

Institutional Change - in pursuit of coherence?

The EU as an International Security Actor

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Abstract

The well-stated fact that institutions matter, according to new institutionalism, is the starting point for this thesis. On this basis, institutional change will be the focus for the three approaches historical institutionalism, rational choice institutionalism and sociological institutionalism. These approaches however focus on different storylines to the same story of institutional change. This thesis therefore aims at explaining institutional change of the EU as a foreign policy actor through these three approaches of new institutionalism. More specifically, how a change in competence post Lisbon has affected the coherence of the EU as an international security actor.

The research also provides a case study follow-up example of how the EU acts as an international security actor in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe post Lisbon. This mixed method is however only a technical approach and EU statements in the Permanent Council and Forum for Security Cooperation at the OSCE are compiled into data that reveals some differences with reference to EU competence.

The thesis demonstrates that one theoretical approach does not necessarily contradict another, but rather should be considered as fruitful encounters when explaining EU institutional change and its effects on coherence.

Key words: New institutionalism, coherence, competence, EU international security actor, institutional change

Words: 18253

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Abbreviations

CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CSDP	Common Security and Defense Policy
EEF	Economic and Environmental Forum
EEAS	European External Action Service
EPC	European Political Cooperation
ESDP	European Security and Defense Policy
ESS	European Security Strategy
EU	European Union
FSC	Forum for Security Cooperation
IGC	Intergovernmental Conference
HR	High Repr. of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
HI	Historical institutionalism
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PC	Permanent Council
RCI	Rational choice institutionalism
SEA	Single European Act
SI	Sociological institutionalism
TEU	Treaty of the European Union
TFEU	Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union

1 Introduction

“Nothing is possible without men, nothing is lasting without institutions”

Jean Monet 1978

The study of institutions in political science, and international relations has, traditionally, largely been based on the Westphalia state system¹ (March – Olsen 1998:946-947). The debate on whether international institutions might enhance cooperation between states has been vivid, even though it is not a very provocative statement. Another step in that debate is if institutional change further would enhance cooperation. Institutionalism scholars have made the argument that given that institutions matter, one should expect increased cooperation in foreign policy as institutional mechanisms expand and stabilize (Smith 2004: 37). A linchpin to the identity of the political science discipline is the study of political institutions. Early works in theories of political science emphasized the traditional political institutions such as the legal system, economic institutions and the state².

The main focus of these studies was how, and why rules arose, and whether the rules worked in favor of the common good. The last couple of decades, however, the debate and many faces of institutional perspectives are generically recognized as “new institutionalism”, and focus is on what explains the rules and practices that comprise the structure of institutions, how they are established, sustained and transformed, but also how these rules influence political behavior (Dimaggio – Powell 1984:2-3, Lowndes 1996:181, March - Olsen 1998:943-944, 2005:247-248).

In line with this debate, the aim of this paper is to produce a dialogue between three approaches of new institutionalism in relation to recent institutional changes to the EU as an international security actor. With the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, much attention was drawn to the coherence of the EU as an international actor, and a significant change to the institutional set-up underlying EU foreign policy was made. Among other novelties introduced³, the High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (HR), and the European External Action Service (EEAS) are *inter alia* responsible for the external representation that was previously executed by the rotating Presidency. It is for the

¹ The Treaty of Westphalia (1648) reflected the notion of international political order that not only encompassed the European roots but also the rest of the world. The political actor central in this treaty was the territorial, sovereign state.

² Further reading on early works of theories focusing on traditional political institutions is sociologist Max Weber, economist Thorstein Veblen, and political scientist W.W. Willoughby.

³ E.g. the appointed Presidency of the European Council,

abovementioned reasons an excellent opportunity to analyze the EU's role as an international actor, with a new set of competences, using new institutionalism.

1.1 Relevance and previous research

Depending on whether a researcher is a political scientist, economist, or sociologist, new institutionalism can be viewed differently, and it has therefore been argued that it is a question of 'many new institutionalisms' (Lecours 2005:18). Even within political science the argument has been made that it is rather a question of renewed institutionalism instead of *a* new institutionalism since the adversative frameworks simply share the notion that institutions matter (Hay - Wincott 1998:3-4). One of the fundamental differences among the approaches in new institutionalism, as mentioned above, is how they view change. Whether institutional change is recognized as part of ordinary institutional life, or as an exception to the rule of stability.

Central to the refocus of (new) institutionalism in contemporary political science is research by James March and Johan P. Olsen (1984, 1989, 1994, 1996). March and Olsen opposed the theoretical focus on individualistic assumptions in political science, and feared the disregard of collective choice and political values. Instead of regarding political processes as aggregative, and institutions as a contractual form for organizations, March and Olsen suggests an integrative political process, and that institutions express 'logic of appropriateness' that influence behavior rather than 'logic of consequentiality'. Accordingly, if an institution effectively influence the behavior of its members, it is more likely that the members will consider whether the actions reflect the institution rather than considering what the consequences will be for the members themselves (Peters 2005: 25-27, Lecours 2005: 27, Peters 2012: 30).

Critics of have pointed to its inability to explain change due to a lack of explanatory factors, and also that it brings nothing new to the table. Moreover, arguments pointing to the lack of new institutionalism to present a unique theoretical framework of analysis are put forward (Kraatz – Zajac 1996: 831, Georges 2001: 151). Some scholars advocate altogether embracing one approach of new institutionalism specifically because of their ontological differences (Hay - Wincott 1998:7), whereas other scholars argue the need for greater interchange between the three approaches, despite their differences, to attain creative combinations drawing on strengths of each approach (Taylor – Hall 1996, Thelen 1999: 370, 380, Hall: 2010: 220).

1.2 Motivation

New institutionalism should not be considered as belonging to one school of thought, instead it can be broadly branched into three approaches⁴: historical institutionalism, rational choice institutionalism and sociological institutionalism (Koelbe 1995, Hall – Taylor 1996:936, Lecours 2005:16). What brings these different approaches together is categorically thin, and the revival of the study of institutions in political science partly sprung from a common reaction to the individualistic approaches of behavioralism, in which individuals are assumed to act autonomously, and not constrained by formal, neither informal institutions. But it was also in line of understanding the nature of continuity and change, since institutions gave way for the opportunity, or incentive for behavior to change (Hall – Taylor 1996:936, Rhodes 2006: xiii). Consequently, the joint key factor to new institutionalism is the fact that institutions matter; the debate is to what extent they do so, and what the effects of institutional change might be. In line with this reasoning, one could also argue that the institutions brings different traditions in political science together and provides for the evolution of these approaches as a whole.

The debate on new institutionalism has partly been on whether it could, based on such a small common denominator, and with such different social ontologies, be forged into what some call a super-institutionalism, but also the possible value of such a hybrid check-list of institutional insights (Hay –Wincott 1998: 5, Aspinwall – Schneider 2000:2-3).

For above-mentioned reasons, this paper contemplates the three approaches as being part of the same story (institutional change), but telling a different storyline, and highlighting different processes within that story. The meaning of this being that the insight of one approach does not necessarily contradict, nor has to falsify the insights of another approach, but should instead be contemplated as enriching and fruitful encounters.

1.2.1 Aim and research problem

The purpose of this paper is to draw from these differences of the three approaches, in order to understand possible effects of institutional change.

⁴ It should be noted that other approaches exist within new institutionalism, e.g. constructivist institutionalism, network institutionalism and normative institutionalism.

The type of institutional change in the limelight here is a change in competence, the abovementioned novelties of external representation introduced with the Lisbon Treaty, i.e. the High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (HR), and the European External Action Service (EEAS).

As the guiding principle for foreign policy in the EU, as well as in relation to other international actors, is coherence, one might expect that a change in competences consequently somehow will influence the coherence of the foreign policy of the EU.

Furthermore, given that a multifaceted approach reveals issues from different angles, it is fruitful for further research that might generate complimentary insights to the process of institutional change, and how a change in competence might affect the coherence of the EU as an international security actor.

Based on the reasoning above, the research questions guiding this thesis:

- *How does the three approaches of new institutionalism explain institutional change in EU foreign policy?*
- *Given that institutions matter, how has a change in competence affected the coherence of the EU as an international security actor?*

1.3 Ideal types

Based on the theoretical chapter, an important note that differentiates the three approaches of new institutionalism is how they consider what one could call the 'lifecycle' of institutions, whereof stability and change are part of this. What then guides the lifecycle of institutions and change, whether it is the result of critical junctures (historical institutionalism), strategic action (rational choice institutionalism) or norm-driven behaviour (sociological institutionalism), differs between the three approaches.

Because of the existence of various strands within each presented approach, and for the purpose of clarification for the analysis, ideal types are presented following each theoretical presentation. An ideal type is extreme versions of a phenomenon, in this case the theoretical approaches of new institutionalism presented in the theoretical chapter. The purpose of this is to highlight the characteristics by pointing out what is typical for each approach, and to provide an analytical toolkit for the analysis (Esaiasson 2007:158, Teorell – Svensson 2007:43).

1.4 Outline

In order to answer the research problem in the best possible way, the research proceeds in three steps. First, the three approaches of new institutionalism, focusing on their take on institutional change, will be presented. Each theory section will conclude with an ideal type in order to facilitate and clarify the analytical chapter.

By way of applying the three approaches of new institutionalism in the next coming chapter to the development of EU foreign policy and competence as designed in the novelties HR and EEAS, the author hopes to shed some light upon a possible dialogue between these three approaches.

The final chapter, is a case study of follow-up nature on the coherence of the EU as an international security actor in another international organisation, namely the OSCE.

2 Methodology

Important acknowledgment before deciding on a methodology is that different methods have different strengths, and often enough one method's strength is the weakness of another and vice versa (Teorell – Svensson 2007: 273).

The course of action for this study therefore incorporates two methodologies, qualitative and quantitative – thus a mixed method design. This approach is not without controversy, because of epistemological differences attached to quantitative and qualitative methods alike. The position of this thesis is nonetheless more technical approach to combining methodologies, and consequently views these two as compatible (Bryman 2012: 631). Methodological aspects and motivation for certain choices in this research is accounted for below.

2.1 Research design – a mixed methodology

The thesis thus has two methodological parts. The first qualitative, consisting of a descriptive case study of institutional change to the EU external representation post Lisbon, videlicet the HR, and the EEAS through the lenses of three approaches of new institutionalism. Consequently, the aspects of the institutional change to EU foreign policy, needs to be accounted for. But also possible effects of the set-up of underlying institutional design to the EU foreign policy. By applying the three approaches of new institutionalism, and key concepts of how institutional change in competence occur and whether the increase of institutionalization actually might result in greater coherence of the EU as an international security actor. In order to understand the institutional development of the EU, one needs to look into possible explanatory factors to why EU calls for greater coherence in its foreign policy, which is accounted for by the approach of Historical institutionalism. This will function as helpful tools for structuring this part of the analysis.

The second, quantitative part is then applied and used a step further down the abstraction ladder, to the EU presence at the OSCE, where EU statements in the decision-making bodies of Permanent Council and Forum for Security Cooperation at the OSCE are examined. The principle argument for this is to look at the coherence of EU foreign policy in another multilateral organisation, post Lisbon. The quantitative part in this mixed research design is thus considered to be of a complementary and follow-up nature, as it is meant to “evaluate and interpret results from a principally qualitative study” (Morgan 1998:368), in this

case to shed light on whether there has been signs of greater coherence in the specific case of EU representation at the OSCE.

Both qualitative and quantitative research incorporates goals of describing and explaining. It is essential in research to have both, scholars that describe the world as well as those who set out to explain it. This relationship is however interactive since some descriptions might lead to new causal explanations as well as they in turn may result in looking at descriptions in other parts of the world or areas (King 1994:34).

Critique to qualitative studies often point to the difficulty to replicate them, since it relies much on the researcher. Another aspect is the difficulty of generalization drawn from qualitative studies, and since it might be troublesome to apply one situation to another it is an understandable critique. The primary purpose for qualitative studies is characterized as focusing on insights, and understanding the 'why' (Teorell – Svensson 2007:150-151).

2.2 Case study & output

The reason for using a case study for this research is because it provides a way of looking at indicators of concepts as specified by the theoretical framework (George – Bennet 2005: 19). In this case of research how institutional change is explained and analysed according to the three approaches of new institutionalism.

The relationship between theory and research is either deductive, meaning that theory guides research, or it is inductive which means that theory is the outcome of research (Bryman 2012:19). The case in point here is the former, deductive. And as is outlined in the following theoretical chapter, HI conceptualizes institutional change as being path dependent, and focus on possible unintended consequences thereof, RCI focus on transaction costs of institutional change, and finally SI considers institutional change as a form of isomorphism.

Why a follow-up case on the OSCE? The reason for choosing this organization is partly because of the sheer size, in terms of participating States, but also in the organization's broad security concept. Another factor is the organization's political and decision-making bodies, as well as operational structures that are designed to promote dialogue on a wide array of topics and situations. With 57 participating States, whereof 27 members of the EU, the latter make up for almost half of the members. Consequently, if acting coherently, the EU has the possibility to be a prominent international security actor (Pourchot 2011: 184).

2.2.1 Material and data

The qualitative part of the study, as it analyse the institutional development of EU foreign policy, official documents, such as Treaty texts, Council decisions, statements as well as press releases that are important in order to connect the theoretical approaches to empirical data. In order to understand the reasoning behind institutional development and treaty revisions, it is also significant to study the course of intergovernmental conferences (IGC). Taken together, these resources are used in order to find empirical evidence, as well as the rationale behind decisions, that can be connected to the theoretical approaches of new institutionalism (King 1994:227).

In addition to the primary sources, a balance of secondary sources such as books, academic articles, publications from think tanks, as well as some few news articles have been used. An important aspect when dealing with both primary and secondary sources is to keep in mind who the author is, for what intentions it was produced and to whom it is addressed (Bergström – Boréus 2005: 23-24).

Certain criteria to mention when conducting social research are the concepts of reliability and validity. Reliability deals with the question of whether the results of a study are repeatable, if a measure is stable (Teorell – Svensson 2007:55, Bryman 2012:46-47). Validity, in short, concerns the integrity of the conclusions drawn from research, if what is intended to be measured actually is measured. The author hopes to obtain this validity criteria by thoroughly exercising precise and thorough formulations.

2.2.1.1. Statistics of EU statements at the OSCE

In this study, the quantitative data used is EU statements in a multilateral organization, more precisely statements by the EU in the Permanent Council and in the Forum for Security Cooperation at the OSCE. The results presented is thus repeatable, and the statements are available at the official website of Delegation of the European Union to the International Organizations in Vienna.

The statements are compiled and structured by the author into measurable data in an excel table that is presented in graphs. A limitation to this quantitative study of EU statements is that it only covers the years from 2011 until 2013-05-16. However the justification is that in order to investigate whether, through an example from EU foreign policy in an international organization, act coherently after the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty. As previously stated, it is a sample and follow-up study so as to be able to see how, and what impact (if any) a change in competence has generated to the coherence of the EU as an international security actor.

2.3 Definitions

In this section concepts used will be defined as to avoid ambiguity on how they are used and what they incorporate for this particular study.

As of the 1 December 2009, the European Union acts as the legal successor of the European Community (TEU art. 1), and the previous confusion of having two actors on the international stage is no more. The notion of EU as an international actor is a rather well established fact and has been focus for numerous foreign policy analysts as well as political scientists⁵, the question of how to define the EU as an actor has however been approached differently. This thesis take on the EU is a rather broad understanding, which covers the EU both in a narrower sense (one or more EU institutions), as well as the collective of EU member states. Nonetheless recognizing the fact that some scholars regard the EU as an international organisation in itself, whereas others regard this feature ancient history, and instead explores how the EU has developed policies, and what impact they might have, in (other) international organisations (Jørgensen – Wessel 2011: 274, Sari 2012: 60). With this background, the division of areas in competence as well as the fact that many policy areas not only fall under one set of competences has been intensified by the divide between the economic and political dimension of the EU. As the EU increasingly has developed its presence as an international actor, its internal divisions have shone through, resulting in hitches of credibility as a coherent actor (Edwards – Rijks 2008: 21-22).

Moving on to the concepts of coherence and effectiveness. Coherence can be understood as legal procedural obligation to be followed by political action. The political action subsequently needs to be coordinated by actors in European foreign policy in order to have a coherent EU foreign policy. If not, internal forces would produce a clash and whirlwind of different external policies (Portela – Raube 2009:4).

Coherence is a precondition for an effective foreign policy. The prime objective for EU foreign policy is to be able to deliver effective policy outputs that member states cannot deliver individually. Even though effectiveness does not always go hand in hand with EU achieving unanimity in foreign policy, coherence is nonetheless perceived as legitimizing EU foreign policy (Portela – Raube 2009:4, Koehler 2010: 57). The debate surrounding the concepts of coherence and effectiveness is tremendously wide. One can speak of different types of effectiveness, but for the purpose of this research it is the effectiveness in acting collectively (Jørgensen 2011: 603).

Another important note in this wide ranged debate is that the English version of the TEU addresses the need for enhanced consistency in EU external action, whereas legal scholars almost unanimously agree on the distinction between the principles of *coherence* and *consistency*. The problem is partly of a linguistic and

⁵ For further research on EU 'actorness' Smith 2008

semantic nature, since different language versions of the Treaties (TEU and TFEU) use different terminology. At least one distinction to be made here is that consistency, in the legal sense, refers to primary law and the assurance that different EU policies do not contradict each other, i.e. they are consistent. The concept of coherence then, conversely connotes a wider meaning and refers to unity as a whole in foreign policy of the EU (Cremona 2008: 13, Duke 2011: 17-18, Blockmans – Laatsit 2012: 138). For the purpose of this thesis, and in spite of the language used in the (English version) TEU, the concept used hereinafter is coherence.

Theoretical framework

New institutionalism can generally be presented as proposing a methodology for research. What this methodology then offers is various research questions and orientations rather than offering a grand macro theory model. As previously mentioned, the basic assumption is that institutions matter. Thus the starting point for analysis is institutions, and the fact that they are an autonomous force in politics, as their weight effect action and outcomes. Each of the three new institutionalisms tackle institutional change differently, and therefore the focus of the overview below (Bulmer 1998: 368, Gorges 2001: 156, Lecours 2005:8).

2.4 From old to new institutionalism

The name new institutionalism implies the existence of a previous institutionalism, and what today, retrospectively, is called old institutionalism focused mainly on institutions as material structures, and individualistic assumptions (Lecours 2005:6).

Political philosophers in the old days identified and analyzed the success, or lack thereof, of formal institutions that were developed for the purpose of the collective good, and then made recommendations for the design for future institutions. From Hobbes and the focus on strong institutions, to save people from their worst instincts, to Locke who developed a more contractarian notion of public institutions, or Montesquieu who identified the need for balance in political structures (Peters 1999:3). The point to be made from these political thinkers is that it paved the way for political science systematic analysis of institutions, and their impact on society.

Since new institutionalism is not an approach designed to describe institutions, and how they work, but more in the line of explaining the process and political outcomes, it is important to note that these strands of different positions reflect a larger debate within political science (Taylor – Hall 1996: 936). This is revealed by the different ways institutions are defined according to the three approaches:

Historical Intuitionism	Formal, or informal procedures, routines, norms and conventions embedded in the organizational structure of the polity or political economy.
Rational choice Institutionalism	In materialist terms, but also rules that govern the political game, creating opportunities as well as imposing constraints.

Sociological Institutionalism	Formal rules, procedures or norms, as well as the symbol systems, cognitive scripts, and moral templates that provide the frames of meaning guiding human action.
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(Taylor – Hall 1996)

In the next coming sections each approach of new institutionalism will be presented, with focus on their take on institutional change.

2.5 Historical institutionalism (HI)

Generally, HI associates institutions with formal organisations as well as informal rules and procedures that structure conduct. Norms and values are considered to emanate from material institutions, and their function in these formal structures is important. In that sense, it is the institutions that actually shape political outcome since they structure political situations (Thelen – Steinmo 1998: 2, Taylor – Hall 1996: 938).

Political actors, according to HI, are considered to follow societally defined rules, even though not necessarily directly for the sake of self-interest. With this follows wherefrom preferences emanate, correspondingly strategies as well as goals pursued by actors are shaped endogenously, by institutional context. At the heart of HI lies the notion of a historically based analysis in order to reveal why actors emphasize certain goals and preferences over others (Thelen – Steinmo 1998: 9). This structural approach acknowledges the autonomy of the political arena, but simultaneously taking into account previously introduced policy. The study of institutions in HI thus reveals how institutions influence the outcome of structural processes, setting the constraints but also shaping political strategies and influence political outcome, even though the institutions not being considered as the sole cause (Thelen – Steinmo 1998:7).

Critique to HI approach has been the lack of what some would call ‘universal toolkit’ that characterizes other deductive theoretical approaches⁶. Some scholars even call it simple storytelling, however the response to this critique is that each approach has weaknesses and strengths based on different assumptions and logics, and the wise route for fruitful research is consequently to explore these.

2.5.1 Path dependence & unintended consequences

In the words of North (1990:3):

“Institutional change shapes the way societies evolve through time and hence is the key to understanding historical change”.

⁶ E.g. rational choice institutionalism

Continuity is a central element in HI, and accordingly an apparent change is in fact only concealing underlying continuity. When presenting change, HI put it forward as a situation of formative period and in moments of crisis, rather than purely evolutionary (Hay - Wincott 1998:15-16).

Central to HI is path dependence that entails a dynamic process of self-reinforcing. By way of example, when an organization or institution embarks on a path (institution is formed or policy is initiated), the initial policy choices tend to persist, and positive feedback reinforces that particular path (Thelen 1999:387-388, Peters 2005:71). Institutional change, according to HI, is a result of unintended consequences due to these 'critical junctures' when considerable institutional change take place, and the institution embark on a new historical path. This branching point of critical juncture reveals that it presupposes that an institution exists in a constant equilibrium state. A bit misleading concept though, since the approach does allow for change, through a discrete process but also when responding to new information and thus a process of learning and capable to move among equilibrium (Lowndes 2002: 105, Peters – Pierre – King 2005:1276).

The effects of critical junctures are mostly argued to be filling a political space, and are difficult to alter or reverse. Positive feedback or factors, even the smallest ones, are then considered to provide advantage, and most likely to produce a scenario of self-enforcing. This is also commonly claimed to happen in issue areas that are not yet well established. If institutional change does take place, according to HI, it is most likely incremental change and not radical. Furthermore, new institutions, through a process of layering, will be created on top of stable institutions, or through conversions where old institutions are remodelled but for new purposes (Hall – Taylor 1996: 942, Thelen 1999: 388-390, Stacey – Rittberger 2003: 867-868, Peters 2012: 20-21).

From the get go, HI was not considered to present very convincing arguments on institutional change. This is also the area that traditionally receives most criticism within HI, of being unduly static, and not able to predict change. This conversely does not have to be its downfall, since post-dicting changes in a more descriptive manner is also fruitful, instead of or as a aim element to explanatory and predicting approaches. The debate on HI has however evolved in this regard, and tackles change as exogenous factors that generate sufficient political pressure for change to occur. Some scholars even argue this being the strength of HI, as it therefore duly can be integrated with the majority of approaches in new institutionalism (Peters 2012: 79).

Table 1. Ideal type of HI

Historical institutionalism	
Scientific world view:	Modified egoism; structured by common agreement. As the name suggests, history matters in the sense that history explains stability and continuity.
General approach:	Order and stability, as well as timing and sequence are important factors.
Define institutions:	Formal, or informal procedures, routines, norms and conventions embedded in the organizational structure of the polity or political economy.
Actors intentionality:	Functional need and convenience, possible shortcuts. Self-reflective.
Explains institutional change:	External factors, such as political or environmental pressure, change can be a cumulative process where previous decisions provide the basis for new decisions. Therefore, initial institutional and policy decisions tend to persist, and be 'sticky'. Change might also be a process of learning, as it responds to new information generated from experiences.
Path dependence:	A self-enforcing process, where initial policy choices tend to persist. Positive feedback enforcing the path, increasing returns in forms of stability and continuity.
Critical junctures:	An institutional crisis can be the result of either endogenous or exogenous factors that lead to a critical juncture. It is a formative process stemming from uncertainty, which presents various alternative routes to embark upon.
Unintended consequences:	Critical junctures might trigger and result in unintended consequences that set the institution on a new path.

This ideal type of HI is derived from the theory chapter above, and thus from the following sources: Hall – Taylor 1996, Hay - Wincott 1998, Thelen – Steinmo 1998, Peters 1999, Thelen 1999, Aspinwall – Schneider 2001, Lowndes 2002, Stacey – Rittberger 2003, Peters 2005, Peters 2012.

2.6 Rational Choice Institutionalism (RCI)

Rational choice can be contemplated as an umbrella of theoretical approaches, wherein all subscribe to basic assumptions on the nature of actors, preferences and

institutional or strategic settings in which they interact. The basis for analysis within rational choice approaches can be actors, organisations or states. Originally political scientists within RCI were inspired by economics and organizational studies, and motivated by concepts that emphasised property rights and transaction costs. RCI reintroduced the study of institutions to rational choice in political science as well as in international relations, and developed at the same time, but relatively isolated from historical institutionalism. According to RCI, actors have a fixed set of preferences and behave accordingly to maximize, and strategically, in order to attain these preferences (Taylor – Hall 1996: 942-945, Pollack 2007:32-33, Peters 2012: 47).

Institutions according to RCI are associated with material structures, and the rules of the political game. These rules then provide for opportunities as well as set constraints on the strategic, calculating actors. Hence not so much focus on what institutions are but rather what they represent, which is equilibrium, that in turn encompass a pattern of behaviour as a result of mutual expectations on how others will act. The emergence and survival of institutions are due to the fact that they fulfil the function for the actors affected by the institutions (Lecours 2005:6, 16, 18, Jönsson – Tallberg 2008: 89, Peters 2012:52).

Snidal divides the critique to rational choice in international relations to internal and external. First, internal criticism still accepts the basics to the approach; however the debate is on how rational choice is used in methodological terms. One of the main internal critiques is the questioning of empirical application of rational choice models. The argument being that empirical work by rational choice scholars has severe methodological failings, and consequently little to contribute to the study of international relations. Second, the external critique then identifies flaws in the approach as a whole. Main argument by scholars are ‘ontological blind spots’, due to the fact that rational choice emphasize certain issues over others by pure assumption, and therefore end up with an inaccurate view of the empirical world (Snidal 2002: 73-74, Pollack 2007: 35).

2.6.1 Strategy to reduce transaction costs

According to RCI, institutions change when they become dysfunctional, or do not generate optimum results. Institutional equilibrium is thus considered as the norm, and mostly it is argued that ‘business as usual’ is when actors seek to maximise their benefits within the institutional context and the institution is held constant. In this view of RCI, institutional change is a consequence of strategic action by actors deciding to remodel because of endogenous malfunctions since the rules of

the game changed and the institutions needs to follow suit⁷ (Lecours 2005:12, 16, Rittberger – Stacey 2003: 1022, Fioretos 2011:373).

Institutional change, due to exogenous factors, is thus institutional modification as actors realise that the benefits for change outweighs the costs and steadily moving towards a new equilibrium. The transaction cost of change refers to the actual change and operating it, and this incorporates the costs of learning how to operate within a new structure, as well as the cost that follows with the uncertainty of operating in a new structure. One aspect to reducing transaction cost is the need for selective incentives so as to receive acceptance and compliance. Another aspect to minimise collective action problems is to design institutions accordingly to reduce transaction costs among actors and between institutions. A point to be made here though is that policy makers can use it to ‘lock in’ their preferences (Koremenos – Lipson – Snidal 2001:782, Hira – Hira 2000: 270, Lowndes 2002:105).

Table 2. Ideal Type of RCI

Rational Choice Institutionalism	
Scientific world view:	Key notions are individualism, optimizing, and strategic behaviour.
General approach:	Institutions are important in the context of strategic and calculating actors, as to constrain their behaviour. How structure influence behaviour and policy.
Define institutions:	Institutions are associated with material structures, and the rules of the political game, that provide opportunity as well as set the constraint for strategic and calculating actors.
Actors intentionality:	Actors have a set of preferences and behave strategically and accordingly as to maximize the fulfilment of these preferences.
Explains institutional change:	Strategic actors decide to remodel institutions only when they become dysfunctional, or do not generate optimal results, due to a change in the rules and henceforth the institutions must follow suit.
Strategies:	Utility-maximizing actors with strategic preferences based on self-interest. Since institutions set the structural context wherein actors pursue their strategies, they are of great importance.
Transaction costs:	In order to lessen collective action problems,

⁷ This is called Nash Equilibrium, when ”a set of strategies, one for each player, with the property that no player can improve her or his position by changing to some other strategy (assuming other players stick to their initial strategies)” (Shepsle 2006:25)

institutions and structures can be designed as to reduce transaction costs.

This ideal type of RCI is developed from the presented theoretical chapter above, and thus the following sources are used: Taylor – Hall 1996, Koremenos – Lipson – Snidal 2001, Snidal 2002, Lecours 2005, Hira – Hira 2000, Lowndes 2002, Rittberger – Stacey 2003, Pollack 2007, Jönsson – Tallberg 2008, Fioretos 2011, Peters 2012.

2.7 Sociological institutionalism (SI)

This approach, as revealed by its name, stem from sociology, more specifically from the subfield of organisational theory⁸. A distinctive difference to political scientist approaches is that SI tend to define institutions much broader, to also include symbol systems, cognitive scripts, and moral templates as these provide the ‘frames of meaning’ that guides human action. Instead of focusing on the historic (HI) or strategic (RCI) dimension of institutions, SI brings forward the cognitive. If RCI emphasise that actors seek to maximise benefits, SI in contrast emphasise that actors seek to act appropriate according to institutionalized practices of a collective, and bestowing a shared understanding of what is true and reasonable, expressing identity in sociologically appropriate ways. It is thus suggested that institutions shape actors perceptions, and with this follows behaviour favouring reproduction of institutions. (Hall – Taylor 1996:946-947, 949, Lecours 2005:17, Olsen 2007:3).

Institutions and culture, consistent with SI, are thus closely associated with one another since agent and structure are inseparable. Given that actions can only be explained and understood in relation to the cognitive and culturally informed institutions in the environmental context in which they exist (Aspinwall – Schneider 2000: 9). According to this understanding, institutions are the collective outcomes of social constructions based on shared cultural understandings of how the world works. SI thus emphasise “logic of appropriateness” as environmental context plays a seminal role in actions taken within an institutional context (Thelen 1999: 386, Pollack 2009: 127).

⁸ The previously mentioned contribution to new institutionalism in political science by March and Olsen reflects debates on institutions in sociology, and can therefore be viewed as a subfield to SI. March and Olsen’s approach in political science is sometimes ascribed normative institutionalism, but for the purpose of this thesis the term used is sociological institutionalism.

2.7.1 The garbage can approach and isomorphism

Since the study of institutions in SI lies much in the actual process of institutionalisation, one could argue that institutional change is a natural component in this approach. Hence, institutions are not static, and change occurs through either institutionalisation or deinstitutionalisation. A more functionalist view within SI is that institutions find the means of adapting to exogenous environmental changes (Olsen 2007: 9, Peters 2012: 139-140).

March and Olsen introduced the concept of garbage can model, that connotes multiple repertoires kept in stock for an institution when searching for solutions to a problem, or when in need to adjust policies. Institutional change thus occurs when the repertoire of possible solutions in the garbage can run out, and steps for adjustments are taken in accordance with the logic of appropriateness. On the basis of this argument, institutional change is not planned but rather the result of various streams of activity and opportunities for the proper action according to the conceptions of society (March – Olsen 1996: 251-252, Peters 2012: 27, 36).

A central concept to understand the stimuli for institutional change in SI is isomorphism that suggests convergence. Two sources for isomorphic change is identified in this context: mimetic and normative. The basic argument for mimetic isomorphism is how institutions identify and adapt to changing circumstances and environmental context. Mimetic isomorphism is triggered by uncertainty, and organizations may model themselves on other organisations when goals are ambiguous or if the environment somehow creates symbols of uncertainty. One explanation could be the recognition of success of another (institution) and thus it is the appropriate (or strategic) course of action to take, or due to condition of uncertainty. A second type of isomorphism, the normative, refers to the process where normative pressures are induced due to legitimacy issues, and members of certain profession aim at define conditions and methods for their profession in order to reach autonomy (DiMaggio – Powell 1991: 66, Radaelli 2000: 28, Gorges 2001:139).

Legitimacy is an important concept in SI, since isomorphism is not driven by efficiency considerations but rather the rationale of gaining legitimacy. Pursuant with this argument then is that societally conformed elements, e.g. to be acknowledged as legitimate and reputable, are more important to consider than internal efficiency (Hall – Taylor 1996: 949, Radaelli 2000: 27-28, Lecours 2005: 12-13).

Table 3. Ideal Type of SI

	Sociological Institutionalism
Scientific world view:	Holism, group identity. Shared past and common experience.
General approach:	Focus is on institutions cognitive ability to shape actors perceptions, and institutional environment is of importance.
Define institutions:	Formal rules, procedures or norms, as well as the symbol systems, cognitive scripts, and moral templates that provide the frames of meaning guiding actors.
Actors intentionality:	Actors develop and redefine goals while making decisions and adapting to environmental pressures. Initial intent can thus be changed, or lost.
Explains institutional change:	Institutional change is a natural component and reveals itself in terms of convergence.
Isomorphism:	Stimuli for change are convergence; mimetic isomorphism is when an institution identifies, and adapt to changing circumstances and environmental context. Normative isomorphism is convergence due to normative pressures.
Legitimacy:	Institutions undergo change in order to approach societal reality, i.e. in consonance with social and cultural codes.

The ideal type of SI is developed from the above presented theory, thus sources used: March – Olsen 1989, DiMaggio – Powell 1991, Thelen 1999, Aspinwall – Schneider 2000, Radaelli 2000, Gorges 2001, Lecours 2005, Olsen 2007, Pollack 2009, Peters 2012

3 Analysis

The EU has gone from an inward-looking foreign policy device⁹ to pursuing global ambitions, as is reflected in the European Security Strategy (2003:14) “*An active and capable European Union would make an impact on a global scale*”. The EU as an international actor is nevertheless a most complex one, since EU foreign policy is an aggregate outcome of its never-ending process of accommodating internal diversities within the EU itself. This everlasting process has been described by some academics as a laboratory of the external policies of the EU. With this background, the working progress of the EU is evident, and that also goes for the EU as an international actor that dates back to the European Community.

Let’s therefore begin with a review on the current state of the art of the EU’s role as an international security actor. Thereafter, the three approaches of new institutionalism will be used as a toolkit for the analysis of institutional change in competence, and its effect on the coherence of the EU as an international security actor.

3.1 The EU - a *sui generis* international actor

The Treaty of Rome (1957) did not contain much notion of the (at the time) EEC involvement in international affairs, except from competence in economic and trade. The Treaty did however give legal personality to the EC. Foreign policy was thus left for member states alone. But from 1970 onwards, informal systems developed under the label European Political Cooperation (EPC), and as collaboration on the European level it proved fruitful even in foreign policy. This informal system became formalised under the Single European Act (SEA) in 1986, and later the Treaties of Maastricht (1992) and Amsterdam (1997) set the mechanisms for the creation of CFSP, and followed by The Nice Treaty that carried the addition of European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP)¹⁰ (Crowe 2008:11, Piris 2010: 238-239, Duke 2011:26).

The ambition of improving coherence and effectiveness of EU’s external capabilities was first introduced in the Maastricht Treaty, by linking the EU’s capabilities with CFSP under the principle of coherence. During the course of

⁹ E.g. the Franco-German antagonism, but also the strained relationship between Britain and Ireland (Hill-Smith 2008:9).

¹⁰ ESDP was renamed CSDP in the Lisbon Treaty

time, however limitations were revealed¹¹ whereof some amended in the Amsterdam Treaty¹² (Smith 2001: 172, 192, Crowe 2008:12, Duke 2011:24-25).

In the following sections, the three approaches of new institutionalism will be applied and used as analytical tools. However the ways in which institutions matter differs according to each approach of new institutionalism. First, since a main feature for HI is the role of history, this approach will be applied to the development of the EU as an international actor up until the Lisbon Treaty. The second approach of RCI then picks up how a change in competence as introduced by the Lisbon Treaty has affected the EU coherence. The third approach of SI focus on how institutional change is a natural process where legitimacy is a driving force following the logic of appropriateness.

3.2 Historical Institutionalism – path dependence *en route*?

Since HI seek to explain institutional choices, and the development of institutions over time, this section will therefore apply the theory of HI on the development of EU competences and coherence in European foreign policy. Catchwords in this theory are timing and sequence, with special focus on continuity. Sequence is important as a factor of explaining institutional outcomes (Rittberger – Stacey 2003: 1023). From the perspective of HI it is thus fruitful to take a look in the rear-view mirror concerning the institutional development of European foreign policy cooperation.

There had been previous attempts at creating a European foreign policy¹³ in the past, however transferring military and political power onto the international level failed to muster sufficient support¹⁴ (Piris 2010: 240, Sari 2012:72). A first important note to make here is hence the sensitiveness of the matter. When the first informal intergovernmental European Political Cooperation (EPC) meeting was held, in the year of 1970, between the six foreign ministers from the European Community member states, a number of cautious steps were taken in order not to raise alarm on issues of sovereignty and traditional diplomacy (Smith 2004:71, Strömvik 2005:2, 90-91). Recalling the importance of timing and sequence in HI, this reflects why the original informal EPC framework was bound by several restrictions, such as no formal links with the European Community, neither with the EC Commission. The meetings were not to be held in Brussels

¹¹ E.g. confusion with regard to third parties, since the Commission was responsible for (in short terms) aid and trade, whereas CFSP issues was still to be handled by the Presidency. The Commission was ‘fully associated’ with CFSP, but not a full-fledged member and could thus not participate since it was still considered strictly intergovernmental activities.

¹²E.g. the creation of the High Representative for the CFSP that was appointed to Javier Solana. Even though he had no institutional authority, the function was to assist the Presidency.

¹³ E.g. the European Political Community (1954) and the Fouchet plan (1962).

¹⁴ The early attempts were inspired by supranational organizational designs, a sensitive matter for nations.

but in the member state holding the presidency, no budget, and a final note of caution is reflected in how they were referred to when making common statements, namely the Six (not the EC).

The Luxembourg report was the springboard for formalizing EPC and the motivation was twofold. First, it was presented as a way forward for a more unified Europe. The second referred to the obligation of Europe to take responsibility that comes with economic might (The Luxembourg report).

A concern for coherence in EC foreign policy was first expressed¹⁵ with the Single European Act in 1987, at a time when EPC was institutionalized and the Community's external action was expanding:

The external policies of the EC and the policies agreed in EPC must be consistent. The Presidency and the Commission, each within its own sphere of competence, shall have special responsibility for ensuring that such consistency is sought and maintained.

SEA, Title III, Article 30

It was thus at this point that the coherence requirement was introduced, and comprised that the external policies of the EC, as well as the policies agreed in EPC should be aligned, ensuring coherence between different competences. Mandated to ensure this was the Presidency and the Commission. With time however it became clear that the divide between the economic (Community) and the political (EPC) diplomacy proved rather dysfunctional (Cremona 2011: 55, Gebhard 2011:104).

In accordance with the concept of path dependence and the fact that HI emphasize order and stability, one could here argue that the institutionalization of EPC in the SEA was a first step on this path towards common European foreign policy, and the notion of coherence was introduced to balance the internal market with a foreign policy dimension. As path dependence is a self-enforcing process where initial choices tend to persist, this holds true in this context as the informal structure was formalized and set into motion. Even though the member states did not confer any decision-making powers to the bodies involved in the implementation of the EPC, but overall the SEA provided for closer links on the organizational level, paving the way for the single institutional framework under the Maastricht Treaty (Sari 2012:74). EPC was however repeatedly criticized for its limitations, mostly regarding its reactive and declaratory approach. The failed attempts to react to international events, and crises nevertheless ended with new efforts to improve policy instruments and deepen commitments¹⁶.

¹⁵ Political and institutional coherence was originally introduced in the Merger Treaty in 1965, but this type of coherence was mainly between the member states and the Community (Gebhard 2011:103).

¹⁶ There were some success, eg. the six acting together at the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE, later the OSCE) in 1975.

The principle of coherence was consequently institutionalized in the Maastricht Treaty¹⁷ in 1992, and created a single institutional framework to govern all policies. The EPC transformed into the CFSP within the second pillar, the Council was entrusted with responsibilities in relation to CFSP, which included the possibility to adopt legally binding decisions. The Maastricht Treaty also provided for legal instruments, such as joint actions and common positions, to function as tools for better cooperation in European foreign policy. A clarification on the rather diffusing research area since it contains the three types of foreign interactions. First the foreign policy of the EU as prescribed in the treaty articles on CFSP, second the EC external relations, and third traditional national foreign policy. On paper the institutional linkages in Maastricht provided for increased coherence, but since it was the responsibility for both the Council and Commission it instead created tension.

An important milestone on the organizational development though is that the Council now could act on behalf of the member states, and it thus reveals a certain conferral of power by the member states, and an effort to project itself as an actor on the international arena. One aspect that followed the lines of SEA was the separation between the CFSP and Community law through the pillar structure, and consequently reinforced the already existing dualism between supranational integration and intergovernmental cooperation (Aggestam et. al. 2008: 27, Wessels – Bopp 2008: 1, Duke 2011: 25, Gebhard 2011:104, Sari 2012: 76).

Historic events taking place in the years between 1989-1991, including the fall of the Berlin Wall and the disintegration of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, notably these exogenous factors affected international institutions to reform. In line with HI, these exogenous events however resulted in institutional debate and consequently led to further enhanced cooperation in European foreign policy matters (Smith 2003:37, Smith 2004: 176, 210, Edwards 2011: 47). The framework for cooperation in CFSP remained primarily intergovernmental, generating continuity and stability. The reforms on EU foreign policy mostly mirror a continuation on the path chosen when initiating the cooperation through EPC, and could accordingly be viewed as (self-enforcing) process of renovation and building upon what had been achieved through EPC. The institutional changes that came with the Maastricht Treaty, according to HI, is here considered as a response to debates and criticism on the previous setup, thus it constitutes a process of learning, and a response to new information based on experiences.

The Amsterdam Treaty was ratified in 1999, and was an amendment to the Maastricht Treaty. With it came the introduction of the High Representative for CFSP to further improve coherence and external representation. The HR was originally set to provide assistance to the Presidency in its external representation role, however this relationship turned out to be quite the opposite. Since the HR for CFSP was appointed on a multiyear basis, the result was that the six-month

¹⁷ The Maastricht Treaty is also known as the Treaty on the European Union (TEU), however to avoid confusion, as the Lisbon Treaty is an amendment to the Maastricht treaty (TEU), in this paper the TEU is used when referring to the Lisbon Treaty.

rotating Presidency assisted the HR. A common defence policy within the scope of CFSP was also incorporated in what was called the Petersberg Tasks that indicated what type of operations could be undertaken.

The Nice Treaty in 2002 mostly focused on a set of Amsterdam leftovers that was needed for the upcoming enlargement. It introduced the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), but was negatively affected by the fact that the dualistic logic remained. By and all this treaty revision did little to enhance coherence (Aggestam et. al. 2008:30, Gebhard 2011:105).

In line with how HI view initial institutional and policy decisions to be 'sticky', the competence divisions, and the tensions that came with it, between the Community and the EPC (later CFSP) have more or less been constant since the institutionalization of EPC through the SEA in 1986. Even though some recognition and improvements have been made on the basis on various reports and treaty revisions¹⁸. This however only strengthens the HI argument of the importance of stability and continuity, and perhaps the timing was not yet ready for the considerable change needed to address the competence issue that inherently affected the incoherence.

To summarize, the Union has hitherto shown many faces in how it presents itself to the rest of the world. The Maastricht Treaty, with CFSP contained in the second pillar, the representation fell on the member states and more specifically on the member states holding the Presidency of the Council. Followed by the amendments in the Amsterdam Treaty, that introduced the HR to assist the Presidency in CFSP matters. The other side to the separation of competences is the Community, contained in the first pillar to deal with matters of trade and aid, where responsibility to speak for the Community was the Commission. Alongside we have the member states carrying out bilateral relations, as well as multilateral diplomacy through their diplomatic missions. With this as background, the Union has over the years had some difficulties in credibility as a coherent actor.

To pursue further coherence, the EU has used a number of institutional devices in rather creative ways, but also with right timing and sequence, it has thus been a self-enforcing process of learning and developing in an orderly and stable fashion. What follows next is a discussion whether next step in the development of the EU reflects a continuation down the path embarked upon with the SEA, or whether the time that followed with uncertainty and unintended consequences pushed onto a new path.

3.2.1 Response to incoherence - a critical juncture?

Prior to the adoption of the Lisbon treaty, a lack of coherence in EU foreign policy was evident, and as the European Security Strategy (ESS) was presented in 2003 it was thus explicitly stated: *"if we are to make a contribution that matches*

¹⁸ The Copenhagen Report (1973), The London Report (1981), and the treaty revisions of Maastricht, and Amsterdam.

our potential, we need to be more active, more coherent and more capable” (European Council 2003:12). The report on the implementation of the European Security Strategy re-emphasised the need for enhanced coherence, and strategic thinking (European Council 2008:2), but also added a number of growing challenges¹⁹ that needed a collective approach. These documents not only called for a united EU approach to the increasing challenges, but were also a way of promoting the EU as an effective and coherent actor on the global stage. Important to note in this regard is that without any clear objectives about what the EU is trying to achieve, it will remain incoherent despite institutional reforms trying to enhance coherence (Duke 2011:31).

A process that began with the Laeken Declaration, and the decision that the next preparation for an intergovernmental conference (IGC)²⁰ was to be prepared by a Convention, making the process more democratic. The Convention came up with a draft Treaty in 2003 establishing a Constitution for Europe, bringing all the previous treaty amendments together and replaced them with one single text, with the aim ‘One Treaty, One Legal Personality and One Pillar’. It was subsequently considered a political earthquake when two of the founding member states, the Netherlands and France, had negative referendums on the Constitutional Treaty in 2005. What was so controversial about the Constitutional Treaty for it to stir such a rigorous debate? To mention a few red flags, the symbolic vocabulary in the treaty and mentioning of a flag, anthem, and foreign minister – wordings that had connotations of a transformation of the EU into a state like creature. In reality, the actual legal content of the treaty would not necessarily have revolutionized the role of the EU, nor its relationship with the member states.

Another important factor to consider at this time is the 2004 enlargement of ten new members in one go, that in itself puts a strain on the institutional machinery. Previous enlargement processes between 1973 and 1995 had taken place gradually, leaving enough time for new entrants to get into the system, but also for the EU to steadily adapt. The 2004 enlargement proved different as uncertainty on how the sheer number of new entrants would affect the EU (Meunier – McNamara 2007:11, Piris 2010:21, 31-32, Dehousse – Magnette 2012:33). The failure of the Constitutional Treaty meant that the Union was left with the institutional design as carved by the Nice Treaty.

Bringing attention to the HI concept of critical juncture at this point, because of a period of uncertainty due to endogenous as well as exogenous factors, a formative period where alternative paths were considered. A number of events, the European Convention and the failure of the Constitutional Treaty, reflect a questioning of the legitimacy of the EU, which stem from the notion that its working methods are legitimized through institutional design (Webber 2011:211). What then followed was a period of reflection, and a climate of distrust but also a sense that European Union was at a crossroads was evident (Piris 2010:14, 23-25,

¹⁹ To name a few: the global financial crisis, energy security and cyber security

²⁰ IGCs is the usual method of negotiating amendments to the Treaties. It is diplomatic conferences between representatives of the governments of the Member States.

European Convention). On this note, and in accordance with the HI concept of unintended consequences due to external events, this set back did not allow for the full institutional change and start of a new path for the European Union. The institutional change can instead be explained what HI explains as gradual and evolutionary change, as an answer to dysfunctional elements that generated a need of an improvement. Another aspect to mention in line with HI reasoning here is the importance of stability and continuity. As such, the various references in the Constitutional Treaty to state like features proved too much and a too big of a step into deep waters of uncertainty.

The rather painful, almost a decade long Treaty review process hence resulted in a more traditional approach to treaty reform, namely to amend already existing treaties. As is clearly stated in the preamble of the Lisbon Treaty, and a recurrent theme all through the treaty reform process, an objective for conclusion was to improve the EU's role in the world:

...to complete the process started by the Treaty of Amsterdam and by the Treaty of Nice with a view to enhancing the efficiency and democratic legitimacy of the Union and to improving the coherence of its action.

(TEU: preamble)

Nevertheless, some features in the Constitutional Treaty did survive, and incorporated in the Lisbon Treaty but presented less controversially. Including the legal personality of the EU as a whole²¹ (not only the European Community), but also the HR²² and European External Action Service, designed with the ambition to enable the EU to take the stage with greater coherence and influence as an international actor (Koehler 2010: 58, Duke 2011: 29-30). Granting the EU legal personality (Article 47 TEU) is also in line with enhancing coherence and visibility as an international actor. With the ambition for the EEAS, to function as a one-stop shop for the partners of the EU, in the words of the HR Ashton “*The aim of all this is to forge a better, more coherent policy, developing European answers to complex global problems, working with our partners around the world*” (Europe Day 9 May, 2011).

There is thus less confusion for third parties as the EU, as of 1st December 2009, acts as the legal successor of the EC (Jørgensen – Wessel 2011: 261-262), with this notion of legal competences, one could go further in stipulating that legal framework creates political possibilities, but also set boundaries for action by the EU (Wessel 2011: 621). The previous pillar structure of the EU was removed in the Lisbon Treaty, but there is nonetheless one leftover, which is the separation of CFSP from the rest of EU activities and policies.

²¹ In the past it was only the Community that had legal personality, however with the Lisbon Treaty it is possible for the Union to enter international agreements under CFSP as well.

²² The HR, that in the Constitutional treaty was proposed the title union minister for foreign affairs, was renegotiated during the process leading up to the Lisbon Treaty for the purpose of member states fear of losing national sovereignty (Verola 2012:44).

This reflects that even though a formal abolishment of the pillar structure took place, member states were still not ready to fully let go of the difference between external (economic) relations and CFSP (Piris 2010:242, Laursen 2007: 7-8).

The heretofore-mentioned concept within HI, that initial policy tends to persist and ‘stick’, is such an example. All in all, the latest institutional changes that came with the Lisbon Treaty did not end up reflecting a critical juncture resulting in an entirely new path. Instead it represents a process of learning from experiences since the formalization of EPC, but also the need of stability and continuity

3.3 Rational Choice Institutionalism – a clear-cut strategy for EU competence in foreign policy?

According to RCI, actors decide to change institutions when they no longer generate optimal results. The actors involved thus behave strategically to optimize self-interest. Institutions are important as they set the rules of the political game, both in creating opportunities as well as setting constraints.

Prior to the Lisbon Treaty, foreign policy was carried out by three actors, and subsequently not the best circumstances for turning EU economic power into political power. With this in mind, the two main institutional changes introduced with the Lisbon Treaty in the area of external affairs the ‘triple-hatted’ HR, and the creation of the EEAS, both with the aim of increasing the coherence of the EU as an international actor (Piris 2010:243, Laursen 2012: 8, Trombetta 2012:59). This section will tackle the abovementioned institutions within the framework of CFSP, their competences and consequently the effect on EU coherence in foreign policy, and analysed in line with RCI, implying a transferral of competences from other actors.

The wide policy area of CFSP clearly includes other EU institutions, such as the Commission, and member states via the intergovernmental framework of the Council. Taking in the RCI assumption that actors have a set of preferences and will act accordingly in order to maximize their benefits, within the rules of the political game, the likelihood of involved actors in the process leading up to the formation of the establishment of the abovementioned novelties, manoeuvred as to maximize their self-interest.

The pillar structure was, as previously stated, formally removed with the Lisbon Treaty. By giving legal uniformity to the EU could have set the intergovernmental character of CFSP under serious constrain. However the CFSP is still locked in and the Lisbon Treaty clearly distinguish between the EU competence under CFSP and its competences in other policy areas, as spelled out in the TEU (art. 24:1) the CFSP is “subject to specific rules and procedures”.

But CFSP competence still remains very limited, and is till predominantly an intergovernmental policy, which means that the member states are still the main source of influence. One distinct feature to bring up in this regard is the issue of

delimitation of powers between the EU and member states in CFSP. Leading up to the Lisbon Treaty, during the IGC in 2007, it should be noted that the UK secured two declarations locking the intergovernmental nature of CFSP. According to Declaration 13 the novelties of the HR and the EEAS must not impinge on responsibilities of the member states, clearly formulated as “*do not affect the responsibilities of the Member States, as they currently exist, for the formulation and conduct of their foreign policy nor of their national representation in third countries and international organisations.*”(Declarations 2007, art. 13)

The European Council is accordingly set to define EU’s general political directions and priorities, and as is explicitly stated in the Lisbon Treaty in relation to CFSP matters:

The European Council shall identify the Union’s strategic interests, determine the objectives of and define general guidelines for the common foreign and security policy, including for matters with defence implications.

(TEU art. 26)

With the above reasoning it is clearly still the member states that play the key role in setting the scene and providing guidelines. In relation to the assumption within RCI, of actors as strategists, one can assume that this reflects the unwillingness of letting go of state sovereignty in the traditionally state-centred competence of foreign policy. Building on this provision, the political orientation for the establishment of the EEAS according to the foreign ministers of the member states within the Council reflects a continuation of their preferences

The creation of the EEAS is aimed at enabling greater coherence and efficiency in the EU’s external action and increasing its political and economic influence in the world.

(Council Press Release 26 April 2012).

Because of the fact that member states are still the main actors, in terms of RCI reasoning, they evidently aim for greater coherence of the EU as an international actor in order to prove its legitimacy and effectiveness on the international stage. This reasoning is furthermore reflected in the Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy: “... *becoming more strategic in our thinking, and more effective and visible around the world. We are most successful when we operate in a timely and coherent manner ...*” (2008:2). Also, taking into account that the (possible) benefits of change, i.e. of increased coherence as an international security actor, outweighs the political cost of continuing adding points to a track record of incoherent foreign policy and its implications. With this reasoning it is assumed that member states are still calling the shots on CFSP matters, and therefore, as a Union, decide to change the rules of the game by creating opportunities as well as setting constraints on the new institutions. Let us therefore turn to the main institutional innovations that came with the Lisbon Treaty, i.e. the HR and EEAS.

3.3.1 Turf wars over strategic competence or increased coherence?

Foreign policy competences with the Lisbon Treaty are concentrated in the position and office of the HR²³. It is the main task of the HR to conduct the EU's CFSP²⁴, and the EEAS is an autonomous body that is to assist her in her work. The 'triple-hatted' nature of the HR derives from the fact that it covers the tasks, according to previous Treaties, attributed three individuals. These were the HR for CFSP/SG of the Council²⁵, the Commissioner for External Affairs, and the President of the External Relations Council²⁶ (Piris 2010: 243-244).

The HR embodies the European interest and member states interests. This reveals the aim of increasing coherence in EU foreign policy by incorporating supranational and intergovernmental elements into the positions of the HR. The appointment of Catherine Ashton as the first HR resulted in diverse reactions. On the one hand, it can be considered as strategic safeguarding by the member states, by not choosing a HR with a strong personality²⁷ that effectively would strengthen the position as such. On the other hand, as she herself hitherto was Commissioner for Trade, her previous experience might reflect in her work as being more prone to working for European interests. Then again, the HR is appointed by the Council, which connotes that she has a special status in the Commission. This in combination with the fact that the HR is responsible for overarching coordination of Commission's policies with external dimension might cause some friction with other Commissioners. This might however prove to result in a positive balance between the foreign policies of the Council and the Commission resulting in greater coherence.

As it stands it is thus up to the HR to coordinate European foreign policy, she is to assist the Council and the Commission in ensuring consistency between different areas of the EU's foreign policy but also between these and other EU policies. This undertaking has been described in the literature as 'mission impossible' and would be so if not for the new diplomatic service that is to assist her (TEU: art. 18:4, Piris 2010: 245-249, Koehler 2010: 67-68, Blockmans – Laatsit 2012: 140).

The EEAS is described as *sui generis*, and is an autonomous body in terms of budget and staff, separate from the Council as well as the Commission (Presidency Report 2009: 6). The staff of the EEAS stems from three sources, the General Secretariat of the Council and of the Commission, and seconded staff from national diplomatic services of member states (TEU art. 27:3). This set-up of staffing is in line with RCI reasoning on reducing collective action problems as to

²³ Catherine Ashton was formally appointed as the first HR under the Lisbon Treaty, 1 December 2009, she was previously Commissioner for Trade.

²⁴ as well as CSDP.

²⁵ In practice it was Javier Solana who had been SG/HR since 1999, and in many ways was the 'voice' of the EU on the international scene.

²⁶ The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the member state exercising the six-month rotating Presidency of the Council.

²⁷ On her appointment some of the criticism was her lack of visible experience for the post.

cutting transaction costs among actors as well as between institutions. However it could also be considered as a selective incentive, of enabling the main institutions affected in handing over competence to a new institution, for career opportunities.

An interesting note to be made is that Catherine Ashton was formally appointed the post of HR in 2009, a year before the launch of the EEAS. The treaty provisions on the EEAS were quite vaguely formulated (TEU art. 27), and it was up to the HR to present a proposal for a Council Decision on the set-up and functioning of the service. Consequently a debate on the institutional setup of the EEAS followed, most notably from the member states²⁸.

Relating this to the RCI approach of maximizing one's self-interest, HR Ashton could be quite instrumental to organisational and strategic features of the EEAS in her proposal for a Council Decision on the service. The Swedish Presidency presented a report in 2009 with guidelines for the HR as preparation for the proposal of Council Decision²⁹. Additional to the scope of the service to assist the HR in her work, the EEAS is:

To ensure the consistency and better coordination of the Union's external action, the EEAS should also assist the President of the European Council and the President as well as the Members of the Commission in their respective functions in the area of external relations as well as closely cooperate with the Member States.

(Presidency Report 2009:2)

Other actors were thus also involved in the preparatory work of the institutional features of the EEAS, e.g. member states and the Commission. And the quote above reflects safeguarding of certain elements, as well as an important note on the coherence at the top levels of EU foreign policy. In line with previous comment on RCI reasoning of weighing costs and benefits, clearly emphasising the role of the EEAS in cooperating with other institutions as well as member states to ensure coherence of EU external action. In addition, it is stipulated that the EEAS "should play a leading role in the strategic decision-making" (2009:4) in order to assist the HR in her responsibilities of coordination and coherence in EU foreign policies. This could however lead to the perception and a distinction between the EEAS and the Commission, the former considered as the programming and decision-making body and the latter as implementation body. Another key phrase mentioned twice in the Council Decision on establishing the functioning of the EEAS, is that the service is to support the HR 'without prejudice to the normal tasks' of the Commission³⁰ (2010: art. 1 and 2:1).

An exclamation mark related to RCI reasoning and the various actors involved, what might prove difficult for the service as it entails serving and balancing many political masters, is just this inter-institutional character, with staff from backgrounds in national diplomatic services and the Commission,

²⁸ But also raised voices coming from the European Parliament.

²⁹ The Presidency Report was later adopted in a Council decision

³⁰ And the General Secretariat of the Council.

operating self-strategically. It could prove to be a continuation of the debacle of intergovernmental versus *communautaire* debate.

3.4 Sociological Institutionalism – isomorphic change of EU foreign policy?

Focus in SI is the institutional environment but also that actors develop and redefine goals, adapting to environmental context. This approach differs to the previous sections on HI and RCI in the sense that emphasis is more on norms and ideas rather than materialistic notions.

During the early twenty-first century the EU, as well as its member states, responded to international transitions with uncertainty. This was evident in the wake of the Iraq crisis. The question of uncertainty was palpable, and the need for the EU to deliver coherently, as other significant actors on the international arena, became crystal clear. The European Security Strategy³¹ issued in 2003, reflected the need for a framework to resolve internal differences, wherein the EU presented its global strategy, and the aim to promote an international order based on effective multilateralism³². The Strategy further reveals a shared foundation for negotiations with other states and organizations on important issues (ESS 2003:9).

In accordance with SI reasoning, the rapidly changing environment of today's world of increasing interconnectedness, the argument that institutions need to follow suit in order to keep up is easily made. Not only to improve coherence and efficiency but also to reflect societal reality and thereby gaining legitimacy. This logic is reflected in the follow-up report to the European Security Strategy in 2008, presented to the European Council, by Javier Solana:

The international system, created at the end of the Second World War, faces pressures on several fronts. Representation in the international institutions has come under question. Legitimacy and effectiveness need to be improved, and decision-making in multilateral fora made more efficient. This means sharing decisions more, and creating a greater stake for others. Faced with common problems, there is no substitute for common solutions.

(European Council 2008:12)

In SI reasoning, The Constitutional Treaty could reflect an institutional change of mimetic isomorphism, where an institution (the EU) identifies and adapt to environmental context. Particularly with reference to the inclusion of the term Minister For Foreign Affairs, and EU flag (Draft Treaty Constitution for Europe

³¹ The US has traditionally presented a National Security Strategy, and consequently it has been argued that the reason why the EU also decided it must have one was as to being an international security actor, setting the agenda, not only the US.

³² Traditionally the term multilateralism is referred to international cooperation between three or more states.

2003:157), revealing strife for parable to other actors' foreign policy organizational structures. Taken together with the EU increasingly taking part in (other) international organisations, and multilateral settings. Nevertheless, the Constitutional Treaty proved a step too far in this regard.

The Lisbon Treaty conveys significant focus on institutional aspects of reform in order to improve coherence of the EU as an international actor. The purpose of the 'triple hatted' HR is to increase visibility but also stability in matters of external representation in CFSP (Piris 2010: 245, 256). Another bridge it is supposed to build is consistency between sectors of EU foreign policies. Since norms and ideas work through processes of socialisation, according to SI, this institutional design of the triple-hatted HR could be an example of how actors (HR) can develop while making decisions as she continuously adapts to environmental context and pressures, i.e. other EU institutions and member states.

In line with SI logic, institutions shape actors' perceptions, the institutional novelty EEAS might thus provide the right organizational framework, a platform for cooperation and access to resources, through which actors can achieve sought improvement. Furthermore it has the possibility of bridging the supranational and intergovernmental gap by creating a 'foreign policy culture' in line with SI reasoning of normative isomorphism, i.e. providing methods for the service that address the shortcomings of coherence in EU foreign policy up to date.

Also part of the service is EU delegations, which as of 2009 the Commission delegations transformed into, and are now representing the EU in the multilateral fora, even in CFSP matters (Emerson et.al 2011:13). Accordingly, "*The Head of Delegation shall receive instructions from the High Representative of the EEAS, and shall be responsible for their execution*" (Council Decision 2010 art. 5:3).

The EU has, over time, obtained a formal position in international institutions, whether it is as a full member or as an observer. In general, it is said that with participation in an international organisation follows participation in its organs, which among other things, entails the right to attend meetings, and exercising speaking rights. In line with SI the EU delegations therefore might build on the 'culture of foreign policy' culture, as actors develop and redefine goals while making decisions and adapting to environmental pressures.

External coherence is related to visibility and how the EU projects itself in a multilateral setting. With this follows the legitimacy of the EU as an actor on the international arena, and if the EU performs coherently it is perceived as a more credible partner in a multilateral setting which according to SI is a driving force for change. Legitimate, one could say reflects the EU's ability to adopt a common foreign policy, as it is, in a sense analogue to adopting a common internal EU policy. (Wessel 2011:623) (Frieden 2004: 262, Gebhard 2011:108-109).

4 Case: EU at the OSCE

The Union shall establish all appropriate forms of cooperation with ... the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

(TFEU art. 220:1)

In this chapter a brief introduction to EU as an international actor in other international organizations, specifically in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, followed by EU's presence in the organization. Based on the already stated fact that pre-Lisbon the EU lacked in coherence as an international security actor, the purpose here is to illustrate with some descriptive statistics how the EU acts in an international organization, and might be perceived by others, post Lisbon.

4.1 The EU as an international security actor in (other) international organisations

The EU has not only increased its participation in international regimes in various policy fields, but also the institutionalisation of EU involvement in other international organisations. By participating in formal international institutions, the EU's visibility as an international security actor increases distinctively (Blavoukos – Bourantonis 2011:1-2).

With the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009, the EU was expected to speak with one voice in international organisations. Since there is no longer the confusion for the rest of the world of being confronted with both the European Community and the European Union as international actors.

According to TEU art. 24:1:

The Union's competence in matters of common foreign and security policy shall cover all areas of foreign policy and all questions relating to the Union's security

However in the autumn of 2011, some altercations between member states of the EU in multilateral organizations took place that stemmed from a general dispute over EU competence in foreign policy. Previously, EU statements had been given on behalf of "the EU" in international organizations. With the Lisbon Treaty however, a clearer distinction of competences had been made. Specifically, it called for a distinction between three types of competence: first, the exclusive competence of the Union, second the competence of the member states and third the shared competence of the Union and the Member States (TFEU art. 3-6).

Accordingly, the interpretation of the Treaty differs with reference to issues of mixed competence where both the EU and individual member states have jurisdiction. The UK believed the EU increasingly to be speaking on the basis of EU statements in international organizations, even on issues considered to be a matter of national competence (Delaere – Van Schaik 2012: 3, 15-16). It went as far that several of EU statements in international organizations³³ could not be delivered since no agreement on the ‘signatory’ of the statements could be reached (The Guardian, 20 October 2011, Der Spiegel, 5 December 2011).

This dispute over competence resulted in the adoption of a Council Decision in October 2011, on general arrangements concerning EU statements in multilateral organisations. The practical guidelines clarified as follows:

- If the statement refers exclusively to responsibilities of the EU it should be formulated “**on behalf of the European Union**”.
- Should the statement refer to responsibilities that concern both EU as well as national competence (shared competence), the formulation would be “**on behalf of the EU and its Member States**”.
- The final option is if the statement refers solely to national competence, it should be formulated “**on behalf of the Member States of the European Union**” (Council Decision 2011: 3-4)³⁴.

4.1.1 EU at the OSCE

There are several models of how the EU and member states participate and represented in international organisations. The most prevalent, and also the one in focus here, is where all member states are full members and the EU is an observer. In the case of the EU at the OSCE, as an observer, however the political reality is that the EU is a major participant (Emerson et. al. 2011:32, 99).

The EU has strong historical links to OSCE, since it played a key role in the establishment of the organization in the 1970s. It was coordination between the member states in the framework of the EPC in a cross-bloc dialogue. The result was the Helsinki Final Act in 1975 that set the basic agreements on human rights, and established a forum for cooperation between blocs across Cold War Europe. The OSCE today holds 57 participating states, from Europe, North America, and Central Asia. In the process of encouraging democratization the OSCE played a significant role in ending the Cold War.

The OSCE approach to security is broad and incorporates three baskets: politico-military, economic and environmental and the human dimension (van Ham 2006: 29, Stewart 2008: 267, Pourchot 2011:180-181). Today, the EU currently almost make up half of the participating states, and contribute more than two-thirds of the OSCE budget.

³³ Including at the UN, the OECD, WHO, IAEA and the OSCE.

³⁴ Emphasis using bold letters my own.

EU competence in OSCE falls under CFSP and CFSD, and as already stated has observer role. However, the function of a 'virtual member' in the sense that it has the right to participate, but without a vote or 'member state' status. Before the entry into force of Lisbon, the EU was represented by the Commission as observer with the rotating Presidency as spokesperson and coordinator of positions (Emerson et. al. 2011: 33, 99).

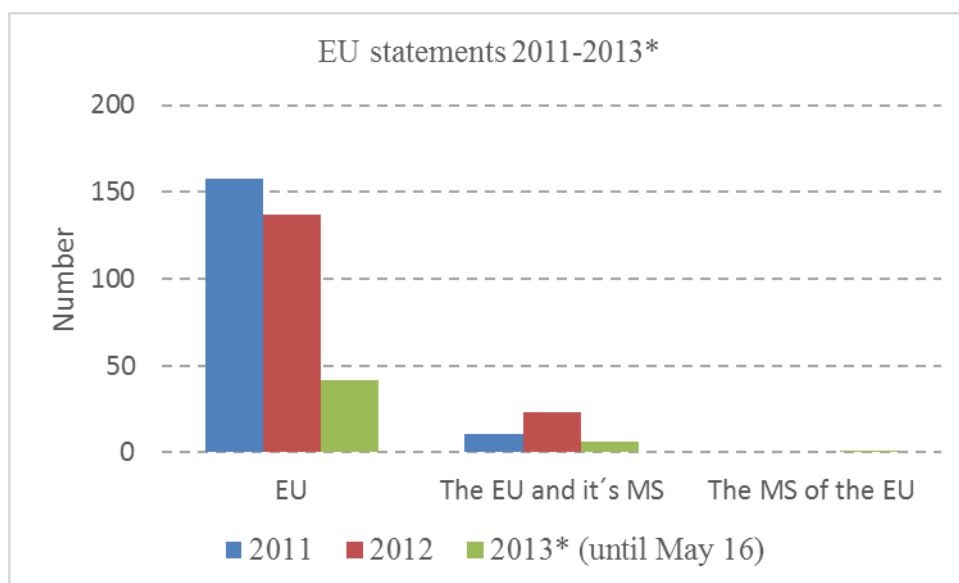
4.1.2 Descriptive statistics on EU statements at the OSCE

Political and decision-making bodies include Summits, Ministerial Councils, Permanent Council (PC), Forum for Security Cooperation (FSC), and an Economic and Environmental Forum (EEF). The present study focus on meetings in the PC as well as in the FSC, both bodies hold meetings once a week.

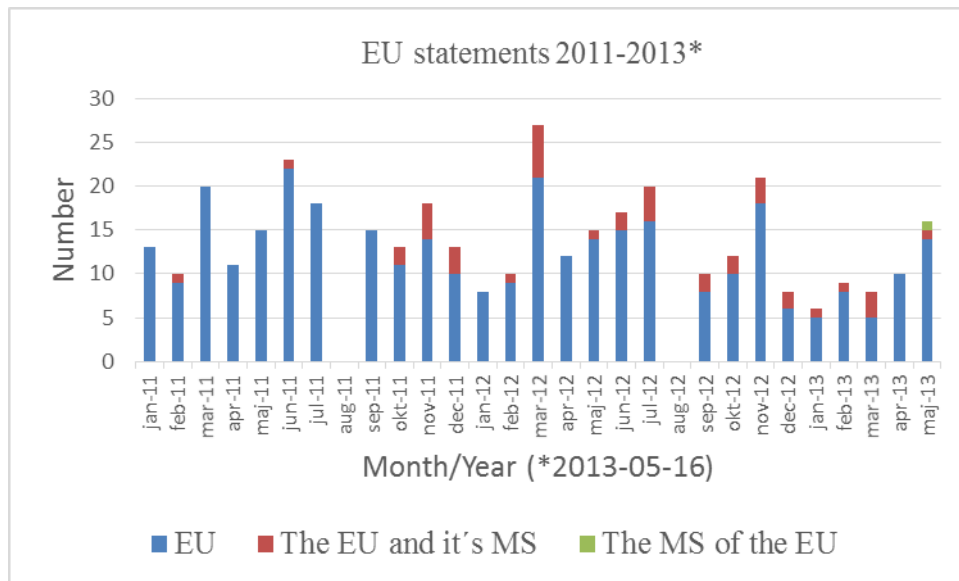
Below is consolidated data on EU statements from 2011 up until 16th May 2013, in both PC as well as FSC meetings. As the three tables reveal, the different variations of EU competence through how it is presented are clarified, as was the result of the dispute over competence.

4.1.2.1. Permanent Council

The graph below reveals a decrease in statements on the basis of exclusively EU responsibilities, and an increase in statements on the basis of shared competence between the EU and the member states. Whereas the formulation based solely on national competence occurred once, so far, in 2013 (barely distinguishable in the graph). A closer look at this statement reveals that it concerns the budget of the OSCE. Since the EU does not contribute, but rather the member states individually it falls under the basis of national competence.



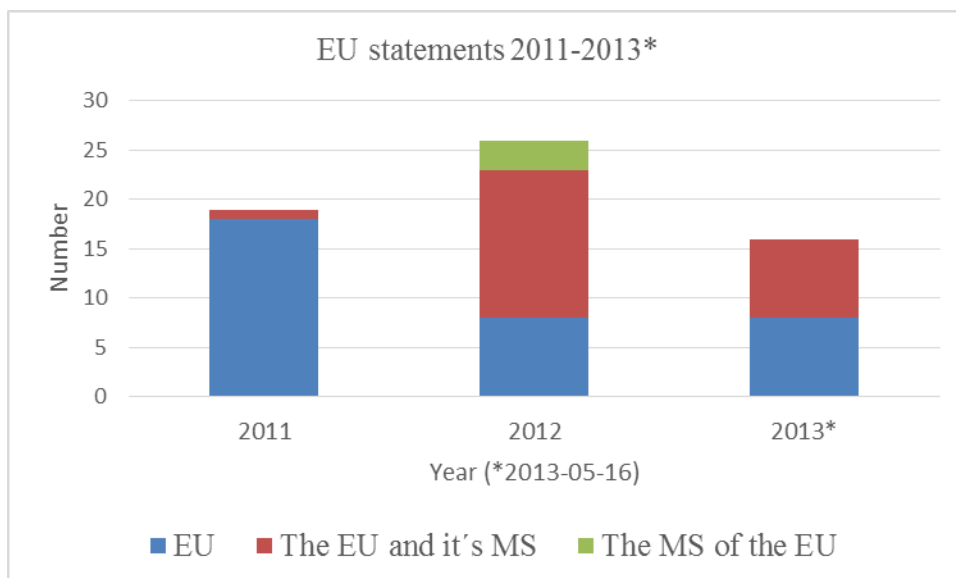
The next graph shows EU statements in the PC on a monthly basis. One note to be made in regard to this graph is that there are no meetings held in August, hence the absence of data from this month. The Council Decision in October 2011 is reflected in the graph below showing an increase in the use of shared competence from that month on. However, two statements based on shared competence were given before the Council Decision was taken.



4.1.2.2. Forum for Security Cooperation

The graph below from FSC meetings reveal a distinctive increase in statements on the basis of shared competence between the EU and the member states. More specifically there is an absolute as well as a relative increase in the statements based on shared competence. The relative increase from the year 2011 was 1 out of 19 statements on shared competence, to 15 out of 26 statements on shared competence in 2012.

Furthermore the formulation based solely on national competence was used three times in 2012. A closer look at these three statements reveals a common denominator, namely the Vienna Document, which is based on negotiations of Confidence- and Security-Building Measures. The Document requires (among other provisions) participating States to share information on their military forces, equipment and defence planning (OSCE official website). This subject is hence sensitive for states as this competence traditionally been subscribed to states alone.



After reviewing the above graphs from PC as well as FSC, the question is whether it reflects a coherent EU as an international security actor, or if it further contributes to a notion of incoherence. An observation, due to the new provisions on how EU gives statements in multilateral organizations, it is a clear change to how it was pre-Lisbon. Looking at these graphs, providing an example of the coherence of the EU as an international actor, the result rather reflects incoherence.

The Lisbon Treaty provided for a classification of competences, which allowed for a better control of the respect of the subsidiarity principle between EU institutions (Piris 2010: 76), but also clearly opened up for a questioning and clarification between what is EU competence, shared and exclusively national competence. Since the list of exclusive competences and supporting competences are exhaustive in the TFEU (art. 3 and 6), but the list of shared competence is not exhaustive and states:

“The Union shall share competence with the Member States where the Treaties confer it on a competence which does not relate to the areas referred to in Article 3 and 6”
(TEU art. 4)

Consequently, it implies that the CFSP as is set out separately in TFEU art. 2:4 belong to the category of shared competences.

The EU is thus still struggling with accommodating internal differences. Because of a change in how the EU presents itself when giving statements, how other actors perceive this in other international organisations, one can only speculate. An obvious fall back would be if the EU showed a decrease in statements, as an absent EU would clearly signify a divided EU.

5 Conclusions

The take of this thesis was to provide a dialogue between the three approaches of new institutionalism, HI, RCI and SI, specifically how they would explain recent institutional changes to European foreign policy. Because they provide for the basic assumption that institutions matter and therefrom take on different storylines on institutional change, each focusing on different processes within the story. Therefore they should not be considered conflicting, but more as theoretical encounters that provide for a more nuanced reading of various focal points that might prove complimentary rather than contradictory.

HI reasoning on institutional change, with the formalization of EPC through the SEA was a first step on this new historical path of cooperation on European foreign policy. However the sensitiveness of the matter resulted in the importance of timing and sequence. As is reflected in the treaty revisions that followed. But also a self-enforcing process wherein the core of initial policy decisions persists throughout the course of time with increasing returns in forms of continuity. An example of this, of course is the gap between the economic and political dimension of the EU that has divided areas of competences but also the problem that follows with that many policy areas not only fall under one set of competences. The various treaty revisions have shown an upgrade through a process of learning with focus on stability and continuity.

HI on this basis offers an explanation based on intermediating factors rather than going to the underlying sources of institutional change. One could argue though that it offers a balanced and adequate reading of the institutional change that the EU has undergone throughout the years concerning its foreign policy and actor on the international scene.

The RCI approach to institutional change in European foreign policy, with special focus on the novelties of HR and EEAS, revealed the importance of actors partaking in the institutionalization process, especially strategic safeguarding of competence for involved actors. For member states it was by upholding strategic competence for the purpose of not letting go of traditionally state-centred foreign policy. Not in contrast however with the fact of member states also aiming for greater coherence for the EU as an international security actor since that entail legitimacy on the international stage.

All in all, with RCI reasoning, the question whether the EEAS will contribute to increased coherence in EU foreign policy will rely on a number of factors. It depends on the willingness of the member states to send qualified staff at different levels to the service. But also whether the other EU institutions welcome the new Service with open arms. The Lisbon institutional innovations for EU's foreign policy are a useful toolkit, however as the main actors it is up to the member states to use it. Whether it is for the purpose of a true European foreign policy in

its own right, or to use it to serve national strategic interests. With regard to HR Ashton, it is splendid to have a single voice, however it requires a single mind backing it up. It is not always the loudest voice that makes a difference, but rather the one able to convey a clear message.

According to SI logic, institutions should reflect societal environment, and institutions shape actors perceptions, hence the organizational framework of EEAS might provide a platform for cooperation and access to resources needed in order to improve coherence for the EU as an international security actor.

The ability for the EU to improve coherence in CFSP matters has improved with the Lisbon Treaty, especially so with the establishment of HR, and the creation of the EEAS and the EU delegations. With more efficient structures and political will, it provides with institutional as well as legal instruments to progress the functioning of CFSP and the role of the EU as an international security actor. One might put an exclamation mark to the possibility of incoherence resulting from introducing new institutions that might undermine the efforts to actually increase coherence. This is however not yet discernible.

EU foreign policy coherence is related to how the EU presents itself to third parties, for example in other multilateral organisations and hence great importance to how the EU is perceived by other partners. For this reason the follow-up case study of EU foreign policy provided some useful insight. The Council decision that specified provisions for how the EU is to present itself in multilateral organizations stemmed from a dispute on the issue of competence. The result was consequently a change in how the EU presents itself, and illuminates a divide that was left open by the Lisbon Treaty and therefore resulted in a crack in need of repair. The presented graphs unveil incoherence if compared to how the provisions for EU statements were pre-Lisbon.

The point to be made here is, even though the main aim of the Lisbon Treaty was to increase coherence of EU as an international actor, with introduced mechanisms in order to facilitate this process, the EU is at the end of the day a most complex foreign policy actor.

5.1 Further research

Several questions has come to my attention during the course of this research that I believe would prove very interesting topics for research in their own right.

One angle to take would be using new institutionalism focusing solely on the institutional setup of the office of the HR. Her various roles, responsibilities and relations with other EU institutions. Because of the uniqueness of this new position, encompassing tasks of previously three positions in their own right.

Another possible research topic would be to conduct interviews in multilateral organizations, with EU diplomats on the development of the EU in multilateral setting since Lisbon, but also conducting interviews with non-EU members and how the EU is perceived as an international actor from the outside.

6 Executive summary

The executive summary is structured according to the disposition of the thesis.

6.1 Aim and research problem

The aim of this paper is, by using the three approaches of new institutionalism, to explain the institutional development of the EU as an international security actor. The type of institutional change in focus is a change in competence introduced with the Lisbon Treaty.

The thesis is thus guided by the following research questions:

- *How does the three approaches of new institutionalism explain institutional change in EU foreign policy?*
- *Given that institutions matter, how has a change in competence affected the coherence of the EU as an international security actor?*

6.2 Methodology

The course of action for this study incorporates two methodologies, qualitative and quantitative – thus a mixed method design. The purpose of this thesis is a technical approach to combining methodologies, and views these two as compatible. Both qualitative and quantitative research incorporates goals of describing and explaining.

The first part of the thesis is a descriptive case study of institutional change to the EU external representation post Lisbon, the HR, and the EEAS through the lenses of three approaches of new institutionalism.

The second part is then applied and used a step further down the abstraction ladder, to the EU presence at the OSCE, where EU statements in the decision-making bodies of Permanent Council and Forum for Security Cooperation at the OSCE are examined.

Primary (Treaty texts, Council decisions, statements) as well as secondary sources will be used in this study.

6.3 Theoretical framework

The three approaches of new institutionalism, namely historical institutionalism, rational choice institutionalism and sociological institutionalism are explored in this thesis.

As is revealed by its name, HI focus is historically based analysis in order to reveal why actors emphasize certain preferences above others. Continuity is central to HI and path dependency is a self-enforcing process that might encounter a hiccup due to critical junctures.

RCI focus on materialistic structures, and the rules of the political game. Self-interested actors with a set of preferences then decide to change institutions if they become dysfunctional or do not generate optimum results.

The third approach, SI focus on how actors seek to act appropriate and bestow a shared understanding of what is true and reasonable. It considers institutional change as a natural process.

6.4 Analysis

6.4.1 Historical Institutionalism – path dependence en route?

HI seeks to explain institutional choices, and the development of institutions over time. The importance of timing and sequence in HI, reflects why the original informal EPC framework was bound by several restrictions, such as no formal links with the European Community, neither with the EC Commission. The Luxembourg report was the springboard for formalizing EPC and coherence was firstly expressed in the SEA in 1987.

The concept of path dependence and the fact that HI emphasize order and stability, the institutionalization of EPC in the SEA was a first step on this path towards common European foreign policy, and the notion of coherence was introduced to balance the internal market with a foreign policy dimension.

HI view initial institutional and policy decisions to be ‘sticky’, the competence divisions, and the tensions that came with it, between the Community and the EPC (later CFSP) have more or less been constant since the institutionalization of EPC through the SEA in 1986.

6.4.2 Rational Choice Institutionalism – a clear-cut strategy for EU competence in foreign policy?

According to RCI actors decide to change institutions as they become dysfunctional or do not generate optimum results. The two main institutional changes introduced with the Lisbon Treaty in the area of European foreign policy

the ‘triple-hatted’ HR, and the creation of the EEAS, both with the aim of increasing the coherence of the EU as an international actor and in line with RCI reasoning implying a transferral of competence from other actors. The process leading up to the creating of these institutional novelties, assuming set preferences of actors manoeuvred in order to maximize self-interest.

Based on RCI reasoning on Treaty texts it is the member states that play the key role in setting the scene and providing guidelines for general political guidelines and priorities. In relation to the assumption within RCI, of individuals as strategists, one can assume that this reflects the unwillingness of letting go of state sovereignty in the traditionally state-centred competence of foreign policy.

6.4.3 Sociological Institutionalism – isomorphic change of EU foreign policy?

According to SI, institutional environment and actors develop and redefine goals. The argument put forward is that EU institutions need to keep up with the changing world order to increase coherence but also to uphold legitimacy as an international actor.

The institutional novelty of EEAS might, according to SI, provide for the right organizational framework and a platform for cooperation creating a ‘foreign policy culture’. Specifically providing methods for the service that address the shortcomings of coherence in EU foreign policy.

6.5 Case: EU at the OSCE

This chapter provides a case example of how the EU acts in an international organization, namely the OSCE. Based on the already stated fact that pre-Lisbon the EU lacked in coherence as an international security actor, it is here illustrated with some descriptive statistics how the EU acts in an international organization, and might be perceived by others, post Lisbon.

A dispute over competence resulted in the adoption of a Council Decision in October 2011, on general arrangements concerning EU statements in multilateral organisations. The consequences and result of this decisions is presented in graphs on compiled data of EU statements held at the Permanent Council and Forum for Security Cooperation at the OSCE.

Due to the new provisions on how EU gives statements in multilateral organizations, it is a clear change to how it was pre-Lisbon. Looking at these graphs, providing an example of the coherence of the EU as an international actor, the result rather reflects incoherence.

6.6 Conclusions

This thesis has provided for an encounter between the three approaches of new institutionalism on the institutional change of European foreign policy. More specifically, how a change in competence post Lisbon has affected the coherence of the EU as an international security actor. Because HI, RCI and SI provide for the basic assumption that institutions matter and therefrom take on different storylines on institutional change, each focusing on different processes within the story these should be viewed as fruitful encounters for explaining institutional change.

HI focuses on the historical process of institutional change, especially the importance of timing and sequence to the process of institutional development that the European foreign policy cooperation has undergone that began its path dependence with the formalization of EPC through the SEA. With RCI reasoning, the question whether the EEAS will contribute to increased coherence in EU foreign policy will rely on a number of factors. It depends on the willingness of the member states to send qualified staff at different levels to the service. But also whether the other EU institutions welcome the new Service with open arms. According to SI logic, institutions should reflect societal environment, and institutions shape actors perceptions, hence the organizational framework of EEAS might provide a platform for cooperation and access to resources needed in order to improve coherence for the EU as an international security actor.

The follow-up case study reveals, due to new provisions for the EU on giving statements in multilateral organizations, a step towards incoherence.

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