DOES "STRATEGIC CULTURE" MATTER? OLD EUROPE, NEW EUROPE AND THE TRANSATLANTIC SECURITY*

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Abstract

Given the failure of two major schools of thought in International Relations, namely realism and liberalism, in explaining the schisms among transatlantic partners, it has become fashionable to explain the intra-European divide regarding transatlantic security by analysing the differences in the "strategic cultures" of the EU member states and the US. In this regard Robert Kagan's provocative comparison of a more pacific European strategic culture to that of the USA, has been undermined by the considerable heterogeneity and complexity of Europeans' attitudes regarding transatlantic security. The objective of this article is to discuss strategic culture arguments in explaining the differences between the transatlantic security approaches of the so-called old and new Europeans. To illustrate the differences in Europeans towards transatlantic security, two major old European states, Germany and France, and some of the new EU members from Central and Eastern Europe are taken into consideration for the analysis. Here it is argued that there were different dynamics at work in different European countries, thus, in spite of its merits, strategic culture as a conceptual framework also has limitations in explaining the whole picture regarding the different European approaches to transatlantic security.

Key Words

Strategic Culture, Old Europe, New Europe, European Union, transatlantic security

Introduction

Almost one year before its 2003 enlargement, the expected division between the Franco-German backbone of the European Union and the

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candidate states from Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) was articulated by the then US Defence Secretary, Donald H Rumsfeld. Given the reluctance of France, Germany, Belgium and Luxembourg to support the US-led Operation Iraqi Freedom, Rumsfield described the group as Old Europe and the predominantly former Soviet-bloc EU candidates, together with traditional US allies, members like Great Britain, Denmark, Spain and Italy, as New Europe. Since then, this phrasing has haunted the continent. Rumsfeld's remarks highlighted the manifestation of the older Atlanticist versus Europeanist debate within the Transatlantic Alliance. This division demonstrated the continuation of this debate within the field of transatlantic security as it became more apparent over certain foreign policy issues like Iraq, the future of NATO in European security and the development of a common policy towards Russia.

While the division among European states with regard to transatlantic relations has been apparent since the end of World War II, the differences have become more distinct with the end of the Cold War. As the main logic of maintaining transatlantic relations has lost its validity with the dissolution of the Soviet bloc, the future of the US-EU relationship and the future of NATO have been reconsidered in Europe. In Western Europe, some states, like France, have openly questioned the necessity for strong transatlantic ties. On the other hand, others, like Britain, have insisted on the *status quo*. Moreover, Italy and Spain have become occasional allies of the US and unconditionally supported the continuation of NATO as the major security framework for Europe. At the same time, former Soviet-bloc CEE states like Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic have developed strong transatlantic bonds since the dissolution of the Soviet bloc and become enthusiastic supporters of Washington.

The clash between the US and the principal European states surprised most of the scholars of international relations. As Tuomas Forsberg and Graeme P. Herd state the dominant theoretical approaches in international relations had little to say on the recent intra-transatlantic divisions.[1] The scholarly community has attempted to provide a sustained account for explaining the root causes of transatlantic tension. Realists argue that the transatlantic discord can be explained by disparities in power. Realist theory suggests that regional powers that fear US hegemony oppose it and states that

[1] Tuomas Forsberg and Graeme P. Herd, *Divided West: European Security and the Transatlantic Relationship*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006, p.21.

are dependent on the US support it. Robert Kagan has argued that after the end of the Cold War transatlantic strategies and interest have diverged as a result of the uneven distribution power among transatlantic partners.[2] However, Britain's unconditional support to the US has undermined the assumption of realism. As Forsberg and Herd point out Britain is an example of an Atlanticist state that fears unilateral US hegemony; but rather than uniting with old Europe in opposition, "it has supported the US in order to provide it with a multilateral fig leaf for its actions and to avert US isolationism."[3] On the other hand, liberal perspective assumes that states which have close institutional links and have the same political outlook as the US are more likely to support strong transatlantic relations. Liberal scholars suggest that the transatlantic relationship remains strong and supported by institutional links as well as by shared values and a common strategic culture. In the academic literature, there exists a debate regarding the relevance of liberalist explanations, particularly those that based on the assumption of common values.[4] Michael Cox argues that "the transatlantic split brings into question various liberal theories of international politics that suggest that two regions are so bound together by ideology, interest and institutions…"[5]

As an alternative to the assumptions of liberalist and realist schools of thought it has become common to explain the intra-European division regarding transatlantic security by analysing the differences in the strategic cultures of the Old and New Europeans. It is argued that the different predominant strategic preferences of the old and new Europeans regarding transatlantic security are rooted in their respective strategic cultures.[6] In the light of the different EU member states' transatlantic security approaches, this article analyzes whether the strategic culture arguments provide a fully-fledged alternative conceptual framework for explaining the differences between the "Old European" and "New European" approaches regarding transatlantic security. In this context, the first section will review the *strategic culture* concept. The second section will present the strategic differences among the Europeans with regard to different transatlantic security issues,

[2] Robert Kagan, *Of Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003, p.3.
[3] Forsberg and Herd, *Divided West: European Security and the Transatlantic Relationship*, p.123
[4] Among all see Alex Danchev, "How Strong Are Shared Values in the Transatlantic Relationship?", British Journal of Politics and International Relations, Vol.7, 2005, pp.429-436; Michael Cox , "Beyond the West: Terrors in Transatlantia", *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol.II, No:2, 2005; Michael Mihalka. "Values and Interests: European Support for Interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq," in Tom Lansford and Blogovest Tashev, *Old Europe, New Europe and the US: Renegotiating Transatlantic Security in post 9/11 Era*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005, pp.281-303
[5] Michael Cox, "Beyond the West: Terrors in Transatlantia", *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol.II, No:2, 2005, p.203
[6] Among all Buras and Longhurst (2005), Gaffney (2005), Miskimmon (2005) and Osica (2005)

particularly Iraq, the role of NATO and Russia. The third section will analyse the differences in Old and New European approaches to transatlantic security within the context of strategic culture arguments. The limits of strategic culture as a conceptual framework for analysing the recent collision between the "Old European" and "New European" approaches to transatlantic security will be discussed in the conclusion.

Strategic culture as a tool for understanding states' strategic preferences

It is widely agreed that considering the complexity of world politics, state actors' behaviours cannot be understood just by analysing their rational choices. According to Robert Keohane, ideational factors should be taken into consideration as well. Even though rational actors are usually seeking to maximize their utility, they are linked by a common society with expectations of interaction and shared ethical standards.[7] As was stated by Keohane, in order to employ rational choice, one needs "…to make some assumptions about the values and interests of the actors... Any rational-choice analysis has to assume a prior context of power, expectations, values and conventions, which affect how interests are determined".[8] Stemming from Keohane's argument, scholars of strategic culture seek to engage with, and go beyond, rational-choice analyses by reasserting the significance of cultural, ideational and normative influences on the motivations of states and their leaders. The strategic culture approach challenges the ahistorical, non-cultural, neorealist framework for analysing strategic choices rather than rejecting rationality *per se* as a factor in strategic choice.

Strategic culture is shaped by formative episodes in times of crisis and is influenced by past experiences. Moreover, it can change fundamentally or gradually over time. Beliefs, feelings, fears, aims and ambitions are the unobservable aspects of each strategic culture, and comprise the core values that give a strategic culture its quality and characteristics. These foundational elements form each nation's strategic culture and are derived from "formative experiences and have been internalised, creating a fairly consensual or centripetal nature to the strategic culture".[9]

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[7] Robert O. Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in The World Political Economy*, Princeton: Guildford, 1984, pp. 73-74.

[8] ibid, p.75.

[9] Vassilis Margaras, *Strategic Culture: A Reliable Tool of Analysis for EU Security Developments?*, unpublished conference paper presented at European Foreign Policy Conference, London, 2-3 July 2004, p.5 http://www.lse.ac.uk/Depts/intrel/EFPC/Papers/Margaras.doc

In his seminal article, Jack Snyder, who is one of the first wave of strategic culture scholars, defined strategic culture as "the sum of ideas, conditioned emotional responses and patterns of habitual behaviour that members of a national strategic community have acquired through instruction or imitation and share with each other …"[10] with regard to security strategies. The most recent wave of strategic culture scholars considers other aspects of state policy, not just the ones relating to military factors.

It is believed that analysis of the cultural context allows the researcher to investigate how the formative experiences of the state and its cultural characteristics shape strategic interests. As Keith Krause and Andrew Latham argue, "while cultural forces do not directly determine policy responses, they exercise a powerful influence on the shaping of what might be called 'policy reflexes"[11] Hence, culture provides a persistent and holistic context in which actors operate. Moreover, the scholars of strategic culture suggest that cultural analysis of military doctrines will "provide us [with] a better understanding of how states choose between offensive and defensive military doctrines".[12]

Since the late 1970s, the concept of strategic culture has been applied in several cases to examine the main aspects of a particular state's security policies. By applying the notion of strategic culture to certain case studies, scholars attempt to explain continuity and change in national security policies. Moreover, the study of strategic culture has also been used to create a framework which can give answers as to why certain policy options are pursued by states. By analyzing strategic culture one can understand the beliefs, attitudes, and practices regarding the use of force, which, through a historical process, gradually evolve over time. Strategic culture analysis is regarded as a very helpful analytical tool to find out the impact of values and beliefs on the foreign and security policies of states.

In sum, it is argued by strategic culture scholars that strategic culture affects policy behaviour by providing the foundations and predispositions of a state's attitude towards particular security issues. Strategic culture sets the boundaries of normal behaviour and provides a blueprint for the possible

[10] Jack Snyder, *The Soviet Strategic Culture: Implications for Limited Nuclear Operation*, Santa Monica: RAND Publications, 1977, p.8

[11] Keith Krause and Andrew Latham, "Culture and the Construction of Western Non-Proliferation Arms Control and Disarmament Practice," in Keith Krause and Andrew Latham, *Cross-cultural Dimensions of Multilateral Non-Proliferation and Arms Control Dialogues*, Research Report prepared for the Non-Proliferation, Arms Control and Disarmament Division Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Ottawa Canada, 1997, p.24

[12] Elizabeth Kier, "Culture and French Military Doctrine: France between the Wars", *International Security*, Vol.19, No.4, p. 66

policy tools available.[13] Within this context, Europeans' responses to different transatlantic security issues reflected diverse national predispositions, as well as historically-rooted perceptions. Besides the disagreements over the nature of European involvement in Iraq, the EU members have been divided over other issues like the role of NATO in European security strategy and the development of a common strategy towards Russia.

Old Europe, new Europe and transatlantic security

In 2002, almost one year before its enlargement, the EU was shaken by the controversy over Iraq. In spite of Germany, France, Belgium and Luxembourg's opposition to the use of force against Iraq, most of the EU members, including the candidate states, expressed their support for a US-led military action against Saddam Hussein. The French government made clear their opposition to the use of force in French Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin's speech in the Security Council meeting on 20 January 2003 by saying that "we believe nothing today justifies envisaging military action in Iraq."[14] To support this view, German Chancellor Gerhard Schrőder declared that Germany would not approve any Security Council resolution authorising war against Iraq.

During the Iraqi crisis, the behaviour of the prospective EU members confirmed Old Europe's prejudices that the newcomers would be pro-American. Most of the CEE states responded to the US calls for the enforcement of UN Security Council Resolution 1441. The Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland together with Denmark, Italy, Portugal, Spain and Britain signed the "Letter of Eight" to call for European unity in the Security Council on the enforcement of Resolution 1441. Furthermore, ten CEE states, the Vilnius Ten, issued a letter to support the US: "The transatlantic community, of which we are a part, must stand together to face the threat posed by the nexus of terrorism and dictators with weapons of mass destruction."[15] These letters were a kind of reaffirmation of Donald Rumsfeld's assumption about the Old Europe - New Europe divide.

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[13] Jiri Sedivy and Marcin Zaborowski, "Old Europe, New Europe and Transatlantic Relations," in Kerry Longhurst and Marcin Zaborowski, *Old Europe, New Europe and the Transatlantic Security Agenda,* London: Routledge, 2005, p.7

[14] French Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin's speech in the Security Council meeting on 20 January 2003 http://www.ambafrance-us.org/news/statmnts/2003/vilepin012003.asp

[15] Albania, Bulgaria, Estonia, Croatia, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia commonly declared "Statement of the Vilnius Group Countries in Response to the Presentation by the United States Secretary of State to the United Nations Security Council Concerning Iraq", New York, 5 February 2003

Interestingly, New Europe's response to the US calls coincided with the ratification of the second enlargement of NATO which included most of the CEE states. In spite of public opinion that was overwhelmingly against the war,[16] the new EU members eagerly took their place in Iraq. Particularly in the Czech Republic's case, the signing of the letter caused debates on the national consensus since the letter was signed by former President Vaclav Havel three days before leaving office. Havel said he signed the document because he agreed with its content and because it did not contradict the official position of the government:[17] As a Czech diplomat elegantly put it, "the Czech Republic established itself firmly as 'New Europe' when it joined the coalition in Iraq. Today about 100 Czech military police are training the Iraqi police against huge odds. They will remain in Iraq as long as they are needed."[18]

The reluctance of French leaders with regard to eastern enlargement and their negative attitude towards new members of the EU during the Iraqi crisis caused mistrust of Old Europe among the newcomers. The joint declaration issued by Germany and France to reject giving support for the war in Iraq on behalf of Europe in January 2003 confirmed the fears of the newcomers. Furthermore, they were offended by President Jacques Chirac's threatening statement to the candidate states at the special EU summit on the Iraq crisis:

> … this is not a responsible attitude. … they have not been well brought up. … Beyond the fact of being infantile, this attitude is also dangerous. One must not forget that many of the fifteen member states will need to ratify the enlargement by referendum. … And enlargement will not work if one of the member states blocks it. These countries have been both not well brought up and [are] ignorant of the dangers of aligning themselves too closely with the American position.[19]

The anxiety about being excluded from important political decisions, including foreign policy, security and defence, accompanied by the mistrust of

[16] With the exception of Lithuanian public opinion: According to the public opinion polls, the Lithuanian public was one of the most pro-American nations in Europe during the Iraq crisis.

[17] Kevin Livingstone, "Leaders Sidestep Letter on Iraq War", *The Prague Post*, 5 February 2003, http://www.praguepost.com/P03/2003/Art/0205/news3.php

[18] Diplomat Magazine's Interview with Czech Ambassador to Great Britain and Northern Ireland Jan Winkler, January/February 2006 http://www.mzv.cz/wwwo/default.asp?id=35564&ido=15419&idj=2&amb=153&ParentIDO=15415

[19] Jacques Chirac's statement on candidates at special EU summit on Iraq crisis, 2003 http://www.seetv-exchanges.com/transcripts/2003/2003-02-21_print.htm

France, has caused new members to feel insecure within the EU. Poland had even been condemned for being a 'Trojan Horse' of America in Europe.[20]

Besides the brand new "New Europeans", some of the existing EU members such as Britain, Spain, Italy, Denmark and Portugal were also very eager to support their American brethren during and after the Iraq crisis. Particularly Britain, in its unofficial role as "the Atlantic Bridge" between Europe and America, has stood by the US from the very beginning of the Iraqi crisis. In general, serving as balancer, Britain has always been able to manage the transatlantic relationship to its benefit. Britain has earned credit in the eyes of successive US administrations as a sponsor for US interests in Europe and around the world. However, American unilateralism and the Franco-German opposition to the war in Iraq have left Britain in a vulnerable position.[21] On the other hand, the other Atlanticist EU members, particularly Spain and Italy, were very sensitive to the strains in transatlantic relations, which were exacerbated by the British-US military action in Iraq. The developments before and after the Second Gulf War were a catalyst for these states to reassess the new security threats and the security strategies needed to deal with the global reach of these threats.

Terrorist attacks on major European targets have reinforced the anti-American position in European societies instead of convincing public opinion of the rightness of American policy. Since 2003, New Europe's willingness to support the US in order to enhance its national security has been challenged domestically. Most of the European governments who gave support to the American invasion of Iraq were punished by their electorates in subsequent elections. Particularly after the withdrawal of Spanish troops from Iraq, the British and Polish governments have found themselves on the defensive both domestically and internationally. Recently only Polish and Czech troops, together with the British, continue to remain to support American troops in their efforts to end civil strife in Iraq.

The second important division between the Old Europeans and New Europeans has appeared in the disagreements over the role of NATO as the main security provider for Europe. The transformation in the international system after the end of the Cold War has led to drastic challenges and changes

[20] Kai-Olaf Lang, *America's Best Friend?*, Berlin: German Institute for International and Security Studies, SWP Comments No. 4, 2003

[21] Alister Miskimmon, "Continuity in the Face of Upheaval – British Strategic Culture and the Impact of the Blair Government", in Kerry Longhurst and Marcin Zaborowski, *Old Europe, New Europe and the Transatlantic Security Agenda*, London: Routledge, 2005, p. 89

both in terms of actors' roles in the system and the interactions among them. Within this context, one of the international actors most affected by this transformation is the EU. It took Europeans more than a decade to digest the magnitude of the structural and ideological changes of the post-Cold War period. During this period, particularly with the Eastern enlargement, NATO has remained the most important security institution in Europe, even though the EU has its own Common Security and Foreign Policy (CFSP) and a Defence and Security Policy (ESDP). In spite of strong French objections to the continuation of strong transatlantic links, some of the EU members prefer to keep strong links with NATO and the US. Britain remains a key actor both in NATO and EU security policy and has attempted to shape the development of both the EU and NATO to deal with the transatlantic security concerns in ways that fit in with its strategic interests. As NATO and the EU have attempted to conform to a changing international security environment, European states like Italy, Spain, Denmark and Portugal, as members and supporters of NATO and the EU, have maintained their commitment to both institutions and tried hard to balance their institutional commitments and national interests.

As far as the new EU members are concerned, they do not see any contradiction between supporting NATO and contributing to the defensive capacity of the Union. As a result of the negative connotations of their eagerness to support America's use of force in Iraq, their governments have found themselves in a position of having to explain the equal importance of being part of both NATO and the EU. This has been underlined in foreign policy documents and the National Security Strategies of several CEE states:

Present-day Poland is firmly anchored in NATO and the European Union. We are linked in a strategic partnership with the United States. … taking into account [the] transatlantic dimension and the role of the United States; …the consolidation of our position [is] as a reliable member of the European community, capable of skilfully harmonizing [our] own and community interests.[22]

It is in Hungary's interest to have [an] expanded, strong and unified Europe that maintains a stronger transatlantic partnership…In the European

[22] Polish Foreign Policy Document 2006 http://www.mfa.gov.ph/Government,information,on,Polish,foreign,polic,in,2006,4599.html

Union, Hungary's aim is to be America's strategic partner, and in NATO to be an ally that strengthens European commitment.[23]

As was pointed out in the *Polish Foreign Policy Document* and the *Security Interests of the Czech Republic,* NATO is considered by the New Europeans to be a security guarantee.

We are not alone in guarding our security; since we have the support of our NATO allies ...The stature of Poland has been clearly enhanced by the membership of both these powerful structures of the Western world, as well as by our significant international activity, commensurate with Polish ambitions and potential.[24]

The Czech Republic has undertaken to improve its individual defence capabilities as part of the Alliance's commitment to enhance and develop its military capabilities...For the Czech Republic; the pillar of collective defence is NATO. Thanks to its NATO membership, the Czech Republic enjoys benefits from the security safeguards enshrined in the North Atlantic Treaty....[25]

Last but not least, Russia has emerged as the most divisive issue in the EU since the Iraq crisis. During the 1990s the EU members generally agreed on a common approach to Russia and they developed a strategy of democratising and westernising Russia. This strategy is in tatters. Furthermore, the divisions between the EU members over Russia are much more complex than a split between new and old member states. The European Council on Foreign Relations' (ECFR) report entitled "Power Audit of EU27 – Russia Relations" shows that the EU is split between two approaches: At one end of the spectrum are those who view Russia as a potential partner that can be drawn into the EU's orbit through a process of 'creeping integration.' … At the other end are member states who see and treat Russia as a threat. According to them, Russian expansionism and contempt for democracy must be rolled back through a policy of 'soft containment' that involves excluding Russia from the G8, expanding NATO to include Georgia, supporting anti-

[23] *Study on Hungarian National Security*, Budapest: Research Centre for Strategy and Defence, 2004

[24] Polish Foreign Policy Document, 2006 http://www.mfa.gov.pl/Government,information,on,Polish,foreign,policy,in,2006,4599.html

[25] Security Interests of Czech Republic, 2006 http://www.mzv.cz/wwwo/mzv/default.asp?id=24118&ido=7567&idj=2&amb=1&prsl=true&pocc1=7

Russian regimes in the neighbourhood, building missile shields, developing an 'Energy NATO' and excluding Russian investment from the European energy sector.[26]

Even though the division between the EU members is not as sharp as that between New and Old Europe, most of the Old Europeans who are in favour of strong Atlantic ties see Russia as a threat. In the ECFR report the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Ireland, Latvia, the Netherlands, Romania, Sweden and the United Kingdom are identified as frosty pragmatists, who focus on business interests but are less afraid than others to speak out against Russian behaviour on human rights or other issues. Lithuania and Poland, on the other hand, are identified as new cold warriors, who have an overtly hostile relationship with Moscow and are willing to use the veto to block EU negotiations with Russia.[27]

Apart from the above mentioned divisions, EU member states, including new Europeans, generally share a common policy line regarding other transatlantic security issues like non-proliferation, the Kyoto Protocol and the International Criminal Court. The differences among Europeans reflect the diversity of European history, geography and culture, which has led to the emergence of different strategic cultures and foreign policy role conceptions. According to the strategic culture scholars, the ends and means are expressed in narratives that represent the self-images of nations. In the following section, whether the strategic culture approach is adequate as an analytical tool to understand the intra-European differences regarding transatlantic security will be discussed.

Old and new European approaches to transatlantic security: does 'strategic culture' matter?

Within the context of the strategic culture approach, it is argued that the strategic preferences of Old and New Europe are rooted in the early or formative experiences of the states, and are influenced by their philosophical, cultural and cognitive characteristics and their elites; therefore, historical differences between Old and New Europeans have affected their attitudes towards transatlantic security. As was discussed previously, the New Europeans' attitudes regarding multilateralism, military intervention and

[26] Mark Leonard and Nicu Popescu, A *Power Audit of EU-Russia Relations*, European Council on Foreign Relations Policy Paper, 2007, p.2
[27] Ibid., p.2

international hegemonic structure are different to those of their Western European counterparts. It is argued that their predispositions are culturally and historically motivated. As Iain Johnston claims, if states share common strategic behaviours then it is because they share similar historical and cultural experiences that lead to a common process of identity creation.[28] For European states, the divisions occurred during and after World War II. The first division occurred between Eastern and Western European states, which also brought the polarisation between the two blocs of the Cold War, which could to some extent explain the differences in New and Old Europeans' strategic choices. For example, most of the CEE states were seriously affected by the traumatic experiences of World War II. As a result, a strong sense of betrayal by their allies prevails within the national discourse of the respective societies. Furthermore, the historical experiences of New Europeans play a role in their view of multilateral institutions and the principle of military intervention. The historical memory of the CEE states has shaped their view towards European appeasement and pacifism, the policies for which they were sacrificed by their Western neighbours in the past.

All of the New European states have at some time been part of one of Europe's great empires and were subjected to the direct hegemony of a neighbour. Most of the New European CEE states were subjected either to the direct hegemony of the Soviet Union or were part of the Soviet Union during the Cold War period. After the end of World War II, the Soviet Union claimed Central and Eastern Europe as its sphere of influence. The failure to secure their independence and sovereignty and the direct hegemony of the Soviet Union caused a distinctive strategic culture within the CEE countries and this might explain some of the new EU members' resentment towards Russia. Given the historical context, one could argue that New Europeans are extremely sensitive about independence and sovereignty; therefore, most of them still see Russia as a major security threat to their sovereignty and independence and develop their security strategies to check direct Russian influence on their affairs. In this sense, most of the New Europeans have shown a more cautious stand *vis-à-vis* Russia compared to their Western European counterparts. For them, integration into the EU is a way to defend their existence as independent and sovereign states. However, not all of the new EU members have developed hostile relations with Russia. Among them, only Poland and Lithuania have shown an overtly hostile stand against Russia and seem to be willing to block EU negotiations with Russia. On the

[28] Iain Johnston, "Thinking about Strategic Culture", *International Security,* Vol. 19, No. 4, 1995, p. 56

other hand, given their economic interests, most of the CEE countries such as Bulgaria, Hungary and Slovakia, have policies towards Russia centred on pragmatic business interests. Bulgaria for instance has strong economic links with the Russian oil company Lukoil which generated almost five percent of Bulgaria's GDP and around 25 percent of its tax revenues.[29] Accordingly, these states tend to avoid involvement in political disputes with Russia. Some other new EU members like the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia and Romania have not refrained from criticising Russia while keeping business interests high on the agenda. The differences in their strategies regarding Russia clearly show that in spite of similarities in historical memories regarding the Soviet Union, they have not developed similar policy lines towards Russia. Many of the CEE and Baltic states have seen Russia as an economic partner rather than as a security threat. As stated by Krause and Latham, strategic cultures do not directly determine policy responses, but provide a persistent and holistic context in which actors operate. It is clear that the strategic cultures of new EU members have affected their general perceptions towards the Western European states and Russia. However, as is in the Russian case most of the CEE and Baltic states have adjusted their policies within the context of their respective strategic cultures as well as their economic and political considerations regarding Russia.

The new EU members' Atlanticist position regarding transatlantic security can be explained in different ways. From the political strategic perspective, for the CEE to play the NATO card is a way of balancing the "Franco-German" wing of the Union. Because of their worries about dissolving in the EU like a lump of sugar in a cup of coffee, they have felt the need to balance themselves against the Old Europeans by relying on US support. According to Sedivy and Zaborowski, for New Europeans "the situation in which the hegemon is a far away country and a non-imperialistic liberal democracy like the US is far more preferable than a Franco-German alternative."[30] According to Heather Grabbe,[31] the CEE states, particularly the newly independent ones, have suffered from decisions made by the great powers outside the region. Within this context they have feared that important EU decisions will be taken by a group of leading countries like France, Germany and Britain. Through their assertiveness regarding transatlantic security they have now made it clear that they are not simply policy-takers.

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[29] Leonard and Popescu, A *Power Audit of EU-Russia Relations*, p.2

[30] Sedivy and Zaborowski, , "Old Europe, New Europe and Transatlantic Relations", p. 23

[31] Heather Grabbe, "The Newcomers," in Fraser Cameron, *The Future of Europe: Integration and Enlargement*, London: Routledge, 2004, p. 64

They have shown that they are eager to bring new ideas and priorities to the Union's foreign policy and security agenda.

Moreover, size is another factor for the New Europeans. Except for Poland, all of the newcomers are small states; therefore, they have serious concerns about how to defend their position *vis-à-vis* bigger members. They want to ensure that the Union is not primarily run by the bigger states. Consequently they prefer to keep close relations with the US and find a place within NATO, as was clearly stated by several CEE diplomats and politicians: "I trust security guarantees (extended to us) by the United States and NATO (not France and the EU)."[32] Moreover, as pointed out by Ambassador Jiri Schneider, "for a smaller state like the Czech Republic the best way to keep strategic dialogue with the US [is] not within the EU but within NATO. Within NATO we are equal…NATO should be [the] primary actor in transatlantic dialogue…"[33]

The strategic preferences of the new members of the EU mainly lie in the experience of a series of traumatic events that were chiefly consequences of the Old Europeans' *real politique*. Hence, they are attempting to balance the dominance of the Old Europeans within the EU. As Forsberg and Herd argue in their analysis of new Europeans, basically they "prefer to prioritise their security interests within the EU, and these may coincide or oscillate more or less equally between those of 'Old Europe' and America/Atlantic Europe."[34] Stemming from this analysis, the CEE states' strategic preferences regarding transatlantic security cannot be explained just by analysing their respective strategic cultures. In spite of the elements of strategic culture that might affect their strategies, the last decade has shown that their strategic preferences are based on their urge for balancing against Russia or an urge to balance the Old Europeans' effect on transatlantic security issues with the support of the US. As their post-accession experience demonstrates, besides their respective strategic cultures, the new Europeans have been increasingly influenced by the EU socialisation process and by the EU's strategic culture. One could argue that new Europeans are in process of adjusting their own strategic cultures with the EU's strategic culture; therefore, their respective policy responses vis-à-vis transatlantic security issues discussed here reflect this adjustment/transformation process.

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[32] MP Egidijus Vareikis as quoted by Dovile Budryte, "The Dilemma of 'Dual Loyalty': Lithuania and Transatlantic Tensions," in Tom Lansford and Blagovest Tashev, *Old Europe, New Europe and the US*, Aldershot: Ashgate, p. 157

[33] Ambassador Jiri Schneider, Director of Prague Security Studies (PASS) speech entitled 'Israel: The Test of the West' at Bar Ilan University BESA Centre, 24 May 2005, Ramat Aviv, Israel

[34] Forsberg and Herd, *Divided West: European Security and the Transatlantic Relationship*, p.70

As far as two major Old Europeans are concerned, throughout the evolution of the EU, France and Germany have always considered themselves to be its key players and underlined their mission to protect the reason for its existence: uniting European countries economically and politically in order to secure lasting peace. Stemming from this ideal, Germany in particular has become the champion of the idea of civilian power and of the doctrine of a "just war."[35] As far as the Old Europeans' strategic cultures are concerned, Germany's strategic culture is identified with the "culture of restraint" (*kultur der zuruchaltung*). Based on a rejection of Germany's militarist past, restraint became one of the major determinants of German strategic culture. With regard to the use of force, German strategic culture is in the camp of favouring a deterrent posture and the use of civilian means over military power-projection. Regarding the organisation of the use of force, German strategic culture called for cooperative security institutions rather than national approaches to security. These key elements of German strategic culture manifested themselves in German policy during the Iraq crisis and its approach to the role of NATO in the post-Cold War European security structure. As a reflection of its preference for multilateralism, Germany approved Resolution 1441 to stop Saddam's aggression, but as a part of a general restraint on the use of armed force, Germany rejected taking part in the US-led military operation against Saddam.

Another factor that had influenced the development of the strategic cultures of Western European states is the existence of NATO as the security provider for Europe. One of the major consequences of the Second World War was the undeniable US leadership in Europe. During the post-war period, the US was the only power that was able to prevent the spread of communism in Europe. Moreover, American political culture was considered as an alternative to both nationalism and communism in Europe. Through NATO, the US exerted its influence on transatlantic security.

France's strategic culture is based on a search for a proper role for itself in the international era and its pretensions to European leadership. With de Gaulle coming to power in France, disagreements within the transatlantic community began. Gaullism appeared as the most serious alternative to American leadership in the West.[36] According to John Gaffney, France has a "very special attitude towards itself: responsible, vulnerable, and the carrier of

[35] According to just war principle, military coercion will take place only when mandated by international law (*jus ad bellum*), and the use of force will be severely constrained (*jus in bello*).

[36] Sedivy and Zaborowski, "Old Europe, New Europe and Transatlantic Relations", p. 9

a superior 'civilisation'…"[37] As a consequence of this self-image, France has always seen the US as naïve and lightweight. Thus France has never accepted the superiority of the US. The French withdrawal from the military command structure of NATO was an expression of this attitude. Throughout the Fifth Republic, French foreign policy has evolved around its claim to greatness (*grandeur*) and the corresponding elevated global status (*rang*). During the Cold War, French foreign policy was one of asserting French independence and autonomy of action, and of promoting the French exception (*spécificité*).[38] One of the principal features of the Gaullist foreign policy, which has been reflected in the French foreign and security policy for a long time, was the primacy of national independence in foreign policy-making; the belief that France had a vocation to provide for European defence leadership separate from the Atlantic Alliance. The result was the pursuit of a priority security relationship with Germany within Europe and the maintenance of a special, neo-colonial relationship with its former colonies. However, after the end of the Cold War the pursuit of *grandeur* and *rang* proved to be detrimental. Instead, the new international order required a greater cooperation and, in some instances, integration with the principal partners. Thus, French diplomacy has remodelled itself as a supporter of international peacekeeping on behalf of the United Nations. Moreover, the French leadership has strived for the development of a European security and defence identity that is autonomous from the US and NATO.

During and after the Iraqi crisis, the Atlanticist – Europeanist division has revived. France found an opportunity to show off its leadership claims and spoke on behalf of Europe. But it failed. Except for a few supporters from the "old gang" - Germany, Belgium and Luxembourg - France could not find support for its case against the war in Iraq. Most of the EU members plus candidate states were very keen on maintaining the alliance with the US. The Old Europe/New Europe division following the Iraqi crisis has caused the alienation and marginalisation of France within the EU.

In the light of the elements of their respective strategic cultures, the French and German policy during the Iraq war and their opposition to unilateral American actions can be thoroughly explained. However, newly elected French President and German Chancellor's attempts to improve relations with the US over transatlantic security need further consideration.

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[37] John Gaffney, "Highly Emotional States: French-US Relations and the Iraq War," in Kerry Longhurst and Marcin Zaborowski, *Old Europe, New Europe and The Transatlantic Security Agenda*, London: Routledge, 2005, p. 77

[38] Adrian Treacher, *French Interventionism: Europe's Last Global Player?*, Hampshire: Ashgate, 2003, p.3

With this double leadership change a change in the direction of both countries' strategic preferences become apparent. Both Merkel's and Sarkozy's policies and discourses towards the US have contradicted with Germany's *culture of restraint* or French *spécificité*.

In his analysis of European strategic culture, Adrian Hyde-Price questioned that whether a strategic culture largely formed in 1950s in the context of the Cold War is still appropriate to the changed circumstances of the post-Cold War world order.[39] As was discussed in the first section, strategic cultures tend to be persistent over time. However, strategic cultures can change gradually when the strategic environment change. Gradually, European states, particularly old Europeans, have realised the challenges posed to existing strategic cultures by post-Cold war security environment. Hence, a change in strategic cultures was inevitable for the old Europeans.

In spite of their severe opposition in the Iraq case, the approaches of Germany and France in particular have gradually changed towards accepting the necessity of an alliance with the US in the long run. After the initial sensitivities and accusations towards the US and its New European partners' involvement in Iraq, both French and German discourses regarding transatlantic relations have gradually changed.

During the 1990s after reunification, Germany began to assume greater international responsibility. Parallel to the gradual change in its strategic culture following reunification, German foreign policy has become more assertive and more emancipatory. The first signs of change in strategic culture reflected in Germany's active support for Operation Allied Force in Kosovo. As pointed out by Karsten Voigt, the Foreign Ministry's special Envoy to the US, "Germany's strategic culture is changing. Germany was traditionally a global player in terms of the economy but not in terms of security. Until recently, global security was not on the horizon. The US will have to engage us on the security issues."[40] German Chancellor Angela Merkel made her first official visit to Washington DC just a few weeks after she was elected in order to mend the bridges with the US. During her visit, Merkel expressed Germany's readiness to contribute, together with the EU and the US, to diplomatic efforts to deal with Iranian nuclear proliferation. To improve ties with the US, Merkel has pledged $10 million to the Iraq

[39] Adrian Hyde-Price, "European Security, Strategic Culture, and The Use of Force," in Kerry Longhurst and Marcin Zaborowski, *Old Europe, New Europe and The Transatlantic Security Agenda*, London: Routledge, 2005, p.140

[40] Karsten Voigt as quoted by Judy Dempsey, "Newly Confident Germany Defends its Interests", *International Herald Tribune*, 14-15 January 2006, p.1

Reconstruction Fund. She has also offered an increase in the numbers of Iraqi police officers trained by German Security experts. Chancellor Merkel's visit was extremely important to signal the Old Europeans' efforts to improve transatlantic relations. In her remarks to the US Chamber of Commerce, Chancellor Merkel remarked that "very close, very strategically oriented transatlantic partnership is in our mutual interest."[41] As a reflection of a new German strategic culture in the making Merkel sought to improve relations with the US while raising Germany's concerns about Guantanamo Bay and climate change.

In explaining Germany's urge for a more active role in transatlantic security, domestic factors should be taken into consideration as well. The economic stagnation and sky-high unemployment following reunification had dominated Germany's domestic political agenda for a long time. Even after 9/11 "terrorism and war/peace" came in fourth with 9 percent after mentions of unemployment (71 percent), the economic situation (14 percent), and immigration (13 percent) in German public opinion polls asking which issues they thought were "the most important themes" of coming elections of September 2002.[42] Hence, German leaders had focussed its attention on internal stability. It is only after 2005, with the gradual recovery of German economy, that the German people's threat perceptions changed. According to The German Marshall Fund's Transatlantic Trends 2007 survey, the percentage of German respondents feeling threatened by economic downturn drops 18 percentage points, while 70 percent of Germans expressed that they felt likely to be personally effected by international terrorism.[43] One could argue that the resolution of internal problems have paved the way for Chancellor Merkel to pursue a more assertive transatlantic policy.

The French strategic stance regarding transatlantic security has also changed since the election of Nicholas Sarkozy as President. Sarkozy has shown his reluctance to follow Chirac's Gaullist approach. Sarkozy, whose main political influences are British, is often described as an Atlanticist, despite his opposition to the war in Iraq. In his initial speeches following his election, he expressed the need for good relations with the US and he made it clear that he is not too keen on the old Franco-German alliance. In his acceptance speech, Sarkozy stated, "I want to tell [our American friends] that France will always be on their side when they need it, but I also want to tell them the

[41] German Chancellor Angela Merkel's remarks to US Chamber of Commerce, 30 April 2007
[42] Peter K. Merkl, *The Rift Between America and Old Europe: The Distracted Eagle*, London: Routledge, 2005, p. 27
[43] German Marshall Fund of the United States' Survey: Transatlantic Trends Key Findings, 2007, p.9

friendship means accepting that your friends may think differently".[44] During the months since his election, Sarkozy has demonstrated an issue-oriented and pragmatic leadership style and proved that his transatlantic policies will constitute an exception to the traditional French strategic culture. The Sarkozy case in particular reflects a drastic deviation from traditional French foreign policy-making. In this regard, Sarkozy's turn can be explained in two ways: One could argue that given the failure of former President Jacques Chirac's insistence on Gaullist policies rooted in early years of the Cold War, Sarkozy initiated a change in France's strategic culture in order to cope with the requirements of a new strategic environment. Another argument could underline Sarkozy's realisation of France not being in a position to tolerate the alienation from transatlantic affairs. And this thought led to Sarkozy's pragmatic Atlanticist turn at the expense of France's decades-long Europeanist stance. Whatever the explanation, the end result of Sarkozy's turn remains to be seen.

Conclusion: the limits of strategic culture

Throughout the article it is attempted to analyse strategic culture as a conceptual framework to understand intra-European differences regarding transatlantic security. It is clear that strategic culture arguments offer a better theoretical framework for understanding intra-European tensions over transatlantic security compare to Realist and Liberalist accounts.

As discussed in the previous section strategic culture perfectly fits in explaining differences between old and new Europeans regarding their participation/absence in US-led Operation Iraqi Freedom. As the transatlantic crisis over Iraq reflected the particular states' attitudes towards the use of force and multilateralism, the intra-European differences can be explained thoroughly within the context of their respective strategic cultures. On the other hand, if the Iraqi crisis is considered as a question of supporting the US over old Europeans, the CEE states' decision to support the US could be explained as a reflection of their respective cultures' evolution from their historical mistrust in Western counterparts, as well as their need to balance themselves against the Old Europeans by relying on US support.

As far as the different approaches towards NATO's role in transatlantic security are concerned, Germany and France's preference for a stronger European alternative to NATO reflects their respective strategic cultures.

[44] "Nicholas Sarkozy: Victory Speech Excerpts", *BBC News*, 6 May 2007 http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/6631125.stm

Furthermore, Germany's recent attempt to engage in transatlantic security more assertively can be explained within the context of gradual strategic culture change. On the other hand, when it comes to explaining CEE states' oscillation between NATO and the EU and their insistence on dual loyalties to both institutions pose a challenge to strategic culture arguments. In this regard, CEE and Baltic states are in a process of socialisation both within the EU and NATO. Therefore, their respective strategic cultures are interacting with both institutions' strategic cultures. As the strategic culture concept was designed to understand the particular cultural contexts within which states strategic interests are shaped, the interactions with institutional contexts of strategic cultures are missed out in this case.

Last but not least, since there were different dynamics at work in different European countries, strategic culture does not provide explanation for every policy difference. For example, in spite of the similarities in historical memories regarding the Soviet Union, the CEE and Baltic states have not developed similar policy lines towards Russia. In some cases they need to adjust their policies within the context of their respective strategic cultures as well as their economic and political considerations regarding Russia. As seen in new Europeans' differences regarding their policies toward Russia, factors other than strategic culture might be affective in shaping state actors' policy responses. It could be argued that strategic cultures do not directly determine policy responses but provide a persistent and holistic context in which actors operate. Therefore, state actors shape their foreign and security policies accordingly. Still the question of why do states with similar historical and cultural backgrounds give different policy responses towards the same issue remains unanswered by strategic culture arguments.

In general, the period under consideration, 2002–2007, is a period through which both old Europeans and new Europeans have been experiencing dramatic changes in the strategic environment. As a result, most of the European states are in a process of changing or adjusting their respective strategic cultures; and strategic culture as a conceptual framework does not provide tools for analysing changes or transformations in respective strategic cultures.

Stemming from the analysis it could be concluded that in spite of its merits, strategic culture also has limitations in explaining the whole picture as a result of the considerable heterogeneity and complexity of Europeans' attitudes regarding transatlantic security.