

A EUROPEAN FOREIGN POLICY?

Role Conceptions and the Politics of Identity in Britain, France and Germany

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Abstract

This thesis explores the prospects for a European foreign policy by comparing identity and role conceptions among British, French and German policy-makers in the 1990s. The end of the Cold War and the aspiration to a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) raise important theoretical and empirical problems about agency and change in foreign policy. The question explored in the empirical study is whether new conceptions of identity and role emerged with the end of the Cold War, and whether these were conceived in a national or European context.

By moving beyond the paradigmatic divisions between rationalism and constructivism, a theoretical framework is developed which conceptualises agency in terms of a situated actor: *homo politicus*. The novelty of the theoretical framework is that it incorporates sociological role theory as a way to operationalise the ideational dimension of foreign policy.

The comparative analysis concludes that a complex process of Europeanisation is occurring that substantiates both the neo-functional (interest-fulfilling) and transactionalist (socialisation) perspectives of political change. Paradoxically, although the process of Europeanisation has led to an increasingly post-modern view of the state, it has not led to a corresponding decline in the affective attachment and legitimacy policy-makers ascribe to national identity. Consequently, the European integration process involves not simply the 'Europeanisation of national identity' but also the 'nationalisation of European identity'. The thesis concludes that towards the end of the 1990s British, French and German policy-makers increasingly shared a common role conception of Europe as an 'ethical power' – one that will use 'hard' and 'soft' power to shape its milieu in ways that reflect its perceived ethical standards.

Foreign Policy in Post-Cold War Europe

We – the Europeans of this generation – have the unique chance to build a new order, which once and for all leaves behind hegemonic thinking and power politics, but also persistent nationalism. (Chancellor Helmut Kohl 1990b)

At the heart of this thesis stands the problem of continuity and change in foreign policy, particularly in relation to the role of the state in contemporary Europe. The end of the Cold War and attempts to forge a common European foreign policy have brought this research problem into sharp focus. These twin developments raise important empirical questions and challenge basic theoretical assumptions in international relations theory and foreign policy analysis (FPA). In particular, two major intellectual challenges now confronts students of foreign policy.

The first of these is how foreign policy can be conceptualised in a fluid environment characterised by significant transformations arising from the end of the Cold War. This question raises the difficult conundrum of the extent to which foreign policy is purposefully shaped as opposed to being a series of incremental adaptations to external forces. Despite the remarkable turning point that the end of the bipolar order constituted in world affairs, the jury is still out on the question of how decisive these changes have been to foreign policy itself, and about what new order has emerged as a result.

The second challenge is what to make of the idea of a ‘European foreign policy’ which appears to transcend the traditional understanding of the state as the central actor. Although mainstream realist theory emphasises how states ultimately seek to preserve their national independence in foreign policy, and many integration theories point to the formidable obstacles involved in integrating the sphere of foreign policy, this is an area to which European policy-makers have devoted considerable attention since the end of the Cold War.

In the early 21st century, the question about a common European foreign policy is high on the political agenda. In particular, two recent international events – the Convention on the Future of Europe and the war in Iraq – have put the spotlight on the prospects for a common European foreign policy. Debates on the draft of a European constitution included proposals for a European Foreign Minister and common defence, both of which raised questions about the role of the state in foreign policy. At the same

time, the 2003 Iraq War exposed serious divisions between EU members themselves – not least between France, Germany and the United Kingdom – on core issues of foreign and security policy.

These recent events bring to our attention what Nicole Gnesotto (1998: 11) argues are two fundamental dilemmas facing Europe as a foreign policy actor, namely (i) ‘nation or integration’; and (ii) ‘America or Europe’. As the empirical analysis of this thesis will demonstrate, these dichotomies should not be seen in simple either/or terms. Nonetheless, they do point to underlying tensions that will determine the way in which foreign policy integration is pursued in Europe. As the EU moves towards a semi-formed polity that includes the ‘high politics’ of security and defence, the first question of nation or integration has become increasingly politicised and raised intensive debates about national identity and the ‘final destination’ of the European journey. The second question concerning the relationship between America and Europe after the end of the Cold War is evident from a careful analysis of how a European identity is conceived, as well as in discussions of a European security order.

Three major players on the European arena support the idea of a common European foreign policy, whilst at the same time disagreeing on how to address the two sets of dichotomies facing Europe as a foreign policy actor. Britain, France and Germany – the three largest, and arguably, most important EU member states – will undoubtedly have a significant impact on the construction of a European foreign policy. A comparative role analysis of British, French and German foreign policies will therefore provide us with an important ‘barometer’ for the prospects of a European foreign policy.

Research Aims

The central research problem that this thesis explores, both theoretically and empirically, is the role of the state as the agent of foreign policy action in Europe during the last decade of the twentieth century (1990-99). This *problematique* is analysed by taking a close look at what meaning foreign policy-makers in Britain, France and Germany attributed to the construction of an EU foreign and security policy specifically, and how they conceived of European order after the end of the Cold War more generally. With

this focus, it is argued, we can capture how policy-makers at the very end of the 20th century thought about the capacity and relevance of the state as an actor in foreign policy.

Albeit for different reasons, realist- and integrationist-inspired studies of foreign policy have in the past failed to account for how the role of the state has both changed and endured in the process of European integration. This lacuna is addressed in this study through an interpretative account of foreign policy. The analytical focus, in other words, is directed towards the *subjective* dimension of foreign policy and the self-understanding of the actors involved. As Carlsnaes (1980: 5) points out, ‘the most important initial step to take, when inquiring into the meaning of an action, is to determine what meaning this given act has for the actor whose behaviour we wish to clarify and explain’. This is particularly important if we wish to understand foreign policy change (Goldmann 1988). In this thesis, it is argued that a vital insight into the way structural changes impact on foreign policy can be obtained from understanding how political agents perceive these conditions, rather than assuming deterministic adaptation.

This research problem into the core assumptions about the functioning of foreign policy at the strategic level raises questions about its links with national identity and role conceptions. Hence, a major *theoretical aim* of this thesis is to develop an analytical framework built around the key concepts of *identity* and *role*, aiming to provide a dynamic account of both continuity and change in foreign policy. Cognitive and cultural factors are particularly important when analysing the general orientation of foreign policy, and represent one perspective from which to explore why states behave in particular ways. Identities and interests are assumed to be deeply intertwined. Policy-makers, in other words, do not only use politics to advance their interests, but to define their identity. The process of foreign policy change is therefore intimately bound up with the quest for identity.

Until fairly recently, the concept of identity in foreign policy was accorded only minor interest in much of the FPA and IR-literature, reflecting the unease with which the broader concept of culture has generally been viewed (Carlsnaes 2002: 343; Flynn 1995: 235; Ross 1997: 43). Yet within the broader discipline of the social sciences, there is an extensive literature on the subject of nationalism, though rarely one that focuses on the international dimension. Thus, an important theoretical aim of this thesis is

to develop relevant conceptual distinctions and propositions about the identititative dimension of foreign policy.

A crucial component of a nation-state's international identity is the role the state is perceived to be playing within the international system. As Le Prestre (1997: 5-6) points out, defining a role and having it accepted by others is one of the basic objectives of a state. Roles reflect 'a claim on the international system, a recognition by international actors, and a conception of national identity'. In this, the concept of role provides us with a conceptual tool to operationalise more precisely how cultural sources inform foreign policy, whilst also expressing the relevance of systemic, geographic and economic variables to a particular foreign policy action (Holsti 1983: 116). Building on sociological role theory, this thesis seeks to develop the role concept to capture the norms and ideas that policy-makers express regarding expected foreign policy behaviour and action orientation. A key question to address is whether particular identity constructions - national and European - tend to generate distinctive roles in foreign policy. The answer to this question has important implications for the development of a European foreign policy.

To investigate the agency of foreign policy in Europe, the thesis focuses on *two empirical domains* with particular pertinence to conceptions of identity and role in foreign policy through a qualitative analysis of speeches in the 1990s. The first concerns the broader question about ideas of a European post-Cold War order, whilst the second focuses more specifically on the question of foreign policy integration in the European Union. The end of the Cold War provides us with an excellent opportunity to study foreign policy ideas regarding order and integration. Whilst many of the structural changes taking place in Europe evolved before the breaking-point of 1989-90, it can nonetheless be argued that the final collapse of bipolarity provided a 'critical juncture' or an instance of 'revolutionary change' to the international system, which challenged established foreign policy belief systems. At the very least, it induced foreign policy-makers to be more explicit about their views regarding the underpinnings of foreign policy in this new environment.

The comparative study of Britain, France and Germany provides us with an interesting empirical basis from which to draw important conclusions regarding the questions raised above. The three countries share a number of similarities, yet their foreign

policies have in the past also diverged significantly. During the Cold War, Britain pursued a predominantly Atlanticist policy; France sought to combine the complicated equation of independence and European integration; and Germany was committed to a distinctive ‘civilian power’ approach to foreign policy. The comparative perspective offered in this study thus provides a more general basis from which to determine the significance of change and continuity in European foreign policies in the 1990s.

Europeanisation and Foreign Policy Change

The key research aim of this thesis has been to investigate the changing role of the state as the agent of foreign policy action. It has done so by analysing what meaning foreign policy-makers in Britain, France and Germany attributed to the construction of an EU foreign and security policy specifically, and how they conceived of European order after the end of the Cold War more generally. This comparative analysis was conducted through an interpretative analysis of the concepts of identity and role in foreign policy speeches. In this final chapter, we will assess agency and change in foreign policy by addressing four issues that emerged from the comparative analysis.

The first issue concerns the politics of identity and the post-modern state. It draws attention to the non-linear and complex process of Europeanisation from which a post-modern view of the state emerges, but where the legitimacy of foreign policy is still firmly grounded in the politics of identity on national levels. The second issue focuses on the Europeanisation of foreign policy and concludes from the comparative role analysis that a common European role emerged in the late 1990s of Europe as an ethical power. The third issue addresses the question whether changes brought on by the end of the Cold War and the European integration process generated (in)stability and role conflict in foreign policy. The fourth issue reflects on the prospects of a European foreign policy emerging in the early 21st century.

However, before we begin addressing these issues, a few brief words on foreign policy change and Europeanisation are warranted.

Foreign policy change. As the burgeoning literature on foreign policy change testifies, there are a number of ways in which the study of change can be approached (for

an overview, see Gustavsson 1998: 18-27). It is therefore important to make three initial clarifications as to how foreign policy change is approached here. Firstly, it is important to remember that this study has been concerned with foreign policy at the strategic level, rather than discrete foreign policy behaviour. This has implications for how we interpret and explain foreign policy change. For instance, it is a common assumption in the FPA literature that the day-to-day flow of foreign policy actions and decisions are better explained in terms of policy adaptation than policy innovation (Carlsnaes 1993: 15-16). However, it has been argued in this thesis that the analysis of foreign policy at the strategic level must incorporate the dynamics of agency-structure, which entails a cyclical view of change. Secondly, we should bear in mind that the empirical findings of this study concern changes in the *subjective* dimension of foreign policy, in other words, changes in the meanings foreign policy-makers attribute to their actions. Thirdly, we should note that however dramatic the changes at the end of the Cold War seemed at the time,¹²⁷ pressures for change do not always translate into policy changes (Goldmann 1988: 5). As Ikenberry (2001: 10) notes, ‘the puzzle today concerns what has not happened: In a decade of sharp shifts in the distribution of power, why has there been so much stability and persistency of order?’ Thus, in this final chapter, we will not only be interested in understanding foreign policy changes that have taken place during the 1990s, but why there has been an equally strong sense of continuity in foreign policy.

Europeanisation. The concept of Europeanisation is a frequently used term in the integration literature, yet one that is rarely defined in a coherent and theoretically rigorous manner (see however, Featherstone and Radaelli 2003; Olsen 2002). The analysis of foreign policy in Europe tends to be dominated by two approaches (Boesche et al 2003). Firstly, the integrationist approach focusing explicitly on foreign policy change in terms of an emergent structure of European governance. Secondly, the FPA approach which bases itself on a clear distinction between state actors and structures, in which European integration is treated as an exogenous force to which national foreign policy has had to respond. The problem with the former is that it has paid little attention to the continuing role of states in the shaping of European governance, whilst the latter has failed to integrate European governance as an endogenous process in foreign policy. In this thesis,

¹²⁷ One analyst even proclaiming that the end of the Cold War represented the ‘end of history’ (Fukuyama 1989), whilst another scholar considered it a new era in history (Hobsbawm 1994: 5). See also Smith (1994: 3).

however, it has been argued that national and European foreign policy would benefit significantly from an analysis that stresses the mutually constitutive nature of the two.

In this study, Europeanisation of foreign policy is understood as a transformation of the way in which national foreign policy is conceived and constructed. It involves a significant move away from the realist principle of national independence towards the gradual convergence of a collective European identity and role in foreign policy. This collective European role is a sign of how new forms of action in foreign policy are conceived and consolidated on the European level. This view of Europeanisation is markedly different from the more prevalent view of Europeanisation as a process of adaptation to EU membership, i.e., the EU as an external force causing changes at the national level. In this study, however, the process of Europeanisation is not understood simply as a question about how the CFSP as a structure influences the member states' foreign policies, but crucially how national agents are involved in constructing this structure of cooperation in the first place. National foreign policy-makers – as intentional agents – shape the CFSP as well as being shaped by it. A comparative perspective is particularly useful from this point of view, as it helps us evaluate whether a transformation in foreign policy is unique to one state or part of a more general process of Europeanisation.

Politics of Identity and the Post-Modern State

The picture which emerges from this thesis is of a process of Europeanisation which is complex and non-linear. In this section, we will be discussing three conclusions that the comparative analysis brought to light. First, the way in which policy-makers perceived European integration confirms both the neo-functionalist (interest-fulfilling) and transactionalist (socialisation) perspectives of political change. The driving force behind Europeanisation was not only a manifestation of a European identity (*Gemeinschaft*), but crucially a national pursuit of influence (*Gesellschaft*). Second, this process of Europeanisation has led to an increasingly post-modern view of the state – one that emphasises influence at the expense of independence – and leads policy-makers to seek political influence in new political structures beyond the state. Third, despite the Europeanisation of politics and emergence of the post-modern state, these developments did not corre-

respond to a decline in the affective attachment and legitimacy to national identity which continued to shape the politics of identity in foreign policy. The conclusion of this thesis does not, therefore, lend support to supranational integration theories that suggest we look beyond the nation-state in our analysis. In fact, it is argued that a continued analytical focus on the state provides us with important insights into the intricate dynamics of European politics. In this view, the state is neither 'rescued' (Milward 1992) nor 'retreating' (Wallace 1994) – it is transformed.

The comparative analysis substantiates the view that policy-makers in the 1990s had moved considerably beyond the modernist conception of a close correspondence between territory, governance and identity. References to the idea of 'shared', 'pooled' or 'extended' sovereignty were far more common than references made to the defence of national independence, thereby undermining one of the key principles of state-nationalism traditionally conceived. However, it should be emphasised that this did not amount to a 'neo-mediaeval' system where sovereignty had been rendered meaningless (cf. Bull 1977/1995: 246). In most areas of foreign policy (as defined in this study) and particularly in the area of defence, policy-makers were reluctant to move away from the principle of intergovernmentalism. We should also remember that there was a clear shift to a pragmatic, even realist, mind-set among policy-makers in the latter half of the 1990s which re-affirmed the centrality of the state in the European integration process.

Nonetheless, the way in which policy-makers conceived of the role of the state in foreign policy corresponded closely to a number of the hallmarks of the post-modern state described in the theoretical framework. They were in general agreement that the only effective response to globalisation was an increase in multilateral cooperation. The perception of an internationalisation of problems and threats, such as international terrorism, failed states and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, was strengthening the belief that decisions and actions had to become Europeanised. This explains why the national and European dimensions were so closely interwoven in their political rhetoric.

On a deeper level, it was also evident how profoundly the impact of a stable peace reinforced this post-modern view of the state. References were frequently made to the EU as a security community in which the use of military force had become unthinkable. More broadly, the absence of direct territorial threats after the Cold War clearly had an

impact on how military power was conceived. In French speeches, it was notable how the military dimension of French identity declined in relevance with the end of military conscription in France. A German military role, it could be argued, was eventually possible because of this transformation of military force towards non-traditional crisis-management operations (the so-called Petersberg tasks). Paradoxically, Britain, the country with the most experience of a professional army, had the strongest military component attached to its international identity. But then, British views of the state were less post-modernist than those of either the French or German.

This movement away from a monolithic conception of the sovereign state was evident in British and French speeches in the 1990s, whilst Germany's federal political system had already induced this change after the Second World War. By the late 1990s, British identity no longer rested on the institutional stability of Britain as a unitary state. In France, the central belief in the French state as the key agency of national unity was questioned by policy-makers themselves, recognising that the state was no longer the 'alpha' and 'omega' of French political life.

However, an important finding of this study is that despite this rise in multiple identities and multi-level governance, the comparative analysis does not support the proposition that these post-modern developments necessarily lead to a decline in the affective attachment to national identity. Indeed, national identity was a key reference point for how other identities were conceived, particularly a European identity. The legitimacy of a European identity appeared to be contingent on the way in which it resonated with norms and conceptions of identity held on national levels. In this sense, the European integration process does not just involve the 'Europeanisation of national identity' but concomitantly the 'nationalisation of European identity'. These dual processes presented a challenge to how policy-makers could coherently articulate a politics of identity enjoying broad public legitimacy.

The conclusion that a European identity appears to be emerging against the background of national identities is supported when we take a closer look at how visions of Europe were formulated. The empirical analysis revealed that British, French and German policy-makers projected onto their understandings of 'Europe' many of their own images of the nation and its geopolitical position. It was evident how the specific expe-

rience of historical nation-building in each country was reflected in the discourse on the future of Europe.

A notable trait in British political thought about Europe was the outspoken rejection of grand ideological visions. European integration was not deemed a political goal in itself, but a process progressing incrementally and firmly based on the nation-states as its legitimate foundation. French policy-makers formulated a more ambitious vision of Europe. Indeed, national symbols of uniqueness and independence were increasingly transposed to the European level in a vision of Europe as a great power able to protect a European civilisation from the challenges posed by globalisation and a unipolar world. French policy-makers, however, hesitated at defining this vision of Europe in federal terms. German policy-makers, on the other hand, did not have these reservations. Their federal vision of ‘unity in diversity’ was largely informed by their own national experience of federalism and deep-rooted desire to build a perpetual peace in Europe. The German state was designed through constitutional engineering, the French state evolved through revolution, whilst the British state grew incrementally. These experiences of nation-building influenced and shaped the way policy-makers formulated their visions of Europe in the late twentieth century.

By drawing attention to this dual process of ‘Europeanisation’ and ‘nationalisation’ of European identity, we also bring back agency and intentionality into the analysis of how identity is (re)constructed. In the analysis of French and German identities, it became evident how policy-makers from these two states actively sought to shape a European identity. This may explain why French and German policy-makers have internalised a European identity to a much greater degree than their British counterparts. Europe as a symbol and ‘constitutive’ community (*Gemeinschaft*) was an idea shared by French and German policy-makers.¹²⁸ They both subscribed to a cultural conception of Europe that represented an *art de vivre* and model of society. This did not mean that instrumental thinking was absent in French and German conceptions. Nonetheless, such instrumental thinking was qualitatively different from that of the British. Whereas German and French policy-makers differed in the concrete details of the Europe they wanted to build, they shared an unmistakable sense of a common destiny.

¹²⁸ In fact, the French and German Foreign Ministers, Hubert Védrine and Joschka Fischer, created joint working groups and policy-planning to address this very issue in the late 1990s.

British policy-makers also clearly identified with a European identity that symbolised peace, democracy, human rights and a developed free-trading market economy. Yet, it was also apparent that British ambivalence to Europe largely stemmed from a deeply held perception that a European identity had largely been constructed without much British influence. Until these asymmetries in conceptions of a European identity are addressed, it is difficult to see how a European identity on its own could legitimate a European foreign policy.

Europe as an Ethical Power

One significant conclusion drawn from the comparative role analysis is that British, French and German policy-makers gradually converged on a common role for Europe as an 'ethical power' at the end of the 1990s. What is particularly interesting with this role is that it reflected a logic of action that could be attributed to both rationalism and constructivism as outlined in the metatheory of chapter two. On the one hand, the process of Europeanisation was intimately connected with the quest for influence by the post-modern state (rational instrumental action). On the other, the distinctive character of this common European role suggested a close connection to European norms that had evolved as a result of the institutionalisation and interaction within the CFSP (rule-based action). Whilst it has not been possible to investigate the actual negotiation process itself, the role analysis uncovered important conceptual changes that took place in the 1990s that paved the way for this convergence towards a common European role.

To begin with, we should note that the process of Europeanisation was an intrinsic part of the more general development of a transformationalist foreign policy. During the 1990s, British, French and German role-sets showed evidence in varying degrees of a transformationalist foreign policy. This was confirmed in the lack of reference made to an independent foreign policy, and the emphasis on the fact that unilateral action was neither an attractive nor feasible option to most foreign policy-makers. European cooperation in foreign policy was considered the norm and national action the exception. As expected, we did not find any 'pure' ideal types of a traditionalist or transformationalist foreign policy. The figure below demonstrates where along a continuum we find the

foreign policies of Britain, France and Germany, and the direction in which the role-sets were changing during the 1990s. These movements along the continuum would bring British, French and German conceptions of a European role closer together.

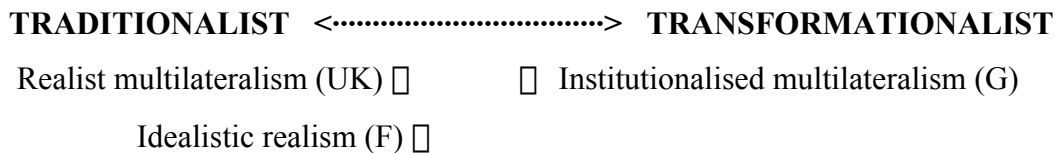


Figure 1: Role-sets in foreign policy.

These role-sets, or schools of thought in foreign policy, were clearly evident in the ideas with which policy-makers in Britain, France and Germany sought to shape the CFSP. The British role conception of European ‘partnership’ was the most traditionalist of the three with its strong emphasis on the nation-state as the fundamental unit of cooperation. Whilst French policy-makers increasingly conceived of foreign policy in a European discourse, it was equally clear that their idea of *Europe puissance* strongly reflected their ambition to build the CFSP in their own national image. Traditionalist ideas of balance-of-power and independence were simply supplanted to the European level in a process we have termed ‘nationalistic Europeanisation’. For both British and French policy-makers, the ‘pooling of sovereignty’ and ‘mutualisation of power’ in foreign policy were primarily conceived as a further addition to their countries’ influence in foreign policy, rather than a subtraction of their sovereign prerogatives.

German policy-makers stood apart in this regard given their explicit aim of delegating sovereignty to make real a supranational foreign policy. Yet, this did not prevent them from seeking to build a European ‘partnership’ that reflected their own normative and value preferences in foreign policy. There was a striking resemblance between the national role conception as a ‘promoter for peace and human rights’ and German ideas of what a European foreign policy should represent. The idealistic contents of these two roles were, however, challenged by the emergence of the role as ‘defender of enlightened national interests’. This national role reinforced an instrumental view of foreign

policy (*Außenpolitik ist Interessepolitik*) that was not easily combined with the idealism to build a supranational European foreign policy.

It was evident from the articulations of British ‘leadership’ and a Franco-German ‘motor’ that policy-makers were preoccupied with how to exercise a decisive influence on the constitutive politics of the EU’s CFSP, i.e., the norms that specify common action. Whilst British policy-makers expressed a visibly nationalistic conception of leadership, French and German policy-makers – symbolising the ‘European spirit’ as they saw it - draped their ‘enlightened’ leadership ambitions in words of moral responsibility and duty in driving a deepening process of foreign policy integration forwards.

The pragmatism that characterised ideas of European order in the latter half of the 1990s constituted the critical atmosphere in which norms of European action could coalesce in ways which eventually led to the emergence of a common role of Europe as an ethical power. It represented a convergence between British, French and German role conceptions, namely a ‘power for good’, ‘Europe as a power’ and ‘Europe as an agent for peace’.

A significant change in the British role conception of a ‘power for good’ was the transformed thinking about the legitimacy of the EU to selectively use military force for humanitarian purposes. This change was in no small part due to the meeting of minds between British and French policy-makers regarding their views of a European security order. The French role conception of ‘Europe as a power’ also changed from the traditional focus on power projection to a greater emphasis on Europe as a ‘restrained power’, i.e., using military power rarely and deliberately rather than as an attribute of its foreign policy. This change in turn appears to have been influenced by the discussions regularly taking place within the Franco-German relationship. Whilst German policy-makers gradually envisaged and acknowledged a military role for both itself and the EU for humanitarian purposes, French policy-makers in exchange toned down their power ambitions of *Europe puissance*. What was common to policy-makers in all three countries was the generally greater prominence given to the idea of an ethical foreign policy. Whilst this emphasis on human rights was not new to German foreign policy as such, it expressed a more profound commitment to human rights in British and French foreign policies. This made the common role conception of Europe as an ethical power possible.

The role of Europe as an ‘ethical power’ contained a number of distinctive characteristics. Firstly, it was intended to signify Europe as a ‘responsible power’, willing to defend universal values, such as human rights, democracy and the fundamental freedoms of other nations faced with aggression. Secondly, it expressed a ‘civilising’ view of international relations that is usually closely associated with the qualities of a civilian power, such as support for collective security arrangements, a legalistic approach to international relations, democratic participation, promotion of social justice and interdependence (Harnish and Maull 2001: 4). Thirdly, the conception of Europe as an ethical power involved the prudent use of military force when needed. This putative dimension of Europe as an ethical power was therefore different from the classic conception of Europe as a civilian power (Bull 1982/83, Duchêne 1972). The promotion of non-military forms of conflict prevention was still seen as preferable, but military intervention as a last resort was not precluded.¹²⁹

This process of Europeanisation can be traced back to the transformed meanings British, French and German policy-makers attached to their nationally conceived security roles. They all recognised wider and more diffuse threats, which broadened security to include non-military issues. The security roles that policy-makers articulated reflected their shared sense of responsibility for European security. Furthermore, all three countries became deeply involved in multilateral military activities in the 1990s. Judging from the many references made in foreign policy speeches, there is no doubt that the experience of conflict and war in the former Yugoslavia was particularly formative as to how policy-makers conceived of their post-Cold War security roles. It opened the discursive space for the reasoning of new rules of action. Conflict and war in the former Yugoslavia seriously challenged the idea of a peaceful and stable European order. As the role as an ‘advocate/champion of a wider Europe’ demonstrated, British, French and German policy-makers were deeply committed to the idea of Europe as a civilising process that eventually should comprise the whole European continent.¹³⁰ The tragedies unfolding in the Balkans were broadly conceived as a representation of Europe’s ‘uncivilised’ past. British, French and German policy-makers struggled for most of the

¹²⁹ It should be recalled that this new role emerged within a wider debate after the end of the Cold War about the use of military power for humanitarian purposes (see for instance, Coker 2001).

1990s with how best to deal with the problems in South Eastern Europe. It could be viewed as a learning process that eventually resulted in the manifestation of a common role of Europe as an ethical power – a role based, in the first instance, on ideational and soft power, but with the instruments of hard power as a last resort.

(In)Stability and Role Conflict

Stability is an inherent characteristic of role as patterned behaviour. However, in this study we were able to conclude that an increasingly post-modern view of the state were emerging and that policy-makers conceived a common European role in foreign policy. After all, roles are sensitive to situational context and time, and therefore liable to change. The potential for a role conflict to erupt within a role-set is always present, i.e., when dominant role conceptions are incompatible or contradictory to one another. The changes that the end of the Cold War and the European integration process brought about undoubtedly exposed this vulnerability. Hence, in this part we will return to the two potential role conflicts that we outlined in chapter two, i.e., whether the development of a European foreign policy was perceived to be (a) conflicting with the domestically generated drive for national independence, and (b) contrary to the transatlantic relationship.

In general, participation in the CFSP was not seen as conflicting with the notion of national independence in foreign policy. There are two obvious reasons why this was the case. Firstly, the CFSP remained predominantly intergovernmental throughout the 1990s. Secondly, the main concern of foreign policy-makers was not the defence of national independence but the quest for influence. In the case of Germany, foreign policy-makers were explicitly promoting *Einbindung* rather than independence. Their greatest fear after the end of the Cold War was the potential re-nationalisation of foreign and security policies in Europe.

However, British and French policy-makers were more ambiguous given their nationalistic approach to European integration. Whilst no manifest role conflict was discerned, there was certainly an underlying tension and conditionality attached to their

¹³⁰ Of course, policy-makers have not been in agreement on exactly where these borders of

involvement of the CFSP. In the case of Britain, this mind-set revealed itself most starkedly at the time of the Intergovernmental Conferences (1990-91/1996-97), when the issue of majority voting provoked a forceful defence of national independence. As we noted in the French role analysis, the symbolic importance of *Indépendance* had been largely transposed to the European level. Yet, at the same time, French policy-makers were reluctant to endorse the German federalist approach to foreign policy. The stability of the French role conception of *Europe puissance* was strongly contingent on the perception that France would exercise a decisive influence within the CFSP structure.

The presence of role conflict was more strongly felt in regard to how a European foreign policy should be built in relation to transatlantic relations. The differences with which British, French and German foreign policy-makers approached this issue crucially concerned the questions of how autonomous Europe should be vis-à-vis America and the political role of NATO after the end of the Cold War. As we noted in the German role-set, there was a latent tension between the roles of ‘motor’ and ‘reliable ally’. However, it is above all the diametrically opposed approaches of British and French policy-makers of the early 1990s that stand out; the former opposing any defence role for the EU, and the latter resisting the development of a political role for NATO in Europe. Yet, by the end of the 1990s, the British and French governments had moved significantly away from the view of a role conflict between an autonomous Europe and a strong transatlantic relationship. The Blair government spearheaded a defence initiative to strengthen the CFSP, whilst the French President Chirac encouraged a French rapprochement to NATO. Did this spell the end of a European-transatlantic role conflict erupting?

The findings of the role analysis do not provide an unequivocal answer to this question. Although the meaning of the French role as ‘independent ally’ was questioned and tested in the mid-1990s, it nonetheless persisted and even seemed to have stabilised again in the minds of French policy-makers by the latter half of the 1990s (when the rapprochement process froze). French policy-makers insisted that *Europe puissance* was not designed to be constructed against the United States, but there was little doubt that they perceived part of this European policy to be ‘non-American’ in order to be inde-

Europe end which would determine which countries could eventually join the European Union.

pendent. Whilst French policy-makers acknowledged the continued importance of NATO for collective defence, their idea of 'Defence Europe' revealed their higher ambition for Europe to develop an autonomous strategic capacity that will ultimately go beyond the so-called Petersberg-tasks.

For British policy-makers, the opposite logic applied. The French version of a more independent Europe would bring the British role conception of the CFSP into conflict with their role as a 'staunch ally' of NATO and the United States. The British defence initiative - which finally gave some substance to the British leadership role - can indeed be interpreted as a pre-emptive innovative strategy to prevent such a scenario from unfolding. The British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, passionately advocated that building Europe as a 'power for good' could only emerge when complementary to the transatlantic relationship. This explains why the role as a 'transatlantic bridge' was significantly emphasised by the New Labour government after it came to power in 1997. These underlying differences in views on the relationship between Europe and America have important ramifications for the stability of a common European role. We will return to this issue at the end of this chapter.

When we analyse role conflict, two caveats should be made. Firstly, it is important to keep in mind how subjective perceptions of a role conflict can be. An actor may simply not perceive a conflict or may seek to deny and compartmentalise a potential role conflict. Secondly, whether a role conflict erupts or not may crucially depend on the skill by which it is handled by particular individuals and the policy-making system itself. German foreign policy, with its tradition of *Sowohl-als-auch* (as-well-as), is a pertinent illustration of this. German foreign policy-makers, it could be argued, were skilful in combining the two roles as 'motor of European integration' and 'reliable ally' in such a way that a role conflict within the German role-set could be avoided.

Given these two caveats, an alternative approach for exploring potential role conflicts and tensions within the foreign policy role-set would involve examining the (in)stability of roles. Hypothetically, a well-integrated and stable role-set is less likely to experience role conflict. In the analytical framework of chapter two, three propositions were made in this regard (cf. Goldmann 1988: 25). Firstly, a role conception tends to be stable when it is central and compatible with other roles within the role-set (salience). Secondly, the role will be unstable if the contents, in terms of norms and objectives, are

inconsistent. Thirdly, the more questioned and contested a role conception, the less stable it is.

An interesting piece of information emerging from this alternative analysis of potential role conflicts is that in the case of British foreign policy, the two roles of 'European partnership' and 'staunch ally' are found to be stable. In fact, the instability found in role conceptions are mainly linked to the Conservative period of government, when the centrality and meaning of leadership was unclear, reflecting a particularly conflictual period in Britain's relationship with the EU. However, both the Labour and Conservative government shared the same inconsistency in regard to the norms and objectives of the role as 'defender of the national interest and independence'; a sign of the tension between the modern and post-modern views that existed among British foreign policy-makers.

Four roles were found instable in the French role-set. The centrality of the role as an 'advocate of a new European architecture' was closely linked to the idealism that characterised French foreign policy in the early 1990s, but this role lost in salience thereafter. What is interesting to note in the French role-set is how the three roles of 'Europe as a power', 'guardian of independence', and 'independent ally' all suffered instability, whilst constituting the key roles in relation to how Europe should be conceived vis-à-vis the United States. The inconsistency of these roles related partly to the ambivalence inherent in the French vision of Europe as a 'federation of nation-states' that was neither unambiguously intergovernmental nor federal. But it also reflected the underlying ambition in French foreign policy to build Europe as a power in a multipolar world, despite the official reassurances made about France as a NATO ally.

The instability of German roles did not really concern the two potential role conflicts outlined in the beginning of this section. The dual processes of 'Europeanisation' and 'normalisation' that we discerned in German foreign policy were seen as necessarily complementary. The 'normalisation' of German foreign policy, in other words, was only conceived to be possible in the wider context of Europeanisation. Some analysts would argue that this logic provided the German government with an 'alibi' for making important foreign policy changes (Janning 1996: 16). The inconsistencies found in the national and European roles as 'agent/promoter for peace' were related to how Germany's new military role (a military enforcement of rules) related to the predominance

of norms pertaining to civilian power that emphasised soft power in favour of hard military power. It should be noted in this context that this was the very same issue raised about the EU when the decision was taken to develop a European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) in 1999. The role exerting the most instability in the German role-set was the role as ‘defender of enlightened national interests’. Although we could trace its origin back in time, it only manifestly emerged in the last year of the 1990s. The role was primarily articulated by the German Chancellor Schröder, which made its centrality unclear and contested. Although the emphasis was on Germany’s ‘enlightened’ self-interests, this instrumental view of foreign policy (implying a cost-benefit analysis of interests) represented a change from norms that articulated a supranational approach to European integration.

Towards a European Foreign Policy?

The fresh awakening of the “old continent” which, a few decades ago, was almost written off by some people, cannot be planned out on a drawing board and written down in a film script. Yet it is also of little use just to point to all the problems and then ultimately to sink into resignation and pessimism. There is certainly a good deal of truth in Arnold Toynbee’s idea that the driving force behind history is the principle of “challenge and response”. To shape Europe is the challenge of our times. (Chancellor Helmut Kohl 1993: 10)

The ambitious concept of a Common Foreign and Security Policy was proclaimed in the Maastricht treaty of the early 1990s. Yet, when we compare British, French and German foreign policies, a common European role giving substance to the CFSP only emerged at the very end of the 1990s. This convergence on a common role was contingent on the pragmatic reasoning that British, French and German foreign policy-makers adopted towards the issues of nation/integration and America/Europe in the latter half of the 1990s.

The stabilisation of a common European role in foreign policy that expresses new rules of action will take time before it forms part of the structure of foreign policy. However, when we peer into the early 21st century, we can see that a common role of Europe as an ethical power is slowly cementing a presence in international politics through the development of a European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). A Euro-

pean Security Strategy has been formulated that makes explicit reference to the notion of Europe as *a force for good*.¹³¹ EU members have agreed to a European Rapid Reaction Force comprising 60 000 troops. The EU is now involved in an unprecedented way in peace-keeping operations in such places as Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia. In these missions, the EU demonstrates its unique capacity to combine a comprehensive set of civilian means (such as aid, economic incentives and civilian police forces) with military power for crisis management and conflict prevention.

Yet at the same time, the issues of nation/integration and America/Europe have become politicised again. The ‘challenge and response’ that Helmut Kohl described in 1993 seem very apt to the situation in Europe more than ten years on. The drafting of a European Constitution reopened the question of nation or integration. The expanding membership of the European Union has added renewed urgency to the question ‘what Europe?’ And in the midst of this intra-European debate about the future course of European integration, the war in Iraq created deep divisions within the European Union itself. This discord exposed the underlying tensions contained in the common role conception of Europe as an ethical power, particularly on the issue of coercive military force. Furthermore, it demonstrated how difficult it will be to create an ‘equal partnership’ between Europe and America – an issue that preoccupied policy-makers throughout the 1990s.

Indeed, exactly how the transatlantic relationship, and more specifically relations with the United States, will evolve in the future appears to be one of the defining issues for the way in which a European foreign and security policy will develop. One of the serious challenges for the transatlantic relationship in the future is how to deal with the post-modern view of foreign and security policy with which British, French and German policy-makers increasingly identify. The common role of Europe as an ethical power epitomises this post-modern and Grotian outlook towards international society. American foreign policy, in contrast, appears modernist with its insistence on the primacy of power politics and the emphasis on international law as the servant, not the master of the state.¹³²

¹³¹ ‘A Secure Europe in a better world’, Brussels 12 December 2003.

¹³² These divergences are all too evident in recent debates on the Kyoto Protocol, the International Court of Justice, the Antiballistic Missile Treaty, the role of the United Nations, the death penalty and the legitimacy of pre-emptive war.

The common role of Europe as an ethical and civilising power symbolises the new ways in which power and influence are being re-defined in the post-Cold War period based on an increasingly cosmopolitan and ‘enlightened’ conception of interest and security. There are few signs that British, French and German policy-makers are intent on abandoning national foreign policy for a *single* European foreign policy. However, the importance attributed to the constitutive politics of the CFSP reveal just how significant the CFSP has become for the foreign policies of Britain, France and Germany. At the end of the day, policy-makers from these three states think of cooperation and integration in foreign policy as the only possible way for the post-modern state to exercise an effective influence in world politics. Perhaps, as Lord Keynes once remarked, the greatest challenge ‘lies not in the new ideas but in escaping from the old ones’.