



ASSESSING THE INFLUENCE OF FRANCE AND GERMANY ON EU FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY

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Abstract

This article assesses the influence of the Franco-German partnership on the development of an EU foreign and security policy since the 1990s, in order to see whether political cohesion between the two member states is a necessary and sufficient condition for the EU to emerge as an actor in the international arena. Based on a methodology using secondary literature in a systematic way, the argument unfolds in three parts: first, the article looks at the political cohesion between the two member states in terms of both the building and the content of the EU's foreign and security policy. Then, it seeks to establish a correlation between Franco-German cohesion and the existence of an EU position, or lack thereof. Finally, the last section explains why the Franco-German cohesion is a necessary but insufficient condition for the EU to gain actorness, by looking at other variables pertaining to domestic politics, European politics, and the international environment. Four models of interaction between the Franco-German cohesion and these other variables are developed: effective consensus; ineffective consensus; diffuse consensus; blocking dissensus.

1. Introduction

In the early 1990s, the Franco-German “couple” (Soutou 2012) introduced several initiatives aimed at relaunching the European integration process through the adoption of a new treaty on the European Union (EU). Both governments contributed to the creation of a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), which took over from the European Political Cooperation and raised the question of Europe emerging as a power in a post-cold war context (Terpan 2003, 2010, Smith 2013). Often presented as the ‘engine’ of European integration (Schild 2010), France and Germany would also become the engine of European foreign and security policy. Indeed, they are often considered to be the main driving force behind the inclusion of CFSP in the Maastricht treaty. Furthermore, the initiatives launched by the French and German governments since 2016, designed to revive the idea of a European defence, would again testify to the leadership function performed by the two member states.

However, since its creation by the Maastricht treaty, CFSP has faced many difficulties and has been confronted with several crises that have hindered its development. The security-defence dimension of CFSP, in particular, was poorly implemented in the 1990s, at least before the creation of a European Security and Defence Policy as a sub-division of CFSP (1998-99). Since then, it has proved difficult for the member states to agree on crisis management operations.

France and Germany have sometimes been presented as being one source of these difficulties. The effectiveness of the partnership between the two countries would be rather limited (Stark 2012, Calla & Demesmay 2013), as well as their capacity to initiate concrete EU foreign and security action. As a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), Germany abstained, together with China, Russia, India and Brazil, when the UNSC voted on a resolution authorizing military intervention in Libya in 2011 (Göler & Jopp 2011, Menon 2011). This decision made a European operation impossible, leading France and the United Kingdom to intervene in the framework of NATO. This shows how Germany can distance itself from the idea, most often defended by France, of the EU emerging as a military power (Paterson 2011).

The aim of this article is not to comment on the current state of the Franco-German relationship, but rather to find a way to assess the degree of cohesion between France and Germany on a number of foreign and security issues, with a view to determining its influence at the EU level from 1990 onwards. Are these two member states central to the strengthening of CFSP? When Paris and Berlin are on the same page, are they effective in influencing CFSP?

This article is based on the assumption that the closer the French and German positions are, the higher the probability that the EU will defend a unified position. However, the fact that France and Germany have defended a common position, and that the EU has adopted a similar position, does not necessarily prove how influential the Franco-German partnership is. To ascertain their actual influence, other factors such as the European system of governance and the larger external environment will be taken into account in order and see how they interact with the Franco-German partnership.

In the remainder of this article, I will present my methodology, which is based on a systematic analysis of secondary literature (section two). Section three will seek to give an overall view of convergence and divergence between the two member states’ foreign and security policies in order to evaluate their cohesion, or lack thereof. The fourth section will be devoted to the potential

influence of both countries on EU external action, whilst the fifth and last section will situate this influence in a larger system of interactions in order to understand its terms and limits.

2. Methods

The positions of the two actors will be systematically compared from 1990 onwards, based on an analytical framework composed of three main categories: 1) contributions to the building of European foreign policy; 2) principles and objectives of foreign policy; 3) positions towards different geographical areas. To establish the positions of France and Germany, I rely on secondary literature found in 16 journals¹ and 16 publishers², selected on the basis of their reputation, and because of their likeliness to deal with the foreign policies of the two states. Some 28 books, 7 book chapters and 20 journal articles have been gathered: they all include elements helping to analyse the positions of France and Germany on foreign and security issues. These publications have been systematically studied in order to define the positions of the two states, and their cohesion.

Cohesion is a measure of the distance between the positions defended by the two partners. Three kinds of situations can be distinguished depending on whether the distance is non-existent, short, or large. Cohesion is lacking when the distance is large; it is weak when the distance is short; and it is strong when the distance is non-existent. When France and Germany defend positions that contradict one another and lead to a disagreement on a foreign policy issue, the distance is said to be large. This was the case when France advocated an EU military operation in Libya (2011), while Germany voted against it. A short distance is when there is no major contradiction between the positions of the two states, but rather nuances, minor divergences, or different priorities. For example, most commentators say that the relationship with eastern countries is a priority for Germany, much more than for France; yet, the policy objectives pursued by the two countries are by and large compatible with each other (Smith 2013). Finally, there is no distance when the positions are aligned and the two member states are on the same page, which is the case, for example, when they issued a common declaration on the building of CFSP before the Maastricht treaty.

The degree of cohesion is assessed based on the abovementioned literature. When there is a consensus amongst the authors (more than $\frac{3}{4}$ of them agree), the distance is characterized as either short, large, or non-existent. When there is no such consensus, the degree of cohesion is uncertain, and the distance might be indicated on the relevant table³ as being short and large at the same time, or short and non-existent. When the distance is not seen to be constant during the whole period, the existence of a fluctuation is mentioned in the right column of the tables.

¹ Ashgate, Bruylant, Cambridge University Press, Cornell University Press, La documentation française, Lynne Rienner, Manchester University Press, Oxford University Press, Palgrave MacMillan, Polity, Presses de sciences po, Princeton University Press, Routledge, Springer.

² Comparative European Politics, Cooperation and conflict, Critique internationale, European Foreign Affairs Review, European Security, International Affairs, International Organization, International Peacekeeping, Journal of Common Market Studies, Journal of European Integration, Journal of European Public Policy, Journal of Conflict and Security Law, Politique étrangère, Politique européenne, Studia Diplomatica, West European Politics.

³ Tables start in section 3.

The aim is not only to establish the degree of cohesion between France and Germany, but first and foremost to see whether there is a correlation between the Franco-German cohesion and the development of an EU foreign and security policy. In other words, does CFSP develop when the French and German positions are aligned, and stagnate when they diverge? To answer this question, the Franco-German positions are compared with EU ones, based on the same categorization as in the previous section (contributions to the building of European foreign policy; principles and objectives of foreign policy; positions towards different geographical areas). More specifically, I try to determine whether a lack of cohesion at EU level correlates with divergences between France and Germany. By lack of cohesion at EU level, I mean either a lack of decision making on issues that were on the agenda, or a lack of cohesiveness in terms of implementation, with member states diverging from the line defined by the European Union (European Council, Council of the EU, the High Representative speaking on behalf of the EU) (Saurugger & Terpan 2015). To establish the existence of EU cohesion, or lack thereof, the same selection of secondary literature is analysed.

Even when a correlation exists between Franco-German cohesion and EU cohesion, it remains to be seen whether the latter is a consequence of the former. Have France and Germany really succeeded in reaching common ground at the European level based on a logic of bottom-up and top-down Europeanization (Smith 2000; Gross 2009; Wong & Hill 2011; Baun & Marek 2013)? Providing evidence to back up this assertion is not an easy task, given the number of factors that can interfere in the process.

While Franco-German cohesion appears to be a necessary condition for an effective EU foreign and security policy, as seen in the previous section, it is very unlikely, in a European Union of 28 member states, that this condition is sufficient, despite the economic and political weight of the two partners. To explain why a common EU position has – or has not – been possible in response to various different circumstances, and to measure the potential influence of the two member states in this context, I propose placing the Franco-German tandem in a larger system of interaction, including other member states, EU institutions, and external factors. The Franco-German relationship needs to be viewed as an “embedded bilateralism” (Krotz & Schild 2013).

Four factors will be taken into account, each of them being classified as either negative (when the factor clearly works against an EU position), positive (when it clearly works in favour of an EU position), quite negative, or quite positive (when the impact of the factor is noticeable, but not so clear). The relative weight of each factor is, of course, an approximation, once again based on the analysis of secondary literature. The objective is not to provide the reader with a precise ‘measurement’ for each case study, but rather to come up with a typology of different situations and different types of factor combinations.

Two factors are specific to France and Germany. The first one concerns domestic politics; the political context (elections, salience and politicization of a problem, the role of public opinion, bilateral relations between the authorities of the two countries) may either lead to the defence of national interests (and be classified as ‘negative’) or work in favour of a Franco-German position within the EU (and be classified as ‘positive’). Franco-German cohesion, as defined in section 2, is the second factor, which plays a ‘negative’ or a ‘positive’ role in the EU and in CFSP. The remaining factors relate to the environment in which France and Germany find themselves. Firstly, European governance (EU institutions and member states; Schild 2010) might be either conflictual (negative) or consensual (positive), thus hindering or supporting a CFSP position. Secondly,

external (non-EU) factors may also work in favour of unity (positive) or lack of unity (negative) regarding EU foreign policy. When most of these four factors are classified as “negative,” it means that the situation is least favourable to EU foreign policy. On the other hand, a majority of positive factors denotes a situation in which the conditions are most favourable to EU foreign policy.

In the remainder of the article, I will present the research results, following the three steps presented in this methods section: establishing the degree of cohesion between France and Germany (section 3); looking for a correlation between Franco-German cohesion and EU cohesion (section 4); and introducing other factors explaining EU cohesion in order to see the place that France and Germany take within a larger configuration of factors (section 5).

3. Reasonably strong political cohesion in all areas except the use of force

At first sight, Germany and France have very distinct features in terms of international actorness. They have specific interests and seem to be subject to different types of path dependence. Germany is still strongly affected by the Nazi period (Longhurst 2010, Stark 2012), which might explain self-restraint in military affairs, strong democratic control over foreign and security policies, and western ties (NATO, transatlantic relations, European integration) aimed at coming to terms with the past and anchoring Germany in the pro-democracy camp. In addition to this, Germany began a normalisation process (Gordon 1994, Bulmer & Paterson 2010) during the Cold War and even more so in the post-Cold War period, by asserting its interests in the Eastern region (Ostpolitik) and progressively lifting restrictions in military matters. But the question remains of whether Germany will behave like a political and military power, beyond its civilian, economic, and commercial status.

France, on the other hand, would still be heavily influenced by the originating ideas of the Fifth Republic (1958-1969) (Kolodziej 1974, Cerny 1980, Gordon 1993, Vaïsse 1998, Vaïsse 2009, Soutou 2012), when President de Gaulle searched for greatness (‘grandeur’), rank (‘rang’), and political autonomy through the development of defence capability (nuclear deterrence), the refusal to depend on the United States, and participation in high-level negotiations, in particular the UN Security Council. However, the French ‘exception’ may have decreased due to several developments: closer relations with NATO and the United States⁴; stronger involvement in the European Union (Cole & Drake 2000, Drake 2005, Lequesne 2008); and more modest ambitions as an individual state (Balme 2009, Blunden 2000, Treacher 2003, Charillon & Wong 2011).

These differences notwithstanding, the foreign and security policies of the two countries have common ground and shared interest, which justifies a close partnership. The question is whether these factors are enough to create cohesion in the pursuit of their foreign policies.

The first way to evaluate Franco-German cohesion is to compare how these two member states view the ‘constitutional’ building of a European security and defence policy (Table 1). These views are neither incompatible, nor fully identical.

⁴ France joined NATO’s integrated command structure in 2009.

Table 1: French and German visions of EU foreign and security policy

	Distance between the French and German positions			Evolution of the distance from 1990 onwards
	No distance	Short distance	Large distance	
The EU should become a military power		X		fluctuation
A strong role should be given to the High Representative and the EEAS	X			stability
CFSP should remain intergovernmental	X			stability

A distance exists in relation to the European Union becoming a military power. By and large, Germany is close to the French position on developing a CFSP backed up with a Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) (Treacher 2003, Longhurst 2010, Daehnhardt 2011, Stark 2012, Soutou 2012, Krotz & Schild 2013), but remains reluctant when it comes to launching and financing military operations (Menon 2011, Norheim-Martinsen 2012, Stark 2012, Terpan 2014). Consequently, the question of whether the EU should become a strong international player is not perceived exactly the same way (Stark 2012; Calla & Demesmay 2013). Moreover, while the two member states agree on the idea of strengthening the security and defence dimension of CFSP, their cohesion is dependent on domestic politics, in particular in Germany where there is more variation. For example, the German refusal to contribute to a European operation in Libya, which happened after a period of greater acceptance of military interventions (e.g., Kosovo 1999, Democratic Republic of Congo 2005; Miskimmon 2007, Longhurst 2010), can be explained by the electoral context in Germany; Angela Merkel refused to engage in a risky military intervention at a time when German citizens, dubious about military operations, were voting in local elections. On the other hand, the German government has given a stronger priority to CSDP since 2013 and the third government formed by Angela Merkel.

With regard to the ways and means of the EU international actorness (the role of the High Representative and her external action service (EEAS), as well as the intergovernmental nature of CFSP), the differences are minimal, or non-existent (Balfour, Carta & Raik 2015). France and Germany support the same vision of a CFSP that should be strong and visible, although controlled by member states (Treacher 2003; Balme 2009; Balfour, Carta & Raik 2015).

Franco-German cohesion can also be measured in terms of foreign policy objectives and principles (Table 2). Not surprisingly, the use of force is the main difference between a reluctant Germany and a more interventionist France (Menon 2011; Stark 2012). However, the distance fluctuates over time. It is quite large in 1990-91, when Helmut Kohl invoked constitutional limits to justify

German non-intervention in the Gulf War. At this point the argument disappeared and *Bundeswehr* military engagements multiplied in the 1990s in places such as Kosovo and Afghanistan, reducing the distance with its French partner (Miskimmon 2007, Longhurst 2010). Later, in 2010, Germany returns to a cautious position with regard to an operation in Libya, before accepting a French demand to engage more heavily in the fight against terrorist groups in Syria in the aftermath of the Paris 2013 terrorist attacks.

Table 2: Principles and objectives of foreign policy defended by France and Germany

	Distance between the French and German positions			Evolution of the distance from 1990 onwards
	No distance	Short distance	Large distance	
Deference to multilateralism and international law	X			stability
Defence of democracy and human rights	X			stability
Position towards the use of force in international relations		X	X	fluctuation

The other principles are more consensual. Both France and Germany emphasise ideals such as multilateralism, respect of international law and UN decisions, and defence of democracy and human rights.

Finally, Table 3 focuses on the positions defended by the two member states regarding different geographical areas. Points of agreement supersede divergences, and the latter are never considered more than ‘short distance.’

Table 3: French and German positions regarding different geographical areas

	Distance between the French and German positions			Evolution of the distance from 1990 onwards
	No distance	Short distance	Large distance	
Israeli / Palestinian conflict	X	X		fluctuations
Iranian nuclear programme	X			stability
War in Iraq	X			stability
Crises in Libya and Syria			X	
Relations with Mediterranean countries	X	X		stability
Relations with Eastern Europe	X	X		stability
Crises in Western Balkans	X	X		fluctuations
Relations with Russia	X			stability
Peacekeeping in Africa		X		fluctuations
Relations with Asia	X			stability
Relations with Latin America	X			stability
Relations with the US	X	X		fluctuations

Most of these differences relate to the military. They concern, in particular, the German refusal to intervene militarily in Libya (Göler & Jopp 2011), peacekeeping in the Western Balkans (divergences in the early 1990s – when Germany unilaterally recognized Slovenia and Croatia – rapidly overcome in the mid-1990s; Miskimmon 2007, Charillon and Wong 2011), and peacekeeping in Africa (Germany being more reluctant than France about being strongly involved). Regarding Africa (Blunden 2000, Calla & Demesmay 2013), France is still very active, in particular in its former colonies, and continues to participate in crisis management through

military interventions. Germany is politically and militarily less active in Africa (Dijkstra 2010). Another difference relates to the Nazi era, with Germany supporting Israel for historical reasons, while France remains closer to the Palestinians and Arab countries (Musu 2010, Müller 2013).

It can be argued that Germany looks East much more than France, while France is more interested in the Mediterranean (Cardwell 2011) and the Middle East than Germany. This difference, however, should not be overestimated, as both member states have a strong interest in their neighbouring countries, largely speaking (Daehnhardt 2011).

Yet, not only is the distance between the positions of the two member states rather short, but the points of agreement are also numerous. France and Germany are on the same page regarding the war in Iraq, the Iranian nuclear programme, relations with the Mediterranean (some distance: Blunden 2000, Daehnhardt 2011), and Russia (even regarding the war in Crimea, Krotz & Maher 2016). No real distance can be noticed concerning the Western Balkans, Latin America, or Asia (Wong 2006, Daehnhardt 2011, Calla & Demesmay 2013, Ruano 2013).

Over the whole period, the distance between the French and German positions remains quite stable. When the distance evolves, it is often towards convergence, like in the case of Africa and the Mediterranean, and facilitated by France's willingness to Europeanize its foreign policy actions (Charillon & Wong 2011). On transatlantic relations, there seems to be a distance between the two member states, with Germany defending a more Atlanticist position (Stark 2012). This has changed due to France getting closer to NATO (comeback to the integrated command of NATO) and seeking to get German support on EU-US relations (Charillon and Wong 2011). Once again, the only areas where we can observe fluctuations and difficulties overcoming divergences are linked with the use of force. Germany is – or is not – likely to contribute to military crisis management, depending on the context, while France participates in most EU, NATO, and UN-led operations (with the exception of the intervention in Iraq in 2003).

Broadly speaking, French and German foreign policies are quite close to one another. There are a few topics where they do not share exactly the same position, but the distance is always a short one. The main area on which they disagree is militarization. Whilst they agree about the idea of a Common Security and Defence Policy, the two partners do not have the same view on the use of force. Germany is still trying to achieve a balance between a culture of self-restraint and more active participation in peacekeeping and crisis management, whereas France usually favours interventionism.

4. The Franco-German partnership as a pre-requisite for an effective EU foreign policy?

We have seen in the previous section that France and Germany share the same general approach to EU foreign and security policy (see Table 1 on “visions of EU foreign and security policy” and Table 2 on “principles and objectives of foreign and security policy”), with the exception of military issues and the use of force. Their foreign and security policies have been affected by a rather unsteady and ambivalent Europeanization process (Irondelle 2003, Miskimmon 2007, Charillon & Wong 2011, Keukeleire & Delreux 2014). This can explain the ups and downs of building an EU foreign and security policy.

France and Germany have contributed a great deal to the development of CFSP. In the early 1990s, Helmut Kohl and François Mitterrand strongly influenced the intergovernmental conference on political union through a series of joint initiatives (Stark 2012). They overcame their differences and presented proposals that deviated from those of the United Kingdom, Italy, and the Netherlands (Laursen & Vanhoonacker 1992). In the Maastricht treaty, provisions around CFSP were largely due to the influence of the Franco-German leaders, although concessions had to be made to more Atlanticist member states (Treacher 2003). Furthermore, the launching of a European security and defence policy in 1998-99 (Dumoulin, Mathieu & Sarlet 2003, Koutrakos 2013) not only came from a Franco-British initiative agreed in Saint-Malo (December 1998, Schild 2010) but also benefited from strong support from France and Germany during the German presidency (first semester of 1999) (Stark 2012). The framing of this policy by the European Council (Cologne, June 1999) mainly reflected the approach defended by the two member states (Norheim-Martinsen 2012). Most of the instruments developed to strengthen the international visibility of the European Union, like the High Representative, the President of the European Council, and the European External Action Service, resulted from a situation in which France and Germany were on the same page, or managed to compromise. Since the European Council in December 2013, although French and German views have converged again, several initiatives have been introduced in order to make progress towards a European common defence (e.g., European defence action plan, European defence fund, permanent structured cooperation).

However, as seen above, there have been fluctuations in the cohesion of the Franco-German partnership (Miskimmon 2007). In periods of rather low cohesion, CFSP – and even more so, CSDP – have stagnated. Between the creation of CFSP (1992-93) and the launching of CSDP (1998-99), and between the launching of CSDP (1998-99) and its recent revival (2013), there was no significant contribution from the two member states. On the contrary, they failed to present the EU as a military actor in Bosnia-Herzegovina (mid-1990s) and the Arab world crises (Libya 2011). Often instrumental in fostering integration on foreign and security matters, the partnership is in constant need of adjustment when it comes to military issues; this most certainly has an impact on CFSP.

Turning to the substance of foreign and security policy (Table 3), it is obvious that areas of Franco-German convergence are also areas where the EU is more likely to agree on common positions. Yet, this is not a systematic phenomenon. Sometimes the partners agree but fail to gather support from other member states. The war in Iraq is a case in point: while some governments supported the Franco-German opposition to war, others joined the British position in favour of the intervention. To a lesser degree, relations with Russia are not a matter of strong disagreement between Berlin and Paris but may be more conflictual at the level of the EU 28, where some members have asked for hard sanctions against Moscow (in particular with regard to the Crimean war), while others favour collaboration (Gower & Timmins 2013).

When France and Germany are not on the same page, decision-making at the EU level is impossible, and CFSP might even be put aside as a framework for foreign policy action. Disagreement may arise from a unilateral decision made by one of the two partners (recognition of Slovenia and Croatia by Germany in 1991, the French initiative in favour of the Union for the Mediterranean in 2007). Quite often, disagreement follows the same pattern: France promotes a European action while Germany is reluctant to follow suit. Germany has opposed several French initiatives in Africa (e.g., Rwanda), has refused to join France in external operations in Libya and Syria, or has only accepted French proposals after a long period of negotiation (e.g., a strategy

regarding the Sahel region, operations in the Democratic Republic of Congo) (Norheim-Martinsen 2012). In these cases, the EU still has a position (non-intervention is a position), but it might be seen as a position by default (inaction caused by lack of consensus).

However, when the two partners finally succeed in finding common ground, this usually leads to an active CFSP position. We can see this by looking at the main areas where a short distance separates the two member states but does not prevent EU action: the Western Balkans; relations with Africa/peacekeeping in Africa; the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; and Mediterranean policy in the midst of multiple crises (see Table 3). In the Balkans, and after a period of open divergences (unilateral recognition of Slovenia and Croatia by Germany in 1991), German and French positions grew closer, which led to a joint conflict settlement proposal presented by the foreign affairs ministers Alain Juppé and Klaus Kinkel in 1993. As far as crisis management in Africa is concerned, Germany used to be reluctant about following French initiatives (for example, the intervention in Rwanda during the genocide). Yet, thanks to a continuous process of bilateral cooperation, Germany has accepted command of EUFOR DR Congo (2005) and agreed to adopt an EU strategy in the region of Sahel (2011) (Norheim-Martinsen 2012).

The Middle East peace process is not an area where Berlin and Paris can easily find a common position, due to their different approaches (pro-Israel for the former, pro-Palestinian for the latter). However, they have succeeded in finding a compromise at critical moments, in particular in the late 1990s (the Berlin declaration in 1999 regarding the possible recognition of a Palestinian state) (Soetendorp 2014, El-Din 2016). In 2007, Nicolas Sarkozy proposed the creation of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), to include the countries of the region but not all EU member states. This was a strong point of contention for Germany, who feared that the EU Mediterranean policy would be circumvented, and that the EU Eastern policy would be set aside. One year later, Germany and France found a middle path (Schild 2010), with the UfM becoming one pillar of the EU neighbourhood policy and the Eastern Partnership becoming the second pillar.

Military intervention appears to be the main issue limiting this Franco-German inclination towards compromise. This has obliged France and the UK to intervene outside the EU framework in Libya (2011) (Göler & Jopp 2011) and may have contributed to a decrease in the number of CSDP military operations between 2008 and 2013. As far as this issue is concerned, Franco-German cohesion fluctuates and the prospect of finding a bilateral compromise that could benefit the EU as a whole seems very dependent on the context, as we will see in the next section.

Thus, in this section we have seen that: 1) Franco-German cohesion is a pre-requisite for an effective EU foreign and security policy; 2) the distance between the positions of the two actors have the effect of blocking EU foreign and security policy; and 3) Europeanization processes tend to reduce this distance, by removing existing obstacles.

5. The Franco-German partnership in a wider system of interactions

To some extent, the influence of Franco-German tandem can be inferred from the existence of a clear Franco-German proposal prior to an EU decision or action, but other pieces of evidence are required to prove an actual influence. This is why the cohesion of the Franco-German couple has to be placed in a wider context, where three other factors are added to the picture: domestic politics in France and Germany, European governance, and external (non-EU) factors. As specified in the

methods section, when these four factors are negative, the cohesion of EU foreign policy is the least likely. When they are positive, the cohesion of EU foreign policy is the most likely. In between these two extremes are situations combining ‘negative’ and ‘positive’ factors.

This framework of analysis has been applied to four case studies (Table 4), which have been selected on the basis of the degree of unity achieved within EU foreign policy. Two of these cases correspond to situations where the EU succeeded in developing its foreign and security policy: the creation of CFSP in 1990-91 and negotiation of the nuclear Iranian programme in 2006-07. In the other two cases, the war in Iraq (2002-03) and the intervention in Libya (2011), divergences clearly prevailed. These four models of interacting factors should help us to understand variations in the influence of the Franco-German partnership.

Table 4: Factors influencing the unity of the European Union in four case studies

	Case study 1 Creation of CFSP (1990-93)	Case study 2 War in Iraq (2002-2003)	Case Study 3 Negotiations on the Iranian Nuclear Programme (2006-07)	Case Study 4 Intervention in Libya (2011)
	Effective Cohesion	Ineffective Cohesion	Diffuse Cohesion	Blocking Dissensus
Domestic politics France and Germany	Positive	Positive	Positive	Negative
Franco- German position	Positive	Positive	Positive	Neutral
Impact of European governance	Quite Negative	Negative	Quite Positive	Quite Positive
External (non-EU factors)	Neutral	Negative	Positive	Quite Positive

Case study 1. The creation of CFSP – Effective cohesion

The creation of CFSP (Table 4) results from a combination of several ‘positive’ factors. This is mainly due to the Franco-German domestic context (positive) and cohesion as a ‘couple’ (positive). In the early 1990s, Berlin and Paris strived to present a united front in the new political world resulting from the end of the Cold War (Laursen & Vanhoonacker 1992; Gordon 1993, 1994; Treacher 2003; Irondele 2003; Charillon & Wong 2011; Daehnhardt 2011; Stark 2012; Calla & Demesmay 2013). France wants Germany to be anchored in the European Union for fear that its partner might choose a different path, be it Ostpolitik or a solitary form of power (Soutou 2012). Germany wants German reunification to be accepted by its European partners. Public opinion in both countries is consistently supportive of European integration. Kohl and Mitterrand

are said to have a close relationship. They defend a common approach to CFSP, with minor differences on military matters. At this juncture, there is no real bone of contention between the two member states, which can be explained by the fact that difficult topics like a European army are out of the discussion.

European and international factors are less favourable to European unity (Krotz & Schild 2013). European governance can be seen as a ‘quite negative’ factor due to the strong opposition between member states who favoured the NATO framework (the United Kingdom, supported by the Netherlands and Italy) and member states who tried to advance the idea of the EU as a security actor (France and Germany, supported by Belgium, Luxembourg, and Spain) during the intergovernmental conference on political union (Laursen & Vanhoonacker 1992; Dover 2007; Dumoulin, Mathieu & Sarlet 2003; Lequesne 2008; Miskimmon 2007; Stark 2012; Aggestam 2015). Yet, all the member states have agreed to negotiate, and there are procedures aimed at finding a common solution. At the international level, the picture is ambivalent, but quite positive, too (Gordon 1993, 1994; Dumoulin, Mathieu & Sarlet 2003; Miskimmon 2007; Balme 2009; Koutrakos 2010). The United States is reticent and cautious regarding CFSP. But the end of the Cold War provides a unique opportunity to develop a robust European foreign and security policy: with the collapse of the USSR, EU member states are less dependent on the US. Finally, this combination of ‘positive’ Franco-German factors, ‘quite negative’ EU factors and more ‘neutral’ external factors suggest that the Franco-German partnership has exerted a decisive influence on the creation of CFSP. This first model can therefore be called “effective cohesion.”

Case study 2. The Crisis in Iraq (2002-2003) – Ineffective cohesion.

The crisis in Iraq offers a more nuanced picture of positive and negative factors. This corresponds to a model of “ineffective cohesion,” which combines strong unity between the two partners with a lack of influence on the outcome of the negotiations. Indeed, the Franco-German factors are clearly positive – the two governments defend a common position, strongly supported by public opinion in their respective countries – while the other factors are negative (Dover 2007; Miskimmon 2007; Bulmer & Paterson 2010; Longhurst 2010; Daehnhardt 2011; Charillon & Wong 2011; Norheim-Martinsen 2012; Koutrakos 2013; Calla & Demesmay 2013; Keukeleire & Delreux 2014; Aggestam 2015). European governance exerts a negative influence due to the existing divergences between two groups of states (supporters and opponents of the US-led intervention) and the lack of leadership capable of resolving these divergences. External factors are also negative, with the United States pressuring several states in order to gain support for its policy. Thus, Franco-German cohesion is strong, but this does not translate into influence in this case.

Case study 3. Negotiations on the Iranian Nuclear Programme (2006-07) – Diffuse cohesion

Our third case study offers another combination of factors, defined as “diffuse cohesion.” The cohesion between France and Germany is rather strong: there is no distance between the positions of both governments, and domestic politics plays a positive role. Other factors are also positive, but to a lesser degree (Smith 2013; Soetendorp 2014; Musu 2010; Keukeleire & Delreux 2014; Aggestam 2015). The Troika (France, Germany, and the UK), together with the High Representative, represent the EU’s position in the negotiation process. European demarches are welcomed by third states, including the United States, although the latter also use the threat of military action to try and get their way. To sum up, many factors work in favour of strong European actorness. Yet, the Franco-German ‘couple’ is certainly not as influential as it was in the first case

study (the creation of CFSP). CFSP was created despite quite strong opposition from a number of member states (United Kingdom, Italy, Netherlands) who were mainly interested in preserving the transatlantic alliance. In the case of the Iranian nuclear programme, the European setting / picture is much more favourable, and the UK contributes to a common position together with the French and the Germans. Diffuse cohesion denotes a situation where Franco-German cohesiveness is hard to distinguish from the cohesiveness of the EU as a whole (and to some extent Western partners).

Case study 4: Military operation in Libya – Blocking dissensus

Our fourth and last case is the only one where Franco-German cohesion is weak (Göler & Jopp 2011; Menon 2011; Calla & Demesmay 2011; Koutrakos 2013; Aggestam 2015). Domestic politics negatively affect this cohesion (Paterson 2011). Faced with the prospect of forthcoming legislative and local elections, Angela Merkel fears that German participation in a military operation in Libya (2011) could undermine the chances of the Christian Democrats. Among political parties as well as public opinion, military interventions and political power more generally (Bulmer & Paterson 2013) remain unpopular. External factors, on the other hand, are quite positive. Indeed, the UK is in favour of a military operation and could envisage the EU as a framework for intervening in Libya. In addition, there are strong humanitarian arguments in favour of the operation; a local population who would welcome it, support from the United States and favourable public opinion in Western countries. This fourth model, called “blocking dissensus,” denotes a situation where the divergence between France and Germany is the main factor behind a Union deadlock.

Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to evaluate the cohesion between France and Germany in foreign and security affairs, and to see how it affects the cohesion of the EU as a whole. We have seen that the French and German positions are fundamentally compatible, in spite of some discordance on geostrategic priorities and the use of force. There have been ups and downs in the partnership, but the partnership itself has never been seriously questioned.

The existing discrepancies between the two member states do not mean that cohesion is systematically lacking. When disagreements are minor, it is still possible to reach a common position, thanks to the Europeanization processes affecting their foreign policies (the Franco-German partnership influences EU governance whilst simultaneously being influenced by the EU; Wong & Hill 2011, Keukeleire & Delreux 2014). Yet, when reaching a common position proves impossible, it has a blocking effect at the EU level; in several cases, the gap between France and Germany on military issues was so huge that EU action was impossible. Thus, most of the time, Franco-German cohesion is a prerequisite for a European position to be adopted and defended.

The idea of a Franco-German ‘motor’ of Europe still has some relevance but might have been overestimated. Their influence does not always have a decisive impact. The four models presented in the last section place the Franco-German partnership in a wider perspective in order to determine their influence in relation to the influence of other factors. “Effective cohesion” (the creation of CFSP) denotes a situation where Franco-German cohesion has played a decisive role compared to other factors. “Ineffective cohesion” (the crisis in Iraq), on the other hand, means that bilateral cohesion has not been enough to reach a consensus at EU level. When France and Germany agree, but their position can hardly be distinguished from that of other (member or non-member) states,

this can be seen as “diffuse cohesion” (negotiations on the Iranian nuclear programme). Finally, “blocking dissensus” pertains to a situation where a Franco-German disagreement leads to European deadlock (the intervention in Libya).

In addition to this, it can be stressed that, apart from the Franco-German ‘engine’, other actors may play the role of policy entrepreneur. The High Representative has been instrumental in launching CSDP operations (Buchet de Neuilly 2002). The EEAS sets the agenda more and more frequently (Vanhoonacker & Pomorska 2013, Balfour, Carta & Raïk 2015). The building of a sophisticated CFSP (Smith 2000) and CSDP (Dijkstra 2012, 2013) institutional system has been highlighted repeatedly, as well as the influence of large (Dover 2007, Aggestam 2015, on the UK) and small/medium-sized member states (Tonra 2001, Lee-Ohlsson 2009).

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