

Abstract

This project attempts to analyse the role of the autonomous projection of hard power as tool of EU strategic culture through investigation into three case studies. These case studies constitute several EU military operations including: EUFOR BiH (Operation Althea), EUFOR DRC (Operation Artemis) and a joint investigation into EUNAVFOR MED (Operation Sophia) and EUNAVFOR MED (Operation Irini). The case selection of these operations is justified through the application of strategic culture theory as well as discourse and documentary analysis of the literature surrounding each of these missions. Further documentary, discourse and empirical analyses are undertaken during the case studies, as well as contextual factors being taken into consideration, in order to come to conclusions regarding the consequences of the strategic actions taken by the EU and other allied or aligned actors in each case upon the strategic culture of the EU. The extent of the relative autonomy ODF the actions of the EU from other aligned actors is also investigated in order to make determinations about the extent to which the EU was fully strategically responsible for a given military operation and, therefore, how consequential the outcomes of a given mission are upon the strategic culture of the EU. The core actors which were identified as being the most significant to the launch, conduct and conclusion of the EU military operations under analysis were: The US, France, The UN and NATO. Each case study is roughly broken down into three major constituent parts which are as follows: to what extent does the operation exemplify the proposed status quo of the EU as a normative or diplomatic actor; what are the consequences of the conduct of the operation upon EU strategic culture; and how autonomously can the EU have been said to have acted in a given case. This is then collated in order to conclude that the EU has placed itself upon a trajectory wherein the application of autonomous hard power in order to achieve strategic objectives is a viable tool for EU strategic thinkers and that the autonomous projection of hard power from the EU is more plausible and effective than it ever has been.