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**Looking at European Security and Defence Policy with a historical
sociological lens :**

The case of the French-German military cooperation in the sociogenesis of ESDP

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DRAFT version (please do not quote without asking the author)

Our communication is based on our doctoral research (defended in December 2008) and deals with the building of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) from the beginning of the 1990's, and more precisely from the French-British turn in Saint-Malo in December 1998, and then its Europeanization at the Cologne Summit in June 1999. These decisions launched the development of a European capacity of defence “when NATO as a whole is not engaged”. We particularly focus on the French-German military cooperation trying to identify the social and political processes and networks underlying the building of a “Europe of Defence” since the 1990's. Our enquiry field is mostly based on qualitative interviews (over 135) in Paris, Berlin and Brussels with French and German officers, diplomats and political actors dealing daily with this subject.

Our analytical claim is to investigate the potentialities of historical sociology in the study of such sectors of the European integration, and to show that it enables us to understand and explain a lot of the challenges and blockades encountered by the European Defence Policy. Here our use of constructivism is not a use as a theory as such, but much more as both a toolbox and methodology as we will show it below. We rely on this conception of constructivism as it is exposed both by Christiansen (Christiansen et al., 1999) and by the reflective article from Steven Smith (Smith, 1999).

Therefore we propose first of all a brief overview of the recent use of historical sociology in the study of European integrations Then we present our method and specific constructivists tools used in studying the European Defence Policy. At least we will decline our central variable –socializing processes- in looking at our object.

Historical sociology and European studies : a stimulating research agenda

The use of historical sociology in European studies seems to be a frame of analysis of growing interest both in the field of European studies. In a very recent issue of the French academic journal *Politique Européenne* (2006), Yves Déloye underlines the fact that the main stream approaches to European integration often lack a crucial element of the process: its historicity, that is: the fact that European integration have deep roots and that the re-investigating the history of the European construction from its historical roots may help us understand how it has been set up and why it functions today has it does, with its strengths and limits (Déloye, 2006, 5). Thus the argument is that it is of high importance to take a serious look at “historical latencies and resiliencies showing today in Europe” (Déloye, 2006, 6)¹. The aim of historical sociology in studying sectors of European integration is to take into account the extent to which social, cultural and political factors structured in time tend to facilitate or hinder the development of the EU. Historical sociologists consider European integration as a set of interlocked social processes rooted in European history which tend to transform it from a differentiated manner linked with the historical trajectories of each member state (Marks, 1997, 39). They try to analyse from a comparative point of view, and following a historical continuum, the power configurations experiences in Europe so as to underline the specificity of the EU as a historical configuration taking place in a time and space which have an influence on its development and representation. The key author here is Norbert Elias : he defines a configuration as a concrete situation of interdependence between the individuals or the states (Elias, 1991a, 158). The flexibility of the concept enables to use it either at a micro level (individual) or at a macro level (states, world system, social structure...).

Elias has been “rediscovered” as a very interesting author both in the field of international relations and European studies, particularly looking at the question of the global aim of European integration : does this lead the EU to a political community in the end, with an own and unique government ? The perspective had already been raised by the founding fathers and echoed by the neo-functionalists authors, among them Ernst Haas. In the neo-

¹ The exact citation in French is : « Prendre très vite au sérieux les latences et résiliences historiques qui se manifestent aujourd’hui publiquement [...] en Europe. »

functionalist perspective², “regional integration [is] expected to occur societal actors, in calculating their interests, decided to rely on the supranational institutions rather than their own governments to realize their demands. These institutions, in turn, would enjoy increasing authority and legitimacy as they become the sources of policies meeting the demands of societal actors.” (Haas, 2001, 23) This phenomenon is the famous “spill over effect”: in Haas’s view, activities associated with sectors initially integrated would spill over into more and more sectors not yet Europeanised, so that in the end European integration should lead to a wide political community in Europe. Historical sociology can raise the question in a different way relying on Elias’s *Civilizing Process: State formation and Civilization* (Elias, 1975)³: European integration should pursue the process of power concentration already at stake in the civilizing process of the West (Cohen, 2006, 124). And this hypothesis seems interesting to us on a twofold level: first, it leads us to understand the nation-states as competing arenas representing a determined level of power monopolisation rather than a fully realized figure (Devin, 1995, 315) ; second, from a methodological point of view and as we will come back to it below, it leads us to mix to levels of analysis: the macro level of member states and the micro level of actors. Thus we can assert that historical sociology provides an interesting research agenda in the field of European studies and will try to show some highlights here.

European Defence, constructivism and historical sociology: what is our analytical and methodological claim ?

The object “European defence” has been quite a lot studied with tools coming from the international relations theory and opposing two extreme poles (realist tools versus constructivists tools à la Alexander Wendt) and has also been treated in the field of the European studies through an institutionalist perspective. But these perspectives, though interesting, still lack an analytical dimension taking into account the status of the emerging actors of this particular type of intergovernmental public policy. The international theorists tend to consider ESDP in its globality and assess it in quite strategic terms. The rational

² Neo-functionalism has been named after the functionalist stream whose figurehead was David Mitrany. Mitrany schematically presumed that specialized agencies composed of experts would progressively take over the administration of international affairs because they would respond to specific functions that the representatives of national governments cannot good fulfil, to the extent that national representatives are guided by national and personal interest far more than by general interest. Neo-functionalism derived from functionalism the notion of “functional spill over”.

³ In French, *La dynamique de l'Occident*.

choice institutionalists focus on the actors calculus of benefits and disadvantages in ESDP, while the sociological insitutionalists concentrate on norms and values embedded in the institutions making ESDP.

Since the beginning of the 2000's, constructivist analysis of European Foreign Policy (CFSP) and European Defence Policy (which is actually the militarised side of CFSP) have started to be investigated (Just to give some examples : Smith, 2003; Howorth, 2002). The study of social representations and ideas constitutes a new trend in the study of ESDP for 3-4 years (Irondelle, 2003 ; Mérand, 2003a and b, 2006; Pajon, 2006; Bagayoko-Penone, 2006). Here we rely on constructivist analytical tools but without intending to develop a "pure" constructivist conception of our object. Our central variable is socialization but what we understand there under this concept is not only the process of identity formation but also an historical dimension.

Our methodology is based on qualitative interviews, whose aim is both to help reveal the representations and practices of the actors of the French-German military cooperation in their daily practices in the field of European Defence Policy. Thus in a constructivist perspective, we have a particular focus on the discourses of the actors and consider this discourses as ways of constructing the European Defence Policy. And this construction is in our view to be put in an historical dimension. Our starting point is to consider ESDP as a social construct, shaped by the socialization of its actors institutionalised through time. We will decline central concept derived from constructivist analysis into three highlights below.

Socialization processes as a central variable

Let's come back to our central thesis. Our research aims at analysing the sociogenesis of the European Defence Policy from the point of view of its most warmly committed actors: the French and German politico-military actors (diplomats, military officers, political leaders). Our field inquiry leads us to formulate one major hypothesis: when we look at the question "how and, much more, why to build a European Defence Policy", the answer isn't clear at first sight; our enquiry shows that the latent functions of a European Defence may actually outperform its manifest functions. To put it clearly: one builds a European Defence Policy not because Europe is threatened, but because of both a long term political project and the highly sensitive question of autonomy regarding the American partner. Thus European Defence Policy constitutes both a social and symbolic construction. And here the constructivists tools can helps us understand and explain this in our global historical sociological approach.

We'll here focus on three main issues : the process of constitution of a specific field of European integration launched by the French and the Germans since the Maastricht negotiations in 1991 ; a slightly different interpretation of the project of European Defence both in France and Germany (macro level of analysis) ; a slightly different interpretation of the project even intern in both counties between officers and diplomats (micro/meso level of analysis).

➤ **The question of constitution of a specific field of Defence in the European construction**

This leads us to use the field theory of Bourdieu. The question is not so much: who are the actors dealing with European Defence, as who constructs these actors and how ?⁴ This leads us to take into account the context in which the institutionalisation of the European Defence Policy takes place and the inheritance of the prior attempts, that is the European Defence Community in the 1950's and the Western European Union thereafter. Here both these antecedents were based on negotiations lead by political leaders and diplomats. The military officers here rather divided about the question of a European Defence Community in the 1950's, both in France and later in Germany. And their doubts on the significance of such a defence project was alimented by the existence of the Atlantic Alliance which constituted both a dialog forum with the USA and a mighty shield against the Warsaw Pact. And today, even if the officers of both nations, but most of all French officers, strongly support the European defence Policy, it is still a political diplomats-lead project. The best proof is the failure in the attempt to build a formal Council of the Defence Ministers in the EU in the end of the 1990's, as it already exists for the Foreign Ministers of the member-states (GAERC). This point here is important to understand the third question we will raise below of internal diverging representations of the European defence project between officers and diplomats.

But why do we talk of field here ? The novelty of the European Defence Policy when comparing to the former projects is its search for permanence. Indeed three organs have been created to make ESDP work :a Political and Security Comity (ambassadors from the member states), a Military Comity (military representatives of the member-states) and a Military Staff working for the EU High Representative, that is with Catherine Ashton (EU's voice and face

⁴ Here the way of questioning our object is partly inspired by two books: Dubois, V., Dulong, D. (1997), *La question technocratique – De l'invention d'une figure aux transformations de l'action publique*, Actes du colloque de l'IEP de Strasbourg des 13-14 novembre 1997, Paris, Coll. « Sociologie politique européenne », and Goergakakis, D. (2002), *Les métiers de l'Europe politique. Acteurs et professionnalisation de l'Europe politique*, Strasbourg, Presses Universitaires de Strasbourg, Coll. « Sociologie politique européenne ».

in the world). A new European External Affairs Service as been added to these organs by the Lisbon Treaty and tends to facilitate the job between the Council and the Commission cultures in this area. That's why we rely on the concept of field here. The European Defence Policy consists in a rationalization process of creating a specific field in the frame of the European construction. This field owns its own logics, concurrences and increases the social capital of its members. Here we define the social capital as the ensemble of actual of potential resources linked with the possession of a durable network of social relations [Bourdieu, 1980]. What is the interest of the field theory in our research case, and how id we come to it ? We start here from a conception of the rely partly state as the outcome of a process of concentration of various forms of capital around diverse fields of power. And foreign and defence policy takes place in this specific configuration in which officers, diplomats and political leaders evolve and negotiate compromises on the European level. These actors are placed into specific positions in the field of policy-making both on a domestic (Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defence, Elysee, Chancellery) and a European (Political and Security Comity, EU Military Comity, EU Military Staff, General Directions VII and XIX of the EU Council), positions which tend to influence their action in the ESDP policy-making. Moreover, the structuring of the specific field of European Defence Policy is largely determined by the way of distribution of the social capital To put it simply: constraints weighing on the actors engaged in ESDP, both at a national and European level, varies in function of their way in the policy-making process in this sector. Diplomats hold here a higher social capital and taking history into account helps us understand why. Diplomatic actors where from the beginning of the European adventure the very actors dedicated to the development of the European Community, and then European Union. They have grown in the integration process and have become experts. It is very different for officers who entered the European construction only in 2001 and found themselves for the very first time working in a total civil organisation. Their social capital is actually more limited that the one of the diplomats: it was until 2001 restricted to a "military capital". This introduction of military in the EU raises lots of sociological questions, among which the question of carrier potentialities. In the representation of the military officers that we interviewed in Brussels, mostly French ones, the occupancy of a position n the Military Comity or the Military Staff in Brussels clearly seems to constitute a good way of increasing their social capital and extending their networks to gain a high position when they come back to their country. What bring constructivist tools in this part ? Constructivist tools, that is the analysis of discourses and ideas held by the French and German actors that we interrogated help us

analyse the European Defence Policy as a social construction: the actors rely on a common vocabulary and new wannabe converging work methods in Brussels. This common set of concepts (for exemple: European Security Strategy, Battle Group Concept, ...) gives a discursive reality to European defence, although we have to look thoroughly at the discourses to grab behind the words and see how much the national and professional socializing process weigh, as we will show it in the next to sections of this text.

We propose to speak of a “field” here because of the socializing process taking place in the three new organs created for ESDP in Brussels. Before ESDP, the decision-making process used exclusively bilateral formats in the sector of military cooperation. With ESDP, the decision-making process takes now place between the actors located in the capital and the permanent delegates of the states and the European actors in Brussels, who share a way of negotiating compromises and solution. Just to give an example, the negotiations around the Berlin Plus agreements in 2002⁵ has been largely lead by the team of the General Secretariat of Ciuncil around Solana and not as directly as before by the national governments. The EU autonomous military operation in Congo in summer 2006 was politically assumed by the diplomatic actors of the Political and Security Comity in Brussels, although the troops stay in the hand of the nation-states. We share with Kenneth Glarbo the assumption that “social interaction is emerging as the natural historical product of day-to-day practices of political cooperation. Diplomats and national diplomacies have internalise, in particular, the formal requirements of a Common Security and Foreign Policy” (Glarbo, 199, 649-650). We thus import from constructivism its concept of socialization. But if socializing processes helps us understand the development of a European Defence field, the concept is also interesting to clarify the still quite diverging interpretations of the European Defence project by the French and German actors, both on macro and micro level.

➤ **One European Defence Policy or several ?**

We're trying to propose a slightly different perspective⁶ as those proposed in classical rationalist approaches by taking into account he socializing processes of the actors so as to understand their positions in ESDP (in favour of or against), the way they analyse the

⁵ These agreement enable the EU to use the common planning means of NATO to led an EU military operation. It is for instance the case of the EU operation Althea right now in Bosnia.

⁶ There're actually very few works using this kind of sociological perspective on security questions in the EU. Frederic Merand, a Canadian professor, works on a converging perspective but more focusing on social representations in a constructivist way.

construction of ESDP and the social capital they mobilize in the negotiations with their European partners. Our interviews showed that between France and Germany, there is a slightly different representation of ESDP⁷.

Schematically, the European Defence Policy represents a means of counter-weighting the American unilateralism in the French diplomats and officers' representation. It is a opportunity of creating a European leadership pole in defence matters and thus bring the EU integration process further towards a global political entity in the long term. What is at stake is not so much to compete with the Atlantic Alliance than to reach a real autonomy for the European defence, so as to enable EU to intervene in the world as a global actor, mostly when American interests do not incite the Americans to act (as in the Balkans in the 1990's). That is why the French actors push forward in favour a the creation of European planning and military structures.

ESDP seen by the German diplomats, officers and political leaders seems more seen as a way of regaining a status of normality for Germany and enable the Federal Republic to assume its international engagements in security matters. But every single discourse –both official and informal- underlines the vital necessity to stay clearly in good standing and terms with NATO. The discourse that we most frequently obtained from German politico-military actors is in substance : enforce the European Defence Policy will enable the Europeans to become attractive in the eyes of the American partner and to show Washington that we are reliable partners.

But the most diverging questions between the French and German actors dealing with ESDP are the question of the relationship between EU and NATO, and the question of military operations. French politico-military actors tend o advocate a strict differentiation between the EU and NATO, arguing that NATO is a strictly military organization, whereas German actors tend to be much more favourable to a more political dimension of the Alliance and a division of labor between the EU and NATO in defence and security matters. Concerning EU military operations, the French actors tend to be very pushing for these operations, whereas the German actors show still reluctance for operations other than humanitarian or peace support. The big difference between them is the question of the use of force. “ESDP is a shay focal point that brings together different political representations of the role of a state in international security” (Mérand, 2006, 136).

⁷ The validity of our results is to be reported to our research design, and our interviews have been completed by the reading of specialized litterature. We of course can't pretend to generalization of the representation of the whole military and diplomatic corpses both in France and Germany.

Here again, what is the use of constructivist tools ? Studying the actors discourses shows that they actually construct their interests and representations concerning the European Defence Policy still very nationally. There is not yet a common European strategic culture, nor a common reflex of thinking European at once. The concept of socialization helps us again to understand the shift in the French and German representations of ESDP. Moreover this focus on socialization leads us to investigate the weight of history appearing in path dependent reflexes. The slightly different representation of European Defence in France and Germany takes its all significance when we look at the actors discourses. These discourses show a very pregnant national habitus (Elias, 1991a) : the national context of socialization plays a string role on the representation of the European Defence. For instance, this major claim for autonomy on the French side can be explained by the strong Gaullist tradition in French foreign policy aiming at constituting a European pole as a power multiplier for France so as to weigh on the worlds affairs. This deep rooted in history national representation of French position has two main consequences in defence and European matters: an expeditionary tradition (the French army can be sent very soon everywhere in the world and the President is the ultimate decision-taker) and a rather intergovernmentalist aspiration for the European project, so that the French government can keep ownership of its decisions. On the contrary, Germany has long been deprived of its sovereignty and of an own foreign policy because of history (Nazi traumatism and occupation of the country by the allied powers). The consequences are : a weak military culture correlated with a string role of the Bundestag when it comes to military operation and a reserve culture; a projection in the European global project inspired by more federalists claim. The German position is much more integrationist than the French one. Thus one understands why it is so difficult to bring European defence forward in a EU at 27 when there are already divergences and strong national habitus incarnated in actors coming from two countries so used to exchanging their views and trying to harmonize them as France and Germany.

The politico-military actors embody these national habitus which also irrigate the decision-making bodies on the national level. And they bring with them to Brussels a large part of these habitus, even if there are incremental learning processes developed through day-to-day interactions with other national actors. But the core of their national habitus seems always pregnant and show in still highly national analysis of security interest, as the actors interrogated both in Paris and Berlin themselves acknowledge. Put shortly: for the French, ESDP must lead to a European defence, whereas for the German it's just an aim at further

European integration. These positions are consistent with “cultures of national security” (Katzenstein, 1997).

But another major advantage of using the constructivist tool of socialization is to have a close look at another kind of socializing process weighing on the actors’ representations: their professional identity.

➤ **Officers and diplomats: two professions, two representations of European Defence ?**

An other crucial element influencing both their action and representation in the frame of ESDP is their professional socialization. Our enquiry in Paris, Berlin and Brussels shows a difference into French and German actors’ representations and practices of ESDP, but also – and what is more strikingly interesting- an internal difference between the representations and practices of diplomats and political actors on the one hand, and military actors on the other hand. The social representations of the politico-military actors involved in defence and security policy-making are closely linked with their structural and professional position. Both military and diplomatic actors have a history of positions which shapes their representation (Bourdieu, 1997). To put it to a simpler way: officers and diplomats have each a specific professional habitus that they incorporated through their socialization phase to become professionals in their own branch.

Thus, although French and German officers have two very different military culture as we saw it above (interventionism versus reserve culture), they share a common organizational ethos characterized by pragmatism. They are professionally trained to think and act following a rationality of finality (*zweckrational*) following Weber’s distinction (Weber, 1976): they develop a pragmatic logic, that is: they act so as to reach the most mutual satisfying solution in terms of efficiency, which does not necessarily coincides with the national political position/ representation. And military officers socialized or multinational work have learned how to overcome the strictly national rhetoric.

On the other hand, diplomats are socialized as representatives of their nation and stay national representatives of theirs governments all their carrier long. Their social representations are thus more ideological than practical : they embody the national political position pf their capital (Paris and Berlin) in multilateral negotiations around the EU table. They show a form of value rationality (*wertrational*) to go on with Weber’s distinction. This means that they act following values or political imperatives more than following a logic of practical

consequentialism. Their repertory appeals to the use of political symbols in foreign and defence policy. They are highly concerned with the questions of leadership and political position of their country in the making of the European defence policy.

These two distinct kinds of rationalities have long been incorporated by the military and diplomatic actors and come from the historical structuring of their professions (we are not going to develop this here by lack of space). Here we meet with a preoccupation developed by Didier Georgakakis, aiming at asking oneself about the professional trajectories of the actors of the European construction, their beliefs and their cleavages by going back to their socialization processes (Georgakakis, 2002, 19).

Two examples particularly show these diverging professional habitus derived from the socialization of the actors as officers or as diplomats. Concerning the question of the EU-NATO relations, the French military officers show much more sympathy for the Alliance than usually acknowledged by the diplomats, even after the reintegration of the military commanding structures in 2009. They see the interest of an involvement in NATO from an operational and practical point of view: participating in the Alliances missions is a good way of developing interoperability and maintaining good military standards. But this position seems quite heretical to a French diplomat. French diplomats consider the EU-NATO dilemma with an ideological point of view and mostly see in NATO an American lead organisation trying to overcome their efforts to build a European Defence.

The other example concerns European military operations and more precisely the EUFOR operation in Congo in summer 2006. At first, officers of both France and Germany were not very enthusiastic⁸, whereas diplomats on both sides of the Rhine clearly showed political and ideological concerns: this operation was both a way of legitimating the European Defence Policy by showing its credibility into action, and of bringing Germany closer to African problematic that they psychologically have difficulties to question. Officers argued of the insignificance of the mission (only 4 months with 1500 soldiers, high financial costs...), whereas diplomats tended to underline the symbolic utility and the political opportunity for the European Defence project by showing that Europeans could act (even if the mission was only to monitor the good running of the first democratic elections in Congo).

This means that the cleavages take place not only between actors of the two nations, but also intern. And on the other hand, despite their different national representations,

⁸ French officers felt no great enthusiasm, an German officers were clearly reluctant at first.

diplomats across Europe advocate ESDP in a more political way because they see in it a way of developing a European diplomacy. Military officers show more concern for effectiveness, which leads them, despite their diverging national military traditions, to more value a good dialogue between EU and NATO.

Conclusive remarks

What constructivists tools in a historical sociological perspective enables us to show here is that socializing processes rooted in the historical structuring of professions and national foreign policy-making structures shape the actors representations. At an organizational level, diplomatic and military practices and representations have been institutionnalized through time, which can explain path dependency phenomenon, for instance to the global positioning of French actors towards NATO or the one of German actirs towards operations.

To sum up, our aim was twofold using sociological tools : it enables us to better analyse and understand intrinsically how ESDP is being constructed since the 1990's (diplomats of France and Germany at first, then from Britain but with a special positioning and then from the 25 EU member states), and how in or case study the French and German actors interact with the resulting ESDP structures. Our specific historical sociologist focus helps us to understand why ESDP seems painfully difficult to erect and how much the socio-historical structuring of both domestic politico-military systems in France and Germany influences the social capital and professional ethos of the actors. And there's a strong scientific interest looking back in the history of European integration and more precisely in our case European defence: this slightly diverging interpretation among the actors was already to be seen in the phase of the European Defence Community (EDC) crisis in 1950-1954. The all project of European defence as a social construct can not be well understood without looking at the actors and their political, social, cultural determinants.

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