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The Importance of the European Union's Strategic and Diplomatic Cultures

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The Importance of the European Union's Strategic and Diplomatic Cultures

Colette Mazzucelli[♣]

Introduction

This paper identifies culture as a variable underlying the establishment of a distinct policy area in the European Union (EU). An inquiry into the evolution of strategic culture in the Union must reference the agreement taken by Tony Blair and Jacques Chirac in 1998 at Saint-Malo. Why did these two leaders take a step in the direction of a European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP)? Do structural or institutional explanations trump the cultural analysis?

In each case, the decision taken may be explained with reference to the culture of the country in question. Each leader was confronted with a tension between the need for his state to continue participation, to varying degrees, in the European integration process and the reluctance or indifference of the national population toward this objective. Culture is a variable that must be taken into account to explain the contestation resulting from gap between national leaders' attempts to define their states' medium to long-term interests at the center of European Union policymaking and the populaces' attitudes of disinterest or downright hostility to these goals.

Culture and Its Discontents

Relatively few studies identify culture in comparative political analysis to explain the dynamics of interaction in the larger European Union.[1] The choice of a cultural perspective, and not a structural or institutional account, is justified by the choice of cases this paper analyzes. Its analysis strives to explain the reasons for the decision taken by Blair and Chirac at Saint-Malo. A structural account places the emphasis squarely on the security considerations and constraints in the international system. An institutional account demonstrates the extent to which actions flow from conditions of path dependence.

The Saint-Malo decision laid a cornerstone for the establishment over time of a European Security and Defense Policy, which makes the emergence of a European strategic culture or a European Security and Defense Identity a distinct, though distant, possibility. The definition of strategic culture used here is that of Longhurst as '…a distinctive body of beliefs, attitudes and practices regarding the use of force, which are held by a collective (usually a nation) and arise gradually over time, through a unique and protracted historical process. Strategic culture is persistent over time, tending to outlast the era of its original inception, although it is not a

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[1] One notable exception is Craig Parsons, *A Certain Idea of Europe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003.)

permanent or static feature. It is shaped and influenced by formative periods and can alter, either fundamentally or piecemeal, at critical junctures in that collective's experiences'.[2]

The argument in this paper is that during the 1990s, like in preceding decades, each nation-state in Europe reacted to systemic change *in its own way*. Stanley Hoffmann, writing in the early 1980s, explained that each nation-state confronts crisis 'according to its own political culture'.[3] This interpretation differs from the dominant structural one, in which culture is at best derivative of the distribution of capabilities and has no independent explanatory power. For rationalists, actors deploy culture strategically, like any other resource, simply to further their own self-interests.

In the run-up to Saint-Malo, Blair and Chirac each had to consider the impact on their respective domestic contexts of the Union's policies, which have expanded in function and scope. This paper makes the case that the Saint-Malo agreement must be explained with reference to culture, not structure or institutions, and not primarily in a security or defense context. The analytical point of departure is that the decision made by each national leader involved argumentation. Tensions were not exclusively or primarily among national elites. Contestation was driven by differences between elite and popular conceptions of each member state's commitment to the European Union. The point of reference in this analysis is a national one, which answers the initial question as to why Prime Minister Blair changed policy at Saint-Malo.[4]

The Road Less Traveled By: Saint-Malo

The Blair Government's Volte Face. Late in 1998 Blair reversed the long-standing British position and accepted the French preference to implement a European Strategic Defense Identity (ESDI) under the aegis of the European Union. At the time the Blair government was not able to join the single European currency project, the Euro, owing to domestic opposition among the British elite and populace.[5] Nor was Britain a member of the Schengen group, whose original members, France, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg, agreed to the gradual abolition of checks at their common borders. After years of Conservative rule, Labour's challenge was to establish Britain's constructive influence in core matters of European Union policymaking while influencing domestic opinion on this matter in a pragmatic way.

Although the new Prime Minister's economic commitment to the Union was strong, Britain risked being left behind as momentum to create the Euro increased. Blair understood it was necessary to establish his party's credentials in Brussels. Opposition to the Euro, however, resulted in a loss of control over monetary union as the British had to settle for observer status in talks addressing currency management. The British wait and see strategy to join the Euro had substantial economic consequences as '…the pound soared on currency markets, damaging industry's competitiveness and raising the threat of recession'.[6] This was the price of assuaging public opinion.

Britain's six-month Presidency of the Council, which began in January 1998, gave Blair the opportunity to experience first-hand the Union's internal divisions over the Euro as well as public apprehension regarding future enlargements after the 1995 accession of Austria, Finland, and Sweden. The British public exhibited anxiety about the unknown, namely how anticipated

[2] As cited in Alister Miskimmon, 'Continuity in the Face of Upheaval-British Strategic Culture and the Impact of the Blair Government,' *European Security* 13, 3 (2004): 3.

[3] Stanley Hoffmann, 'Reflections on the Nation-State in Western Europe Today' in *The European Sisyphus Essays on Europe 1964-1994* (Boulder, San Francisco & Oxford: Westview Press, 1995), p. 213.

[4] Thomas Forsberg, "Explaining the Emergence of the ESDP: Setting the Research Agenda," Paper prepared for the British International Studies Association Meeting, Cork, December 18-20, 2006, p. 13.

[5] 'Remarks of Sir Michael Quinlan,' *The Atlantic Council of the United States*, 08 December 2000, p. 2.

[6] Cited in Laura K. Conley, *Optional Supranationality: Redefining the European Security and Defense Policy*, The Honors College, Wesleyan University, 2007, p. 75.

enlargements would change their lives. Timing was critical. Domestic popular support for EU membership was on the wane when Blair needed to affirm his country's interest in a larger Union on the verge of making a qualitative leap in monetary integration.

In a March 1998 address before the French National Assembly, Blair expressed his concern about this decrease in public support. In that speech, he recognized the need for leadership and vision as a national leader with the responsibility to play a proactive role shaping popular opinion about the European Union. Blair's remarks also highlighted defense as an area for cooperation in which Britain and France 'can and should do more together'.[7] Blair emphasizes particular national attitudes about the use of force, which, in turn, indicates his perception of the strategic importance of defense cooperation with France in an EU context.

Blair affirmed his support for the European Union through a British initiative in defense cooperation. His aim was to develop ESDI jointly with the French as an EU policy area, which appealed to a domestic audience as a national and a European project.[8] Blair's commitment to the Europe Union was expressed with reference to distinct national traditions, which lend Britain its specificity: parliamentary sovereignty, transatlantic solidarity, and popular accountability. From a pragmatic standpoint, it was also increasingly clear to Blair that ESDI was going nowhere, and that without a new impetus provided jointly with France, defense policy would neither be substantive nor European.[9] There had to be a collective presence to mobilize peer pressure among member states, avoid the inefficiency of uncoordinated, *ad hoc*, initiatives, and allow domestic publics to identify with a project viewed nationally as a positive sum game of global significance. Most importantly, the United Kingdom and France were diverse enough in their views to create a negotiating space for other member states of the Union to join an emerging ESDI.[10] As a consequence, the Saint-Malo Declaration derived legitimacy from cultural differences as well as military strengths, which Britain and France respectively brought to the table.

The Chirac Government's Popular Dilemma. In contrast to the British prime minister, Chirac faced unexpected domestic constraints during the 1990s, particularly in the context immediately preceding the Saint-Malo agreement. Since the national referendum that just barely insured the ratification of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) in 1992, France was confronted with internal challenges to what had traditionally been perceived by the country's elite as a popular consensus in support of the country's participation as a founding member in European construction.[11] There were two issue areas that alienated the French populace in the period leading to Saint-Malo in late 1998: the fulfillment of the economic convergence criteria necessary to join the EMU and enlargement of the Union to include the countries to the center and east of the Continent.

In accordance with the Treaty on European Union, France had to fulfill five criteria to join the Economic and Monetary Union in the first wave. The most notable criteria is a country's ability to attain a budget deficit of less than 3% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). After his election in 1995, Chirac and his newly appointed prime minister, Alain Juppé, confronted a budget deficit, 6% of GDP, which could have left France out of an EMU core. Juppé's task was to draft and implement a plan to cut the budget deficit by almost half – to 3.5% – within a year. The steps toward economic convergence incurred a heavy social cost, which provoked a negative

[7] 'Prime Minister's Speech to the French National Assembly,' *10 Downing Street*, 24 March 1998, http://www.pm.gov.uk/output/Page1160.asp

[8] Conley, p. 83.

[9] Quinlan, p. 2.

[10] The diversity inherent in the French-German tandem at the height of its functionality in the intergovernmental conference (IGC) context is analyzed in Colette Mazzucelli, Ulrike Guérot and Almut Metz, "Cooperative Engine, Missing Engine or Improbable Core? Explaining French-German Influence in European Treaty Reform" in *Leadership in the Big Bangs of European Integration* Derek Beach and Colette Mazzucelli, eds. (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 159.

[11] Colette Mazzucelli, *France and Germany at Maastricht Politics and Negotiations to Create the European Union* (New York: Garland, 1997), pp. 207-41.

reaction from the French public. Consequently, the Chirac government's popularity suffered a sharp decline.[12] The strikes and labor unrest that resulted led Chirac in hindsight to make one of the most blatant political miscalculations of his career. His sudden call for an early election in spring 1997 aimed to release the president from domestic political pressure in the years to come during his initial seven-year tenure. This breathing room was essential as Chirac sought to reassert France's leadership of Europe and reappraise its role in a reformed North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The strategy resulted instead in 'five years of futile cohabitation with a contentious Socialist majority in the French National Assembly, thereby stalling Chirac's grand designs for Europe and the alliance'.[13] The government's defeat and Juppé's swift departure left Chirac to confront a population hostile to the Maastricht agenda.

The increasing popular dissatisfaction with the government's economic policy was not the only European challenge Chirac had to face. The French public's feelings about the Union's enlargement to central and east Europe were decidedly negative regarding particular countries. Only the accession of Poland and Malta was viewed favorably by the French with the population divided evenly about eventual membership for Hungary. 1998 Eurobarometer survey data indicate that citizens expressed an overwhelming disapproval of future European Union enlargement to Slovakia, Romania, Slovenia, and the Baltic countries, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.[14] Expansion had the support of the French government, which Chirac articulated as follows: "Enlargement is both a moral duty and an opportunity for Europe."[15] In this statement, the French president sought to define the state's long-term interest in European terms. This objective is reflective of traditional French policy toward European construction from the 1950s: the country is strengthened economically and politically as integration proceeds in those policy areas that are in France's vital interest.

The Chirac government considered the Economic and Monetary Union and enlargement as the next critical steps in the European construction process. For Chirac, the dilemma was fundamentally one of national leadership in an era dominated by the choice France had made for Europe.

The strategic importance of EMU and enlargement to the French state was contested not only by elite personalities, but, more significantly, by an increasing majority of the country's population. Gueldry's analysis is particularly relevant in this context: '…French opponents to the single currency blame the stringent convergence criteria for the abdication of monetary sovereignty, the crisis of the welfare state, the loss of productive investment and soaring unemployment.'[16] The 1992 referendum revealed that it was no longer possible to count on voters automatically casting their votes in accord with established political and socio-economic affiliations. Chirac had to contend with the increasing volatility of the French electorate, which is connected with an acute crisis of confidence in established political parties.[17]

Despite his personal reluctance, Chirac cast his vote for the Treaty on European Union "as a personal choice" not as chairman of the *Rassemblement pour la République* (RPR). His embrace of a pro-Maastricht policy in winter 1995 when his Conservative prime minister tried to curtail public expenses and social benefits drove a wedge between Chirac and nationalistic Gaullists. Those faithful to traditional Gaullism castigated the loss of French policy alternatives. Gueldry explains; '…The denunciation of the social costs of European unification in a pro-

[12] Conley, pp. 102-03.

[13] Simon Serfaty, *Architects of Delusion: Europe, America and the Iraq War* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), p. 62.

[14] Eurobarometer, as cited in Conley, p. 108.

[15] Jacques Chirac, "Vive the United Europe of States; Jacques Chirac from the French President's Address at the Fourth Annual Conference des Ambassadeurs," *The Independent (London)*, 3 September 1998, p.4, www.lexisnexis.com as cited in Conley, p. 108.

[16] Michel R. Gueldry, *France and European Integration Toward a Transnational Polity?* (Westport, CT and London: Praeger, 2001), p.7.

[17] Ibid

Maastricht blueprint provides easy political ammunition to demagogues in a country suffering from a social crisis and an identity crisis.'[18] The crisis must be analyzed in the cultural, historic context dating back to the French Revolution during which '…Intolerance also fed on socioeconomic differences, especially since the French felt a "violent and inextinguishable hatred of inequality."'[19] Differences exacerbated among classes in French society as a result of the march toward the single currency, and situate an analysis of France's Revolution in a modern context:

> …"Poverty worked to sharpen all jealousies and all hatreds on all sides"; and the prosperity that succeeded it increased discontent further and caused "hatred against the old institutions [to grow]. The nation [took] visible steps toward a revolution." Violence was the result not of poverty as such but of the frustration associated with it….[20]

The concern of the Chirac government in late 1997 and early 1998 was that the French public expressed fundamental differences about the desirability of French participation in the European Union. In this context, the time was ripe for a high profile European initiative that would influence public opinion. The level of support for membership in the European Union among the French public declined from 66% in the spring of 1990 to 48% in the fall of 1997 and 50% in the spring of 1998.[21] The agreement between Blair and Chirac at Saint-Malo in December 1998 may be analyzed as a project to foster an affinity with the European Union among the French populace. In other words, Conley analyzes Saint-Malo as 'an identity-building project [that] was Chirac's method of choice'.[22] Such a project was time sensitive: in the atmosphere that emerged in the 1990s, the French were hostile to the EMU criteria, opposed to future enlargement, and less favorable to membership in the Union than in previous decades.

Explaining Saint-Malo in Context

Of the explanations offered in analyses of the development of ESDP, three are prominent in the literature: the natural expansion of integration as a process; Europe's desire to balance against the United States; and the pragmatic needs of crisis management in a new security environment since the end of the Cold War.[23]

This paper addresses the query as to why ESDP emerged in the late 1990s. The point of departure is an inquiry that questions the reasons for the change in British policy under Prime Minister Blair. In this context, my argument is that Blair wanted the United Kingdom to take the lead in a key policy area – defense – that he believed would bring his country into the mainstream of influence in European policymaking alongside France and Germany. This argument, which is fundamentally different than those in the literature, locates the explanatory factors on the national level. This is not, however, simply the basis of a fourth narrative of 'old European power politics and competition between nation-states recast in new circumstances'.[24] The explanation is sensitive to context and timing: Blair needed to establish solid domestic support for the European Union at a time when Britain was in no position to join the first wave of EMU. Elite and public contestation regarding the Euro was strong. Blair also wanted to establish a British commitment and 'determination to use European instruments to achieve some of its foreign policy goals and to

[18] Gueldry, p. 7.
[19] Pierre Birnbaum, *The Idea of France* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001), p. 38.
[20] Ibid, p. 39.
[21] "Eurobarometer Surveys, 33-52," *European Commission*, http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb_arch_en.htm as cited in Conley, p. 109.
[22] Conley, p. 109.
[23] Forsberg, p. 10.
[24] Ibid, pp. 13-14.

develop a more interventionist foreign policy in terms of crisis management and conflict prevention around the globe'.[25]

Since the late 1990s, the evolution of British and French security policies may be explained, as Lantis writes, 'as a product of domestic political adjustments (rooted in culture, traditions and common historical narratives) to changing international circumstances'.[26] This does not discount another explanation, which is the challenge of post-Cold War crises in the Balkans, as a motivation for Blair and Chirac to agree in Saint-Malo.[27] Changes introduced by globalization impact on traditional national strategic cultures, which in turn contribute to European initiatives, like the Saint-Malo revolution demonstrates for ESDP.

In terms of the 'presence' of ideational elements prior to Blair's action at Saint-Malo, Blair had to contend with the United Kingdom's established Atlanticism and 'non-European' sense of identity, which its cultural and historical experience defined. There was a need to address the unresolved conflict over the very notion of European integration. Unlike their Conservative predecessors, the Labour Party aimed to overcome its traditional reticence about European integration since the end of World War II.[28] Labour's conversion to a pro-European policy occurred during the 1990s under the leadership of Neil Kinnock and later John Smith. There are several explanations for the shift from the policy of withdrawal that was articulated in the 1983 manifesto, including: the 'shift of the trade union movement to support for integration'; the 'failure of socialism 'in one country' in France'; and 'the shift to pro-Europeanism on the part of several key figures in the party'.[29] Labour was adept at exploiting European policy in an opportunistic way while in the opposition. The divisions within the Conservative Party, and particularly within the second Major government, in power from 1992-97, were exploited by Labour as the country ratified the Treaty on European Union. As the Major's government's relations with other European Union member states deteriorated, a new group of young leaders, including Tony Blair, Gordon Brown and Peter Mandelson, heightened the willingness to realize Britain's interest in the European context.

Blair's objective was to reform Europe with Britain in the lead of the renewal. The 1998 British Presidency of the Council did not offer him the opportunity to bring the European Union closer to the domestic public. Despite positive achievements over the six-month tenure in the Chair, the British Presidency did not register any enduring result by involving the British people in the integration process. An initiative with France emphasizing defence allowed Britain to play a key role, which was visible to the larger public, and underscored Britain's importance as a bridge that arguably was achieved on Kosovo.[30] The objective was to secure British domestic support for Europe's Union by making the population witness Britain's role between Europe and the US as 'a pivotal power at the crux of international politics'.[31] Blair's action to reach the bilateral agreement with Chirac at Saint-Malo later that year reflected these ideas. In Quinlan's view, Blair's underlying judgment was 'at root a tactical one about what was the best route towards getting something substantial achieved in the collective defence field, not a strategic switch to accept the Euro-aspirations of Gaullisme.'[32]

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[25] Miskimmon, p. 14.

[26] Jeffrey S. Lantis, 'Strategic Culture: From Clausewitz to Constructivism,' *Strategic Insights* Volume IV, Issue 10 (October 2005): 7

[27] Quinlan writes that Blair was increasingly aware that ESDI was 'in practice going nowhere'. The unacceptability of that situation was, in his view, 'suddenly highlighted by Kosovo'. His argument supports the challenge of post-Cold War crises as an explanation. As cited in 'Remarks of Sir Michael Quinlan,' p. 2.

[28] Piero Ignazi, 'Blair's Defence Policy: Between Atlanticism and Europeanism,' *Working Paper for the course on Analisi della Politica Estera*, 27 Luglio 2006, p. 5.

[29] Ibid, p. 6.

[30] William E. Paterson, 'The United Kingdom Between Mars and Venus: Bridge or Bermuda Triangle?' *European Research Working Paper Series* Number 12 (Birmingham: European Research Institute, 2006), p. 8.

[31] Ignazi, p. 7.

[32] Quinlan, p. 5.

Chirac's journey to Saint-Malo must be explained with reference to the French interest to develop a European common foreign and security policy (CFSP) including defense. This policy area, in which national sovereignty figures most prominently, is one in which successive French presidents have embraced a traditional Gaullist objective: to speak for Europe.[33] The case of France is illustrative of the cultural argument that the decision taken at Saint-Malo cannot be explained simply as: 1) the natural expansion of integration as a process; or 2) Europe's desire to balance against the United States.

First, Saint-Malo was a decision that confirmed the intergovernmental nature of defense policy as part of the European Union's second pillar, CFSP. As Paul Luif argued, '…Learning processes and spillover effects do not seem to have the same strength in the intergovernmental cooperation of the EU's second pillar as in the supranational first pillar'.[34] Chirac's agreement with Blair at Saint-Malo was about 'a policy for common decision making, yet one in which no country would ever be bound to participate.'[35] The French president underlined that the realization of a European security and defense policy provides the foundation for a European identity because the undertaking is the expression of the national interest.

Secondly, it is not entirely accurate to equate the French viewpoint, which is expressed with a distinctive voice, with 'anti-American, anti-NATO, proto-Gaullism.'[36] In different periods of history when crises arose, for example, the stationing of missiles in Cuba, France aligned with the United States and the West. During the 1990s, France's relations with NATO drew closer as the Alliance underwent a significant transition after German unification and the fall of the Soviet Union. French elite opinion is not monolithic, however. The anti-American, anti-NATO strand of thought is one among many. As Quinlan perceives this strand, 'in defense matters France is most truly and proudly herself when she is disagreeing with the United States and distancing herself from NATO as being an unhealthily US-dominated organization.'[37] Despite this inclination, which is culturally ingrained in the French worldview, the challenge for France when the ESDP project was defined at Saint-Malo, was to convince the United Kingdom, and then the US and other EU member states, that ESDP and NATO were mutually reinforcing.[38]

During the 1990s, the Western European Union (WEU) together with NATO assumed responsibility for peacekeeping operations in support of United Nations missions in the former Yugoslavia. The 1996 NATO Council meeting in Berlin led to an agreement to intensify cooperation within the ESDI framework. Although the initial intention was to strengthen the European pillar within NATO, French and British initiatives subsequently built on the Saint-Malo foundation, which aimed to determine the European capacities for crisis response missions. As an integral part of the French identity-building project, Chirac's decision at Saint-Malo illustrated that the pragmatic needs of crisis management in a new security environment since the end of the Cold War were visibly addressed in the eyes of the French public. The deliberate choice of this policy capitalized on the French domestic support for a common European defence. It also underlined the popular belief that defence efforts should be undertaken by the European Union.[39]

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[33] Lois Pattison de Ménil, *Who Speaks for Europe? The Vision of Charles de Gaulle* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1977.)

[34] Paul Luif, 'The Strategic Cultures of "Old" and "New" Europe,' *The International Spectator* 2/2006 (2006): 112. Luif cites the examples of Ireland and Austria, which are now more 'neutral' than when they became EU members in 1973 and 1995, respectively.

[35] Conley, p. 107.

[36] Quinlan, p. 4.

[37] Ibidem

[38] Thierry Tardy, 'National Threat Perception: Survey Results from France,' *Garnet Working Paper No. 18.5*, May 2007, p. 11.

[39] Sozialwissenschaftliches Institut der Bundeswehr, *Europe's Common Security Attitudes and Opinions in France, Germany and Italy*, Forum International, Volume 26, Strausberg, December 2004, p. 31; Emil J. Kirchner, 'European Union: The European Security Strategy versus national preferences,' in *Global Security Governance* eds. Emil J Kirchner and James Sperling (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), pp. 125-26.

As the leader of a large state, for which independence of action in security and defence policy is a matter of national identity, Chirac's decision at Saint- Malo preserved French sovereignty in this area. This is a distinctive national concern, which engenders no substantial contestation at home, and indicates the extent to which a European strategic culture is dependent on the evolution of genuinely common interests and the willingness of states to accept a 'coordination reflex [that] tends to narrow down the range of actions envisaged by member states.'[40] Chirac demonstrated the consistency in French security policy since Saint-Malo by maintaining this 'philosophy of independence'.

The philosophy of independence is indicative of a structural rather than an instrumental style of European governance. This is a style that reflects the traditional authority of the state in France and the role of the president in the institutional set up of the Fifth Republic. French elite perspectives on ESDP since Saint-Malo have been intricately related to French popular uncertainty about integration and globalization as two sides of the same coin.[41] There is one constant from the 1992 Maastricht referendum through the 1995 labor unrest regarding the Euro until the 2005 rejection of the European Constitutional Treaty: domestic opinion reveals significant differences between the French elite and population. French leaders have consistently highlighted the benefits to the national population of European security initiatives, which speaks to their identity-building function in the Saint-Malo context.[42]

In the French case, the requirement to shore up domestic opinion indicates that the support for ESDP is pursued in the national interest and is unlikely to engender the expansion of integration. Nor does ESDP make sense as a purely military policy to balance against the United States. As a response to the differences inherent between elites and the public about European integration, the Saint-Malo agreement provided a foundation to create a European strategic culture with the potential to 'generate the political momentum to acquire capabilities.'[43] A European strategic culture is a necessary element in the Union's development as a distinct polity to manage globalization in the 21st century. Its evolution allows the member states to address popular concerns about integration by constructing a European identity that responds in the public eye to the pragmatic needs of crisis management in a new security environment.

After the Saint-Malo agreement and prior to the Iraq controversy, Cornish and Edwards explained this potential development in the following way: 'As the EU comes into contact with 'zones of intractable conflict', and given the policy connection between development and security, an EU strategic culture will become increasingly valid. Limited military forces could reasonably be used by the EU to pursue goals which rightly fall within its scope of action and which complement other areas of Union activity. By these means, the EU will develop a unique strategic culture which begins to serve its needs and aspirations (as expressed in the Helsinki initiative) and which neither forecloses later evolution of the European capability (even, if desired and affordable, into the EU's own defense alliance), nor-importantly-rivals NATO in scope or style.'[44]

In hindsight the Saint-Malo decision illustrates Hyde-Price's argument, which underlines diversity as the source of member state differences: 'Despite Robert Kagan's intentionally provocative writings counterposing of a more pacific 'European' strategic culture to that of the USA (Kagan 2002 and 2003), the fact is that European attitudes to the use of force are

[40] Christopher Hill, 'European Foreign Policy: Power Bloc, Civilian Model – or Flop?' in *The Evolution of an International Actor: Western Europe's New Assertiveness* ed. Reinhardt Rummel with the assistance of Colette Mazzucelli (Boulder, San Francisco & Oxford: Westview Press, 1990), p. 33.

[41] Colette Mazzucelli, 'The French Rejection of the European Constitutional Treaty: Two-Level Games Revisited,' in *The Rise and Fall of the EU's Constitutional Treaty* ed. Finn Laursen (Nijhoff/Brill, 2008).

[42] Conley, pp. 115-16.

[43] Paul Cornish and Geoffrey Edwards, 'Beyond the EU/NATO dichotomy: the beginnings of a European strategic culture,' *International Affairs* 77, 3 (2001): 603.

[44] Ibidem

characterized by considerable heterogeneity. These differences cannot simply be attributed to relative power differentials, but reflect the diversity of European history, geography and culture. This diversity has led to the emergence of different strategic cultures and foreign policy role conceptions, which are only loosely and indirectly related to material power capabilities. The UK and France, for example, are similar in terms of their relative power capabilities, but have pursued different policies toward transatlantic relations and the Iraq War.'[45]

The decision taken at Saint-Malo made the evolution of a European strategic culture possible. This analysis explains that the Saint-Malo agreement was made in order to maintain the momentum to establish Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), the cornerstone of the European Union's burgeoning diplomatic culture, at a time when popular support for integration was in question. This is an explicit rejection of the spillover thesis, which underlines the specificity of Britain and France at Saint-Malo.

The Union's Revolution: Strategic and Diplomatic Cultures in the Making

The cultural analysis in this paper highlights elite-mass contestations that were a necessary impetus for key decisions on European defense policy by the leaders of two large European member states. These decisions aimed to establish a European identity with which national populations could identify. This is significant because the defense area is likely to illustrate if the Union emerges as a 21st century strategic and diplomatic actor with its own distinct culture relative to the United States, China, and others in the world.

[45] Adrian Hyde-Price, 'European Security, Strategic Culture, and the Use of Force,' in *Old Europe, New Europe and the Transatlantic Security Agenda* eds. Kerry Longhurst and Marcin Zaborowski (London and New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2005), pp. 138-39.