Thus one could interpret that there are not that much of dissatisfaction. However, as the study shows, many of the MS do hold a frustration of how the financialities and national interests are expressed and dealt with in regard to the EUBG and the military cooperation.

**Exits**

The exits are perceived to be the way that some MS prefer the work of NATO, UN and OSCE. It is also noted that the upcoming referendum in the UK this summer (BREXIT, 2016) is an example of the seriousness that exits has got to the Union. Also, Denmark has alone chose to not be a part of the EU CSDP and EUBG.

Due to the Danish opt-out on the military aspects of the Common Security and Defence Policy

Denmark abstains from actively participating in discussions related to the EUBG - and from participating in them obviously.

---

252 2.2 Integration vs. Disintegration
253 The Netherlands; Hungary
254 Denmark
There are thus other acknowledged possible options for not taking part of the EUBG cooperation, i.e. NRF and NATO. However, to exit the Union (BREXIT) is perceived to be quite radical.

7.3 The merge; an aspect of loyalty
The common key aspect in the theoretical discussion is known to be the grade of loyalty. It is interpreted that due to the strong loyalty within the Union, most of the MS seem to be ‘satisfied’ with the situation as it is (no explicit voice structuring), even though there are some frustration, complaints, financial issues and possible exits. Further, loyalty is acknowledged due to that the MS expresses their concern about how the EU, as a regional organisation and a Union, would be negatively impacted if the EUBG were removed. This both internal; the MS enjoy to be a member of the Union and wants it to persist that way. External; as a MS of the Union, it is important that the outside world perceives the position of the strong Union.

**Graph 1. The Development of a SC in terms of loyalty**

Loyalty
- Fostering
- Generating
- Enforcing

Programme and/or strategy of the development of the regional organisation

Satisfaction

Dissatisfaction;
- Voice structuring
- Exits

Integration

Mature SC = End state of a regional organisation

Ascendant SC

Nascent SC

Cooperation starts, due to a common notion of security issues
8. Conclusion

– How can we understand the persistence of EUBG within the European Union in terms of integration and disintegration of regional organisations?

– Is the persistence of the battlegroups a sign of that European Union cannot disintegrate?

This study has highlighted the factors of the non-use of the EUBG and further deepened the discussion of why they still exist within the EU. It has contributed to an understanding of tensions between integration and disintegration within regional organisations by showing how the strength of already integrated institutions and elements, affects the notion of disintegration within a regional organisation. The neo-functional approach of possibilities of disintegration within a ‘deep integrated security community’ enhance the understanding of viewing the EUBG as something that cannot be dissolved due to devastating consequences for the European Union.

The integrated cooperation within the scope of the EUBG concept shows the EU as a tight, pluralistic security community, with a common understanding of the military and security aspects within the Union. The institutionalised policy-structure of the EU CSDP is glue that correlates to a deep-rooted loyalty and trust, within transnational bounds between the MS. Further, the EUBG demonstrate a grant of that the Union represents a friendly and peaceful regional organisation.

The EUBG are a part of the SC and cannot be removed. As the hypothesis proposed; first, externally; the Union takes on its imposed and demanded role as an international responsible security actor. Second, internally; the common identity, reliability and trust are rooted in the habit of keeping the EUBG, despite non-deployment. Third, also internally; the concept of the EUBG enables the MS to cooperate, coordinate and share military capabilities, and also, be updated about the common military and defence arsenal within the Union. In addition, throughout the research, a forth dimension has grown; a national (within-MS) perspective of that a contribution to the EUBG legitimise the persistence of troops, corps and military units at home, on the national level. This perspective improves the understanding of the case, and the persistence of the EUBG and further, how an element of a transnational institution is/can be needed/used, nationally.

The political, economical, physical and military will and/or risk, may not ever pool within the European Union. Perhaps, the EU was not ready for a common security and defence policy, and not least, a common regional military force. The EUBG may never be used as first initiated, - maybe they never even was planned to?
References

Articles


Chappell, Laura (2009) *Differing member state approaches to the development of the EU Battlegroup Concept: implications for CSDP*, European Security 18:4, 417-439

Collier, David (2011) *Understanding Process Tracing* The Teacher Berkely


Books


Bellamy, Alex J. (2004) Security Communities and their Neighbours Regional Fortresses or Global Integrators? Palgrave MacMillan


Lindberg, Leon & Scheingold, Stuart (1971) Regional Integration Harvard University Press: Cambridge


Documents and Reports


Vocabulary Dictionary; Disintegration Online: 2016-05-12 from https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/disintegration