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Culture and Foreign Policy

Abstract: The Maastricht Treaty includes as the “second pillar” of the European Union a Common Foreign and Security Policy that is designed to improve co-operation in foreign policy, co-operation which has existed informally since 1970. However in recent times (for example, the Libyan crisis), the European nations have not found the single voice that has been expected of them. The article asks for the reasons for the difficulty in improving this policy. As hypothesis a linkage to culture is established, understood as values and attitudes but also memories and remembrances. The article explores the possibility that the differences in the foreign policy are linked with the long life of these elements in the collective mentality.

Key words: Common Foreign Policy, Maastricht Treaty, stereotypes, political sciences, culture in European integration

The so called Common Foreign and Security Policy

The Common Foreign and Security Policy was established by the Treaty of Maastricht as the so called “second pillar” of the new European Union. Forty one years after the signing of the first inter-governmental treaty establishing the European Community, the Member states agreed on the co-ordination of the policy relating to external affairs. It could be understood as a reaction to a perception that is often transmitted with the *bonmot* or *boutade* attributed to Henry Kissinger (and recently revitalised by him¹) of the interlocutor for a telephone call to “Europe”.² The second pillar started with a terrible failure. Europe, pushed into a protagonist role by the United States’ initial rejection of assuming responsibility in the Balkans, but being involved – like the other international organisations in a process of re-adaptation (Lucarelli 2000) – was unable to avoid not only a war, but genocide, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.³ At that time, different coun-

¹ In a panel discussion with the Polish foreign minister in Warsaw on 27.6.2012, he spoke of not being sure who was the author of this sentence, but accepted that it was a good sentence... (see, among others, M. Sobczyk, *Europe Still Seeks Voice, Kissinger Says*, “The Wall Street Journal”, 28.6.2012, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702304830704577492901066964924.html>, 16.8.2012).

² “Who do I call if I want to speak to Europe?” (ibd.)

³ To the conflict see for example S. G. Meštrović, *Genocide After Emotion: The Postemotional Balkan War*, Routledge, London 1996. To the ethnic cleansing: M. Cherif, Bassiouni (December 28, 1994): *Final report of the United Nations Commission of Experts established pursuant to security council resolution 780 (1992), Annex IV – The policy of ethnic cleansing; Prepared by: M. Cherif Bassiouni*, United

tries continued to adopt different positions and, for example, Germany's prompt recognition of Slovenia and Croatia – in a way scholars have described as “Alleingang” (Lucarelli, 2000, pp. 130–150) – seemed not to be shared by France or Great Britain.

Since then, many international conflicts have brought about cohesion (or lack thereof) within EU member States.⁴ Ultimately progression is undeniable: the transfer of the High Representative from the Council (i.e. the representative of governments) to the Commission (i.e. the institution that takes care of common interests) and the creation of the External Service, are indicative – with all the well-known problems connected to these decisions – of the improvements that have been made since the humble beginnings of co-operation in foreign affairs in 1970⁵ through the first mention of this co-operation in the Single Act of 1986.⁶ With the adoption in 1970 of the Davignon Report at the Luxembourg summit, an informal inter-governmental consultation was held regarding the mechanisms through which member states could achieve ‘politics of scale’.⁷

Subsequently, with the Single Act – that despite its humble dimension and although it is almost forgotten has been decisive in the history of European integration – the cooperation in foreign policy affairs has taken on very special position, in an unstable balance between ‘to be or not to be’. It is worth being reminded that for European Political Cooperation (EPC) a special Secretariat was created that was expressly not linked to the Union's institutions but could use them for its functioning.⁸

These were the steps taken prior to the European Security and Foreign Policy (ESFP) established by the Maastricht Treaty.⁹ Nevertheless, in recent times and together with

Nations, <http://www.ess.uwe.ac.uk/comexpert/anx/IV.htm>, August 5, 2012. To the role of the European Union see, among many others, E. Faucompret (2001), *The dismemberment of Yugoslavia and the European Union*, University of Antwerp, Faculty of Applied Economics, <http://ideas.repec.org/p/ant/wpaper/2001012.html>, August 5, 2012.

⁴ Mapa conflictos 90: <http://mondediplo.com/maps/conflictsmdv49> VER CORREO.

⁵ The European Political Cooperation started informally after the Davignon Report presented at the Luxembourg summit in 1970a adopted by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs. The full text – whose official name is *Report by the Foreign Minister of the Member States on the problems of political unification. Adopted by the Foreign Ministers, Luxembourg, 27 October 1970* – can be found at <http://aei.pitt.edu/4543/>, 6.8.2012, reproduced from the *Bulletin of the European Communities*, 11-1970.

⁶ Published in the “Official Journal” L 169 of 29 June 1987. Title III is called *Treaty Provisions on European Co-operation in the Sphere of Foreign Policy*.

⁷ R. H. Ginsberg, *Foreign Policy Actions of the European Community: The Politics of Scale*, Lynne Rienner, Boulder 1989). According to the Davignon report, the two objectives were: “To ensure greater mutual understanding with respect to the major issues of international politics, by exchanging information and consulting regularly”, and “To increase their solidarity by working for a harmonization of views concertation of attitudes and joint action when it appears feasible and desirable” (point I at Part Two).

⁸ *A Secretariat based in Brussels shall assist the Presidency in preparing and implementing the activities of European Political Co-operation and in administrative matters* (Art. 10g).

⁹ To this whole evolution see, among many others, D. Allen, R. Rummel, W. Wessels, *European Political Cooperation: Towards a Foreign Policy for Western Europe*, Butterworth Scientific, London 1982; M. Holland (ed.), *The Future of European Political Cooperation: Essays in Theory and Practice*, Macmillan, Basingstoke 1991; A. Pijpers et al. (eds.), *European Political Cooperation in the 1980s:*

cases in which a European voice was perceived, in some other cases failures were visible (Wolff and Yakinthou eds., 2011). The German abstention from the United Nations in the Libya crisis is one remarkable and very recent example.¹⁰ And perhaps the nomination of an unconvincing personality as first European “Foreign Minister” is also a sign that governments are willing to take some steps but will only go to a certain point: maybe the nomination of Catherine Ashton is a step backwards in comparison to Javier Solana, who had less competence but more presence – and is perhaps a step too far for some of the governments.

As far back as 1970 the Davignon Report expressed the desire to “bring nearer the day when Europe can speak with one voice.”¹¹ Why then these difficulties in approaches to foreign policies, in order to present one European position?

Culture and International Relations

In Political Science – like so many other scientific fields – different approaches are not only possible but realised; some of them become dominant in the concrete history of a science, normally via authorities (individuals or schools, sometimes as a continuation of individual work) and often competing with other approaches that occupy a good part of the academic writings.¹² The history of a science is often neglected as a factor that creates the perspective from which many research works are done.¹³ The prejudiced structure of knowledge that we often accept as a result of human experience seems to be excluded when speaking about science and scientists, potentially “approximativ optimal informierte Leser” (Groeben 1980, 188): Nevertheless, the scientific approach fulfils the hermeneutic principle of “quodquod recipitur ad modum recipientis recipitur,” a mediaeval sentence

A Common Foreign Policy for Western Europe?, M. Nijhoff, Dordrecht 1988; E. Regelsberger, P. De Schoutheete de Tervarent, W. Wessels (eds.), *Foreign Policy of the European Union: From EPC to CFSP and Beyond*, Lynne Rienner, Boulder 1997.

¹⁰ Even the German press reacted with incomprehension and indignation. See as a representative position the comment in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*: *Gaddafi geht mit mörderischer Härte gegen sein eigenes Volk vor. Kann da Enthaltung eine deutsche Position sein? Nein. Doch Guido Westerwelle will um jeden Preis außenpolitisches Profil gewinnen – sogar um den Preis der internationalen Isolation.* (T. Denkler, *Libyen, Westerwelle und Deutschlands Enthaltung Der Krisen-Profileur*, “Süddeutsche Zeitung”, 18.3.2011, <http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/libyen-westerwelle-und-deutschlands-enthaltung-der-krisen-profileur-1.1074028>, retrieved 6.8.2012). See D. Tielker, *Die deutsche Enthaltung im UN-Sicherheitsrat zum Libyen-Einsatz*, Grin, München 2011.

¹¹ In point 6.

¹² On the role of the authorities in scientific life, see E. Banús, L. Galván, “*Seco y latoso*” – “*Viejo y venerable*”: *El Poema del Cid a principios del siglo XX o Del cambio en la apreciación de la literatura*, “RILCE” 15.1 (1999), pp. 115–140.

¹³ Max Wehrli’s comment on the role of the history of a discipline is related to the philology, but kann be also applied to other cases. Wehrli wrote: “Wissenschaftsgeschichte [...] kann selber Methodologie sein [...], kann [...] zur Bestimmung und Abklärung des eigenen Standorts beitragen, zur Einsicht führen in die zeitliche und räumliche Bedingtheit der jeweiligen wissenschaftlichen Positionen und Vorsicht lehren im Gebrauch einer immer geschichtlich vorbelasteten Terminologie” [M. Wehrli, *Allgemeine Literaturwissenschaft*, Francke, Bern 1951, p. 30].

with which Hans-Robert Jauss summed up the reception theory (Jauss, 1989, pp. 59–76). This *modum recipientis* is, however, marked not only by personal choices and preferences but also by proximity to one school or approach.

In Political Sciences, the empirical approach is a core interest for institutions, for movements or power seems to be dominant¹⁴ – this is said with the required cautiousness of someone who is aware of his limitations: not being a political scientist everything that will be said about this discipline is ostensibly done in a tentative way that is accepting of corrections and criticism.

The approach with which an answer will be researched to a question for the difficulties in establishing a more coherent European foreign policy is at the same time a methodological proposal, namely a proposal to more closely link Political Sciences and Culture. This is not new, and some previous and actual efforts could be cited,¹⁵ although when in dialogue with a political scientist, reference to the word “culture” very often means “political culture”.

However it seems that in recent times this approach is not so popular and is perhaps even discredited, for example with a project such as Samuel Huntington’s theory of the clash of civilisations¹⁶ in which a linkage between international conflicts and culture is witnessed; and in more concrete terms, religion is held to be responsible for the conflicts.¹⁷ Criticism of this position was broad and well grounded, so much so that it cannot be discussed here¹⁸ – suffice to say that such approaches do a disservice to attempts to bring political events and evolutions out of the limitations of a purely institutional or power approach and to look for a broader framework in which connections to other fields of human activities, and specifically to culture, are possible.

This perspective will guide the following reflections on the difficulties of establishing foreign policy on a European level.

¹⁴ To the different approaches specifically in International Relations and their research priorities see as an introduction E. Barbé, *Relaciones Internacionales*, 3rd ed., Tecnos, Madrid 2007, pp. 45–109.

¹⁵ A brief overview in P. G. Picazo, *Relaciones internacionales*, 3rd ed., Tecnos, Madrid 2009, pp. 193–197. To the presence of cultural oriented perspectives in Political Sciences see, among others, A. Holtz, N. von Dahler, *Kultur, Macht, Politik: Konstruktivismus und die politische Beziehung von Kultur und Macht*, Peter Lang, 2010. Lisa Weeden, criticizing the (ab)use of “culture” understood only as “political culture”, defends the relevance of a cultural approach and presents its possibilities in Political Sciences: see L. Weeden, *Conceptualizing Culture: Possibilities for Political Science*, “American Political Science Review” 96.04 (2002), pp. 713–728.

¹⁶ S. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations?*, “Foreign Affairs”, vol. 72, no. 3, Summer 1993, pp. 22–49 and *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, Simon & Schuster, New York 1996.

¹⁷ Huntington’s main thesis is: “the fundamental source of conflict in this new world will not be primarily ideological or primarily economic. The great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural” (S. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilization?*, “Foreign Affairs” 72, 3 (Summer 1993), p. 22).

¹⁸ See F. Ajami, *The Summoning*, “Foreign Affairs” 1993, 72, 4, pp. 2–9; B. M. Russett, J. Oneal, M. Cox, *Clash of Civilizations, or Realism and Liberalism Déjà Vu? Some Evidence*, “Journal of Peace Research” 2000, 35, 5, pp. 583–608 and E. Said, *The Clash of Ignorance*, “The Nation”, 22 October 2001, among many others.

On the relevance of memories for external relations

The use of stories in the scientific approach has a long tradition. In classical and medieval rhetoric they were called “*exempla*”.¹⁹ It follows therefore that the first approach to the chosen topic will be an “*exemplum*”.

It happened in the summer 1991 in Krakow during a Seminar for Spanish students. We had in a morning appointment with a Professor of the University on the very day when there were troubles in Russia. The tanks were on the streets and the way the situation would develop was at that stage unclear. Before leaving our residence we saw pictures on the television and with the help of some Polish students we were able to broadly understand what was happening. With this limited information we went to the meeting which had been scheduled for 9am. The professor, an elegant lady speaking excellent Spanish, gave a lecture explaining some of the central points of Polish history and setting the history of the Jagellonian University into this framework.

Then she opened the floor for questions. The first one was related to the events in Moscow we had seen on TV. She replied that she had not seen any events as she left her house early in the morning and had not realised that this was not a normal day, like so many others. When listening to our very insufficient explanation, she turned pale and could only repeat: ‘O my God, o my God.’ Her family had suffered under the communist regime and previously under the Nazis, and now she was imagining that the unstable situation in Moscow could again move Russian tanks towards Poland. An embarrassing silence followed.

This silence was bringing to the fore the difficulty for dialogue, the mutual incomprehension – based on a common attitude in facing these events: both she and we were in sorrow about what was happening in Russia; both she and we were fearing for the end of the evolution in Russia towards democracy; both she and we were Western-oriented.

So from a rational point of view they were judging the event from a perspective based on the same values, one could say from a similar point of departure. But for each side the reaction of the other side was impressive but in the first moment difficult to understand: for her it was difficult to understand that the Spanish students remained relatively indifferent in the midst of this potentially terrible situation, analysing it with only rational thoughts. For the Spanish students, the situation was actually interesting, and could have evolved to an undesirable point, but the Professor’s reaction was a shock: they were astonished and alarmed about this reaction, about the speechlessness, the silence. When leaving from the session, in these first minutes when the comments sputter without intellectual filter, the general comment was about this reaction.

There was a clear cultural gap between the professor and the students, a gap based not on the rational approach but on geography (the proximity to or distance from Russia) and moreover on memories and experiences as well as transmitted (or let’s say “traded”) narratives, based also on belonging to a different generation. All these factors caused not only the different reactions but also certain incomprehension about the reaction. In fact

¹⁹ On the relevance of the “*exempla*” in the antique rhetoric see, for example, R. Gazich, *Teoria e pratica dell’*exemplum* in Quintiliano*, in: *Aspetti della ‘paideia’ di Quintiliano*, eds. P. V. Cova et al., Vita e pensiero, Milano 1990, pp. 61–141.

the horizon of experiences with which this event was received was very different.²⁰ And on the Spanish students side only the transmission of information and the rational elaboration of bridges to the Professor's vital environment transformed the concern into understanding.

From "exemplum" to theory

Why has it been – and still is – so difficult to articulate a common foreign policy within the European Union? On the background of this story it could be said: Because the reaction to an event in Russia shall never be similar for a Spaniard and a Pole (and if you add the generational distance between young people never having been confronted with "the wall" and citizens having personally suffered the consequences of this "wall", the estrangement is reduplicated).

An Enlighten view of politics and specifically of foreign policy probably will not accept such a view as if perceptions, memories; and cultural elements would ultimately play such a fundamental role. Of course culture is understood here in the sense that appears in the UNESCO definition – that probably goes back to Edward B. Tylor's work from the end of the 19th century, and that includes values, morals, attitudes, and world views²¹ – and one could also add stereotypes or fears, for example.

From this Enlighten point of view, it could easily be answered in the example of the Cracovian experience not only with Habermas' argument that the reason is able to disrupt the force of the tradition (Habermas, 1981); it also could be argued that the protagonists of the story are by no means politicians, the individuals making the foreign policy, but citizens whose reaction is ultimately not decisive in policy making.

Two questions are possible in terms of this argument:

- Is this true that citizens reactions are not decisive in the decision making process in foreign policy?
- Is it true that policy makers are free from cultural memories when taking decisions about external policy?

According to a commonly accepted sentence that comes presumably from the quote by Otto von Bismarck *politics is the art of the possible*.²² The sentence has become so popular

²⁰ To the concept of "horizon of experiences" it can be said that it was used for the first time in the literary studies by Hans-Robert Jauss in his *Untersuchungen zur mittelalterlichen Tierdichtung*, Niemeyer, Tübingen 1959, pp. 153, 180, 225, 271. In social sciences it appeared for the first time in K. Mannheim, *Mensch und Gesellschaft im Zeitalter des Umbaus*, Gentner, Darmstadt 1958, 212ff.

²¹ For Edward B. Tylor, culture is "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" [*Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Language, Art and Custom*, J. Murray, London 1871:1]. In the UNESCO's view, "Culture is a set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group. It encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, values systems, traditions and beliefs" (*Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity* (2001), <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/diversity.htm#2>, 7.9.2010).

²² It seems that the quote is a fusion of two sentences by Bismarck: "Die Politik ist keine Wissenschaft, wie viele der Herren Professoren sich einbilden, sondern eine Kunst" (*Expression in the Re-*

that not only has it been quoted countless times, but different “authorities” have introduced variations to it. John Kenneth Galbraith is quoted with the words, *Politics is not the art of the possible. It consists of choosing between the disastrous and the unpalatable*. Galbraith is said to have written those words in a letter to the then U.S. President John F. Kennedy at the time of the Cuban Missile Crisis.²³ To former French President Jacques Chirac another variation of Bismarck’s words is attributed: *Politics is the art of making possible what is necessary*.²⁴ This more defeatist or voluntary approach does not invalidate the acknowledgment that nowadays in democratic states a government without its citizens is perhaps possible (as it has been not only possible but realised in former times), but a government against its citizens is on a short or long term punished with a high price – not only in democratic but also in relatively closed societies: the example of the so-called “Arab revolutions” in Tunisia or in Egypt are witnessing this affirmation. Politicians therefore have to take into account the feelings and memories of citizens in their mental relation to other countries.

One example can illustrate this idea: At the beginning of the Iraq war, Spain’s conservative Prime Minister José María Aznar joined the coalition that supported the United States intervention.²⁵ This represented a marked difference with many of the other member states of the European Union, but in accordance with a rare partner for Spain in external affairs is the United Kingdom and against the feeling of a majority of the population.²⁶ Having an absolute majority in Parliament, the Prime Minister was not forced to take into consideration other positions on this matter. Shortly before the next elections, a bomb attack in Madrid (on 11 March 2004) caused immense damage – killing 177 people instantly and injuring more than 2,000, with a further 14 deaths in hospital. It was easy for an intelligent acting opposition to provoke a change of government.²⁷ It was done by evoking the possibility that the attacks could be revenge for the Spanish engagement in

ichstag (1884)), and *Die Politik ist die Lehre vom Möglichen* (Interview (11 August 1867) with Friedrich Meyer von Waldeck of the *St. Petersburgische Zeitung*, reprinted in *Fürst Bismarck: neue Tischgespräche und Interviews*, Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, München 1895, vol. 1, p. 248.

²³ 2.3.1962; printed in J. K. Galbraith’s, *Ambassador’s Journal: a personal account of the Kennedy years*, Houghton Mifflin, Boston 1969.

²⁴ Quoted in *Chirac shuffles the pack*, “The Economist”, 31.3.2004, <http://www.economist.com/node/2552770>, 6.8.2012.

²⁵ For an analysis of the used justifications under a discursive perspective see: T. A., van Dijk, *War rhetoric of a little ally: Political implicatures and Aznar’s legitimization of the war in Iraq*, “Journal of Language and Politics” 2005, vol. 4, no. 1, pp. 65–91.

²⁶ See S. Kull, C. Ramsay, E. Lewis, *Misperceptions, the Media, and the Iraq War*, “Political Science Quarterly” 2003/2004, vol. 118, no. 4, Winter, pp. 7, 569–598.

²⁷ One week before the elections, the survey conducted by Instituto Opina for the relevant media group Cadena SER was foreseeing 161–166 seats for the governing People’s Party and 140–145 for the Socialist Party. At the end, the results were giving 148 seats to the PP and 164 to the Socialists (see the survey in http://www.cadenaser.com/static/pulsometro/antiores/encuesta_040308.htm, 6.8.2012). For an analysis of the different explanations for the electoral change see the work paper of the prestigious Instituto Elcano: N. Michavila, *Guerra, terrorismo y elecciones: incidencia electoral de los atentados islamistas en Madrid*, Real Instituto Elcano, Madrid 2005, <http://ribei.org/901/1/DT-013-2005.pdf>. Another interesting analysis in S. B.-C. Fernández, *Las elecciones legislativas de 2004. Un análisis de las encuestas y de la gestión comunicativa en la campaña electoral: su proyección en la decisión de voto*, “Doxa comunicación” 4, pp. 189–209.

Iraq.²⁸ The mere possibility (no proof at that time was evident) and the shock at the government side that caused its (also non rational) insistence in attributing the attacks to the Basque terrorist group ETA caused this electoral carnage for the conservative party. This action in foreign policy against the feelings of the majority provided the background for this unexpected result.

This is of course an extreme example due to its peculiar circumstances, but it demonstrates that politicians have to take into account citizens' feelings in relation to concrete "otherness". In reality, closeness to the United States is not a dominant trace in the Spanish collective mentality.²⁹ It would probably be exaggerating to go back to the war at the end of the 19th century after which Spain lost its last colonies (Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines), in a war that caused an immense impact at home with references in literature, the arts, and later in movies.³⁰ The Marshall Plan, that caused or fostered during a certain period of time a pro-American attitude in many countries, was affecting Spain only later and on a much smaller scale,³¹ and the wave of anti-Americanism in connection with the Vietnam War was also prevalent in Spain. It is remarkable that in the first years of Spain's democracy after Franco, the Socialist Party mobilised the population against NATO-membership and only when becoming the governing party (1982) did the attitude radically change. It was also suggested that an accession to the European Community could be difficult if Spain remained outside the Western defence organisation.³²

The psychological background of the population in the face of a concrete foreign policy decision (in this case Spain's accession to the anti-Saddam-Hussein coalition) is marked by all these memories, transmitted or experienced, and configures an attitude that later finds an expression in concrete political acts like elections. Within these cultural moments, which give stability to attitudes in front of foreign policy options, emotions can also play a major role and can lead to support (or lack of) to some measures taken by government based not only on rational arguments.

Politicians are human beings

Politicians act on cultural background, a background they will respect more or less, change more or less, or overcome more or less. Politicians are normally members of polit-

²⁸ The well-known newspaper "El Mundo" uses for the comment of the elections the title "Zapatero derrota al 'Gobierno de las Azores'" (*Zapatero wins over the 'Azores-Government'*, "El Mundo", 15.3.2012, <http://www.elmundo.es/papel/2004/03/15/espana/>, 6.8.2012.

²⁹ See W. Chislett, *El antiamericanismo en España: el peso de la historia*, Real Instituto Elcano, Madrid 2005, http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/documentos/228/228_Chislett.pdf.

³⁰ It entered the Spanish history as "The Disaster". See M. Blinkhorn, *Spain: "The 'Spanish Problem' and the Imperial Myth"*, "Journal of Contemporary History" 1980, vol. 15, no. 1, pp. 5–25.

³¹ There is a famous movie called "Bienvenido, Mister Marshall" (1953) that shows how a small Spanish village prepared the announced visit of the Americans bringing the prosperity to the village. At the end, after very sophisticated preparations, the Americans only drive on high speediness through the village's main street.

³² See E. Barbé, *España y la OTAN*, Laia, Barcelona 1981; C. G. Segura, *La política exterior del PSOE durant la transició política espanyola. De la clandestinitat a la Constitució (1974–1978)*, "Afers Internacionals", n. 7, 8 y 9, 1985–1986.

ical parties that are rooted in cultural traditions: they are normally closer to some geographic areas and political positions, and this includes cultural elements, values, attitudes, world views, concepts on the human being and society, and on the role of politics. The following example may also illustrate this: Why did José María Aznar opt for the “Azores-coalition” along with George Bush and Tony Blair as its main representatives? It happened during the years in which the conservative party dominated the political panorama in Spain. For a second time national elections were won and this time the government was supported by an absolute majority in the Parliament, so that the complex ad hoc coalitions with regional parties that marked the first Aznar-government (1996–2000) could be avoided. Spain was at that time a flourishing economy (“España va bien” – as Aznar used to say³³), its place in the European Union was consolidated, and Aznar seemed to be under the impression that the external position of Spain did not correspond with its real power. Efforts were made to guarantee a stronger presence in the international arena.³⁴ The alliance with the United States and the United Kingdom was perhaps seen as the best way to realise these goals.³⁵ Was it by chance that Aznar was joining the representatives of two Empires? Psychological representations also played a major role in this decision. Surprisingly, Aznar’s successor (and opponent) Rodríguez Zapatero was not free from international ambitions and launched the idea of the “Alliance of Civilisations”, an idea that has been rather unsuccessful.³⁶

Psychological representations and foreign policy

Foreign policy is probably the field of politics in which memory, narratives, links, history and traces of it in a narrative tradition in stories are activated in an efficient way. The initial attitude of someone from Ireland towards the United States will differ considerably

³³ He used this sentence for the first time in an electoral meeting on 3.3.1997. Later on, he repeated it very often as answer to the critics of the political opposition. It was quoted endless times, originated a song...

³⁴ In his first parliamentary speech, when presenting the government program, he included the improvement of the international presence of Spain as one of the priorities: “Es un programa que, integrando planteamientos y aportaciones de cada formación, tiene como ejes impulsar la economía con objeto de crear empleo, mejorar el bienestar de los españoles, desarrollar el Estado de las Autonomías, revitalizar nuestra democracia y fortalecer la presencia de España en Europa y en el mundo” (*Discurso de José María Aznar en la sesión de investidura como Presidente del Gobierno*, 3.05.1996, <http://www.jmaznar.es/discursos/pdfs/00001A0001.pdf>, 11.8.2012). In fact, Aznar was successful in achieving that Spain became during the years 2003 and 2004 one of the non permanent members of the Security Council; this was a priority for the Aznar government.

³⁵ In his speech, being Prime Minister, to the Congress and the Senate of the United States, he underlined very clearly his Atlantic preference: see *Discurso de José María Aznar ante el Congreso y el Senado de los Estados Unidos*, 4.02.2004, <http://www.jmaznar.es/discursos/pdfs/01884A1884.pdf>, 12.8.2012. For example, he affirmed: “Como europeo, quiero decirles que no quiero otra alternativa a la relación atlántica.”

³⁶ It was proposed at the 59th General Assembly of United Nations, on 21.9.2004. It was assumed by the United Nations and several governments and international organisations joined it, whereas it was criticised by some intellectuals. The achievements done by this group have been limited.

from a Spaniard's attitude. Songs, novels and movies tell the histories of Irishmen leaving for, travelling to and arriving in the States. In many cases, family histories provide a closer, singular approach to this other culture.

It is true that in other fields of politics, cultural elements are also active. For example the Community's Agricultural Policy cannot only be understood from a technical perspective. The role agriculture plays in the French collective mentality is decisive for the eminent place it has played in the whole history of the European integration.³⁷ The German obsession with the contention of inflation is almost certainly connected with economic reasonability, but probably not only with it – historic experiences and the reminder of them are living in the mentality.³⁸ Other fields of the Union's action could probably also be related to cultural factors.³⁹ But probably in none of them it is as clear as in foreign policy.

In previous times when European attitudes towards the United States of America were mentioned, there can be no doubt that there were relevant changes in the second half of the 20th century. The Marshall Plan was a milestone in the history of relations, and in Germany the help during the grave time of the Berlin blockade was as relevant as the economic help. Later the terrible images of the Vietnam War caused a shift in the population's mind, although the values shared with the Americans were more intense than those shared with communist Vietnam.

The emotional role of foreign policy is proven also with the fact that most national heroes are connected with the relationship with a foreign power in a certain moment, in a specific part of the "national history" – mostly in times of war or occupation –: national heroes have resisted, defended authentic values, and sometimes died for this defence.⁴⁰

It is also a common experience that foreign policy issues (Vietnam or Iraq) are able to mobilise the population, to provoke demonstrations in favour or against a governmental decision.⁴¹ Only some economic issues – such as a reduction of salaries, redundancies,

³⁷ The CAP is often explained as the result of a political compromise between France and Germany (see D. Swann, *The Economics of Europe: From Common Market to European Union*, Penguin, London 2000, p. 232).

³⁸ An article from 13.1.2012 by the German press agency dpa, that has been reproduced hundreds of times, starts with the sentence: "Die Angst vor Inflation hat sich tief ins kollektive Gedächtnis der Deutschen eingebrannt" (reproduced for example in <http://www.n-tv.de/wirtschaft/Was-auf-Deutschland-zukommt-article5201596.html>, 12.8.2012).

³⁹ An interesting relation between the different positions in front of the Economic and Monetary Union and identity issues in France, Great Britain and Germany is seen in the chapter D. Engelmann, H.-J. Knopf, K. Roscher, T. Risse, *Identität und Europäische Union: Die Diskussion um den Euro in Grossbritannien, Frankreich und Deutschland*, in: *Europäische Institutionenpolitik*, eds. T. König, E. Rieger, H. Schmitt, Campus, Frankfurt/Main–New York 1997.

⁴⁰ It is the Swiss case with Wilhelm Tell, in Scotland William Wallace, in Spain, the many people fighting against Napoleon's invasion, in Poland, Jan Sobieski who stopped the Ottoman penetration in Europe. In Latin America, the different "Libertadores" are commemorated in these years, in which the bicentenary of the independence is motive for organising every kind of events (Bolívar, San Martín and many others); in Peru, high appreciation is given to Miguel Grau who fought against Chile's attempt to conquer the country. It is Rizal in the Philippines and so many others around the world.

⁴¹ Some recent examples: *Thousands protest in Chicago as NATO summit opens*, Reuters, 20.5.2012, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/05/20/us-nato-summit-protests-idUSBRE84I09X20120520>, 12.8.2012;

and measures in an economic crisis, as well as some aspects of social policy – are capable of causing a similar popular reaction. Foreign policy issues can contribute to cause relevant social changes, therefore anti-Americanism became one of the constitutive elements of one of the most distinctive social and cultural changes of the last decade, a movement that has been identified as May 68.⁴²

On the other side, the use of “Feindbilder” (“The Image of the Enemy”) is one of the most common strategies of non democratic (and sometimes also democratic) governments for creating or improving cohesion but also for detracting from internal problems.

National narratives and European foreign policy

The history (understood as “story”), the memories, and the narratives are more national than European: this is the tradition – and this tradition is transmitted not only by the family but also within the educational system. It should be remembered that there is a considerable reluctance for transferring competences in the educational sector to the European level that are related to contents: the Treaty excludes it’s explicitly!⁴³ The contents have to remain national. This affects not only the facts but also the perspective: history can be taught from a national or from a European perspective.⁴⁴ And it is not the same! A colleague of mine, a historian at my university, was fascinated because last year he was teaching Contemporary History of Europe to a class in which there were Erasmus students from Germany, France, Poland and Turkey. Try to explain – he told me – the Second World War to students with such a different background. It is fascinating, and it is challenging.

On the other side, there is no tradition of European foreign policy because a good part of the European States’ foreign policy was done in front of, and often against other European states, precisely those states that now are partners in the common European project.

Chicago protesters rally against Syria’s government, “Chicago Tribune”, 3.7.2011, <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/local/breaking/chibrknews-chicago-protesters-compare-syrias-leader-to-hitler-20110703,0,1413960.story>, 12.8.2012.

⁴² A relevant event for the disturbs in the universities was caused in June 1967 by the death of the student Benno Ohnesorg in Berlin during demonstrations against the visit of the Shah in Germany.

⁴³ In article 167 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union is said that “The Union shall contribute to the development of quality education [...], while fully respecting the responsibility of the Member States for the content of teaching.”

⁴⁴ Some projects financed under the Commission’s “Culture”-Programme are dealing specifically with this idea that there is a specific European perspective. For example, in 2012 a project is founded with the title “EuroVision – Museums Exhibiting Europe”; it “explores an innovative interdisciplinary approach for national and regional museums to re-interpret their objects in a broader context of European history”. The objective is, therefore, “the Europeanisation of the contentual object presentation”. A similar approach is given in of “Critique and Crisis”, a project proposed by the German Historical Museum, that intends “to offer a contemporary post-Cold War perspective on European art and history since 1945”. Here “European art is used in singular, and – as it is further said – Europe is “envisaged as a mental territory and a field of interaction”. To these and other projects see Enrique, Banús: “How European is the European Union’s ‘cultural policy’”, presentation at the ICCPR Conference, Barcelona 2012, forthcoming.

Yet this means that the common – or at least co-ordinated – external policy supposes a paradigm shift. Changes of paradigm are challenging and take time: political changes can succeed very quickly (after elections, for example, the panorama can be completely different), economic changes too; however social changes might need more time but can still succeed in one generation; whereas cultural and psychological changes need more time. The creation of a common foreign policy is connected to cultural change.

European Political Cooperation started in 1970, in an informal way, because the states didn't want to formalise it at that time. This is a regular occurrence – many EC policies had a similar experience. In forty years the progress has not been revolutionary, but some progress has been made. The common market also needed a long time for its establishment: it was thought of in 1957, and a deadline of 12 years for its establishment was set. But it was finally realised only 36 years later, on 1 January 1993 and after new impulse given by the Single European Act. Furthermore this goal has been more challenging than expected. Here too a change of paradigm was needed, a shift of paradigm with relevant cultural consequences.⁴⁵ It was a change of paradigm because it meant a new view of the frontiers, or more specifically the transformation of the frontiers into borders.⁴⁶ It also supposed the giving up of sovereignty – and sovereignty was one of the main concepts defining the modern State, and it was supposed to transform the perception of some concrete “others” – from former enemies (or at least opponents) to partners in a common project in which the differences were not diluted but taken as point of departure for the new communitarian method of continuous negotiation.

These were the relevant changes, including cultural elements, because they implied changes in mentality. But with only several exceptions the creation of a Common Market was related to economic interests and did not mobilise the history, the traditions or the emotions as foreign policy does – with some exceptions like beer for the Germans (the debate on the compatibility of the 1516 German Beer Purity Law with European Law mobilised strong emotions⁴⁷), or olive oil for the Mediterranean countries⁴⁸ or the maintenance of zero Value Added Tax (VAT) for certain products (life necessities) in the

⁴⁵ To the cultural consequences of the European integration see E. Banús, *¿Hablan los Tratados fundacionales del 'patrimonio cultural común'?*, in: *Principios esenciales informadores en la construcción de la Unión Europea. Homenaje a José Antonio Jáuregui*, coord. C. F. Molina del Pozo, Editorial Universitaria Ramón Areces, Madrid 2010, pp. 317–330.

⁴⁶ See E. Banús, *The cultural relevance of the borders*, “Eurolimes” 2006, 2, pp. 198–205.

⁴⁷ The European Court of Justice decided that the prohibition of selling in Germany beers that were not brewed according to the Purity Law was incompatible with the Community Law (see Case 178/84, Judgment of the Court of 12 March 1987 – Purity requirement for beer, <http://curia.europa.eu/juris/liste.jsf?language=en&jur=C,T,F&num=178/84&td=ALL>, 7.8.2012). An interesting comment about reactions and consequences, written 25 years after the sentence, is given in M. Köpcke, *Bier, nicht mehr nur “rein”*, “Deutschland-Radio Kultur”, 12.3.2012, <http://www.dradio.de/dkultur/sendungen/kalenderblatt/1686013/>, 7.8.2012.

⁴⁸ The Council Regulation (EC) No 864/2004 of 29 April 2004 “[...] establishing common rules for direct support schemes under the Common Agricultural Policy [...] recognized in number 13 of the motivation the relation of olive oil with ‘local traditions and culture’” (in Official Journal of the European Union, L 161/48-96, 30.4.2004, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2004:161:0048:0096:EN:PDF>, 12.8.2012).

United Kingdom.⁴⁹ These are market elements with a strong cultural affection. Many other aspects in the realisation of a common market are technical and can be developed by the experts, without the emotional implication of the common citizen.

If therefore also the realisation of a less significant paradigm shift took considerably more time than initially expected, the way towards strong co-operation in foreign policy is for sure a complex one. It also cannot be realised *manu libri albi*; with a catalogue of measures to be taken (this could be done with the Internal Market, thanks to the famous White Book on its completion). Foreign policy has to do with actions and reactions in a constantly changing field, in a field in which interests, power, economy and culture are interacting continuously. No doubt: more than a telephone number is needed. “Abbiamo fatto l’Italia”, was said after Italy’s unification, *si tratta adesso di fare gli italiani*.⁵⁰ The identification with European common heritage, and also in its external dimension, is required.

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⁴⁹ *Zero-rated VAT applies in the UK on most food (with the paradoxical exception of snacks), medicines, books and some forms of transport* (A. Victor, *VAT: a brief history of tax*, “The Guardian”, 31.12.2010, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/money/2010/dec/31/vat-brief-history-tax>, 7.8.2012). There is a problem of compatibility of this tax with the European law: critics argue that it means an indirect subvention for certain products. In that sense, the European Commission informs: “There are a number of temporary derogations, e.g. zero rates in the United Kingdom and Ireland” (European Commission, *Taxation and customs union: General overview*, http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/taxation/vat/how_vat_works/index_en.htm, 7.8.2012).

⁵⁰ The sentence is attributed to Massimo D’Azeglio (Massimo Tapparelli marchese D’Azeglio), one of Garibaldi’s friends, in the opening session of the first Italian parliament, on February 18th, 1861.

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Kultura i polityka zagraniczna

Streszczenie

Traktat z Maastricht stworzył II filar Unii Europejskiej – Wspólną Politykę Zagraniczną i Bezpieczeństwa, która powstała w celu poprawieniu współpracy w zakresie polityki zagranicznej, współpracy, która istniała nieformalnie od 1970 roku. Mimo to ostatnio (na przykład w odniesieniu do kryzysu libijskiego) europejskie państwa nie znalazły wspólnego głosu, którego od nich oczekiwano. Przedmiotem artykułu jest pytanie o przyczyny trudności w udoskonalaniu tej polityki. Artykuł bada możliwość wynikania różnic w polityce zagranicznej z długiego okresu trwania tych elementów w mentalności zbiorowej.

Słowa kluczowe: Wspólna Polityka Zagraniczna, Traktat z Maastricht, stereotypy, nauki polityczne, kultura w integracji europejskiej