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## Comparing approaches: strategic culture versus the domestic level – the CSDP in Libya in 2011

### Presentation

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#### Abstract

This analysis focuses on the European Union's reaction to the 2011 Libyan crisis as a case study. It seeks to demonstrate the limitations of the 'strategic culture approach' in observing and explaining the EU's lack of a common response, which would have involved the development of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), and to demonstrate that the 'domestic level approach' has greater explanatory power. It lays emphasis on France, Britain, Italy and Germany as a sample of the EU/27. The empirical material includes several interviews.

Key words: CSDP, strategic culture approach, domestic level approach, foreign policy analysis

### **Comparing approaches: Strategic Culture versus the Domestic Level – The CSDP in Libya in 2011**

*How am I introducing this work?*

- I start with a GENERAL OUTLINE & A RESEARCH QUESTION
- then I focus on the AIMS & OBJECTIVES of this case study
- next, I spend a few words on the DEFINITIONS & ASSUMPTIONS of the approaches
- the empirical part regarding the approaches is discussed in the paper, & here I deal with some EVALUATION resulted from the analysis (the approaches' capabilities & limitations)
- the CONCLUSION follows

◆ concerning the GENERAL OUTLINE & RESEARCH QUESTION,

as we remember, during the Libyan crisis of 2011, there was no civil-military intervention from the European Union (as an organisation, institution) & in particular from the CSDP, the Common Security and Defence Policy of the EU

we know that, in order to have the CSDP 'in action', convergence of the 'political support' of the EU member states is needed; convergence does not require all of the member states to be operational; those willing to intervene are sufficient to set the CSDP in motion;

this case study is about 'the EU's inaction' with regard to that crisis; & I explore two approaches to find 'reasons for that inaction': the Strategic Culture analysis and the Domestic Level of observation;

the first one has been used, in the years around 2000 & the following first decade, to discuss the kind of action pursued by the European Union & its member states in their (failed or not) attempts at developing a common strategic culture;

whereas the second (the domestic angle) appeared less applied, as far as the literature on the CSDP up to 2010 was concerned; and that gap exerted some pressure to 'fill that space';

Considering my research question, this is:

*do these two approaches offer "REASONS" REGARDING THE LACK OF A EU's COMMON RESPONSE to the Libyan crisis which would have involved the development of the CSDP?*

◆ concerning the AIMS, these are:

(a) to highlight the dynamics which characterised the CSDP's non-intervention, as far as the two approaches were concerned;

& (b) to underscore the approach which was the most appropriate for analysing the development of the CSDP;

◆ concerning the definitions:

a thorough DEFINITION of the two approaches & how they are made of, can be found in the paper; however: with regard to the strategic culture: this one can be explained as shaped by the mechanisms of reaction to threats (e.g. the Libyan crisis); these mechanisms are based on ideas, norms & patterns of behaviour of the actors involved in the security & defence policy;

in the context of the EU/CSDP, strategic culture is the combination of ideas, norms & patterns of behaviour that are sufficiently shared at national level by political actors & society & are related to processes concerning European Security and Defence politics [Martinsen & Meyer];

◆ the assumptions of the strategic culture approach suggest that: ideas, norms & patterns of behaviour that are sufficiently shared at national level by political actors & society are to be satisfactorily shared at the EU level in order to offer convergence in the CSDP;

ideas relate to the state's role in the world & its vision of a safe global order; (for instance, does the state perceive cooperation at the basis of global order?)

norms define the conditions under which employing force is lawful; (for instance, certain states need the UNSC's cover in order to engage in military operations; & certain other states do not)

& established patterns of behaviour can be seen as the way in which societies debate, the political actors take decisions, & the armed forces perform actions, all of which are related to security & defence; (an example of patterns of behaviour could be the accepted convention, within a certain society, that military & civilian operations are conducted in a multilateral setting, or, by contrast, could be led by individual states)

◆ with regard to describing the domestic level of analysis & its assumptions, this approach hinges on the centrality of the member states;

its key assumption is that any analytical explanation of the CSDP which does not include the domestic dimension is essentially flawed

&, as a further assumption, this approach has the important function in determining whether the CSDP is an appropriate 'process' for responding to the national interests & goals [Hill 1997; Bulmer 1983]; & this approach is strengthened by Bureaucratic Politics [Allison 1972].

#### ◆ EVALUATION

Said this, & said that a detailed empirical discussion is in the paper, I proceed with some EVALUATION of the approaches:

◆◆ concerning the strategic culture perspective, the case study has found:

◆ among the 'capabilities':

the approach's proficiency' in giving indications of the 'character' of the member states' strategic cultures (including their society and policy-makers' attitude to the crisis, contemplating or not an intervention from the CSDP); (for instance, France's strategic thinking in terms of grandeur; British self-perception of great power; & the German perceived need for submerging their nation-state into the wider whole (Schmidt 2006))

◆ among the 'limitations':

in relation to this approach's capability to explain EU's member states' convergence/or not in the CSDP: the case study indicated that the approach highlighted more differences than similarities among the general features defining the strategic culture of the EU states;

and the approach would argue that differences negatively impinged on a convergent position; and this would lead to the conclusion that there is no growth of the CSDP;

but this conclusion is untrue; because despite the member states differences in strategic culture, the EU states have marked-up over 20 military-civil operations through the CSDP, during the 1998-2011 period;

(i) hence, as a first EVALUATION, the case study focused on this approach's inappropriateness for analysing convergence, and, therefore, the development of the CSDP;

(ii) &, continuing the EVALUATION, a further criticism underscored the approach's inability to shed light on the 'causes' of member states' reactions to the crisis;

◆◆ concerning the domestic level methodology, the case study observed the following 'capabilities':

(i) by adjusting the approach's focus to the 'advantages' that the leaders and policy-makers may have thought to obtain through their action, the domestic level analysis was more skilled than the strategic culture perspective in explaining 'why' the CSDP was not favoured in the event of responding to the

crisis; (for instance, domestic considerations may have estimated the value of the 'rapidity' of an action of national security; a CSDP common operation would not have allowed an urgent action taking place – as it was found to be the case for France under President Sarkozy)

(ii) similarly to the above point, the domestic view highlighted the 'relevance' of the rewards and benefits at which the policy-makers may have aimed – that motivated the non-development of the CSDP; (for instance, in Britain, ignoring the CSDP was reinforcing PM Cameron's stance on a referendum on Europe)

(iii) the approach laid emphasis on domestic interests, burdens and pressures as 'forces' which impacted on, and impaired the CSDP's growth; (an example: in Germany, with regard to participating in a CSDP civil-military operation, Chancellor Merkel was concerned about not jeopardising her position vis-à-vis the up-coming elections in some states)

(iv) the approach stressed the motives concerning the policy-makers' behaviour and refusal of the CSDP; (an example was the leaders' fear (EU HR Ashton) of politically damaging their reputation)

◆ the CONCLUSIONS:

with regard to highlighting the dynamics which characterised the CSDP's non-intervention:

the domestic level of observation was more capable than the strategic culture perspective to elucidate the reasons which justified inaction; & was the most appropriate for analysing the CSDP's development.