

# **THEORISING EUROPEAN STRATEGIC CULTURE BETWEEN CONVERGENCE AND THE PERSISTENCE OF NATIONAL DIVERSITY**

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*CEPS WORKING DOCUMENT No. 204/JUNE 2004*

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## Abstract

This working document focuses on the dynamics and scope of strategic culture-building in the context of the European Union's aspirations to develop a European security and defence policy (ESDP). It argues that the notion of strategic culture can be useful in assessing the context in which the ESDP will develop further as well as its performance in matters of conflict prevention, management and resolution. Nevertheless, in order to be conceptually and empirically useful, strategic culture needs to be disaggregated into collective norms about the means and ends of security policy, as well as its different carriers such as political elites, societies and armed forces. The paper examines the convergence thesis and suggests three theories to explain convergence informed by realist, constructivist and regional theories of political change. Yet the paper also argues that these forces can affect national strategic cultures differently, depending on the countries' geopolitical positions, the institutional stickiness of domestic ideas, values and norms, and the degree to which such norms are subject to partisan or societal contention. On this basis, the paper advances some hypotheses about the actual extension of the convergence process, which will need to be validated by further empirical study.

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## **1. Introduction**

The European Union (EU) and its member states have taken remarkable steps in the last six years towards designing and assembling the pieces of an emergent European security and defence policy (ESDP). Since the breakthrough Anglo-French summit at St. Malo in 1998, we have seen the creation of new posts, committees, units and agencies, changes to the legal provisions governing security policy-making at Amsterdam, Nice and Brussels (Convention), as well as progress in equipping the EU with the civil and military capabilities necessary to translate decisions into actions (Howorth & Keeler, 2003; Cornish & Edwards, 2001). At the Brussels Summit of December 2003, the EU agreed for the first time in its history on a European Security Strategy (European Council, 2003), which sets out an analysis of and general response towards the most salient security threats the Union is facing. Yet serious questions have been asked about the real value of such a strategy and the emergent institutional structure in the face of persistent national differences in foreign policy goals, collective norms about the legitimate use of force, as well as in national military doctrines, all of which can be conceptualised as sources of incoherence, confusion and paralysis for ESDP (Menotti, 2004; Everts et al., 2004; Keukeleire, 2002).

This paper contributes to the debate about ESDP by focusing on the emergence of a European strategic culture as an arguably crucial factor for understanding its evolution, functioning and problem-solving capacity. In doing so, this paper builds on, complements and extends previous contributions to the debate about the emergence of a European strategic culture (Heiselberg, 2003; Howorth, 2002; Cornish & Edwards, 2001; Rynning, 2003; Martinsen, 2003). This paper aims at being distinctive and innovative in the following way: it elaborates a theoretical framework for the study of strategic culture by disaggregating the concept and providing a number of criteria as well as ideal types to distinguish different national strategic cultures from each other. It then investigates in what way a European strategic culture could develop from and depend on a convergence process of its national-level counterparts. Moreover, the paper outlines three theories about why national strategic cultures in the EU are seen to converge and in which direction. At the same, it is important to highlight that some countries' strategic cultures may be affected in different ways by these dynamics, neutralising convergence pressures or even leading to divergence. On this basis, the paper advances some hypotheses about the strength of the convergence process and explores its potential implications for determining the scope and governance of ESDP. Nevertheless these theories and hypotheses should be treated as preliminary and should be tested by systematic empirical study of strategic cultures and the forces affecting them. This kind of research has not been done so far.

## 1.1 European strategic culture(s): What it is and why does it matter?

The presentation of the European Security Strategy (ESS) by the EU's High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy, Javier Solana, in June 2003 and its agreement by heads of state at the Council in Brussels six months later has been generally welcomed both in Europe, as well as in the US (Keohane, 2003; Berenskoetter, 2004; Meyer, 2004).<sup>1</sup> It appeared as a first, if not wholly satisfactory answer to frequent calls for a "strategic concept" (van Staden et al., 2000; Biscop, 2002), which would set out the EU's objectives in the field of security and defence as well as a strategy of how to achieve them. In fact, beyond the issue of threat analysis and setting of a number of 'strategic objectives', the ESS remains vague with regard to various aspects, including the functional and geographic conditions under which the use of different kinds of capabilities would be appropriate, alliance politics or internal security (Heisbourg, 2004). Moreover, as with many other strategies in the history of EU integration, the value of such a document is determined primarily by the degree to which member-state governments are willing and capable of implementing it over a longer period.<sup>2</sup> It will depend not just on creating the military and civil capabilities to complement the EU's already very broad toolbox of foreign policy instruments, but also on whether the EU is politically and cognitively able to identify and respond to security threats in a coherent and effective manner, including the use of force. This is where the intangibility of 'European strategic culture' is introduced in the discussion. European in this context refers to the European Union attempting to act through ESDP. Practitioners see it as a work in progress, which ought to grow in order to serve particular ends. In the ESS, High Representative Solana calls for the development of "a strategic culture, which fosters early, rapid, and when necessary, robust intervention" (European Council, 2003, p. 12). Strategic culture in this rudimentary form is depicted as a kind of mindset to allow the successful implementation of certain types of action. The European Parliament and the Western European Union (WEU) Parliamentary Assembly use the notion of an EU strategic culture as a justification device to demand more scrutiny rights and better information for the public through the High Representative (WEU Assembly, 2003).

In the academic debate, strategic culture plays a role as an intervening variable in foreign policy analysis to understand states' and/or international organisations' behaviour in security and defence affairs. Its relevance can be best understood from a moderate constructivist perspective within international relations (Risse, 2002; Schimmelfennig, 2000; Checkel, 1998 and 2000; Katzenstein, 1996b), which emphasises the role of ideas, norms, identities and worldviews for understanding how actors interpret social reality and construct their interests in international affairs and EU institutions through these cognitive lenses. They do not dispute that material circumstances, such as anarchy of the international system and differences in the distribution of power capabilities matter for actors, but suggest that these differences are often not sufficient for understanding states' behaviour in foreign affairs. Only with reference to deeply ingrained norms about identity and legitimate behaviour could one, for instance, understand the pacific orientations of post-war Japan or the Europeanised defensive posture of Germany (Katzenstein, 1996c). If national norms, ideas and values regarding security policy

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<sup>1</sup> Felix Berenskoetter's (2004) comparison of the US National Security Strategy and the ESS comes to the conclusion that beyond the identification of certain security treats, the two documents are quite different in their language, length, style, overall goals, worldviews and use of instruments. In other words, US policy-makers and NATO officials should have read the document more thoroughly before welcoming it as a building block for re-establishing transatlantic unity.

<sup>2</sup> One can take the Lisbon strategy aimed at making the EU the most competitive economy by 2010 as a good example of how not to do it. It has only widened the capability-expectation gap, because of numerous design and delivery problems at multiple levels of governance.

matter, we would expect these factors to also play a key role in shaping the EU's conduct in security and defence affairs, which is largely but not only the result of member-state preferences entering a governing mode operating and on the basis of the unanimity principle.

The significance of shared values and views of the world is, as Sten Rynning writes, that these can act "as a context that, if integrated and coordinated, can help actors overcome even serious obstacles to cooperation; conversely, culture can be the predominant source of strategic incoherence" (Rynning, 2003, p. 483). It could be argued that the significance of a shared strategic culture can be best understood when focusing on three carriers or levels: political decision-makers, societies and armed forces. For national decision-makers determining the path of ESDP the challenge is that they need to agree on the overall objectives for EU security and defence policy, in particular, how active the EU should be in pursuing what kind of security interests or humanitarian values and what means are justified for these ends. What kinds of means are justified to promote democracy and protect human rights? Is it legitimate to use force to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction? If these questions cannot be answered, belated reactions, decision-making paralysis and coalitions of the willing outside the EU framework are the likely outcome. For societies these questions matter as well when forming an opinion over whether the use of force is justified, but they are also particularly concerned over the question of authorisation of force. Broad parliamentary as well as international approval through the United Nations can make all the difference to whether interventions will enjoy support and can be sustained when human and financial costs mount. This is apparent in the case of European countries' participation in the invasion of Iraq and the reaction of citizens in Spain to the terrorist attack in Madrid of March 2004.

Finally, strategic cultures matter at the level of armed forces, which operate on the basis military doctrines that guide procedures and approaches in the case of deployment. These doctrines are often shaped by geo-strategic considerations, which in turn may result in quite different perceptions of how to engage with opposing wills as Freedman argues (Freedman, 2004). In so far as ESDP depends on the close cooperation of national militaries in planning, deciding and acting, the risk of strategic incoherencies is disorientation, unclear goals and procedures, and thus delayed or ineffective action. It could also be argued that intra-European coalitions of the willing, of countries with very similar strategic cultures and political objectives, are not necessarily the solution. Even if it is true that some countries' strategic cultures are sufficiently similar, for instance those of France and the UK as claimed by Freedman (Freedman, 2004, p. 22), it would be hard to conceive of the authorisation of ESDP operations, if these are considered illegitimate by a large number of member states. The EU is by law and aspiration a value-based political community, not an instrument that can be used by a narrow if powerful group of members for different purposes. The legal provisions for structured cooperation reflect that. Hence, a minimum degree of convergence in national strategic cultures appears as indispensable for an EU strategic culture to emerge and work. It could be argued that whether such a strategic culture is perceived as sufficient depends i) on the specific challenges it is confronted with or sets for itself, as well as ii) the degree to which the different ideational components of this culture are in fact shared among the different participants, societies and institutions involved in ESDP.

In summary, mapping and understanding the strategic cultures at these multiple levels is crucial for arriving at a realistic understanding of the possibilities, limitations and aspirations of the EU's new security policy. This effort requires, however, a workable definition and operationalisation of the term 'strategic culture'. Per M. Martinsen has discussed earlier accounts of strategic cultures by Gray (Gray, 1999) and Johnston (Johnston, 1995; Johnston,

1999) and defined European strategic culture “as the ideas, expectations and patterns of behaviour that are shared across the actors involved in the processes surrounding European security and defence politics”. He also defines ‘strategy’ as the civil and military means employed in ranked order to reach particular ends defined as ‘crisis management’. This definition is a good starting point, which could be made even better if adapted in a number of ways.

First, we would suggest replacing ‘expectations’ with ‘norms’ to link up with Katzenstein’s definition of norms as social facts, which define standards of appropriate behaviour and express actors’ identities (Katzenstein, 1996c, p. 5; Katzenstein, 1996a, p. 19). Norms in this sense are not volatile and ever-changing depending on different situations, but are deeply ingrained, identity-derived *collective* expectations that concern, for instance, the legitimacy of the use of military force and the state’s role in international politics.

Second, strategic culture should not be limited to just political actors directly involved in ESDP decision-making. A strategic culture needs to be rooted in collectively held norms, societal values and beliefs about the legitimate use of force in order to be meaningful and effective. Leaving societies and publics out of the equation would be a mistake given the high public salience of security threats such as international terrorism and the very real and potentially high costs that preparing for and engaging in military mission entails. Indeed, as Martinsen points out, whether these missions will be at the high or at the low end of the Petersberg scale is not necessarily a good guide to how costly they will be, if one thinks of worst case scenarios arising from humanitarian intervention or peace-keeping missions.

Third, crisis management appears as a too short-term and narrow goal for a security strategy. Indeed, the very nature of a security strategy is to prevent conflicts from evolving in the first place or to pursue certain security interests in a coherent and sustainable way. Distinguishing between the short, medium and long term is thus not very helpful here, unless one wants to introduce a deliberate yardstick for the political ends of a European strategic culture at this point. We would instead propose defining the scope initially broad as to include the deliberate application of all kinds of instruments and forms of power, ranging from persuasion to force, by one actor or a group of actors to make other actors (usually states) change their behaviour in ways that are deemed important to enhance the formers’ security and defence interests (Hill, 2003, p. 137).

One can start from the adapted definition of European strategic culture as the ideas, *norms* and patterns of *behaviour* that are shared across the actors *and publics* involved in the processes of pursuing European security and defence policies. *Norms* within the context of strategic culture concern the conditions under which the use of force is considered legitimate, such as the ends it is used for and the way its use is authorised domestically and internationally. *Ideas* concerning the state’s role in the world and its perception of a secure global order, which has implications for the degree to which it cooperates with other actors or regimes, including regional or global organisations or other states such as the US. And finally, *established pattern of behaviour*, which can be broadly understood as ways of discussing (societies), deciding (political actors) and doing things (armed forces) in matters of security and defence.

## 1.2 Unpacking strategic culture(s): Norms, ideas and typologies

Based on the previous definition of strategic culture, we can now ‘unpack’ the notion to make it amenable to research. In particular, this paper sets out criteria and scales for distinguishing different kinds of strategic cultures from each other. Sten Rynning speaks of a “strong

strategic culture” capable of allowing the EU to prevail in zero-sum conflict situations, in which opposing actors need to be defeated rather than persuaded to change their views, interests and behaviour (Rynning, 2003, p. 484). Implicitly, a weak strategic culture would then mean a power that seeks to overcome opposing wills through means of persuasion or other sanctions short of the use of military force. Yet ‘weak’ or ‘strong’ can be viewed as too crude and moreover normatively biased measurements to make a distinction. Instead it could be suggested that concentrating on key norms and ideas underpinning strategic cultures to conceptualise these characteristics not as mutually exclusive, but rather as spanning continuums, within which different national strategic cultures can be located (see Figures 1 and 2).

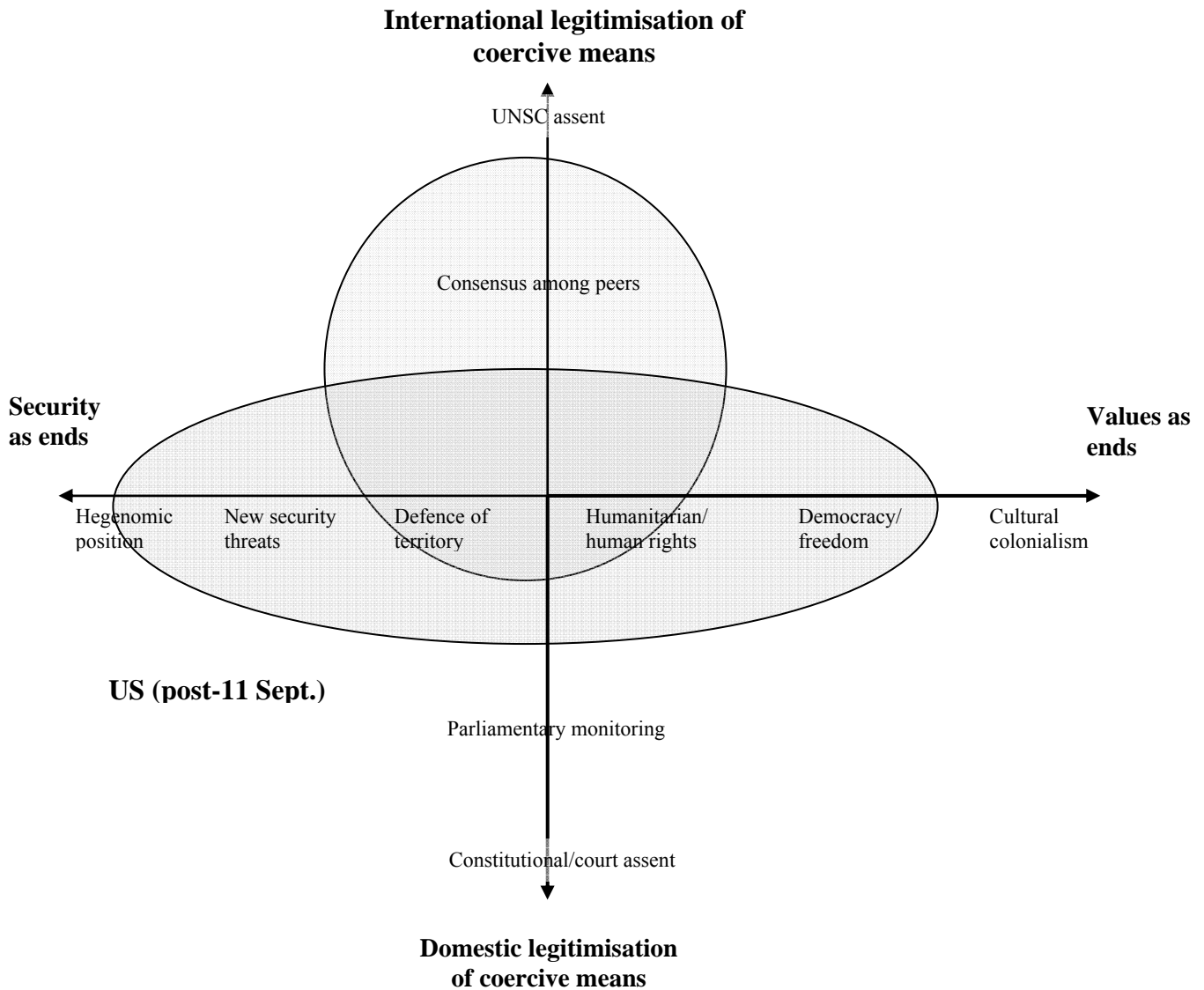
As for the different criteria, this paper concentrates first on what Katzenstein has called the constitutive and regulatory norms as the most persistent and most deeply rooted aspects of national strategic cultures. Different kinds of norms concerning the means and ends of security and defence policy can be used to distinguish national strategic cultures from each other, drawing on Heiselberg’s distinction of strategic culture on the basis of their degree of activism in pursuing different kinds of goals (2003, pp. 12-13). Moreover, strategic cultures put a different degree of emphasis on the pursuit of two fundamental goals: the pursuit of security and the defence of key values. The use of military force may be considered, for instance, appropriate for the defence against immediate threats, but not for the defence of values. The second major measurement, which misses from Heiselberg’s account, is the degree to which the use of coercive means requires domestic and external authorisation. For instance, there are those countries, such as Germany, that demand a very high degree of both domestic and international assent before the use of force can be considered legitimate, whereas American strategic culture provides the president as the commander-in-chief with substantially more leeway domestically, but especially with respect to international authorisation. Figure 1 below is an attempt to set out a scale of norms regarding the pursuit of certain goals as well as the authorisation of means.

The circles represent an admittedly preliminary assessment of where the EU has currently placed its ESDP according to the European Security Strategy and other forms of EU-level institutionalisation of norms, along with where the US can be located after the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001. The questions with respect to the EU are, first, whether the current, official EU version of strategic culture is indeed widely shared not only by the major Brussels actors, but also by national elites and publics; and second, whether it is possible to identify a process of convergence and upgrading of strategic cultures, opening opportunities for shifting EU strategic culture towards the Franco-British model.

The second dimension of the inquiry involves ideas about how a given state should relate to its external environment in the pursuit of security, in particular whether it is prepared to cede sovereignty/autonomy by becoming part of alliances and regional organisations, or ally itself formally or informally to a particular state. Figure 2 spells out how a number of European states can be situated with regard to this dimension. We can broadly distinguish between i) the neutral countries such as Sweden or even more extreme, Switzerland, concerned over their territorial integrity and political sovereignty, ii) states such as Germany who are extremely keen to pool their defence competences with alliances (WEU, NATO), states (US) and regional organisations such as the EU, and finally iii) states such as France and the UK, which either favour strongly the EU or alliances/US as a vehicle for the sharing of defence and security competences. It can be argued that ESDP only became possible because the UK and France have moved substantially on the sovereignty/cooperation axis towards each other since St. Malo. The UK acknowledged the need for a substantial and autonomous European role in

security and defence matters, while France at least to a certain extent reconsidered and upgraded its assessment of NATO. Only if there is agreement on the norms underpinning the legitimate use of force in security and defence as well as over the ways to collaborate with each other can ESDP take off the ground.

Figure 1. Norm graph for situating EU and US strategic cultures

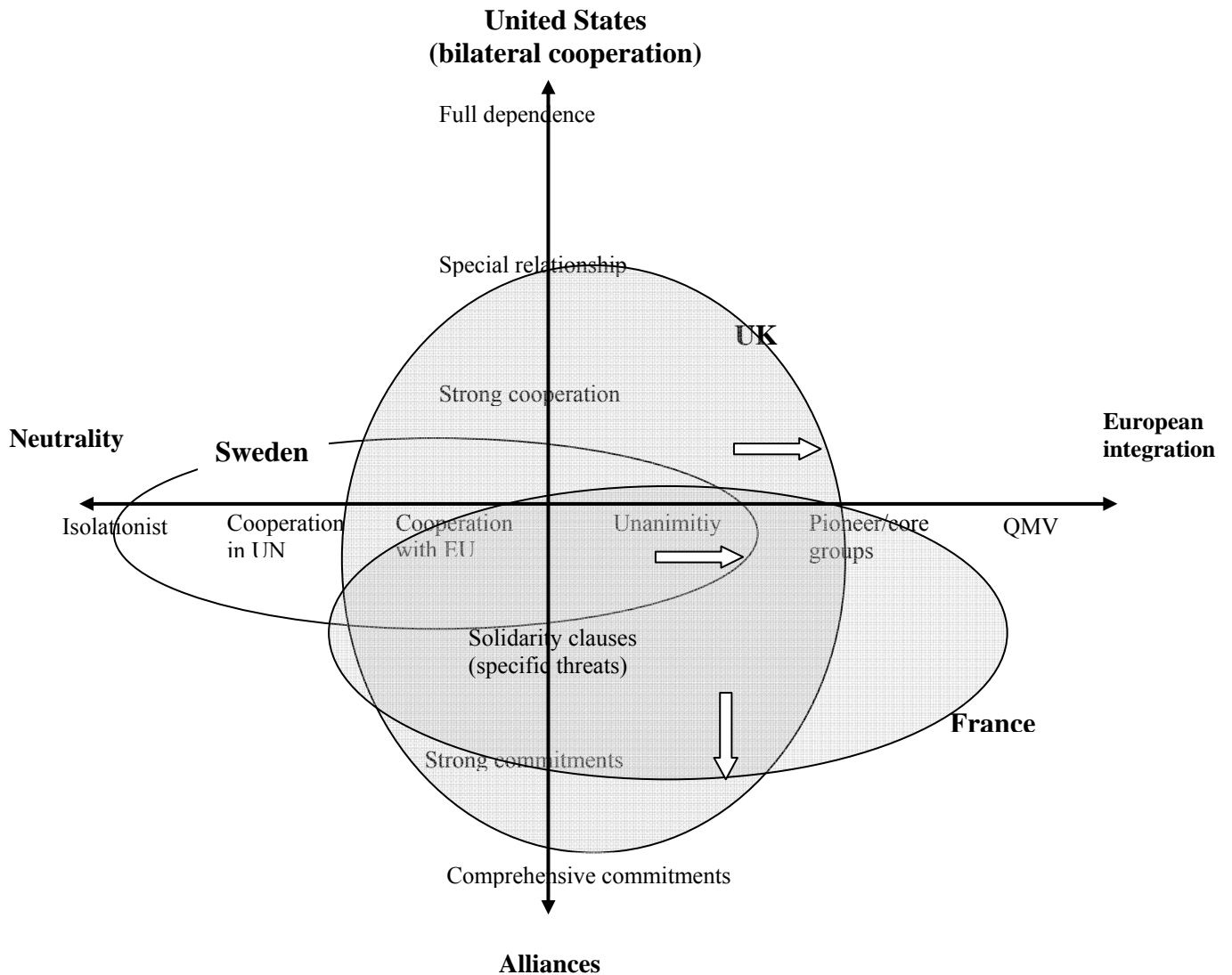


How do national strategic cultures relate to the emergence of a European strategic culture? It is conceivable that the increasing institutionalisation of ESDP, the convergence of views at the level of senior civil servants and military staff leads to a Brussels-based strategic culture, which may be running ahead of or be distinct in several ways from those norms, ideas and pattern of behaviour that we can see at the national level. In so far as the European Union is in many respects a different political entity than any of its component parts, we would even expect some of its features to be different. None of the existing EU states have borders with Russia as well as the Mediterranean region, none have so many relations with non-EU member countries and none have such peculiar and heterarchical structures of different governing modes and policy competences. Nevertheless, it can be proposed that a successful European strategic culture would need to capture and draw upon similar norms, ideas and



practices regarding security and defence policy and the legitimate use of force as argued in the previous section. In other words, a European strategic culture is not taking the place of national strategic cultures, but it should be conceived of primarily as the increasing institutionalisation of those ideas, norms and values that are sufficiently shared at the national level.

Figure 2. Idea graph for situating different member states



Transnational homogeneity is not a natural state of affairs, but rather the result of convergence. This could mean in theory that there could be a convergence towards a limited pacific or only self-defence oriented European strategic culture, which would mean that authorisation is protracted, highly dependent on the support of other non-EU countries and the UN, as well as limited to certain types of situations and conflicts. Conversely, we could envisage convergence as the gradual transformation or upgrading of particularly the more pacific or defensive-minded strategic cultures towards more activism in the pursuit of their goals, which would entail an expansion of the legitimate ends of ESDP coupled with an increasing lowering of the norms regarding the domestic legitimisation and authorisation of the use of military force. Finally, convergence may be conceived of as a process that affects all strategic cultures and pushes them towards a kind of median or hybrid European set of

norms, which are then becoming increasingly institutionalised and internalised. In the current academic discussion (Freedman, 2004, pp. 22-23) as well as in the Solana report (European Council, 2003), convergence is implicitly conceived of in the sense of upgrading towards ‘a more active’ strategic culture presented by countries such as France and the UK, which form an attractive core or ‘model’ of robust strategic cultures for others to follow or at least not to oppose.<sup>3</sup>

Shared strategic culture does not equal a harmony of interests or expectations on what to do in a given situation, but provides those involved with a common ideational and normative platform and established communication channels to take and sustain decisions about the use of different capabilities for various ends. Moreover, the question whether a strategic culture is shared across national actors or publics (and therefore becomes ‘European’) is not the same as whether it conforms to some actors’ expectations for supporting particular kinds of actions. In other words, whether a strategic culture is sufficiently robust or coherent depends on the political aspirations it is expected to support. What has not been investigated here is whether there has also been a convergence in the ranked order of national security and defence policy interests and threat perceptions in the different countries (Kirchner and Sperling, 2002). This aspect, however, touches on the question of EU foreign policy and the question of sufficient political will (Keukeleire, 2002). Only by understanding the interplay of deeply ingrained strategic cultures and more volatile political considerations can we understand foreign policy as Hill and Wallace have noted: “Effective foreign policy rests upon a shared sense of national identity, of a nation-state’s ‘place in the world’, its friends and enemies, its interests and aspirations. These underlying assumptions are embedded in national history and myths, changing slowly over time as political leaders reinterpret them and external and internal developments reshape them” (Hill and Wallace, 1996, p. 8).

### 1.3 Theorising the convergence of strategic cultures

In the previous section the hypothesis has been developed that national security cultures have been and are converging towards a greater activism in the pursuit of security and value goals, in the preparedness to use coercive means, as well as in the degree to which the European Union is seen as a legitimate vehicle for the sharing of national security and defence policies. Given the current state of the art in empirical research, this is just one position in the debate about whether national strategic cultures have become sufficiently similar to support a European strategic culture. On the one side of the debate are those who see the EU gaining not only in capabilities, but also increasingly in political resolve to act (Howorth, 2002; Cornish & Edwards, 2001). On the other side are those who highlight that Europeans still disagree over key issues concerning the analysis of threats and the application of military force, raising the risk that the EU will fail to act effectively when faced with grave threats or crisis (Lindley-French, 2002; Rynning, 2003; Heiselberg, 2003). Nevertheless, in so far as one takes ideas and norms seriously as factors to shape interests and policies, these intangibles should not be treated as self-evident or easily deducible from the behaviour of governments within the EU, instead, they should be subjected to a systematic empirical

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<sup>3</sup> It should be pointed out that such a strategic culture is not necessarily normatively superior. From Freedman’s perspective (2004) the military doctrines of pacific or defensive countries are unsuitable for ESDP because these countries do not have sufficient hard combat experience, depicting them as weak, confused and out of practice. Nevertheless, in so far as ESDP is essentially about fostering security for EU citizens as well as defending certain values, the jury is out about whether pacific countries’ experience in using instruments for conflict prevention and resolution may not be more useful for achieving these interests effectively. One could argue for instance that by pursuing too activist an ESDP, the EU might undermine its attraction to many countries in the world and weaken its soft power (for an elaboration on the concept of soft-power see Nye, 2004).

inquiry that ought to investigate ideational changes affecting both EU and national elites as well as national publics. This has hardly been done so far with the exception of Heiselberg (2003), who investigated the impact of ‘formative moments’ or ‘experiences’ on the narratives underpinning national strategic cultures in the UK, Sweden and Germany (see below). Moreover, accounts of the driving forces of any such change usually employ a historical approach and do not link up with theories of either international relations or European integration. Jolyon Howorth, for instance, has pointed to a number of powerful “endogenous and exogenous historical forces” (Howorth, 2003, p. 9), most notably the aspirations of Europeans to accomplish political union and the increasing unwillingness of the US to foot the bill for European security free-riding after the end of the cold war. While such an account has its merits, especially when written by an expert with profound knowledge of the substance, it leaves much desired in terms of better understanding the key dynamics at play, of explaining and forecasting outcomes, in short, for theorising the evolution of ESDP. What are the key assumptions regarding the driving forces, which are the most powerful dynamics and do they affect nation-states as the most decisive actors in the building of the ESDP?

The goal of the following section is to draw on existing theoretical approaches in political science and international relations to suggest three theories that could account for the convergence of national strategic cultures in Europe. These three theories vary with regard to the time frame of their explanatory power. The first one, drawing on realist concepts, takes about a decade to produce effects; the second, institutionalist perspective concentrates on medium-term (about five years) developments, whereas the formative experience theory can also work in the very short term, depending on the kind of event as well as its interpretations. Given the scarcity of reliable empirical material about the actual degree of convergence, any statements regarding the existence, non-existence or limitations of a European strategic culture have to be regarded as preliminary until appropriate empirical material becomes available.

### **1.3.1 A realist account of ideational change: Structural changes in the international system after the end of the cold war**

The (neo-)realist perspective on international politics highlights the role of differences in the distribution of power capacities among states within an anarchical international system for understanding the characteristics of the system (Waltz, 1996; Gilpin, 1996). They have also played an important role in the analysis of state foreign policy.<sup>4</sup> While hard core realists would dispute the value of ideas as an important explanatory variable, moderate constructivists do take some geopolitical factors and changes in power capabilities into account, which may influence actors’ perceptions of their interest and what is being considered appropriate (Schimmelfennig, 2000; Goldstein & Keohane, 1993). Moreover, while collective identities and norms (once they have become internalised) are generally sought to be independent from material circumstances, one would also expect dramatic changes in the real world to be capable of challenging and transforming collective beliefs and norms. Ideas, norms and values do not therefore just float within a vacuum, but are

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<sup>4</sup> Kenneth Waltz (1996) has always disputed that his structural theory, *per se*, is suitable for the analysis of unit-level characteristics, including the behaviour of individual states. Yet, it could be used in conjunction with more detailed studies of particular states’ behaviour as an intervening factor. In particular, situation system-level variables could even overcome the diversity of unit-level characteristics to bring about homogenous outcome or as Arnold Wolfers wrote, “if the house is sufficiently on fire, all its inhabitants will rush for the same exit” (see Elman, 1996, p. 61)

themselves subject to changes in the real world, but only under certain conditions, which are not likely to be met every couple of years. The first argument is thus derived from realist thought to the extent that the dramatic changes in the international systems as a result of the end of the cold war would affect not just interest perceptions, but also the security cultures underpinning and pervading preference formation.

The thesis is that European national security cultures, which remained relatively static during the cold war, came under significant adaptation pressure owing to dramatic changes in the international system and their repercussions for states' ability to protect themselves. In the shade of the American security umbrella and as an associated part of one pole of the bipolar international system in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Western European states have managed to overcome the regional security dilemma – by integrating their markets, sharing political authority and delegating competences to supranational institutions in a way that encouraged over time the emergence of a Deutschan security community, in which inter-state war has become unthinkable. Yet, even if intra-regional anarchy has been overcome, the EU and its constituent parts still inhabit a potentially dangerous international system, where hard power and its main currency of military capabilities still matter for security policies and self-identification. The demise of the Soviet Union ushered in a swift transition from a bipolar to an essentially unipolar system (at least in terms of the capacity to wage conventional warfare), in which the US is the sole remaining military superpower, surpassing in military spending alone the EU, China, Russia and India taken together.

This shift had two consequences: first, the US shifted its attention away from balancing its increasingly harmless former adversary to ensuring its global hegemony by preventing the emergence of new challenger states or a group of challenger states (see US NSS). Second, the US-EU capabilities gap became a lot more pronounced for two reasons. First, EU states cashed in on the peace dividend starting from the late 1980s and second, the capacities they had, namely large standing territorial armies, had suddenly become virtually useless after the demise of the Soviet threat. Therefore, the shift in US attention away from Europe and the widening capability gap posed a challenge to those norms concerning the ends for which military force can be used (left/minus part of the  $x$ -axis in Figure 1) as well as for the ideas concerning the pooling of defence sovereignty. The belief that a passive or purely reactive approach to security and defence policy would be sufficient to guarantee national security became gradually undermined. Indeed, one of the central tenets of realism is that capacities and power balances matter because other states could not be trusted within an anarchical international system. The post-cold war environment weakened substantially the ideational and institutional glue between Western Europe and the US, and raised for Europeans the question whether the US could be trusted to always intervene when Europe's security interests were at stake. The engagement of NATO (de-facto the US) in Bosnia and in Kosovo did not calm these fears, but rather accentuated them to the extent that it demonstrated not only Europe's lack of political and military capacity, but also its limited influence on US decision-making on how the air campaign was to be conducted. The decision-making process within the United Nations in the run-up to the invasion of Iraq and the Bush administration's talk about 'coalitions of the willing' just reinforced the notion that the strategic view on Europe held by the US had fundamentally changed. Moreover, even though a major attack from the east (or indeed from any other neighbouring state) of Europe had become an excessively unrealistic scenario, the world's only superpower increasingly charged European countries with new security tasks, namely taking a more proactive approach to ensuring security in its backyard.

Given the US dominance of the international system in terms of conventional military power, weaker powers have either the choice to balance or to bandwagon; either they support the security policies and interests of the hegemon or they participate in efforts to bring about a genuinely multi-polar structure, in which the hegemon's absolute superiority is held in check by a greater number of smaller regional powers – a longstanding aspiration of French presidents, including the current one. In both cases, the prevalent norms of passive or purely reactive defence of security interests would come under adaptation pressure to become more flexible and assertive. This was particularly true for countries such as Germany, who had conceived of themselves primarily as a *Zivilmacht*, which would use combat troops only to defend an alliance or itself against attacks. The first Gulf war of 1990–91 had already challenged this norm and also made other countries realise that in the new world order, territorial defence alone was not enough to meet the demands of the benign hegemon. One could argue, therefore, that it was such structural changes that challenged a number of European countries to adapt their self-perception from being a net-importer of security to being an exporter of security. Nevertheless, the impact on national security cultures may have been limited because these changes did not initially necessitate a mobilisation of military capacities against a new antagonist, but were largely channelled through EU institutions and mechanisms such as the EU accession process with its application of membership conditionality, TACIS programme or the Barcelona process. In summary, while specific events such as those in Kosovo or Iraq (see the third section below) may accelerate the domestic perception of changed power capabilities in the international system and the strategic outlook of the US, we are looking at powerful structural forces pushing European states (especially the more pacific, neutral and territorial defence-minded) to reconsider their normative orientations towards a greater activism in shaping their new security environment.

### **1.3.2 The institutionalist account: Cognitive change through Europeanisation**

If one holds the view that European integration is an inexorable trend, security and defence policy just follows logically, albeit more slowly and belatedly, the path of other policy fields such as money, competition, customs and trade policy to name but a few. Yet given the fundamental concerns many member states have had and still have when confronted with the decision to delegate political authority to the EU-level, the puzzle for integration theory has been to understand how regional integration in Europe could develop over the medium to long term in a direction that many national decision-makers did not anticipate, did not care about because their immediate electoral fortunes were not affected or would have actively opposed at the time if faced with the outcomes (Pierson, 1998). There are two accounts of how integration becomes self-perpetuating that are relevant for the discussion of the evolution of ESDP. One important answer to the question has been that supranational institutions exploit gaps in member-state control and upgrade the common interest through gradually cultivating spillovers. Formal institutions, such as the European Commission, but also Council formations, committees, subcommittees and agencies tend to take up a life of their own after they have been created and seek to diffuse their self-interested interpretation of political problems and their potential solutions. This is particularly relevant in times of crisis or when member states are grappling with problems they cannot solve on their own. In both cases, supranational actors will seek to set the agenda by proposing a strong European Union-based solution rather than a loose intergovernmental one to the problem, as for instance the setting up of new agencies (e.g. for armaments), new posts (e.g. the Office of the High Representative or the coordinator of anti-terrorism measures) or new legislative proposals (e.g. the solidarity clause or the Helsinki Headline Goals). A logic of functional spillover comes into play here as well to the extent that many of the instruments, which are needed to

combat new security threats such as terrorism, organised crime and regional instability owing to ethnic tensions, are already situated at the European level as a result of previous integrative steps. We have seen this kind of pattern in the aftermath of September 11<sup>th</sup>, the Madrid bombing of 11 March 2004 and even in the Iraqi crisis. In the later case, it was the working group of the Convention as well as the Office of the High Representative (HR) that succeeded in building up a consensus for a European foreign minister and for selling a European Security Strategy to national representatives and eventually heads of state in Brussels in December 2003. Indeed, the HR office has particularly managed to progressively extend the scope of its activity by building support among its key constituencies in Brussels (Crum, forthcoming). Thus, the more member states agree on institutionalising their cooperation in order to make it more effective, the more they fall prey to the logic of unintended effects highlighted by historical institutionalism (Pierson, 1998) and neofunctionalist cultivated spillover (Schmitter, 2003). While both logics primarily influence political elites' perception of their interests as well as the interplay between different interests, it goes further than this. It gradually changes the terms of reference among political elites about the role the EU can play in delivering security for national citizens, given politically elite-based strategic cultures a push to the right of the  $x$ -axis in Figure 2, the EU integration dimension.

The EU-value added to national solutions must, however, appear as very strong in terms of enhancing effectiveness to fundamentally change national reservations against sovereignty transfer. This is where the second mechanism of Europeanisation sets in. Constructivists point out that political actors' do not always engage in objective interest calculations, but they often follow a logic of appropriateness, informal rules that shape institutional and national identities (Checkel, 2000; Schimmelfennig, 2000; Olsen, 2000). The arguments advanced by scholars of EU integration is that such integration can set in motion socialisation dynamics, which can overcome the central problem of gaps in mutual trust and common world views among the key actors in EU intergovernmental bargaining, thereby gradually changing informal institutions at the member-state level, including ideas, routines and beliefs over time. These socialisation dynamics primarily affect the plethora of sub-ministerial actors, experts and senior-level officials, which then play a role in gradually reshaping informal institutions at the national level. Cognitive Europeanisation occurs primarily within the numerous committees, task forces and working groups, which are made up by primarily by national officials, some of which are permanently based in Brussels. The day-to-day experience of working together, shared professional backgrounds and a common commitment to a shared project lead the Brussels-based participants in the foreign and security policy nexus to become part of a "high-level network with transformative effects" (Hill & Wallace, 1996, p. 6). Narrow interest-based bargaining is gradually superseded by arguing over the best solution for the EU.

The new Office of the High Representative has especially developed into an engine of socialisation, liaising and networking with both national and European actors, gradually building up trust among national defence bureaucracies, military staff, intelligence communities and other foreign policy actors. The staffs of the Policy Unit, the Political and Security Committee and the military committee meet on a regular basis or even work daily with each other within the same building on Avenue de Cortenberg. They can rely on secure lines of communication and have access to confidential national intelligence sources and pieces of analysis prepared on the basis of these national and some EU sources by the EU's Joint Situation Centre (SITCEN) (Müller-Wille, 2004). SITCEN is staffed by seconded officials from national intelligence agencies, who are able to use their contacts to tap into national intelligence sources when jointly drafting common assessments of different issues, thereby taking the national 'spin' out of documents.

Although these mechanisms are comparatively new, there are also established channels for joint deliberation, planning and assessment in the EU's common foreign and security policy (CFSP), such as the COREU system and the European correspondent system, by which member states exchange confidential information and assessments on foreign policy. Ben Tonra has argued that particularly smaller member states' patterns of behaviour, identities and ideas concerning foreign policy have become gradually Europeanised through their participation in an EU institutional setting and their enmeshment in an information and analysis exchange system (Tonra, 2003). One could also expect complex socialisation across the older CFSP, which has been portrayed as being increasingly pervaded by a "concertation reflex" (Nuttall, 1992) among member states and ESDP as a relatively new policy area dealt with at the EU level. Yet, ESDP can draw on established networks of actors who know each other either from NATO or from the CFSP context. Many of the actors in ESDP and CFSP are identical. Double-hatting is also increasingly advanced across institutions, as the case of the proposed EU foreign minister illustrates. The question is not only how powerful these socialisation effects are, but also whether these networks of senior civil servants are able to remould instructions from senior national politicians in sensitive matters of national security. Trends by national leaders of large member states bypassing the EU and its structures are clearly problematic as witnessed by the creation of the Contact Groups in the Balkans or cooperation within the so-called 'Quint', an informal *directoire* consisting of Germany, France, the UK, Italy and the US (Gegout, 2002). In the Iraqi crisis, one also saw also the bypassing of Council institutions and procedures in favour of bilateral diplomacy between France and Germany on the one hand, and the UK and the US on the other hand (Crowe, 2003). In such situations, intelligence flows from national services to the EU are also severely affected.

On balance, however, the cognitive Europeanisation dynamics described above can be expected to gradually contribute to joint assessments and views of security threats in the ESDP, to building the trust among national actors that is essential for closer cooperation and/or the use of more flexible mechanisms and creating Europeanised networks among the officials involved in these processes. These ideational changes at the elite level would then be slowly passed on to wider collective beliefs and norms through a multi-step process of communication. The effectiveness of such a trickle-down effect depends partly on how well national elites are embedded in national discourses, how many actors are involved at the EU level and how strong pre-existing orientations are (see below). Moreover, the EU level allows governments to better legitimate the use of certain instruments – including the use of military force – and helps to gradually overcome traditional ideational constraints held in collective memories such as neutrality and non-alignment in countries like Austria and Sweden (Heiselberg, 2003). Europeanisation may thus lead to a more proactive pursuit of both security concerns and values, as well as make it easier for governments to externalise the legitimisation of the use of force in situations where domestic authorisation alone would be problematic or neutrality concerns would prevent a further engagement.

### **1.3.3 The constructivist account: Armed conflicts as critical junctures for societal learning**

The first two perspectives on explaining ideational change relate primarily to political elites, especially decision-makers, experts and senior civil servants. While elites can have an important multiplier effect, under normal circumstances they are not able to single-handedly transform national security and strategic cultures. Norms relating to the use of force or a national place in the world are generally persistent over time, not least because they are institutionalised in various ways (Katzenstein, 1996a). Yet changes in national strategic

cultures as well as the norms and narratives underpinning them can and do occur, either very gradually to the forces described above or rapidly through events and crises, which act as ‘formative moments’ (Ringmar, 1996, p. 85; Heiselberg, 2003, p. 8) for the updating of collective memory and as critical junctures for learning and unlearning. The traumatic experience of utter defeat and occupation in World War II for instance paved the way for the institutionalisation of new norms of societal pacifism in Japanese and German societies (Katzenstein, 1996b). Indeed, World War II contributed to the emergence in most continental European societies of norms about the use of force for self-defence only or strengthened notions of neutrality and non-alignment to prevent dangerous entanglements (or both).

One widespread thesis is that the outbreak of violent ethnic conflicts in the Balkans, which led to NATO interventions in Bosnia in 1995 and Kosovo of 1999, challenged the more reactive and territorial defence-oriented national security cultures and initiated a process of societal learning in a number of member states towards a more active role in security and defence (Heiselberg, 2003).<sup>5</sup> Intensive news media coverage of the events in Croatia, Bosnia and Kosovo exposed citizens across Europe to pictures of interethnic violence, starving men in concentration camps, raped Muslim women and violent ethnic purges. This raised painful memories in many European countries of Nazi *Lebensraumpolitik* and notions of ethnic superiority that promulgated the extermination of other ethnicities or religions. German society in particular was thus torn apart between the regulative norm of never sending soldiers ‘out of area’ again, and the commitment to prevent a second Auschwitz, as German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer put it during the conflict in Kosovo.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, the inability of Europeans as represented by the Dutch UN battalion to prevent the massacre of Srebrenica was widely interpreted in Europe as a moment of collective shame.<sup>7</sup>

Moreover, a number of European countries recognised that new conflicts in the neighbourhood could affect them directly, either by increasing tensions between the ethnicities living within their borders or by flows of refugees and/or the increase in organised crime linked to political radicalisation and the need to purchase arms. Beyond the Bosnian experience, the conflict over Kosovo was not only another case of Europe preventing an outbreak of a conflict and more ethnic cleansing, but constituted another lesson for most Europeans, who would have preferred a different kind of military campaign to the one the US

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<sup>5</sup> Heiselberg (2003) concentrates her account of how national narratives changed in the case of the UK, Germany and Sweden primarily on Kosovo and 11 September, 2001. This seems to be too narrow a focus, given that it excludes not only Bosnia and Srebrenica, but also the Iraqi war, which may be interpreted as the first expression of a more or less European public opinion on a security issue. The notion of the narrative as the embodiment of strategic culture is of limited use for theorising exactly because it is so broad and because it suggests an unrealistic degree of coherence. Moreover, in so far as ‘formative experiences’ are thought to affect not just political leaders but also societies, the empirical focus on the statements only made by ministers is too narrow. Finally, her interpretation of the empirical material she uses is not entirely consistent. On the one hand, she states that Kosovo was interpreted in all three countries as a wake-up call for Europe to defend its values and become more active, yet she argues that narratives about the use of force “diverged” (2003, p. 35), which suggests that they were more distant from each other than before the conflict. This is clearly not the case, even if the observed convergence in the overall narrative about Kosovo did not lead to the same conclusions regarding the need for the use of military force.

<sup>6</sup> Sweden’s Foreign Minister Anna Lind is quoted by Heiselberg in a remarkably similar way (2003, p. 18): “Let us now add to the insights, Never again Auschwitz!, Never again a Cold War! and Never again Srebrenica! and one more: Never again Kosovo! But what is the most important is for these painful experience for Europe to be turned into political action (sic)”.

<sup>7</sup> After the publication of an investigation report on the Srebrenica massacre the Dutch government resigned in April 2002, a few weeks before general elections, in a symbolic acknowledgement of its political responsibility. The truth is that probably few political leaders in continental Europe were mentally prepared to take tough decisions and order their troops into open battle with the Serb forces of General Ratko Mladic.



implemented. NATO was under considerable criticism for its targeting of bridges and other infrastructure, which led to many civilian deaths, rather than engaging the Serbian forces directly with ground troops and accepting the risk of more casualties among NATO forces.<sup>8</sup>

The question is whether the Balkan wars alone were ‘traumatic’ enough to bring about lasting and deep changes in the collective norms concerning the activist defence of values, including the use of military means? What role did September 11<sup>th</sup>, the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, and the Madrid terrorist attack of 11 March play in re-coding national collective norms about the use of military force? It is fair to say that September 11<sup>th</sup> only accentuated the perception in Europe that a more active policy stance in security and defence was needed. EU leaders agreed an ambitious set of initiatives to improve cross-national cooperation primarily in the area of internal security through the Justice and Home Affairs pillar. Despite the genuine shock and the outpouring of solidarity, Europeans felt much less affected by and vulnerable to al-Qaeda style of terrorism, so the cognitive impact of September 11<sup>th</sup> could be seen as giving European publics only a moderate push towards a more activist role in the pursuit of security interests. Yet it did not change the dominant norms concerning the legitimisation of the use of force, as the invasion of Iraq demonstrated. In contrast to the attack against the Taliban regime in Afghanistan (which was backed by the UN and clearly linked to the September 11<sup>th</sup> attack), the US-led invasion of Iraq, aimed primarily at regime change and democracy promotion, found very little support among Europeans on principled grounds. If anything, the Iraqi crisis cast into question the Kosovo lesson that certain values needed to be defended with military force even when international legitimacy was low. Moreover, the US strategy of assembling coalitions of the willing with considerable pressure and financial incentives – dividing Europeans against themselves – deepened the post-cold war lesson that the US could no longer be trusted to listen to European concerns and act in their security interests.

It can be argued that the US approach demonstrated for the first time that the differences between the norms pervading US national strategic culture and those in European societies (not necessarily the elites) were greater than the intra-European differences. Iraq thus did not affect in any real sense the *x*-axis of Figure 1, namely the ends for which power instruments are employed, but highlighted and consolidated the intra-European similarities with regard to the norms legitimating the use of force (on the *y*-axis). Evidence from opinion polls indicates that the failure of the US to gain the assent and/or even a majority of votes in the UN Security Council was an important factor for most European public support for the intervention, especially in the UK, where Prime Minister Tony Blair had all but promised a UN resolution as a basis for such action. It seems therefore that the experience of the Balkan wars has initiated change towards a more activist and certainly more (humanitarian) value-oriented strategic culture, while the Iraqi experience prompted a process of ideational convergence, possibly even contraction on the part of the more activist countries, on when and where it is legitimate to use military force. It also substantially increased the attractiveness of the EU as a vehicle for national security and defence policy, and lowered the attractiveness of cooperation with the US.

#### **1.4 Conditional cognitive change: How member state characteristics matter**

The previous section outlined three factors that could bring about a convergence in national strategic cultures in the sense of a greater overlap in the norms governing the use of different

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<sup>8</sup> With this experience fresh in their minds, the EU managed for the first time to prevent the escalation of ethnic violence in Macedonia.

types of means for political ends. It also argued that these different theories affect different dimensions of national strategic cultures (ideas and norms) and vary also with respect to the time frame necessary for making a significant impact. The third dimension of differentiation is national. From studies of Europeanisation we have learnt, however, that member-state adaptation to the same kinds of incentives and constraints can vary considerably depending on different factors, most notably the mediating impact of formal and informal institutions. The same is true for the study of the cognitive impact of changed distribution of power capacities in the international system, Europeanisation processes and experiences of violent conflicts on constitutive and regulatory norms pervading national strategic cultures. It is argued that adaptation pressure is mediated by three factors: the geopolitical position of a given country, the depth and institutionalisation of such norms, and the presence of strong ideological cleavages within a country. The following elaborates on how these factors may affect differential adaptation to the above convergence pressures.

The geographic and political proximity of a country to both friends and potential adversaries influences both elites' and citizens' ideas and norms regarding security and defence policy. For instance, the shift in power capabilities after 1989 affected Eastern and Western Europe differently. Given the experience of Soviet Union domination and indeed occupation of Eastern Europe, the end of the Warsaw Pact initiated strong demands for new security guarantees from the US and a premium on enhancing traditional territorial defence through NATO membership. Even after the 1990s, bullying tactics by Russia have ensured that the need for territorial defence remained high on the newly independent states' mind map. They placed greater trust in the US as the world's only superpower and hegemon to safeguard their security interests than in other European countries or EU institutions. The new EU members are thus considerably less likely to support an expansive or 'post-modern' perspective on the ends for which ESDP is to be used, particularly but not only with regard to the promotion of values and those cases where the US is seen as actively opposed. In Western Europe, however, the perception of the advent of unipolarity in defence terms was quite different, because Russia was perceived as a less close and dangerous neighbour and the US as a less reliant and supportive partner. The differences in perception were most pronounced in Poland during the Iraqi crisis, when the country not only signed the Letter of the Eight, but also purchased US instead of European fighter planes. The preferences for the US rather than the EU as a security provider may change gradually as a result of negative experiences with the US in Iraq, as well as positive experience of the EU in dealing forcefully with the occasional Russian demands and blackmail attempts. Ten years of post-cold war experience are relatively little, however, when compared with the long experience with a powerful, and over the last 40 years, quite malevolent and repressive neighbour in the East.

Cultural proximity can also play a role as a mediating factor for the perception of armed conflicts or crisis situations. During the Kosovo air campaign, a majority of the publics in Italy and Greece were opposed to the strikes, compared with the generally more supportive rest of Europe. One reason for this is clearly the different experience of Albania and Albanians on the one hand and Serbs on the other hand (particularly in Greece) as well as concern over the potential negative fallout from an escalation of the conflict in the form of spillovers to Macedonia, loss of economic welfare owing to new sanctions or new refugee flows. The fear of negative consequences or a generally more positive view of the culprits or more negative one of the villains in a conflict affected the degree to which a conflict is interpreted as a strong case for a more active defence of European values. Similarly, differences in the national interpretation of such events can also be functional as well as cultural as in the case of public perceptions of terrorist attacks. Irrespective of *Le Monde's* headlines after September 11<sup>th</sup> that we are all Americans now, the UK has been the European

country culturally most in sync with the cognitive sea change caused by the attacks on the other side of the Atlantic. After the initially very high attention subsided, it became clear that Europeans generally felt much less threatened than Americans from this new asymmetric threat. But also within Europe there were differences in perceptions of being vulnerable to terrorist attacks, partly for the reason of strong personal and cultural ties as in the case of the UK, but also for more functional reasons given different countries' participation in the US-led invasion of Iraq.

Another intervening factor in explaining variation from the top-down pressures for convergence is the stickiness of national security ideas and norms. In other words, ideas and norms, which make up strategic cultures, may be deeply internalised or they may be rather shallow. Different degrees of stickiness may be the result of particularly traumatic experiences in national history or the institutionalisation of such ideas in very solid forms, such as legal provisions within constitutions, the presence of particular parties, lobby-groups or advisory bodies with a lot of influence in national public debate. Germany and Poland are two countries that have had particularly traumatic historical experiences and developed over time quite strong normative predilections towards certain kinds of security policy. In the case of Germany, the belief that German soldiers should never again wage war outside of their home country became deeply ingrained and institutionalised as a result of the societal learning processes sparked by the utter moral and physical defeat suffered in World War II. In the 1990 case of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, Germany was unable to act because of both ideational and constitutional constraints. The latter were removed in 1994, but only under conditions of strong domestic and external authorisation. Another case of German ideational uniqueness is its concern over the *Wehrpflicht* (compulsory conscription), which can be seen as a deliberate self-constraint against a more activist, effective and indeed 'more dangerous' *Bundeswehr*, becoming a 'state within the state' or more prone to torture prisoners as the German Defence Minister Peter Struck recently argued in response to the pictures of the US abuse of prisoners in Iraq. This was partly linked to the support of the *Wehrmacht* for Hitler as well as the experience of how paramilitaries, such as the *Freikorps*, destabilised the Weimar Republic after the end of World War I. Similarly, Poland has been a country with a collective memory of betrayal, defeat and occupation reaching back longer in time and weighing more heavily on public consciousness than in other European countries. The experience of being bargained away by the greater powers on several occasions and the painful lesson that principles of democracies and international law did not count for the great powers left a cognitive imprint on Poles' strategic mind map. This particularly concerns the cognitive ability to cede sovereignty, trust other European countries with defence and forego the ability for territorial defence along with the view of the legitimacy bestowed on the use of military force by the international community including the United Nations.

Finally, national strategic cultures may be deeply contested along ideological or party lines, rendering the impact of convergence forces uneven and hard to predict. The most obvious case was the UK, where the two main parties have quite opposing views on crucial aspects of security policy, which are also reflected to some degree in the broader population. In the case of the UK the two parties may have agreed on the legitimacy of the Iraqi invasion, but they are deeply divided over the issue of European defence. While the Tory party sees any efforts to strengthen the EU's political and military capacity in defence and security matters as a dangerous erosion of national sovereignty, a threat to NATO and the UK's special relationship with the US, the Labour party sees both dimensions as complementary and has no fundamental problem with the notion of cooperating on ESDP and pooling political authority on EU integration more broadly. These differences are also reflected in the population, even if most people do not care as much about sovereignty or EU integration as newspaper

editorialists and politicians do. This means also that a change of government could dramatically change government policy on ESDP, even if it is not going to dramatically alter collectively shared notions of when the use of force is legitimate.

Similarly, we have seen that incidents such as the Madrid bombing could effectively swing a government policy on Iraq (and implicitly on norms relating to the external legitimisation of military force) by 180 degrees. It should be noted, however, that the Spaniards were much more strongly opposed to the war than the British were; it was mainly only the salience of the issue that was changed by the attack. The same can be said of the Italian society. A better example for deep societal divisions over the use of force was Germany during the war in Kosovo, where deep divisions opened up across party lines and within the population over whether it was justified to defend certain values by military force and without a UN resolution. While the normative argument about the need to prevent another Auschwitz carried the day, it would have taken very little to turn German societies away from a more activist interpretation of its strategic culture, such as the very gruesome pictures of Serb civil casualties during the NATO air campaign or al-Qaeda style attacks on the German KFOR peace-keeping contingent in Kosovo or within the country. Hence, in some of the countries most affected by forces of convergence, domestic divisions over the issue of external legitimisation of force, the ceding of sovereignty to Europe and the degree to which security interests need to be pursued proactively (if necessary through military pre-emption) make it difficult to analyse and forecast these states' foreign policy behaviour and their support for ESDP over the longer term. If a change of government can make such an impact on a state's willingness to cooperate over ESDP, theories of ideational and normative convergence reach their limits.

### **1.5 Evolution and scope of a European strategic culture: Some preliminary observations**

This paper has provided a theoretical framework for the analysis of strategic culture and for studying the dynamics that may bring about a convergence of strategic cultures in Europe. It has illustrated how strategic cultures can be disaggregated into different scalable components in order to more accurately describe, empirically study and theoretically explain them. Moreover, the paper has proposed three accounts of why national strategic cultures in Europe are converging towards a greater pool of shared ideas, norms and patterns of behaviour in ESDP matters. We have singled out changes in the international system caused by the demise of the Soviet Union, Europeanisation processes associated with functional and social spillover processes and the impact of publicised armed conflicts on collective memories. Yet it has also been made clear that these forces can affect national strategic cultures differently, depending on the countries' geopolitical positions, the institutional stickiness of domestic ideas, values and norms and the degree to which such norms are subject to partisan or societal contention. Moreover, these three theories affect the different dimensions of convergence and some take longer than others to make a significant impact. On this basis, some hypotheses about the extent and direction of the convergence process can be advanced, which will need to be validated by further empirical study about the dynamics affecting strategic cultures in Europe and the construction of a European security and defence policy.

First of all, national strategic cultures have become more ambitious with regard to the means for which security and defence policy should be employed. This particularly concerns the question of security interests, where there is a growing support for a more activist and medium-term perspective of self-defence going beyond the territorial and intermediate, but stopping well short of US-style pre-emption. On the defence of common values, the

experience of the war in Iraq seems to have turned back the wheel (after the Kosovo experience) on the issue of how active states should seek to defend values. While humanitarian intervention to prevent material human suffering seems to be generally accepted as a legitimate aim of coercive action as witnessed in Kosovo and more recently in the Congolese Bunia as the first genuine application of ESDP, the promotion of democracy, freedom or market economy does not appear as a consensus issue among between member states (which may well be the reason of its understatement in the European Security Strategy). Moreover, particular events and their interpretation in national publics can be expected to play an important role within the logic of path-dependence in determining whether the use of coercion to overcome opposing wills is seen as a legitimate instrument for the defence of values. Europeans may generally be able to accept military casualties in stabilisation and humanitarian intervention scenarios, but are prone to react strongly to the killing or mistreatment of civilians in armed conflict situations.

On the issue of the legitimisation of the use of different instruments of power, a preliminary conclusion is that the dynamics of convergence – particularly the impact of the Balkan experience – described above have influenced norms about the authorisation of ‘out of area’ interventions. Constitutional thresholds on the use of force and constraints of neutrality and sovereignty have been lowered, partly by displacing authorisation expectations to the regional (EU) or international level (UN) as in the case of the traditionally more neutral countries. One may note, for instance, that in the case of Kosovo, countries such as Sweden, Denmark or Norway did not suddenly see the lack of a UN resolution as a fundamental problem. Yet, at the same time, as governments are now more likely to send troops into dangerous situations, some countries have strengthened their authorisation procedures. Given the strong role of national parliaments and the UN in this context, swift authorisation and action may continue to be a major problem in cases where EU countries want to deliberate and act in concert with each other. Convergence towards the British or French model of force authorisation is unlikely, nor is it desirable from the perspective of democratic accountability (see also Bono, forthcoming). One must also note that EU-level accountability mechanisms are extremely weak in legal terms, given that the EU Parliament only has consultation rights in the ESDP, even if it is gradually extending its influence informally and through the careful use of its budgetary powers.

Finally, a combination of systemic changes and the experience of the Iraqi invasion and occupation have significantly weakened the idea that defence cooperation has to be primarily with the US or within the context of NATO. One could see a strong consensus especially at the level of European societies with regard to the perceived illegitimacy of the US-led invasion of Iraq and a general awareness that European public opinion was broadly united on this issue, in contrast to the experience in Kosovo, where southern European countries diverged from the pro-interventionist mainstream. Moreover, since the mid-1990s, one can see a gradual increase in the high levels of public support for a stronger role for the EU in defence and security matters, indicating the influence of a long-term trend, which had already started in the late 1980s. Europeanisation, on the contrary, seems not to have played a strong role here given the low profile of ESDP operations and the closed nature of elite deliberations in this area. For the neutral countries, EU integration especially seems to be the only acceptable means of cooperating in these policy areas as Heiselberg (2003) argues. Moreover, cognitive Europeanisation processes have succeeded in building up levels of trust among national representatives involved in CFSP/ESDP, gradually lowering sovereignty concerns, contributing to common perspectives on security threats and strengthening approval for the usefulness of the EU as a forum for joint-deliberation and action. It is likely, however, that

enlargement will slow down this socialisation dynamism and increase the likelihood of a *directoire*-type of cooperation outside the EU framework.

In summary, while the norms regarding the legitimate objectives for security and defence policy (the ends) have been extended (strongly in the area of security interests, moderately on values), there has been relatively little upward change with regard to the authorisation of means (domestic demands may have become somewhat lower, external expectations may have become somewhat higher). The traditionally less-activist cultures have moved probably most with regard to the ends of security and defence policy, but not with regard to the authorisation of the use of military force out of area. Ideas about the nation's collaboration with other actors in security governance have also been affected, motivating the neutrals to become more outward-looking, particularly to the EU, while the traditionally more Atlanticist nations are gradually pulling away from cooperation with the US only to open possibilities of intra-EU sharing of defence competences. Convergence thus seems to affect all countries, not just the more pacific, neutral or defensive strategic cultures, but it does so in different ways. Yet, it is important to keep in mind that convergence is not an inevitable phenomenon as states may react differently to adaptation pressures and particular events.

One can expect that at least the first of the three driving forces, the changes in the distribution of power capacities in the international system and the shift in US orientations away from the European continent, points in the direction of greater support for an EU role in security and defence and a greater support for a more activist pursuit of security goals in the medium term. This process may be somewhat slowed down – but not reversed – by an incoming, less arrogant Kerry administration in the US. The contribution of socialisation and spill-over processes is more uncertain: What kind of leadership can be provided by the next European Commission and the High Representative? Will staff levels continue to increase and interactions across levels and actors intensify? How will the Council deal with the threat to group cohesion and decision-making capacity through enlargement? In particular, can permanent, structured cooperation as foreseen in the draft Constitutional Treaty be made to work in order to open new pathways for stronger commitments, deeper socialisation and effective action? Can the Constitution's provisions for a European foreign minister be translated into practice? The crucial question remains whether the EU manages to overcome its incoherencies in setting foreign policy priorities across pillars, actors and instruments, which have often obstructed effective action, particularly preventive measures. ESDP cannot be made to work without further steps to improve CFSP.

From the perspective of collective learning, one can ask whether public opinion will perceive the EU as successful in defending values and building stable polities in Bosnia (the EU taking over from NATO at the end of this year), Macedonia, Afghanistan or in Sudan? The actual (in contrast to the perceived) performance of ESDP on the ground will in part depend on the speed of political, especially parliamentary decision-making and the ability to give military commanders sufficient freedom to react to changes in the situation on the ground. Indeed, the delay in reacting effectively to the recent outburst of inter-ethnic violence in Kosovo was partly because of national caveats concerning the rules of engagement by different national contingents. Intra-European differences concerning domestic authorisation of force thus still matter and hamper ESDP. Hence, there is thus much reason for the EU to be very careful about the missions and goals it wants to take on in the context of ESDP, in order to avoid the risk of political fall-out and public backlash. Erring on the side of caution may be difficult in the face of strong public calls for action and the dynamism of unfolding event, but it may be crucial for building up confidence that the EU can be effective once it decides to act.

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