'Europe' in France's foreign policy discourses: Threat versus chance

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1. Introduction

France holds a most prominent stance in the history of European integration – prominence, in fact, meaning ambiguity. On the one hand, France launched the Schuman Plan which led to the ECSC, it joined hands with West Germany with the Elysée Treaty, and initiated the EMU introducing a common currency for Europe. On the other hand, Paris scrapped the European Defence Community, blocked the UK's accession, and rejected any deepening of the Community by pursuing an 'empty chair policy' in 1965. When the French voted down the Constitutional Treaty on 29 May 2005, European integration went into its most serious crisis ever since. The referendum's outcome once more bears witness to France's difficulties with ‚Europe' – in the literature often referred to as 'contradictory', 'ambivalent',‚adaptation problem', ‚decay', ‚loss of reality' or 'identity crisis'.[1] The two latter terms shall be explored here by examining the (changing) meaning of ‚Europe' in France's foreign policy discourse since the Second World War. The hypothesis developed here postulates that the former dominant interpretation of ‚*Europe as a security threat*' was replaced by ‚*Europe as chance for security and prosperity*' in the 1990s, which was subsequently interpreted as by ‚*Europe as an economic threat*' (2005).

I will proceed as follows: In a first part, the theoretical and methodological tool box for this study – a combined identity-discourse approach - is introduced. This serves two purposes. One is to propose an analytical tool to examine how 'Europe' has changed its meaning over time. The other is to grasp the strength of political actors supporting certain meanings. Then, a ramble through post-war history will reveal how the French argued with a view to Europe in their most important foreign policy debates. The debate on the European Defence Community in the 1950s provides the basis of French post-war national identity, followed by more recent debates, namely, the Maastricht Referendum (1992), the problems surrounding GATT (1990-94), and the referendum on the Constitutional Treaty (2005).

In conclusion, some implications for the EU's future integration projects are sketched – and a policy recommendation is given how the French malaise could be dealt with in the long run.

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[1] Some examples: Kolodziej 1974: 21, Howorth 1996: 31, Fontaine 1993: 54, Ross 1998 : 1, Hoffmann 1993: 130f., Moreau Defarges 2002: 966, Christadler 1990.

2. The Theoretical and Methodological Approach

The approach taken here is based on a research project conducted at the University of Trier (Joerißen and Stahl 2003, Stahl 2006: 42-60) and is in line with the tradition of constructivist foreign policy analysis as developed by the Copenhagen School (Hansen und Wæver 2002, Larsen 1997, Holm 1997), as well as Thomas Risse's Team (Marcussen et al. 1999, Risse 2001, Roscher 2003). Constructivist theories are rooted in different concepts of which ‚identity' is one of the most popular (Wæver 2005: 34). In general, 'identity ca be defined as *"images of individuality and distinctiveness (`selfhood´)´held and projected by an actor and formed (and modified over time) through relations with significant `others´"*.

<div align="right">(Jepperson et al. 1996: 59)</div>

'National identity' should be understood here as a special case of 'collective identity' (Nadoll 2003, 167) which helps to comprehend the baseline, the *grands lignes*, of foreign policy. An identity approach appears to be well-suited to enlighten France's complex relationship with 'Europe' since it focuses upon a society's 'self' and 'other' and thus deals with the „*social constructions of boundaries*" (Zølner 1998, 171). Unlike rationalist variables, 'identity' demands endogenisaion, i.e. it should be made explicit how a specific identity has evolved and what it precisely means (Cedermann und Daase 2003). Elements of national identity are:

- a common, socially-constructed feeling of a common history,
- a common feeling of belonging to a certain group, a territory, a civilisation, or a culture,
- common institutions which express and safeguard shared history,
- certain peculiarities which help to distinguish 'us' from 'them'.

The formation of a specific identity always is a product of social interaction and communication (Mead 1973: 222, 244). Therefore, it is plausible to link the concept of identity with that of 'discourse'. In democratic societies, political discourses fulfil different functions, namely to

- explain political events,
- legitimise and justify decisions and policies,
- (re-)interpret collective memories and
- (re-)construct identity.

Proceeding from the premise that national identity is expressed in discourses, our understanding of a societal discourse resembles a constantly changing crown of a tree. The single leaves ('arguments') join to form branches ('argumentative patterns') which again meet

to constitute bigger branches ('discursive formations'). All bigger branches, however, stem from the trunk (the 'national identity'). The trunk consists of multiple rings ('identity elements') which tell of passed discursive battles. An 'identity element' should be understood as an ultimate argument which refers to the collective self, e.g. '*the European Germany*' or '*Germany as part of the West*'. Thus, an identity element serves as a consensual starting point for different argumentative patterns. For instance, with reference to the identity element of the '*responsible Germany*', Germany's support for the American attack on Iraq could be claimed but – by reference to the same argumentative pattern - Germany's reluctance to do so at the same time. In other words, identity elements do not predetermine any policy recommendation. This function is filled by the other end of the argumentative chain where recommendations for action usually stand – some advice or claim addressed to decision-makers as to how the country should act with a view to foreign policy.

Identity element I   -> Argumentative patterns 1   ->Recommendations for action A
                       -> Argumentative patterns 2   -> Recommendations for action B

In a discourse, political actors strive to establish their reasoning as the most convincing one dominating other arguments – in this regard, discourses are always power struggles (Torfing 2005, 15, 23). When some political actors succeed in establishing their recommendations for action as the dominant ones, they have achieved 'discourse hegemony' (Nadoll 2003, 176). This hegemonic chain of argumentation best meets the society's current experiences and what is currently held 'to be true'. This not only provides respective political actors with the privilege of interpreting the future ('*Deutungsmacht*'), but also the collective memory of the past.

A broad identity-based argumentative pattern which implies recommendations for action and which is supported by powerful political actors is called 'discursive formation'[2] (Nadoll 2003: 166f., Larsen 1997: 16). Discursive formations reflect a society's basic identity constructions which carry the baggage of passed discursive battles and therefore tend to be relatively stable. As an analytical tool for foreign policy analysis, discursive formations can in some respect be superior to usual research objects like single political actors, political parties or governments. The problem is that foreign policy orientations in Europe usually cut across party lines. Discursive formations take account of this since they group party fractions according to their respective foreign policy orientation. For instance, the PCF, as well as the

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[2] The term has been introduced to the scientific debate by Michel Foucault (1989, 13).

Front National and certain *souvérainistes* of the Gaullists, struggle against any deepening of European integration. Discursive formations pre-structure a discourse following the main line of argumentation – without following the main actors. This seems particularly promising if actors change their arguments over time and usurp other actors' reasoning – as can be observed in France. In addition, when the focus is not on political decisions but on basic orientations and the legitimation of decisions, discursive formations are the better analytical choice.

A final word should address the methodological treatment of a 'loss of reality'. Following the constructivist logic, there is no 'objective reality' as such in discourses but only social interpretations of 'reality' (Milliken 1999, 236). Consequently, a 'reality shock' means that a formative event which is brought up in a discourse obviously does not fit into the pre-dominant interpretation of 'reality'. When such a discursive hegemony remains stable and durable despite diverging perceptions of EU partners, EU institutions, and 'the rest of the world', this signals a 'loss of reality'.

In the following, I will attempt to reveal France's identity change by snap-shooting some of the most contested foreign policy issues of France's post-war history. The struggle against the European Defence Community in the early 1950s serves as a reference point - the fiercest debate since the Dreyfus affair had shuttered French society.

3. 'Europe' in France's foreign policy discourses
3.1 The debate on the European Defence Community (1952-54) – Too many threats from Europe
The context

At that time, the French Fourth Republic was in a state of instability. Governments came and went, and sometimes the country lacked leadership for several months. In addition, France was confronted with severe external challenges, among which the decolonisation issue, the German question and the beginning of the Cold War stood out. In the wake of the Korean War, it was French Premier René Pleven who presented a plan for a European Defence Community which entailed the following elements:

- a Council of Ministers and a common Minister of Defence,
- the integration of the national armies on battalion level,
- no military general staff nor a defence ministry for West Germany,
- the integration of the military command in the NATO framework,
- the maintenance of non-integrated French forces for overseas tasks.

Between 1952 and 1954, several governments of the 4th Republic did not dare table the treaty in Parliament. Eventually, the radical-socialist Mendès France presented it but without actively supporting the EDC. Although already signed by six European countries, the treaty was voted down in the National Assembly on 30 August 1954.[3] As a consequence, German rearmament was embedded in the transatlantic alliance, and European defence remained an enigma for the decades to come.

In the debate, the political class was totally split and – with the exception of the communist party - did not follow party lines (Siegfried 1959, 153).

Argumentation

Identity elements (ultimate arguments)	Argumentative patterns	Recommendations for action
(France as part of) Europe as a common destiny	• Overcoming of nationalism • Aim of United States of Europe	pro
France as part of the West	• US engagement necessary • Alliance with the UK essential	pro pro/contra
Preservation of France	• EDC as death of the *nation* • Aim of a Europe of nations/states	pro contra
(France as part of) Europe as a Third Force	• Neutral Germany • US influence in Europe too big • Aim of a 'European Europe'	pro pro contra
France as a Great Power	• Strong France as a model for Europe • Soviet threat to Western Europe • Threat of German power-house and 'Rapallo' • EDC weakens France's military strength • EDC as a tool to control Germany	contra pro/contra pro/contra contra pro
France as part of the Christian Occident	• United States of Europe as a community of values	pro

Table 1. The EDC-Debate (Synopsis from: Stahl 2006, 112-124)

In the debate, the political class was totally split and – with the exception of the communist party - did not follow party lines (Siegfried 1959, 153). The so-called *cédistes* pleaded in favour of a sovereignty transfer in defence issues while the *anti-cédistes* rejected the idea of a European defence. The idealists portraying *'France as part of the Christian*

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[3] Fractions and parties voted as follows (cons/pro): PCF (Communists): 99/0, SFIO (Socialists): 53/50, PR (Radikal Socialists): 34/33, UDSR (moderate left): 10/8, MRP (Christian Democrats): 2/80, Modérés: 44/79, Indépendants: 3/11, RPF (Gaullists): 67/2, Others: 7/1.

Occident' and *'Europe as a common destiny'* proved rather weak. Foreign Minister Robert Schuman did not succeed in finding much support when he argued that the EDC would contribute to the overcoming of nationalism and might lead to a revival of the West (Dettke 1981, 239f.). Communists and Gaullists heavily criticised his argumentation by calling its supporters 'Vichyists', 'Munichois' and 'foreign countries' party' (Rioux 1985, 165). Gaullists as well as the Jacobin-minded partisans of the Socialists and Radicals were afraid of the "death of the French nation" (O'Neill 1981, 76) and instead pleaded in favour of a ‚Europe of nation-states'. In this perspective, France was to serve as a model in Europe.

Even among the *cédistes,* a rather realist view was more pervasive. The ‚Atlanticists' argued that the Soviet threat and the control of Germany required France's integration into the West (Hoffmann 1956, 74-76). Since German rearmament seemed inevitable, the EDC appeared as the ‚smallest evil' as Schuman's successor Georges Bidault put it. The EDC would serve as an instrument to tie Germany to the West, it would help to dampen the re-awakening of German nationalism and prevent any temptations of a new ‚Rapallo'. Another line of argumentation which was particularly popular among socialists was based on the identity element of a *‚Europe as a third force'*. The EDC was to contribute to a strong Europe which could balance the two emerging superpowers (Zeraffa-Dray 1993, 238). But these different motivations in favour of European defence faced a dilemma: The more the U.S. and the U.K. were linked to the EDC framework following the demand of the Atlanticists, the less autonomous a EDC would become and the less it could serve as a third force (Loth 1995, 195).

The *anti-cédistes* held different positions on the German question. The communists denied the necessity of German rearmament altogether and interpreted the Stalin notes as a good sign for coming to terms with Moscow. Yet the Gaullists and the vast majority of the military agreed to German rearmament but refused to combine French troops with German forces. At a time when France had to defend its interests in Indochina, the EDC would split and therefore further weaken the French army. Hence, France would hardly be able to maintain parity with Germany in the EDC and lose influence and power (Guillen 1985, 146): The EDC "*réarme Allemagne et désarme la France!*" (Fauvet 1956, 37). To *anti-cédistes'* minds, only a strong and autonomous France would be in a position to deal with post-war problems. The EDC, it was argued, served the opposite by undermining French sovereignty and diminishing French influence. Or, as some Gaullists put it: If the EDC came to force "*L'Europe serait construite sur le cadavre de la France.*" (Fauvet 1956, 37).

Conclusions

The EDC debate illuminated the basic conceptions of Europe and the strength of their principal supporters. The 'idealists' – whose argumentation were founded in a '*European destiny*' or the '*Christian Occident*' – represented only a minority. The vast majority of the *cédistes* as well as of the *anti-cédistes* argued in a 'realist'[4] vein. The crucial questions were how the threat posed by the Soviet Union and the latent German one were judged. In order to balance these threats, the *cédistes* favoured a common West including the UK and the US which should in the long run transform to a '*Europe of a third force*'. By contrast, the opponents pleaded for a 'Europe of Nations' which would give France a leading role.

Most evidently, the affective Europe which yielded a lot of sympathy right after the war had disappeared. Instead, the '*Europe as a third force*' – a systemic identity element – figured prominently in the discourse. Apart from that, 'Europe' was primarily seen as a means, France being separate from Europe. In the debate, the doom-sayers succeeded in discrediting the EDC as a threat to France's status, values, and security.

When the EDC was liquidated, European defence became part of the transatlantic alliance. The 'no' in the National Assembly had meant just that although the alternative – German re-armament in NATO - had not been a topic in the discourse. So the (unrealistic) views on Europe and the world prevailed and became the 'Gaullist consensus' – the loss of reality carried the day.

3.2 From EDC to Maastricht

In the aftermath of the anti-cedists' victory, the agreement on the Roman Treaties came about as a miracle (Parsons 2000, 52). Yet France's compliance was due to lucky circumstances, one being the extraordinary cleverness of the Mollet government and the other the linkage between the EEC and Euratom (Küsters 1989, 224).

In retrospect, de Gaulle's foreign policy can be interpreted as an endeavour to avoid any modification of the hegemonic *anti-cédiste* world view. Instead, as President of the Republic, he strived to make reality meet his views. Examples include his proposals of a great power *directoire*, the Fouchet initiatives, the veto on the UK's accession to the EC, the blockade of the European institutions, the OECD's plans for a free trade area, and the withdrawal from NATO's military command. But the effectiveness of this policy turned out to be limited: plans for a *directoire* and the Fouchet initiatives failed, the Northern enlargement passed

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[4] We borrow the terms 'idealist' and 'realist' to name our discourse formations from Raymond Aron (1956, 12). 'Realist' denotes an argumentation which bases on threats, relative gain seeking, and the balancing motive.

under his successor Pompidou, the 'Luxembourg compromise' enabled a further deepening, and French NATO policy remained largely symbolic. By the end of the 1960s, France's European policy had reached an all-time low (Lucas 1992, 387). It took another decade before France regained the initiative by proposing a European Monetary System which became a stepping stone for the EMU. Giscard's changed rhetoric on Europe was even more accentuated by his successor Mitterrand who spoke of 'the United States of Europe', 'the common European house' and 'the European confederation' (Joerißen 2001, 68). Yet his 'idealist' rhetoric hardly did translate into factual foreign policy considering analysts' statements on the „*rosa Gaullisten*" (Kolboom 1991, 146) and „*Mitterrand`s Foreign Policy, or Gaullism by any other Name*" (Hoffmann 1987). The economic debacle of the left government in the early 1980s marked a 'turn' in France's identity which made the *relance* of European integration in the field of economics – namely the SEA - possible. Henrik Larsen (1997, 95) observed two dominant discourses in the 1980s, one of which - (dominant 1981-84) – constructed France and Europe as separate and mutually exclusive. But in the second one (dominant 1984-1990) Europe appeared as a prolonged France: French aspirations were projected to the European level. The subsequent debates on the TEU and the GATT are apt to summarise the strengths of those discursive formations and illuminate how substantial the 'turn' in France's identity in the 1980s really had been.

3.3 The debate on the Maastricht Referendum (1992) – Europe as a utility

The context

On 11 December 1991, the heads of government agreed on the most far-reaching reforms of the EC since the Roman Treaties. The policies of the EC were extended, the principle of majority voting was strengthened and the powers of the European Parliament increased. Furthermore, integration was enhanced by introducing a common currency and a European citizenship. After having signed the Treaty on European Union in February 1992, the ratification procedure commenced in all member states. Due to the Danish no and the verdict of the German *Bundesverfassungsgericht*, the treaties did not enter into force until November 1993.

On 3 June 1992, President Mitterrand announced that France would go for a referendum –a possible but not a necessary move according to the constitution. A first motive for his decision could have been his ambition to demonstrate France's *rôle leader* in European integration – in particular vis-à-vis the UK. Secondly, without any doubt, he targeted at splitting the Gaullist opposition and thus stabilising the Socialist government (Appleton 1992: 1f.). However, Joseph Rovan (Rovan 1992, 476) termed his decision as "unbelievable political carelessness". In the following months, a heated and fierce debate broke loose,

triggering a "crisis of French ‚identity" (Kassim 1997, 168). At the end of the day, the French approved the TEU by a narrow margin of 51,04%.[5]

All major parties of the centre, the socialists (PS), the Gaullists (RPR), the UDF and the Greens, were split over the issue (Criddle 1993, 231). Only the parties on the edges of the political spectrum, the Communists (PCF) and the *Front National*, entirely voted against the TEU. In their battle against the treaty, the PCF was supported by the trade unions (CGT), left-wing intellectuals and dissidents from the PS and the RPR which organised a *Comité pour une autre Europe* (Appleton 1992, 8). In the socialist party, President Mitterrand – supported by the minister for European Affairs Elisabeth Guigou, Bernard Kouchner and Jack Lang – sought to rally the vast majority of the party for a Yes. Only the former defence minister Chevènement, together with a group of left-wing Jacobins, departed from that line and pleaded for a no.[6] The moderate mid-right party UDF – spear-headed by its former president Giscard d'Estaing – signalled overall acceptance of the treaty. Yet renegade Philippe de Villiers initiated a *combat de valeurs* against the agreement.[7] Despite the fact that he was completely isolated among top functionaries, he convinced many local UDF politicians to share his position and made it to pull one-third of the voters to his side (Criddle 1993, 232). Positive statements came from the Catholic Church and the industry. A deep rift went through the Gaullists (RPR). Although party leaders Chirac and Balladur half-heartedly supported the TEU, two former ministers (Séguin, Pasqua) launched a widely recognised media campaign against Maastricht which appealed to half of the Gaullists' electorate. Consequently, when confronted with decisive votes in the Senate, the party decided to abstain. The green parties also avoided any official statement since their leaders' opinions diverged (Appleton 1992: 9f.): Antoine Wächter (*les Verts*) and Brice Lalonde (*Génération écologie*) pleaded in favour of ratification but were countered by Dominique Voynet and Alain Lipietz.

The two political camps evidently held different views on Europe as was characterised by the terms ‚*souverainistes*' and ‚*intégrationnistes*'.

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[5] For analysis see: O. Duhamel and G. Grunberg: „*Référendum: les dix France*", in: Le Monde 22/9/1992, pp.1, 7.

[6] Jean-Pierre Chevènement used to be the front-man of ‚*Socialisme et République*' – a jacobin minded group in the PS which represented round about 8% of the party members. After Maastricht he left the party and founded the ‚*Mouvement des Citoyens*' (MDC).

[7] Philippe de Villiers who wrote „*Notre Europe contre Maastricht*" became famous in the referendum campaign and remained the UFD's ‚bird of paradise' in the following years.

Argumentation

Identity elements (ultimate arguments)	Argumentative patterns	Recommendations for action
(France as part of) Europe as a common destiny	• Franco-German reconciliation serves as a basis for European unity	pro
European France	• Europe propels domestic modernisation and prosperity • Europe as a threat to France's economic and social system	pro contra
Preservation of France	• Europe as a medium for French values • Europe as a threat to the *nation* undermining French sovereignty	pro contra
(France as part of) Europe as a Third Force	• 'European Europe' in security policy • Enhanced competitiveness vis-a-vis the US and the Far East • Europe is a playground for US-interests	pro pro contra
France as a Great Power	• Loss of France's own status • Threat by a 'German Europe' • EU as a means to bind Germany	contra contra pro

Table 2. The Maastricht-Referendum (synopsis from: Stahl 2006, 125-140)

Conclusions

Regarding the debates until June, Mitterrand's calculation seemed to have paid off: The RPR was split and the government could present itself well off. Yet in the two months to follow, the leaders of the *intégrationnistes* – Mitterrand, Chirac and Giscard – proved unwilling to enter the discourse. Thus, for instance, RPR leader Chirac stated support for the TEU 'only as a private person' (Roscher 2003, 187). This public vacuum was easily filled by the party renegades Pasqua, Séguin, Chevènement and de Villiers who could spread their appealing message. The population became more and more sceptical: In June, still 65 per cent favoured a yes but until mid-August, support melted down to 50 per cent (Kolboom 1993, 14). The government reacted only after Mitterrand had intervened in early September. Yet the yes campaign was to no avail since it lacked appealing slogans (Appleton 1992, 10) – by the way, a striking similarity to the Constitutional Treaty. When some pro-Europe-minded personalities finally entered the discourse – among them Giscard and Delors - and Mitterrand could win a duel against Séguin on TV, the rise of the no could be stopped and secured the narrow margin in the final vote. The *intégrationnistes'* most convincing argumentative patterns were the instrumentalisation of Europe, serving a triple purpose: to balance the US, to modernise France, and to bind Germany.

To say no in the referendum also meant to say no to France's political class. The party leaders and known personalities were clearly in favour of ratification, its opponents were outsiders. Moreover, the President as well as government were highly unpopular at the time – another parallel to the Constitutional treaty debate. Analysts therefore spoke of an *élite-mass split* (Cohen-Tanugi 1993, 37) and a *"crise du politique"* (Moreau Defarges 1993). The *souverainistes* acted successfully as challengers of the ruling political class.

When comparing the activated identity elements with those of the EDC debate, it can be stated that four out of six elements were still at stake. Only two – ‚*France as part of the Christian Occident*' and ‚*France as part of the West*' – did not play any role in the Maastricht debate.[8] In the ‚realist' argumentation in both discourses, different threats for France's international position were discussed – making prominent use of the balancing motif. In the EDC dispute, the warning voices with regard to Germany's re-armament had dominated the fear of Soviet aggression. Forty years later, Germany remained in the core of the arguments. Again, the *intégrationnistes* pleaded for an substantial *engrénage,* supranationality being the adequate tool. In addition, they relied on a third identity element which constructed – slightly modifying the 'Third Force' – '*Europe as a balancer*' in international politics. Due to various formative events – one being the outbreak of war in the former Yugoslavia – the weakness of Europe had become evident and thus strengthened the *intégrationnistes'* stance. The forth, very important identity element was the *'preservation of France'* which had well served the *anti-cédistes*: The substantive loss of sovereignty in the defence realm would have shuttered the foundations of the nation. While this argumentative pattern largely remained unchallenged at the time, the proponents of a yes turned the argument around: After the end of the Cold War, French values could only be maintained and spread when propelling them to Europe via the EU. By contrast, the *souvérainistes* held that French *indépendence* and *exception* – in cultural as well as in civilisational terms – could only be preserved by marking off Europe.

When the identity elements, argumentative patterns and recommendations for action of the *souvérainistes and anti-cédistes* are condensed and summarised, a 'realist-autonomous' discursive formation appears. This discursive formation used to represent the traditional 'Gaullist consensus'. But under the permanent reality shocks, it lost some of its momentum over time – as became obvious in the Gaullists' split. Those now pro-European Gaullists joined UDF politicians and the majority of the Socialists without losing their realist

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[8] These elements are ‚de-activated' and have not evaporated. E.g. in the reception of 9/11 a certain re-activation of ‚*France as a part of the West*' could be observed.

understanding of world politics. As Larsen has observed for the 1980s, this discursive formation – let us call it 'realist-European' – succeeded in integrating Europe in the French self-conception.[9] This fifth identity element – the '*European France*' – was also used by left-wingers who rejected the TEU. They argued that the European France should withstand any capitalist temptations and the 'European France' was meant to become a model for a social Europe which was to secure solidarity and workers' rights. But the *integrationnistes* linked Europe to necessary domestic reforms, e.g. creating 'national champions' which could compete with German, Japanese and American companies on a large scale. This realist-European discursive formation – in effect with the help of the idealist one – carried the day (Roscher 2003, 2). Yet it was a close race and, as the following discourses will reveal, the realist-autonomous discursive formation remains enormously powerful. Indeed, in Maastricht, it lost a battle and European integration could thrive for some more years.

3.4 The debate on GATT – a France outside Europe

The context

The *General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade* (GATT) was developed after the Second World War to promote free trade on a global scale. In Europe, a customs union was established in 1969. Since then, the common external tariff and the common external economic policy are administered by the European Commission which speaks in the name of the EC/EU in international trade negotiations. The so-called Uruguay Round was meant to deal with the following topics:

- tariffs and non-tariff barriers,
- sector-specific issues (tropical fruit, agriculture, textiles, resources),
- a reform of the traditional GATT framework (reduction of exemptions, subsidies and compensatory payments, dispute settlement) and the functioning of the system,
- the new agenda (services, intellectual property, capital investment).

The Uruguay Round had been the eighth negotiation round within GATT and was named after its opening place - Punta del Este in Uruguay (20/9/1986). It was supposed to last for four years but in fact took four more years and was concluded on 15 April 1994. The treaty entered into force on 1 January 1995 with a World Trade Organisation as its new institutional cornerstone. Since the Doha Round currently appears to be deadlocked, the Uruguay Round was the biggest and most important reform of the word trading system until today.

On the way to more free trade, progress can only be achieved by an incremental step-by-step approach which requires patient negotiating skills on behalf of the negotiating parties. In the

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[9] Similar: Goulard (2000, 3). Schubert (1989, 559) has called this political string 'Euro-Gaullist'.

member states' perspective, these negotiations resemble three-level games: Before the Commission can take a position, it first has to be mandated by the member states. Considering the length and the content's complexity, one cannot be surprised that deadlocks and standstills are common phenomena. France played a significant part in the negotiations since

„France was at the centre of the controversy because its continuing refusal to agree to the proposal became the EC's refusal." (Epstein 1997, 188)

Frances's behaviour can be characterised as follows (Stahl 2006, 157-159): Between 1990 and the change in government in 1993, the socialist government objected to negotiations altogether. This implied

- a deeply sceptical stance concerning the incorporation of agriculture and cultural goods,
- a constant threat to veto any international agreement (e.g. Blair House Agreement),
- a permanent endeavour to find allies for the French position,
- a consistent attempt to effectively control and limit the Commission's space of manoeuvre.

Even massive diplomatic pressure from the US, the Commission and its EC partners could not make France move: *„La France (…) a longtemps adopté une position suicidaire sur le dossier de l'intégration européenne et de la négociation du GATT "* (Saint-Étienne 1993, 388)

It was only in spring 1993 when the (socialist) government Bérégovoy was replaced by a centre-right government that the situation gradually changed. Yet any change of course meant an enormous risk to the Balladur government since the Gaullists' rhetoric had exceeded the Socialists' by far. Only when the German government demonstrated solidarity with France in a dramatic Council meeting, Balladur finally agreed to a compromise. After having survived a vote of no confidence in the National Assembly, the Uruguay-Round could be concluded the same day.

Argumentation

Identity elements (ultimate arguments)	Argumentative patterns	Recommendations for action
(France as part of) Europe as a common destiny	• cultural identity of Europe threatened	contra
European France	• 'third way' between free trade and protectionism desirable • Europe as social model • EC preferential trading arrangements prevail over international agreements	contra contra contra

Identity elements (ultimate arguments)	Argumentative patterns	Recommendations for action
Preservation of France	• agreement would mean treachery to the rural France	contra
(France as part of) Europe as a balancer	• France as leader of European farmers • Aggressive US behaviour vis-a-vis EC • Germany sides with France, common European positioning	contra contra pro
France as a Great Power	• US seeks to put second agrarian world power down • One-sidedness of the Commission, lack of French influence • WTO as institution limiting future US arbitrary acts • national courage needed to end isolation	contra contra pro pro

Table 3. The GATT-Debatte (synopsis from: Stahl 2006, 145-190)

Conclusions

The GATT discourse bears witness to the practically non-existing liberal idea in France. Instead, France was constructed as spear-heading the battle for the rural Europe – propagating a 'third way' between liberalism and protectionism against the Anglo-Saxon ultra-liberalism. A second argument hailed the French resistance as honourable since it defended Europe's cultural identity (*exception culturelle*). The fact that the rest of Europe hardly sided with France remained largely unnoticed in the domestic arena. The European institutions – the Commission in particular – acted in an irresponsible manner and ignored the French interests. Consequently, France claimed its control and substantial institutional degradation. The rejection of the Blair House Agreement (brokered by the US and the Commission) was entirely consensual in France – idealists as well as both realist discursive formations basically shared the same view. Unfortunately, this meant that France was completely isolated even within the EC. The Bérégovoy government backed a national veto threat by a National Assembly resolution – an institutional safeguard for the loss of reality. The Balladur government only succeeded because all of a sudden, Chancellor Kohl – to the complete surprise of his ministers, by the way – sided with France and the Council agreed to a semantic statement which demanded a reformulation of the Blair House compromise.

The discourse revealed that the alleged identity change was only one part of the story. The *mission civilisatrice,* modernisation and competitiveness arguments which had characterised the discourse hegemony in the Maastricht case to some extent simply did not show up. Even the idealists who struggled for Europe's culture and identity did not pay any attention to the discourses in the rest of Europe, their argumentation remained inward-looking and

egocentric. Even more alarming was the perception of the Commission which served as a scapegoat. The instrumental use of 'Europe' was ubiquitous in all realist argumentative patterns. Whereas the idealists spoke for Europe without having consulted it, the realists projected the proper loss of reality to the European level. Thus, in many respects, the GATT discourse precluded the outcome of the Constitutional treaty referendum. When 'Europe' – an economic giant consisting of a single market and a monetary union – is rhetorically linked to economic issues in French discourses, it will indeed get into rough waters.

3.6 The Constitutional Treaty – globalisation's gate-keeper

Context

On 29 May 2005, a solid majority (54.87 per cent) of the French voted against the Constitutional Treaty. When the Dutch did the same a few weeks later, the European Council decided to suspend the ratification process: European integration thus entered into its most severe crisis since the Luxembourg compromise 40 years ago. The crisis came suddenly but not unexpected because the alarm signal of the Danish rejection of Maastricht and the negative Irish referendum on Nice had passed unheard. Only a 'reflection clause' found its way in the Treaty of Nice. The highly susceptible[10] ratification procedure remained unaltered – despite increased risks due to more national referenda and a more politicised project called ‚constitution'. The following deficiencies were known:

- There is no choice between political alternatives (e.g. Nice v. Constitutional Treaty) but only a yes/no decision is offered. Whereas the consequences of a yes are obvious, the consequences of a no remain opaque (no institutional arrangements, no 'plan B').

- The adoption of the treaty follows a national, not a European logic. Only some member states require referenda which take place on different dates. Most evidently, there is no European debate but only a chain of national debates. The outcome of an earlier debate might influence the outcomes of later ones.[11]

- The political will of the people is *post factum*: the negotiations are closed and the treaty has already been signed. As a consequence, the discourse cannot have any effect on certain issues which makes it look like a pseudo-democratic event.

All of these deficits were well-known since 1992 and in retrospect, it is hard to comprehend that these problems had been entirely ignored. Most probably, the EU was blinded by the overwhelmingly positive outcomes of the referenda in the candidate countries which let the

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[10] Sheer mathematics could have caused serious doubts. Assumed that there were only six referenda, and the probability to win for each referendum is 50%, then the chance that the Constitution would have passed in all countries is 1,5%….

[11] The football championships have learned faster (from the devastating German-Austrian performance in Gijon): The final games in one group are now taking place simultaneously.

EU forget about the devastating experiences with the Norwegian and the Swiss EES referenda.

Argumentation

Identity elements (ultimate arguments)	Argumentative patterns	Recommendations for action
(France as part of) Europe as a common destiny	• maintain peace and prosperity • enhance historic mission of overcoming nationalism	pro pro
European France	• Constitution as necessity and compromise • another Europe is possible	pro contra
Preservation of France	• French values and social system continue to be exported • Threat to the nation and France's social model	pro contra
(France as part of) Europe as a balancer	• Constitution strengthens Europe's position in the world • Constitution is symbol of Anglo-Saxon pre-dominance which weakens Europe	pro contra
France as a Great Power	• a No would weaken France's influence in the world • France's influence decreased due to supranationalisiation and enlargements	pro contra
France as part of the Christian Occident	• Threat of Turkey's accession	contra

Table 5. The referendum on the Constitutional Treaty
(see: Stahl 2006, 141-143, Schild 2005)

Conclusions

Already in terms of motives, Maastricht and the Constitional treaty show striking similarities: Chirac followed Mitterrand in his idle belief that a majority of yes votes could easily be secured while the opposition could be split. By so doing - the next parallel fallacy - France's and the government's position in Europe could have been enhanced (Schild 2005, 189). What Mitterrand did to the Gaullists, Chirac did to the Socialists. He paid a high price for his successful *vendetta*: „*A severe crise d'identité*" led to a „*Tsunami politique*".[12] The president desperately tried to separate a vote in favour of the Constitution from a vote in favour of himself – in vain. It is well remembered that it was Chirac who had withdrawn from the debate in 1992 in order not to support Mitterrand – an irony of history.

Another striking observation was that the parties again were split all over. Admittedly, the Gaullists were remarkably pro-European this time but the Maastricht renegades had left the

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[12] Title of an article in the *Economist* (28/5/2005) and the head-line of *La Tribune*(30/5/2005).

party. Even the PCF was split this time, and so were the trade unions and civil society (Larhant 2005, 3). The *élite-mass split* was deepened through the referendum and complemented in some way the shock of the presidential elections in 2002 when right-wing Le Pen had left Prime Minister Jospin behind.[13] The observation that all leading media in France were inclined towards the yes camp further supports the idea of an *élite-mass split.*[14] The dissatisfaction of many, especially among the young, was instead articulated via the internet (websites of the no camp, blogs).

The supportes of the yes pursued a strategy which was oriented towards the success of the Maastricht debate. The largely utilitarian arguments stressed *l'Europe puissance*, the functional necessity of an institutional reform, and painted the disastrous consequences of a no in dark colours which would make France's influence shrink.[15] These were arguments from the realist-European tool box which mainly referred to ‚*France as a Great Power*' and ‚*Europe as a balancer*'. This did not counter the major line of no argumentations which rooted in the preservation of France: its prosperity and its model of society jeopardised by 'ultraliberalism' as represented by the Constitution. The anti-globalist and leader of a farmer's union, José Bové, made his point when he claimed that 200 years after the fall of the Bastille, the Constitutional Treaty should now follow suit (cf. Economist 28/5/05). The pro-constitutionalists' attempt to define the constitution as a ‚neutral' framework was to no avail although the anti-constitutional stance of many liberals – e.g. the Economist – could have played for this line of argumentation. President Chirac had desperately tried to sell the treaty as „daughter of 1789" (cf. Schild 2005, 199) emphasising the attractiveness of a so understood ‚*European France*' and the ‚*nation*'. Re-calling the quotation introducing this paper, the pro-constitutionalists still clung to „*faire l'Europe*" whereas their opponents had already moved further to the „*sans défaire la France*". In their agumentative patterns, the identity element '*European France*' experienced a drastic change: Europe changed France more than *vice versa*. In that sense, the anti-constitutionalists proved the strongest believers in Europeanisation! To put it differently, they no longer swallowed the nice stories about how France had used Europe for her purpose but acknowledged that Europe indeed has the power to interfere in the national realm. Unfortunately, this Europeanisation is perceived only as a negative one. Considering that politics still matters the belief that it should be able to turn

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[13] The feeling of the time was a „*ras-le-bol général*", see e.g. the analyses in the dailies *Libération* and *Le Monde* (30/5/2005, the comment „Das Publikum verlässt den Saal", FAZ (13/6/2005) and Hanns W. Maull's Editorial: „*The Melt-down of European politics*", Newsletter on German Foreign Policy, http://www.deutsche-aussenpolitik.de/digest/op-ed_inhalt_17.php [21.6.2005].

[14] Altweg, J.:"*Frankreich vor dem Referendum. Jasager und Neinmeiner*", in: FAZ (24/5/2005) p.46.

[15] See Schild's (2005, 191) argumentation and the empirically gathered arguments of the voters: IPSOS: „*Référendum 29 Mai 2005: Le sondage sorti des urnes*", http://-www.ipsos.fr/CanalIpsos/poll/8074.asp [23/6/05].

things around again, i.e. to re-negotiate the treaty, seemed comprehensible. It were the departing socialist (e.g. Fabius, Emmanuelli) who successfully argued that 'another Europe' is possible and therefore appeared as 'the better Europeans'. On the one hand, this was well in line with the elite's *langue de bois* – systematically exaggerating France's possibilities. But on the other hand, this unrealistic argumentation could hardly be countered since this had revealed the pseudo-democratic character of the whole endeavour and the sheer instumentalisation of the referendum for party purposes.

An analysis of the reasons given for the no vote also reveals that the concrete context of the Constitutional Treaty did not matter too much. In the debate, the anti-constitutionalists used a variety of arguments which - in a narrow sense – did not have anything to do with the contents of the treaty. Yet they anchored their arguments well in the French identity. For instance, the future accession of Turkey would threaten the foundations of the *Christian Occident* – the FN's mantra in the debate.[16] In addition, further enlargements would weaken France's say in the European institutions (*France as a Great Power*) – an argument well in line with the government's rhetoric in the running-up to the Nice summit. And enlargements, moreover, enable the famous 'Polish plumber' to undermine the French social system (*Preservation of France*). Since Maastricht – when the basic argument had been already present – the anti-constitutionalists have been arming up: Be it the Bolkestein directive, companies' *délocalisations*, the negative impact of the ECB or the humiliating deficit procedure of the European stability pact: French society is hurt by European politics. The fact that these subjects were not part of the Constitutional Treaty but of earlier treaties (SEA 1986, TEU 1992, Amsterdam Treaty 1998) is revealing. Evidently, there is hardly any permissive consensus working in favour of these institutions. This might reflect the 'realist dialectics' (*langue de bois*) of former governments: Mitterrand and the socialist Premiers did not approve the ECB because of ist functional, economic superiority. Rather, it had been a tool to get rid of the 'asymmetry' – the dominance of the Bundesbank. And the Fabius government did not praise the Single European Market in order to overcome national market barriers, enhance competition and realise efficiency. Rather, it was seen as a means to meet the Asian challenge and to Europe's status as a ‚third force' in the international system. The French bought this 'realist dialectics' in the short run but never accepted these institutions as such. In other words, the ‚loss-of-reality gap' has never been closed. No wonder that the

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[16] The use of this identity element in the long run is telling : Robert Schuman referred it in the EDC discourse in order to overcome national resentments, Le Pen re-activated it 50 years later to promote such cultural resentments.

factual construction of Europe more and more diverged from the French's proper projection how it should look like.

If one looks only at the numeric strength of political formations, one would not have expected any problems with ratification.[17] Yet the threat to the French economic model by a 'ultra-liberal Europe´ sketched above appealed to the supporters of the otherwise pro-European Socialist party. Victory in the referendum had been enabled by deserters from the PS (most prominently former Prime Minister Laurent Fabius) and the Greens.[18] In analytical terms, the realist-European discourse formation was split and the 'deserting' fraction joined forces in its recommendation for action, i.e. 'no to the Constitutional Treaty', with the realist-autonomous discourse formation which struggled against the Treaty by reference to its well-known souverainist arguments. After the failure of the EDC, another huge European project failed due to a lack of support from the French left.

4. Conclusions

The referendum on the Constitutional Treaty has revealed that the Europeanisation of the French political parties is not well under way. While the extreme parties of the right and left hardly show any progress at all in this respect, the parties of the centre are torn when the question of Europe comes around. The Gaullists and the UDF paid the price of persevering quarrels all along the 1990s which ended in (souverainist) separations, and the PS is heading for a similar destiny. The stable images of Europe which are far from 'reality' and the looming popular front euphoria[19] among the leftist anti-constitutionalists are a bad omen for the foreign policy challenges ahead: the Doha Round, a substantial reform of European institutions, and enlargement to South-East Europe.

In terms of political communication, how could the 'reality gap' be narrowed? In other words, how could the political discourse in France meet those of the partners again? In my point of view, one thing to start with is to give up the *gentlemen's agreement* that European institutions and the EU partners respect the national discursive space. The Commission, politicians and personalities from other countries should intervene in national discourses - in particular in France.[20] This would have another desired side-effect: One could get rid of national government playing the role of Europe's advocate in a discourse - which had proved

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[17] Vgl. D. Reynié: « *20 mai 2005, un paysage dynamité* », Analyse, Institut Robert Schuman, http://www.robert-schuman.org/öe/france/referendum/resultats.htm [12.09.2005].

[18] Jean-Marie Colombani: „*L'impasse*", in : Le Monde v. 30.5.2005.

[19] See Karine G. Barzegar on the Website france-republicaine.fr: Pour une autre Europe. Le jounal permanent du NON a la Constitution europeenne, http://reseau.over-blog.com/article-406096.html (download: 16.5.06).

[20] As the results of the PFE-Project suggest, this claim could also be made for Denmark, Greece, and the United Kingdom.

fatal in spreading realist dialectics. By so doing, Europe would have a voice in the domestic realm, instrumental rhetoric of governments could be revealed, and Europe would have the opportunity to lose the image of just being the national elite's favourite.

The weakness of the idealist discursive formation is another characteristic – not only in France but also in Denmark and the United Kingdom. What is special about France is the use of 'Europe' as systemic (but hollow) category which roots in ‚*Europe as a balancer*'. The other omnipresent argumentative patterns entail Europe as 'extended France' or as mere instrument to pursue national goals. In Maastricht, the realist-European discursive formation had achieved discourse hegemony by selling this ‚extended France' to the public – Europe as chance for prosperity and security. Thirteen years later, the realist dialectics had fallen back on its promoters: France is conquered by globalisation and Europe serves as a gate-keeper of the latter.

An essential ingredient of realist discourses are patterns of threat which are filled by perceptions of the international system. For 40 years, Germany had fed these threat patterns, but now it was replaced by ‚globalisation'. At least, to explain the French no with regard to the EDC as well as to the Constitutional Treaty, a German word can be of some use since it has already made its way into the English vocabulary: Angst.

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