

The Nation, Bureaucratic Functionality, and EU Institutions:

Three Socialization Worlds of CSDP Actors

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Abstract

This paper engages with the theoretical debates about the emergence of a European Union (EU) strategic culture by focusing on social representations of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) actors. Using a case study of military cooperation areas, during a period of security crises (2008–2014), two research questions are addressed: (1) What are CSDP actors' social representations on military cooperation areas? (2) How do national, functional, and institutional socialization processes shape the emergence of the EU strategic culture? The paper shows that (1) CSDP actors have sharply state-centric social representations of defence and security issues. Nevertheless, the European security field is not only structured by the national cleavage between states, and especially between great powers in Europe, but also by transnational political cleavages. As regards military cooperation areas, CSDP actors share a set of social representations in favour of European cooperation through the CSDP rather than transatlantic cooperation through NATO. Their social representations are not reducible to their national preferences and suggest the emergence of an EU strategic culture. (2) This EU strategic culture is shaped within three areas or worlds of socialization: one national (the nation) and two transnational (bureaucratic functionality and EU institutions). This paper is based on a questionnaire of closed questions and on a set of semi-structured interviews, which investigated networks and social representations of CSDP actors in France, Germany, the United Kingdom (which are the three main military players in Europe), and in EU institutions. This paper contributes to the field of EU studies by offering a sociological perspective on the CSDP.

Introduction

Decision-makers rarely agree on international affairs, but the European Union's (EU) Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) seems to be an exception. Apart from some actors who work in this field, people seem to arrive at the same conclusion: either this policy does not exist or it is already dead. Major international events in recent years seem to prove them right. The EU has been unable to deploy forces abroad in high-intensity military conflicts, such as in Libya in 2011 (even after the Lisbon Treaty came into force),ⁱ or to react to the annexation of Crimea by Russia in 2014.ⁱⁱ The EU, through the European External Action Service (EEAS), also failed to harmonize national foreign policies on how to act regarding the regime of Bashar Assad in Syria, or to move in support of the Syrian rebels, against ISIS or with Russia and/or the USA. Stanley Hoffmannⁱⁱⁱ and Andrew Moravcsik^{iv} respectively define the CSDP as an "illusion" and as a "pipe dream," where no European interests or preferences exist. Even Jolyon Howorth, the father of the studies on the CSDP, is more sceptical vis-à-vis the European integration of national defence policies in the 2010s than in the 2000s.^v The EU as an organization is too weak to shape decision-making in the defence and security sectors, due to the fact that it has low institutional autonomy from nation states.^{vi}

These intergovernmentalist and institutionalist contributions are helpful in shedding light on the weaknesses of the EU's CSDP governance through the analysis of state preferences (*macro* level of analysis) and EU institutional frames (*meso* level of analysis). Nevertheless, they do not take into account CSDP actors who are embedded in EU institutions (*micro* level of analysis) while European (British, Croatian, Italian, Lithuanian, etc.) military and diplomatic personnel interact in Brussels on a daily basis^{vii} and have done so since 2001. Far away from Brussels, intergovernmentalists and institutionalists claim that CSDP actors do not matter, but do not provide any empirical evidence for such an assertion. Moreover, they focus on interest

and institutionalist variables to explain the CSDP governance rather than on ideational ones.

This article uses primary sources to suggest a constructivist argument: social representations of decision-makers matter.^{viii} The CSDP is less the product of a bargaining process between national interests or a set of EU institutions than it is a social field in which CSDP actors share national and transnational social representations.^{ix} These social representations form what can be called a “strategic culture.”^x This strategic culture that CSDP actors share is shaped in three political areas or worlds of socialization, with three distinct kinds of allegiance visible: the nation, the bureaucratic functionality, and EU institutions. This paper is based on a questionnaire of closed questions and on a set of semi-structured interviews, which investigated networks and social representations of CSDP actors in France, Germany, the United Kingdom (which are the three main military players in Europe), and in EU institutions.

The aim of this article is to go beyond the outdated nation/Europe dialectic and articulate the three worlds of CSDP actors’ socialization that structure the field of European security. This paper contributes to international relations theory by offering a sociological perspective on European integration that is based on Bourdieu’s work.^{xi} It is also useful to those seeking to understand the new EU Global Strategy on foreign policies and security defined in 2016.^{xii} The article is divided into four main sections: (i) setting out the status quo, (ii) the theoretical framework, (iii) the research design, and (iv) a discussion of the results.

Realist and Constructivist Perspectives on EU Strategic Culture

From the literature on EU strategic culture emerges a theoretical debate between realists and constructivists on the question of convergence of national strategic cultures. Realists observe a persistent divergence of national strategic cultures between the great powers interests in

Europe.^{xiii} The most important actors are France and the United Kingdom,^{xiv} as well as Germany and Italy.^{xv} EU institutions, especially the supranational ones such as the European Commission, the European Parliament (EP) and the Court of Justice of the EU, have a marginal role in the convergence of national strategic cultures. In the spirit of the Concert of Europe that resulted from the Congress of Vienna in 1815, the realist school suggests that only cooperation between the great powers is possible.^{xvi}

Constructivists also demonstrate the persistence of the national cleavage: the social representations of German CSDP actors are not equal to those of French, British, or Italian CSDP officials.^{xvii} Based on empirical research conducted within the EU institutions, constructivists argue that a gradual convergence of national strategic cultures towards a European strategic culture is at work. This is explained by processes of functional (military vs. diplomats vs. security professionals) and institutional socializations (national vs. EU institutions; EU intergovernmental vs. EU supranational institutions). They demonstrate that a slow but undeniable convergence of national strategic cultures is under way. However, they face difficulties in understanding, characterizing, and explaining the convergence process.^{xviii} There is a lack of results from empirical studies to confirm or deny the convergence process in discussion. “Does the PSC [Political and Security Committee] contribute to the convergence of strategic cultures between Member States? We cannot answer that question with a high degree of certainty given the nature of empirical data.”^{xix} This preliminary finding calls for further theoretical debate in order to find new empirical evidence.^{xx}

A Sociological Approach to EU Strategic Culture

This paper aims to fill some of the gaps left by constructivist works on the emergence of an EU

strategic culture with a sociological approach^{xxi} as a link between scholars who use “strategic constructivism”^{xxii} in EU studies and those who develop a “theory of practice”^{xxiii} in international relations theories. This theoretical sociological framework is based on three notions: the social field, the strategic culture and the socialization process.

A social field is a social microcosm in which actors struggle to keep or to obtain a type of power (economic, European, military, political, symbolic, etc.).^{xxiv} More precisely, a social field is “a hierarchical space of social relations centred on a specific stake, such as politics (for example, winning the elections), business (dominating one’s competitors), or culture (being in vogue).”^{xxv} The CSDP field is a relatively autonomous space where national and EU actors (diplomats, civil servants, lobbyists, military, politicians) engage, with different levels of resources to influence CSDP policy-making. According to Kauppi, the main issue is “to understand the formation of a distinct European field of political action.”^{xxvi} In the CSDP field, this refers to the convergence of national strategic cultures.

On December 3–4, 1998, France and the United Kingdom signed the Saint-Malo declaration, creating the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). In 2001, the Treaty of Nice institutionalized the ESDP by providing it with three structures unique to defence: the Political and Security Committee (PSC), the Military Committee (EUMC), and the EU Military Staff (EUMS). In 2003, the EU launched its first peacekeeping mission (Operation Concordia in Macedonia). With the Treaty of Lisbon in 2009, the ESDP became the CSDP, and in 2015, the EU undertook its 32th mission (EUTM RCA in the Central African Republic). This suggests that “this all-out institutionalisation of ESDP began to produce effects of military socialisation analysed by some authors in terms of Europeanisation and acquisition of a common strategic culture.”^{xxvii}

A “strategic culture” is generally defined as a “consistent and persistent set of ideas, specific to a given socio-historical context, on the use of armed forces and the role of military institutions, and which is shared by a community.”^{xxviii} The concepts of ideas, norms or social representations are associated with constructivist language. Nevertheless, the concept of social representation is preferred because it is characterized by a “unique kind”^{xxix} to analyse how actors see, think, and represent the (political) world in practice.^{xxx} The EU strategic culture is operationalized by four dimensions: (i) the political arena for strategic cooperation (from the transatlantic alliance through NATO to European cooperation through the CSDP); (ii) the attachment to sovereignty (the inertia level of Europeanisation of national security and defence policies (NSDP)); (iii) goals of the military power (from the defence of European territory to the deployment of forces beyond the borders of Europe); and (iv) policy instruments (from military to civilian tools). The first two dimensions test the European integration of the NSDP. The second two dimensions identify the EU’s use of military power.^{xxxi}

Socialization is a process referring to the social construction of actors’ behaviours and their social representations through different mechanisms at different period of their lives. This article focuses on secondary socialization processes from three mechanisms, or more precisely three practices.^{xxxii} national, functional, and institutional. National socialization assumes that CSDP actors’ social representations are shaped by their nationality,^{xxxiii} while functional socialization presumes that the social representations of CSDP actors’ are the product of the actors’ function in their work activities.^{xxxiv} Lastly, institutional socialization assumes that CSDP actors’ social representations are a product of the institution in which they operate.^{xxxv}

Three Worlds of Socialization and Two Military Cooperation Areas

This sociological approach focuses on the analysis of CSDP actors' social representations from the case study of military cooperation areas (dimension 1 of the EU strategic culture), and during a period of security crises (2008–2014). Two research questions are asked in sociological jargon: (1) What were CSDP actors' social representations on military cooperation areas between 2008 and 2014? (2) How did national, functional, and institutional socialization processes shape the emergence of the EU strategic culture? The paper shows that (1) CSDP actors had sharply state-centric social representations of defence and security issues. Nevertheless, the European security field was not only structured by the national cleavage between states, and especially between great powers in Europe, but also by transnational political cleavages. As regards military cooperation areas between 2008 (the Russo-Georgian conflict) and 2014 (the Russo-Ukrainian conflict), CSDP actors shared a set of social representations in favour of European military cooperation area through the CSDP rather than transatlantic cooperation through NATO. Their social representations were not reducible to their national preferences and suggest the emergence of an EU strategic culture, though in an unstable European security context. Between the Russo-Georgian and the Russo-Ukrainian conflicts, North Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean were destabilized from 2010 to 2011 by the so-called "Arab Spring." (2) This EU strategic culture was shaped within three areas or worlds of socialization, one national (the nation) and two transnational (bureaucratic functionality and EU institutions). CSDP actors' social representations of military cooperation areas were not only a national socialization process effect but also the product of transnational functional and institutional socialization mechanisms.

This paper is mainly based on a questionnaire of closed questions, carried out between 2008 and 2010,^{xxxvi} which investigated networks and social representations of forty-seven

CSDP actors in France, Germany, the United Kingdom (arguably the three main military players in Europe), and in EU institutions. This figure (forty-seven) is lower than the level (one hundred) from which it is theoretically accepted to calculate percentages.^{xxxvii} However, given the purely qualitative and interpretative ambition of this research, it does not seem incongruous to compute statistics on a small number of actors. Furthermore, these forty-seven odds have not been randomly picked up but chosen by three criteria: one deductive (*positional* criterion) and two inductive (*participative* and *reputational* criteria).^{xxxviii} Firstly, I checked the organizational chart of government department or interest group interested in security policy in the EU (Brussels), France, Germany, and the UK (*positional* criterion). Secondly, I did an in-depth study of CSDP-related meetings and summits in order to extract actors who took a stand on CSDP issues (*participative criterion*). Thirdly, I submitted the resulting list containing several hundred actors to a small group of CSDP experts, who added key actors they thought were missing, but also subtracted those they thought were too marginal to CSDP debates (*reputational criterion*).^{xxxix}

Data analysis was conducted using Excel and SPSS. In this article, I only use the section of the questionnaire on social representations (table 1 and appendices 1 and 2). A second survey, also qualitative, was conducted between 2012 and 2014, with sixteen semi-structured interviews with other CSDP decision-makers in Brussels. I conducted this additional survey to check if there was an evolution of the CSDP actors' beliefs after the Lisbon Treaty came into force in 2009. The main result of this fieldwork is that there was a consistency in CSDP actors' social representations before and after Lisbon.

Table 1. Sample distribution of the forty-seven CSDP actors' social representations with respect to three socialization worlds: the nation, bureaucratic functionality, and institution

Socialization World	Variety	Absolute values	Proportion
Nation	French	7	15%
	German	18	38%
	British	15	32%
	'Other' Europeans	6	13%
	Non-Europeans	1	2%
Total		47	100%
Bureaucratic Functionality	Diplomats	17	36%
	Military	9	20%
	Politicians	9	20%
	Civil servants	4	8%
	Academics	4	8%
	Lobbyists	4	8%
Total		47	100%
Institution	National institutions	26	55%
	EU institutions	13	28%
	Non-governmental institutions	8	17%
Total		47	100%

European Cooperation Rather Than Transatlantic Alliance

As regards military cooperation areas between 2008 and 2014, an overview of the questionnaire

results shows that (1) CSDP actors were more likely to choose European cooperation (CSDP) over the transatlantic alliance (NATO), and (2) the effectiveness of the three worlds of socialization. Social representations of CSDP actors were shaped by their national affiliations but also by their transnational functional and institutional allegiances.^{x1}

Overall, the area of strategic cooperation which CSDP actors were most likely to choose is national (68%) (table 2). Nevertheless, the actors preferred European cooperation through the CSDP (21%), compared to transatlantic cooperation through NATO (11%).

Table 2. Overall results of CSDP actors' social representations with respect to military cooperation areas

		Absolute values	Proportion
Areas of military cooperation	Nation	32	68%
	European cooperation (CSDP)	10	21%
	Transatlantic cooperation (NATO)	5	11%
Total		47	100%

This trend is confirmed by the answers to the question on relations between the EU and NATO. Actors were more than 80% likely to say that EU had complete autonomy (15%) or most (67%). Concerning decision-making in relation to NATO, 83% of the actors said that the EU had autonomy, either complete (15%) or limited (67%), while only 5% thought otherwise. In addition, two thirds of actors (67%) believed that the EU should develop integrated military structures. Some wish for this to happen regardless (27%), others provided that there was no duplication with NATO structures (50%).

The National World of State Socialization

While most of CSDP actors questioned seemed to prefer the European area of strategic cooperation rather than the transatlantic one, the national level of analysis specifies preferences of actors based on their nationality. According to the above-mentioned questionnaire, French and German officials preferred, to different degrees, European cooperation more than British actors did between the 2000s and the 2010s. National differences observed between the CSDP actors validate the significance of national cleavage as strongly structuring the European security field.

60% of German actors believed that decisions should be taken by the state. Of the remaining 40%, an overwhelming majority (83%) preferred the EU to NATO. This preference for European cooperation was confirmed by the relationship between the EU and NATO. A large majority of German officials (94%) would prefer for the EU to get a complete (12%) or a limited (82%) political autonomy from NATO. As for the European integration of military structures, German respondents unanimously approved; three quarters (73%) wanted the integration of structures, but without duplication of NATO structures, and one quarter (27%) of respondents wanted it regardless.

The results for British actors are completely different. None of them believed that the EU should take decisions relating to security policy and defence. 80% responded that the state should do so, and 20% that NATO should be in charge. Concerning the relationship between the EU and NATO, a majority (60%) believed that the EU was autonomous from NATO, even if these two institutions should strive to work together. Nevertheless, 20% of them thought that NATO remained the main security organisation in Europe, and another 20% believed that

NATO was the only security organisation in Europe. 60% of the British respondents were also against integrated European military structures. The rest were divided between those who were against the integrated structures unless NATO agrees (20%), and those who would accept the structures only if there was no duplication of NATO structures (20%).

French CSDP officials were set between their British and German counterparts. Of the French respondents, almost three-quarters believed that decisions should be made by the state (71%), and more than a quarter (29%) thought that decisions should be made by the EU. None of the respondents considered it the role of NATO. French respondents unanimously answered that the EU was autonomous from NATO. 57% considered the autonomy to be limited, and 43% that the EU was completely autonomous from NATO. Moreover, all French actors endorsed the creation of an integrated European military structure: three quarters wanted full integration (71%), and almost one third of the respondents answered that they wanted the integration but without duplication of existing NATO structures (29%).

The Transnational World of Functional Socialization

A functional analysis can specify the CSDP actors' level of commitment to the EU as an area of strategic cooperation, in relation to their professional position. Civil servants and academics spoke out strongly in favour of European cooperation, followed by diplomats, members of lobby groups or firms, and then the military for the period 2008–2014. Politicians belonged to the professional group which identified itself the least with the idea of European cooperation. Functional differences observed among the CSDP actors supported the hypothesis of a functional socialization: that the CSDP field was not limited to a national structure. A transnational functional cleavage completed the national allegiance of CSDP actors.

Civil servants represented the professional group that declared itself the most in favour of the EU as an area of strategic cooperation. Half of the respondents believed that decisions should be made by the state, whereas the other half believed that the EU should make them. None considered it to be the role of NATO. All civil servants responded that the EU's decision-making is autonomous from NATO — 75% considered this to be restricted autonomy and 25% considered the EU's autonomy to be absolute. They unanimously approved the creation of integrated European military structures: half of the respondents were fully supported these structures, and the other half supported this but without duplication of NATO structures.

This support for the European cooperation social representation was also found among diplomats. Over three quarters (77%) of diplomats surveyed believed that decisions should be made by the state. In the remaining quarter, they were twice as likely to choose the EU (15%) as NATO (8%). Over 85% of diplomats believed that the EU is autonomous in relation to NATO. Nearly one fifth (16%) of diplomats estimated it to be complete, and over two thirds (69%) considered it to be restricted. Almost three fifth (58%) also endorsed the concept of integrated European military structures: one third did so unconditionally (33%) and one fourth (25%) on the condition that there was no duplication of NATO structures.

The respondents from the military likewise favoured European over transatlantic cooperation. More than eight in ten (86%) said that decisions should be made by the state. But the remaining 14% chose the EU. None of the respondents answered that NATO should make the decisions. Furthermore, nine in ten (87.5%) said that the EU was completely (37.5%) or partially (50%) autonomous from NATO. In addition, three in four (75%) were in favour of the creation of integrated European military structures: 25% were unconditionally in favour and 50% were in favour, but without duplication of NATO structures.

The positions of politicians were more balanced. 37.5% believed that decisions should be made by the EU and 37.5% that decisions should be made by NATO. 75% of politicians replied that the EU was autonomous from NATO, even if these two organizations must work together. 75% endorsed the development of integrated European military structures: 62.5% did so but without duplication of NATO structures, and 12.5% did so unconditionally.

Finally, all the academics believed that decisions should be made by the state, and they were unanimously in favour of European integration of military structures. In addition, three quarters (75%) of academics believed that the EU was independent of NATO, even if both institutions were encouraged to work together.

The Transnational World of EU Institutional Socialization

Between the Russo-Georgian and the Russo-Ukrainian crises, the CSDP actors from national, European, intergovernmental, and supranational institutions believed in the social representation of a European strategic cooperation rather than a transatlantic one. However, the degree of CSDP actors' commitment varied in this period of time, depending on the institutional bond. The significance of the divide between workers belonging to the CSDP national institutions and those working within the EU institutions confirmed the divide between the CSDP officers attached to the EU intergovernmental institutions (Council, EDA) and those belonging to the EU supranational institutions (Commission, EP) structured the European security field to a lesser extent.

When asked by whom decisions should be made in the CSDP, most EU actors (85%) as well as national officers (68%) largely answered “the state.” The remaining 15% of European officials favoured the EU. Among the last third of the national staff, 16% favoured the EU and

16% NATO. Regarding EU/NATO relations, EU officials unanimously affirmed the EU's autonomy in decision-making, either limited (78%) or total (22%). Nearly three quarters (74%) of domestic actors came to the same conclusion. However, they were twice as low (11%) as their European counterparts (22%) in saying that the EU had complete autonomy from NATO. The finding that the European CSDP actors were more likely to support European strategic cooperation over the national ones is confirmed by the following data. Nearly nine out of ten European actors (88%) believed that the EU should develop its integrated military structures, while among national staff only two out of three expressed this position (67%). A majority of European actors of the CSDP (54%) were unconditionally in favour of this military integration, and one third was in favour of such integration, but only without duplication of NATO structures (33%). Among domestic actors only one tenth (11%) were in favour of unconditional military integration. More than half (56%) were in favour of it if there was no duplication of NATO structures. In summary, all actors were in favour of European cooperation through the CSDP, but in different proportions; the EU actors were more strongly in favour than domestic actors.

Validation of a cleavage between the 'Europeans' and the 'nationals' confirms the assumption of institutional socialization. What about the second institutional divide?

The EU intergovernmental and supranational actors strongly shared the social representation of European cooperation as the most relevant military cooperation area, however the latter more so than the former. For a very large majority of actors belonging to an EU supranational organization (80%), decisions on security and defence issues should be made by the EU. Officials working in the EU intergovernmental institutions were four times less likely to think so (20%). No actor part of the EU supranational or intergovernmental organizations responded

that NATO should make such decisions. Social representations of intergovernmental and supranational CSDP actors converged more on EU/NATO relations and integrated European structures. The EU officials, embedded in intergovernmental and supranational organisations, were unanimously in favour of autonomy for the EU in its relations with NATO. More intergovernmental actors (25%) than supranational actors (20%) thought that the EU was completely independent of NATO. However, 75% of intergovernmental actors and 80% of supranational actors saw it as partial. The creation of integrated European military structures was an idea endorsed by three out of four (75%) intergovernmental actors. Half did so unconditionally, and 25% on the condition that there was no duplication of NATO structures. Supranational actors supported the integration of military structures unanimously: 60% unconditionally, and 40% if there was no duplication of NATO structures.

Varieties of Political Allegiances in the EU

In conclusion, this article puts forth two main findings that contribute to the CSDP studies, based on primary sources from fieldwork in Berlin, Brussels, London, and Paris.

First, CSDP actors adhered to their own social representations which could not be exclusively explained by their national preferences. Taking the case study of military cooperation areas for the period 2008–2014, CSDP actors chose the European area (CSDP) rather than the transatlantic one (NATO). The symbolic use of Article 42.3 of the Treaty of the European Union rather than NATO's Article 5 by the French Minister of Defence Jean-Yves Le Drian, after the ISIS terrorist attack in Paris in November 2015, can be seen as a recent practical example of this. This result is consistent with research that demonstrates the emergence of a common strategic culture.^{xli} It should be confirmed by the analysis of the three

other dimensions of the EU strategic culture.^{xlii}

Second, CSDP actors' social representations were shaped within three worlds of socialization between the Russo-Georgian conflict and the Russo-Ukrainian crisis: one national (the nation), and two transnational (the profession and EU institutions). To put it differently, CSDP actors had not one allegiance, either national or European — even in these military issues which are closed linked to national sovereignty — but varieties of political allegiances; their national preferences, the function which they hold, *and* the institution where they work. As a result, these three worlds of socialization structured the European security field around national *and* transnational cleavages between the 2000s and the 2010s.

Conclusion

I have demonstrated that the EU strategic culture has been reinforced during the last decade in spite of a destabilized security context on the borders of Europe (Russo-Georgian conflict in 2008, “Arab Spring” in 2011, Russo-Ukrainian crisis in 2014). This time of political uncertainty is not over, but still shapes the EU. Inside the EU, the eurozone's reform,^{xliii} a more effective cooperation between states to fight ISIS against terrorist attacks,^{xliv} and the implementation of “Brexit”^{xlv} present major challenges, especially in light of the 2017 elections in Germany and France. On the EU's borders, the migration flow resulting from conflicts in Syria, Yemen, and Libya, which is not likely to end in the near future, is a disturbing symptom of the Schengen crisis.^{xlvi} Outside the EU, the American foreign policy shaped by President Donald J. Trump casts further doubt on the future of European security.^{xlvii}

In this time of political turmoil, I hope that this constructivist and sociological analysis is a more practical tool to follow the next political developments of the CSDP than the outdated

nation/Europe dialectic. Taking seriously the power of ideas and linking together these three socialization worlds of CSDP actors can be useful to understand the future of CSDP governance and political outcomes, of both further EU integration or disintegration.

Appendices

Appendix 1. Sample distribution of the forty-seven CSDP actors with respect to age

	Absolute values	Proportion
Male	44	94%
Female	3	6%
Total	47	100

Appendix 2. Sample distribution of the forty-seven CSDP actors with respect to gender

	Absolute values	Proportion
35 and under	7	15%
36-45	10	21%
46-55	10	21%
56 and older	6	13%
Non respondents	14	30%
Total	47	100

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