The foreign policy process has become Europeanised, in the sense that in every international issue, there is an exchange of information and an attempt to arrive at a common understanding and a common approach – compared to how things were in the past, where most issues were looked at in isolation without addressing the attitudes of other member states or a European dimension.

These words of a senior British foreign policy-maker reflect the experience of foreign policy cooperation between member states of the European Union for more than a quarter of a century. Over the years, the level of ambition to speak with 'one voice' in foreign affairs has steadily increased to include even security and defence questions. The Maastricht Treaty clearly stipulated that the Union’s Common Foreign and Security Policy should aim to assert the EU’s identity on the international stage. This progressive deepening and widening of European integration in foreign policy raises a number of interesting questions, particularly regarding the significance and future role of the state in foreign policy: Are states no longer the most important organisational actors in foreign policy? Is the realist idea that states ultimately seek to preserve their national independence in foreign policy still relevant to international relations in Europe?

The precise implication that the CFSP has for national foreign policy is a matter of contention in the academic literature. Yet, few analysts would probably disagree with the observation that it has ‘moved the conduct of foreign policy away from the old nation-state national sovereignty model towards a collective endeavour, a form of high-level networking with transformationalist effects’ (Hill and Wallace 1996: 6). How we conceptualise these changes in foreign policy is a major challenge and provokes us to look anew at the theories and categories with which we go about our research on foreign policy in contemporary Europe. A central research problem is to explore the relevance of the state and investigate whether the agency of foreign policy is now increasingly conceived on the European level by policy-makers.
This chapter sets out to explore this research problem using a political-cultural approach and seeks to illuminate the cognitive mind-maps with which policy-makers interpret their political ‘realities’. Culture is here defined as the broad context in which individual and collective identities are linked, producing shared meanings that influence the framing of political action. In foreign policy, the concept has been characterised as ‘broad and general beliefs and attitudes about one’s own nation, about other nations, and about the relationships that actually obtain or that they should obtain between the self and others in the international arena’ (Vertzberger 1990: 68). The analysis presented here is based on a social constructivist perspective, in the sense that political ideas and perceptions are assumed to be part of cognitive structures that give meaning to the material world (cf. Adler 1997b).

At the core of the analytical framework presented below stand two key concepts: identity and role. The first is identity. Ideas about who ‘we’ are tend to serve as a guide to political action and basic worldviews. Collective identities express a sense of belonging to membership of a distinct group. As such, they tend to provide a system of orientation for self-reference and action (Ross 1997: 2). Thus, it is important to address the issue of how foreign policy is interconnected with national and/or European identity. Changes in self-conceptions, it is suggested, are intimately bound up with long-term foreign policy change. For its part, the concept of role facilitates a political-cultural approach to foreign policy analysis in two ways. The first is methodological. Role concepts provide us with an analytical and operational link between identity constructions and patterns of foreign policy behaviour. Role conceptions suggest how cultural norms and values are translated into verbal statements about expected foreign policy behaviour and action orientation. As Hudson and Vore (1995: 26) note, ‘National role conception is one of the few conceptual tools we have for the study of how society and culture serve as a context for a nation’s foreign policy. It allows one to bridge the conceptual gap between the general beliefs held in a society and the beliefs of foreign policy decision makers.’

Role conceptions could metaphorically be thought of as ‘road maps’ which facilitate the foreign policy-maker’s navigation through a complex political reality. Human perception is theory-driven, as Jönsson, Tägil and Törnqvist (2000: 10) point out: ‘Theories are like floodlights that illuminate one part of the stage but, by the same token, leave other parts in the shade or in the dark.’ Given the emphasis on role conceptions, it should be apparent that the analytical framework presented in this chapter concerns the subjective dimension of foreign policy.

The second way in which the concept of role facilitates a political-cultural approach to foreign policy analysis is epistemological. Role concepts provide an essential link between agent and structure, as they incorporate the manner in which foreign policy is both purposeful and shaped by institutional contexts. Foreign policy, in other words, is not just a question of adaptation to structural forces (determinism), nor is it simply a function of political will (voluntarism). As Hollis and Smith (1990: 168) argue, ‘Role involves judgement and skill, but
Role identity and Europeanisation of foreign policy

at the same time it involves a notion of structure within which roles operate. With an emphasis on the interplay between agency and structure, the European foreign policy-maker is considered to be both subject to norm-conforming social structures and involved as an agent in (re)constructing identities and interests – some of which may be imagined beyond the state.

From this line of thought it follows that the analysis of international institutions, such as the CFSP, should begin with an analysis of the self-understandings of the actors involved. This chapter contains a brief empirical section, which poses the question of whether national and European role conceptions are conflicting or converging. Examination of this question is based on a comparative study of British, French and German foreign policy in the context of the CFSP (Aggestam 2000a). The stability of the EU as a foreign policy actor, it is argued, is dependent on the member states modifying their behaviour according to each others’ roles and expectations.

The politics of identity

In the international system, membership of a political community has traditionally been institutionalised spatially within territorial states (Krasner 1988). Foreign policy follows as a consequence of a political community being recognised as a sovereign state and is thus an essential confirmation of its identity by other sovereign actors. Wallace (1991: 65) has called this the ‘grand strategy’ definition of foreign policy – ‘that foreign policy is about national identity itself: about the core elements of sovereignty it seeks to defend, the values it stands for and seeks to promote abroad’. With all the symbolic trappings of sovereignty and statehood, foreign policy plays a significant role in the socio-political imagination of a collective identity. Key foreign policy speeches frequently contain assertions referring to subjective we-feelings of a cultural group and its specific customs, institutions, territory, myths and rituals. These expressions of a collective national identity reveal how foreign policy-makers view past history, the present and the future political choices they face. However, in contemporary Europe, many politicians are also increasingly emphasising a European identity:

To be part of Europe is in the British national interest. So far from submerging our identity as a nation in some Eurosceptic parody of a Federal super-state, we believe that by being part of Europe we advance our own self-interest as the British nation. This is a patriotic cause. (British Prime Minister, Tony Blair 1999)

We will always associate with Europe the absolute objective of finding common solutions to common problems and of acting with weight behind us in a rapidly changing world, not because we want to give up or level our national identities but rather precisely because we want to preserve these identities and to include them in a more comprehensive European identity. (German Chancellor, Gerhard Schröder 1999)
Does this emphasis on a European identity in foreign policy signify a shift away from a singular notion of political identity confined to the nation-state?

There is some evidence to suggest that the European integration process towards ‘an ever closer union’ has been accompanied by a decline in the political salience of national identity (Dogan 1994) along with the gradual evolution of multiple identities on regional, national and European levels (Aggestam and Hyde-Price 2000). This raises a number of intriguing questions about foreign policy in Europe: which social collectivities, interests and values do foreign policy-makers see themselves representing and advancing in foreign policy?

The politics of identity refer to a particular set of ideas about political community that policy-makers draw on to mobilise a sense of cohesion and solidarity in order to legitimate the general thrust of foreign policy. Since the early nineteenth century, nationalism has promoted the idea that the source of individual identity and loyalty lies with a ‘people’ constituted in the nation. The nation is seen as the source of sovereignty on which the state, in turn, is founded. In foreign policy, this political principle should lead the foreign policy-maker to promote the identity, independence and influence of the nation-state s/he officially represents.

The state is not, however, a natural, pre-given social construct. According to Giddens (1985: 221), the crucial function of nationalism is to ‘naturalize the recency and contingency of the nation-state through supplying its myths of origin’. This political socialisation has an important security aspect. If the idea of the state fails to be supported in society, the state itself may lack a secure foundation (Buzan 1991: 78). Thus, a sense of belonging appears to be closely interrelated with membership of a political community that seems to offer protection from external threat (Garcia 1993: 13).

The ‘institutionalisation’ of national identity takes place through various forms of political socialisation and tends to make identity constructions relatively resistant to change. It reinforces certain practices and rules of behaviour which explain and legitimise particular identity constructions (March and Olsen 1998a: 7; see also Almond, Powell and Mundt 1993: 46). As a consequence of its articulation and institutionalisation in the political culture, national identity may become internalised in the cognitive framework – or prism – through which foreign policy-makers interpret political reality. If sufficiently internalised, these accounts of national identity may become part of the political culture and ‘national style’ of a state’s foreign policy.

‘Culture represents a unified set of ideas that are shared by the members of a society and that establish a set of shared premises, values, expectations and action predispositions among the members of the nation that as a whole constitute the national style’ (Vertzberger 1990: 267). The conceptual lenses through which foreign policy-makers perceive international relations tend to set the norm for what is considered rational foreign policy-making.

Yet, despite the fact that self-conceptions tend to be relatively resistant to change, the processes by which they are perpetuated are certainly not static. Identity constructions are contextually dependent and develop and change over
time: ‘a continuing exercise in the fabrication of illusion and the elaboration of convenient fables about who “we” are’ (Ignatieff 1998: 18). Just as they evolved in particular historical circumstances, definitions of identity and foreign policy interests may be redefined as a consequence of current transformations internal and external to the state.

In many states, the end of the Cold War and the deepening of European integration have sparked off soul-searching debates about the meaning of national and, for that matter, European identity (Aggestam 2000b: 54–63). For example, the unification of the eastern and western parts of Germany has provoked an intensive debate about German identity (the so-called *Berliner Republik* debate) and the meaning of ‘normality’ (*Normalisierung*) in German foreign policy (Baring 1994; Hellmann 1997; Aggestam 2000b; Hyde-Price 2000). In Britain, the very concept of Britishness has been called into question and resulted in constitutional change. Similarly, in France the referendum on the Maastricht Treaty in the early 1990s and the growing unease at the impact of globalisation on French culture, have provoked a debate about the whole patriarchal conception of the French state and sovereignty (Hoffmann 1991; Flynn 1995; Moisi 1998).

In this context, the argument put forward is that profound changes in the predominant idea of the nation are likely to have significant foreign policy implications. Broader foreign policy approaches, particularly regarding European integration, are bound up with a sense of identity in foreign policy. This is why, for instance, there tends to be a competition of ideas at the EU intergovernmental conferences, as the position of each member state tends to reflect its own conception of political community (Aggestam 2000b: 75–83).4

Thus, it could be argued that the more the European Union is moving towards a part-formed polity, the greater the demand for a perceived harmonisation of a national and European identity. Reference to transnational practices and a European supranational identity will be accepted more easily among a broader public if these are in some way framed as compatible with a national identity. Yet, as public opinion surveys and debates on the European Union have indicated, foreign policy elites face a delicate balancing act in seeking to articulate views of European integration that are seen by the broader public not as a threat to national identity, but an enhancement of multiple identities.

**The boundary position of the foreign policy-maker**

Foreign policy-makers are understood in this chapter as agents collectively representing the state as a *social actor* in foreign policy (cf. Katzenstein 1996). This is because role conceptions are considered to have a social origin (a point which will be discussed further below). They are formed within a cultural context and their legitimacy and endurance are dependent on their being broadly shared at a particular time. In Europe, the agents of foreign policy are positioned at the intersection of transnational processes and domestic structures. Although they are primarily national agents of foreign policy, they find themselves in a boundary position from which they must mediate between two worlds of foreign
policy-making: one in the national capital, the other centred in Brussels. While foreign policy role conceptions to a great extent are shaped primarily within the broader political culture of a state, one research problem that needs to be addressed is the extent to which the interaction and elite socialisation between EU members affect foreign policy perceptions. The role perspective developed below is based on the premise that actors learn and are socialised into playing roles through interaction within both domestic and international contexts.

The foreign policy-maker is guided by both rules and reasons in foreign policy. Foreign policy action is a mixture of political will and adjustment to structural factors. The analytical framework outlined here thus deviates from a strict interpretation of instrumental rationality that implies that action in foreign policy is simply based on the maximisation of power and security interests. Rational theory tends to ignore endogenous dynamics and focus on material utility maximisation. A reflective approach, on the other hand, emphasises the impact of cultural practices, norms and values on perceptions of interests (Keohane 1988). The two approaches reflect different logics of how human behaviour and intentionality are interpreted: rational instrumental action (logic of expected consequences) and rule-based action (logic of appropriateness) (Checkel 1998: 4).

Conceptualising the policy-maker as occupying a boundary position is similar in some aspects to the idea of ‘two-level games’, in that it highlights the interaction between the international and domestic context in negotiating international agreements (Putnam 1993). However, the analytical framework offered by role concepts places greater stress on how international interaction and socialisation between policy-makers may affect the way they conceptualise their interests during and after negotiations. It is not unreasonable to assume that a high degree of interaction between policy-makers within an international institution, such as the EU’s CFSP, may encourage a process of social learning. However, the extent to which this process may lead to complex learning (a reassessment of fundamental beliefs and values) is an empirical question that needs to be explored further, but which is beyond the scope of this chapter.

Characteristic of international relations in Europe are the expanding networks of transnational and transgovernmental relations. These appear to be changing the context of foreign policy. One way to conceptualise this new context for policy-makers is to utilise the notion of a ‘security community’ developed by Deutsch and his associates (1957). They defined a security community as a transnational region in which the positive identification and interaction between the members would lead to a decline in military force and a rise in the expectancy of peaceful relations. In a similar vein, Wendt (1992: 400) has suggested that the process of European integration is leading towards ‘a “cooperative” security system, in which states identify positively with one another so that the security of each is perceived as the responsibility of all’.

What makes the Deutschian perspective particularly useful is that it recognises that different social-communicative processes between actors may affect and shape their identities and interests. High levels of interaction between states
can encourage the development of a growing ‘we-feeling’ and common ‘role identity’ (Deutsch 1957: 5–7). This mutual responsiveness and compatibility of interests may, according to a social constructivist understanding, make possible new repertoires of action and behaviour.

Many studies that focus on questions of identity emphasise that identity is a source of conflict due to the inherent process of defining a ‘self’ against an ‘other’. This focus has tended to overshadow the equally interesting process in which identities may be reconstructed through cooperative and positive interaction with other actors, leading to intersubjective understandings and shared norms.

The concept of ‘security community’, which is currently experiencing a renaissance in the academic literature, emphasises the socio-cognitive imagination of a common destiny and identity that may take place within a transnational region. Adler and Barnett (1998: 30) distinguish between ‘loosely’ and ‘tightly coupled’ security communities according to (1) their depth of trust; (2) the institutionalisation of their governance system; and (3) the degree of anarchy in the system. “Tightly coupled” pluralistic security communities . . . possess a system of rule that lies somewhere between a sovereign state and a centralised regional government. This is something of a post-sovereign system, comprised of common supranational, transnational and national institutions, and some form of a collective security system’ (Adler 1997a: 255).

The relevance of this for our understanding of the EU’s CFSP is that there are indications that foreign policy cooperation between EU member states has generated the first stages of a learning process through which the actors involved increasingly perceive themselves as a ‘we’. The high density of multilateral interactions and the continuous communication and adjustment (coordination reflex) within CFSP point to certain qualitative new features of solidarity between EU members. Transparency, consultation and compromise are norms underpinning the CFSP framework. It is not unreasonable to suggest that there may be a degree of path dependency involved in this cognitive evolution: ‘Trust, shared identities, and familiarity encourage further contact, further integration, an expansion of the number of topics viewed as appropriate for discussion, and the development of common definitions of problems and appropriate actions’ (March and Olsen 1998a: 27). However, as we will see below, there are good reasons for questioning a linear view of European integration. This is because international norms agreed on the European level do not necessarily lead towards intersubjective understandings between states.

Role conception

The concept of role originates from studies in sociology and social psychology, where it has frequently signified an actor’s characteristic patterns of behaviour given a certain position or situation (Goffman 1959; Biddle and Thomas 1966;
Jackson 1972). Role theory was introduced into foreign policy analysis by Holsti (1987a), when he sought to explore the link between social context and foreign policy.

A sociological understanding of role focuses on the nature of agency and its relationship to social structures. Given that role is conceived of in terms of a characteristic behavioural repertoire, it is a concept that captures elements of continuity in foreign policy. However, given a long enough time period, the role concept also captures processes of socialisation and thus provides insights into foreign policy change.

The concept of role can be used in different ways to explain or understand foreign policy. It is a broad concept that carries different connotations. Briefly, there are three different ways of defining ‘role’. These are closely interlinked yet do not necessarily concur with one another. First, there is role expectation: this is a role that other actors (alter) prescribe and expect the role-beholder (ego) to enact. Second, there is role conception: normative expectations of a certain kind of foreign policy behaviour expressed by the role-beholders themselves. Third, there is role performance: this role refers to the actual foreign policy behaviour in terms of decisions and actions undertaken, and is particularly sensitive to the situational context in which it is enacted.

If we wish to understand how national and European identity influence foreign policy perceptions, the second distinction – role conception – offers a fruitful avenue for exploration. ‘A national role conception includes the policymakers’ own definitions of the general kinds of decisions, commitments, rules, and actions suitable to their state, and of the functions, if any, their state should perform on a continuing basis in the international system or in subordinate regional systems’ (Holsti 1987a: 12; original emphasis).

This definition by Holsti encourages an inductive empirical analysis to take place, in order to reveal how policy-makers themselves perceive and define roles. What Holsti (1987a: 28) found in his study was that the practitioners of foreign policy expressed a multitude of roles, in contrast to the more general and singular roles arrived at deductively by academics. Significantly, this conclusion seems to suggest that roles have multiple sources and are not exclusively generated by the international distribution of power. As Barnett (1993: 278) points out, ‘The state’s survival is rarely at stake but the government’s domestic standing frequently is, so it is possible that domestic-generated roles will have greater force than roles dictated by power considerations.’

The aspect of role emphasised in this chapter is its function as a cognitive image; one that simplifies, provides guidance and predisposes an actor towards one intentional behaviour rather than towards another. As cognitive studies have revealed, most people tend to simplify complexities in the world (Gerner 1995: 25). The British diplomat, Robert Cooper (1996: 8) expresses this succinctly: ‘Thinking about foreign affairs – like any other kind of thinking – requires a conceptual map which, as maps do, simplifies the landscape and focuses on the main features.’
A role conception embodies a mixture of norms, intentions and descriptions of reality, which vary in degree of specificity and manifestation. As noted above, it is important to underline that actors conceive of multiple roles. These vary in overall importance (centrality) and according to the situation and institutional context (salience). A role conception may become intersubjective and hence relatively stable over time, as policy-makers are socialised into and internalise these role conceptions. ‘As these national role conceptions become a more pervasive part of the political culture of a nation, they are more likely to set limits on perceived or politically feasible policy alternatives, and less likely to allow idiosyncratic variables to play a crucial part in decision-making’ (Holsti 1987a: 38–9).

However, it is important not to ‘over-socialise’ the agency in foreign policy. Roles have multiple sources and in order not to over- or underestimate the significance of institutions in the formulation of foreign policy, it is important to consider how roles are generated from a combination of structure, interaction and intention.

Structure refers to patterns of social relationships, practices and shared perceptions of reality (Lundquist 1987: 40). A structural approach, in other words, brings to our attention how institutions, not actors, determine norms and roles. It is important, however, to emphasise that national and international structures consist not only of normative, but also material elements. In international relations theory, the sources of roles have frequently been considered to be predominately systemic (anarchy) and based on material factors (Walker 1987: 271; Rosenau 1990: 213). To be sure, material attributes, such as economic strength, geographic location and system of government, play a crucial part in how states view themselves and their relationships with other states. However, if we discard the utilitarian assumption that foreign policy is primarily driven by power maximisation within an anarchic structure, then the concept of role can facilitate an understanding of obligations and commitments which are not derived simply from basic national interests.

The interactional approach stresses role-playing; that is, the processes by which actors learn and are socialised into playing roles. This is a crucial component in the analytical framework presented in this chapter and captures the processes of foreign policy integration between EU member states. A structural approach runs the risk of making role analysis static and deterministic, thereby failing to apprehend change in foreign policy perceptions. In contrast, the interactional approach is dynamic and illuminates the actors involved in the process. The actors play a crucial part in defining their own roles in a process of negotiation. Given that roles are generated in the interaction, it follows that roles tend to fluctuate and change over time (Searing 1991: 1246).

Finally, it is argued that the longevity and centrality of role conceptions can only be fully understood if we take into account the goals and intentions that drive them. As noted above, the policy-maker is guided by both rules and reason in foreign policy. Purposive roles are a result of a dynamic interaction between
institutional constraints and the actor’s preferences (Searing 1991: 1248). The idea of role rests on an analogy of the theatre, in which an actor is expected to behave in predictable ways according to a script (rule-based action). In the past, sociological theorising of role has tended to underestimate the actor’s objectives and intentions contained in the contents of a role conception. However, actors do not simply act passively according to a script, but are actively involved in categorising themselves with an action orientation.

The emphasis here on identity and the socio-cultural context of foreign policy does not contradict strategic action and subjective rationality in foreign policy. Indeed, we will not be able to understand the dynamics of how policymakers reason if we do not acknowledge that human behaviour and intentionality are grounded in both a logic of expected consequences and a logic of appropriateness (Aggestam 1999: 11–12). The concept of role can provide us with a vital link between the two logics. As March and Olsen (1998a: 12) point out, ‘the two logics are not mutually exclusive.’ ‘Political actors are constituted both by their interests, by which they evaluate their anticipations of consequences, and by the rules embedded in their identities and political institutions. They calculate consequences and follow rules, and the relation between the two is often subtle.’

Hence, the approach outlined here falls in the middle ground between rational and reflectivist understandings of how the actors in foreign policy are reasoning. The culture-bound prism through which foreign policy-makers view the world and consider their interests does not preclude strategically motivated action in a bounded rational sense. Yet, it tends to demarcate the limits for what are perceived and defined in the first place as acceptable and viable goals and interests in foreign policy. ‘Culture does not impose a cognitive map upon persons but provides them with a set of principles for map-making and navigation’ (Ehrenhaus, quoted in Vertzberger 1990: 270).

Role conceptions are broad categories that allow a certain flexibility of interpretation, depending on the extent to which they have become formally institutionalised with a specific guide to action. Furthermore, the centrality of a role conception does vary depending on situational context and time. Barnett (1993: 275) makes a useful distinction between position and preference roles. The former provide an actor with well-defined and detailed guides to action. The latter contain greater flexibility of interpretation as to the meaning of a role.

A certain amount of discretion in interpreting roles appears indispensable to policy-makers in order to accommodate the potentially conflicting roles that different institutional contexts and interactional processes generate. A role conflict may arise when role conceptions in an overarching role-set are incompatible with one another. Changes in role conceptions may be induced by role conflicts or when the centrality and salience of a role conception are called into question. The literature on belief systems suggests that the impact of new information is largely determined by whether the structure of a belief system is ‘open’ or ‘closed’. New information tends to be interpreted and adopted in view of pre-existing beliefs.
Yet, their centrality may alter in the light of new information, which can bring prior beliefs into 'cognitive dissonance'. This can be seen as a process of learning, giving rise to new definitions and understandings of a role conception (Hermann 1990: 10–11).

However, there is an inherent resistance to change in role conceptions for two reasons. First, if role conceptions are constantly fluctuating, they fail to provide policy-makers with the consistency they seek as intentional actors in foreign policy. Second, there is a dialectic relationship between national identity and foreign policy role conceptions. The more central a role conception becomes, the more likely it is to be surrounded by myths and institutions, thus becoming part of a nation's political culture. These impeding factors help explain why, for example, the end of the Cold War did not lead to drastic re-orientations of foreign policy for the majority of European states (see Niblett and Wallace 2001). The question to be addressed below is whether three decades of foreign policy cooperation between EU member states have resulted in a convergence of national and European role conceptions.

**National and European role conceptions: conflict or convergence?**

That the European Union may be characterised as a security community is hardly a controversial statement to make. It is, however, an open question as to how deep 'a sense of community' is felt within the EU and how this feeling may be affecting foreign policy perceptions. The attempt to harmonise different foreign policy traditions goes back to the early 1970s. In 1983, EU members made a pledge in a so-called 'Solemn Declaration' that they would henceforth endeavour to seek common positions in international affairs, which should constitute the central reference point for national foreign policy. Has the interaction and institutionalisation of foreign policy cooperation over the years resulted in a growth of common values and a Europeanisation of role conceptions?

The stability of the EU as a foreign policy actor is dependent on the member states consistently adopting common role conceptions and modifying their behaviour according to each others’ roles and expectations. If a Europeanisation of foreign policy is taking place, we would anticipate that member states would be adopting position roles that increase the predictability of foreign policy and stable expectations.

The aim of this section is to provide a brief discussion of national and European role conceptions, based on a comparative study of British, French and German foreign policy in the context of the CFSP (Aggestam 2000a, 2000c, 2000d). The purpose is to illustrate European developments in foreign policy, though within the limited scope here, no attempt can be made to give a detailed account of the extent to which foreign policy has become Europeanised.

Three role conceptions will be discussed. These roles indicate how policymakers conceive of political influence; their depth of feeling for the EU as a security community; and the independence of the state as an actor in foreign policy.
1 *Leader:* This role reflects how policy-makers perceive influence and how they relate to power. In a security community, power can be understood in terms of having a significant influence on the norms that specify common action (cf. Adler and Barnett 1998: 52).

2 *Partner:* Commitments to support and cooperate closely with another state indicate perceptions of a ‘special relationship’ and strategic partnership. This role is interesting, as it communicates the depth of trust essential to collective identity formation.

3 *Independent:* This role conception involves commitments to retain independence of action in foreign policy and an emphasis on the primacy of national interests. It should, however, be pointed out that this role could also be conceived of in a European discourse with an emphasis on the EU as an independent actor in world politics.

In terms of preference and position roles discussed above, the role conception of ‘independent’ belongs in the former category; ‘partner’ in the latter; and ‘leader’ somewhere in between the two.

A comparison between British, French and German foreign policies indicates that policy-makers in these three countries see themselves as members of a collective security community. Few, if any, politicians are directly hostile to the development of the CFSP. Quite the opposite – most policy-makers are generally enthusiastic about the added weight and influence that the CFSP brings in international affairs. Thus, European interests tend to be seen as largely compatible and complementary to national interests.

As three of the largest member states of the European Union, it is not surprising that foreign policy speeches in Britain, France and Germany make reference to ‘leadership’. However, the meanings they attach to this role conception differ and reflect the different ways in which they perceive political influence.

References to leadership in the British political discourse fulfil a function in justifying and legitimating participation in the process of European integration. The British self-image as a political and military medium power reinforces this role conception. Both the Conservative and Labour governments have regarded British leadership of the CFSP as enhancing Britain’s influence in world politics. As a leading EU member, it is recognised that British foreign policy has gained a distinctive European dimension, which is perceived as an important complement to, but not a replacement of, national foreign policy. Yet, at the same time, it is not precisely clear what this leadership entails, given that British foreign policy-makers, particularly in the past, have been very reluctant to express the kind of visionary thinking that is required to exert a leadership role within a security community. British proposals for strengthening a common European foreign policy have primarily been confined to pragmatic suggestions focused on improving operational procedures. Nonetheless, a significant change has taken place following the Labour election landslide of 1997. The Blair government continues to emphasise Britain’s global role as a nation with worldwide
interests, but is also much more concerned to provide some substance to its leadership aspirations. This is evident above all in the area of defence. Since the Anglo-French summit of Saint-Malo in December 1998, the British government has made a vigorous attempt to influence the evolving principles of what should constitute common EU action in security and defence.

The French conception of their leadership role has deep historical roots and constitutes, as in Britain, an important legitimating function for French participation in the European integration process. French presidents have repeatedly proclaimed the idea of France playing a leading role at the core of a Europe of concentric circles (le cercle des solidarités renforcées) – an idea that enjoys considerable domestic support. It is perceived to be a political and historical responsibility of France to take a lead towards a European political union. The European Union is thus ultimately conceived of as a political project aimed at making the EU a powerful actor in world politics: Europe puissance. As part of this power projection, Europe needs to develop an independent defence component. It is therefore not surprising to note the unease with which the French reluctantly recognise American leadership in European security through NATO.

In Germany, the idea of exerting leadership is formulated very cautiously to avoid any association with historical analogies. Nonetheless, the role of leader is conceived of as emancipation from the past, in the sense that Germany has a historical responsibility – even a duty (Verpflichtung) – to promote European integration to secure peace and stability on the continent. A long-standing belief during the post-war period was that German unification must take place hand in hand with European unification. Germany is to be the ‘engine’, exercising leadership in terms of ideas and initiatives. In other words, exerting power over the normative contents and meaning of a deepening process of European integration in foreign policy.

However, German policy-makers are reluctant to exercise leadership unilaterally, particularly in foreign policy. Instead, they attempt to provide directional leadership with France. The role conception of leader is thus closely linked to the idea of a partnership between Germany and France. This partnership is perceived in both countries as the bedrock on which the whole process of European integration rests. It is a strongly held belief in both countries that if France and Germany fail to act in concert, there is a considerable risk that European developments may become seriously derailed. Thus, a distinguishing feature of this relationship is its institutional embeddedness, which is aimed at encouraging proximity of interests between them. Symbolism is an important ingredient and political leaders from the two countries frequently seek to launch joint policy initiatives to demonstrate their common resolve. This was illustrated on a number of occasions during the negotiations of the 1996 IGC, when the German and French governments launched a number of initiatives to improve the effectiveness of the CFSP and to provide the EU with a ‘strategic capacity’.

However, a key problem faced by Germany and France in their attempt to provide directional leadership in the field of foreign policy is that they have had,
at least until recently, different conceptions of political union and Europe as a global power. First of all, they appear to differ in their emphasis on the extent to which the CFSP should remain an essentially intergovernmental framework. While Germany is a keen advocate of majority voting and wishes a greater involvement of the European Parliament in the CFSP, France wants second pillar issues to be primarily developed within the European Council (where the presence of the French president is safeguarded). Second, the French vision of a European foreign policy is concerned with the projection of power and independence as a global actor. For Germany, with its post-war tradition as a civilian power, the deepening of foreign policy integration has been less about exerting European power and more about diffusing it internally, thereby preventing a re-nationalisation of foreign policy that could lead to national rivalry and instability between EU members. As a rule, German foreign policy-makers tend to be more reluctant than their French counterparts to use military means of foreign policy and to think in global power political terms.

Furthermore, German policy-makers are always much more keenly aware of the implications that a deepening process of foreign policy integration may have on transatlantic relations. The German government favours a more cohesive European actor capacity to shoulder a greater burden of security, thereby becoming a more equal partner to the US. Nonetheless, this must not jeopardise the continued presence of American involvement in European security, which is considered a fundamental security interest.

Interestingly, despite the high degree of institutionalisation and interaction between French and German policy-makers, there is still considerable friction in the relationship. Both parties tend to admit they are not an obvious ‘couple’. The German Foreign Minister, Joschka Fischer (1999), captures this dynamic well when he asserts that,

Together Germany and France are the driving-force behind European integration and in its European dimension their special relationship is indispensable. As neighbours with a shared history, they are nonetheless very different, yet herein and in the resulting tensions lies a source of productivity, a creative potential that is the secret of this motor for integration.

The Franco-German relationship has certainly changed from the days of the symbolic holding of hands between Mitterrand and Kohl. In France, questions are raised about the banalisation of the Franco-German relationship: a fear about a declining attachment to the partnership which could result in new tensions. Though officially welcomed, the debate in Germany on Normalisierung, the Berlin Republic, and assertions of German national interests in foreign policy, are closely monitored in France in case it indicates a decline in Germany’s European identity and a rise in German particularism.

Where does Britain figure as a partner? Officially, policy-makers in Germany and France tend to say that their relationship is not an exclusive one. Initiatives originating from this bilateral relationship have always been made open for other
countries to join. French policy-makers, in particular, tend to emphasise that without full British participation, the CFSP will be less effective. As the French President Chirac (1998) stated after the 1998 Saint-Malo meeting: ‘Europe taking new foreign and security policy initiatives, requires a very high degree of entente between Britain and France, two countries with great and strong diplomatic and military traditions.’ As two medium powers and permanent members of the UN Security Council, they do in fact share a number of common interests. Yet, in the past, the Anglo-French relationship has frequently been characterised more by rivalry than partnership.

The main stumbling block between them has for a long time been their different conceptions of Europe. While the British wax lyrical about a transatlantic Europe, the French dream of a cohesive and independent Europe. German policy-makers, on the other hand, refuse to see a contradiction between the two visions of Europe. Britain’s close relationship with the United States has in the past fuelled deep-seated French suspicions that Britain is primarily a faithful US ally supporting American hegemony in Europe.

The Saint-Malo agreement of 1998 is thus significant in that it set in motion a genuine attempt to address the question of how to develop a common security and defence policy of the European Union. There are two reasons for the warming of Anglo-French relations. First, both Britain and France have become increasingly pragmatic and less dogmatic in their competing visions of a transatlantic vs European Europe. France supports the idea of a European pillar in NATO, while Britain endorses the development of an autonomous defence capability in the EU. Second, the experience of recent peacekeeping operations, particularly in the former Yugoslavia, has demonstrated common grounds of interest.

The role of ‘independent’ is significant only because it does not appear as a major preoccupation in the minds of foreign policy-makers. The realist assumption that national independence is a major concern in foreign policy does not, therefore, find support in this study. Not unexpectedly, German policy-makers are the most outspoken about denouncing a policy based on Realpolitik and balance of power. There are no indications that Germany’s considerable political, military and economic resources impel German policy-makers to conclude that they should seek independent action.

The insignificance of an independent role does not, however, correspond to an endorsement of a supranational European foreign policy along the lines of the old idea of a European Defence Community. As recent decisions have indicated, the institutional and decision-making structures on security and defence questions (the so-called European Security and Defence Policy), has been firmly placed outside the orbit of the first supranational pillar of the European Union. For states, such as Britain and France, the primacy of national interests remains fundamental. However, if the CFSP were to assume a more supranational character, the inherent dilemma between a deepening process of integration and the continued emphasis on the nation-state as the basis of collective foreign policy action would become more exposed.
French policy-makers, in particular, reveal how the idea of independence has been replaced by a major preoccupation about enhancing French influence in multilateral structures. French rapprochement towards NATO and its confederal approach to EU foreign policy cooperation are indicative of this change in foreign policy perception. Yet the role concept of independent has not been entirely discarded. During the Cold War, the Gaullist interpretation of national independence contained a strong identitative dimension in French foreign policy. In the post-Cold War context, this idea of French independence is being transposed to the European level to counteract a perceived American hegemony in a unipolar world.

British and German policy-makers do not share this French view of the United States. However, they seem increasingly to share the idea that national independence has to give way to a pooling of resources to safeguard a greater measure of collective European independence and power in world politics. This convergence towards a common European role conception approaches the French idea of Europe puissance. The German Chancellor, Gerhard Schröder, openly endorsed this concept in the French Assembly in the autumn of 1999. The British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, previously reluctant to employ the French concept, formally echoed it in his speech of 7 October 2000 in Warsaw where he looked forward to 'an EU whose vision of peace is matched by its vision of prosperity; a civilised continent united in defeating brutality and violence; a continent joined in its belief in social justice. A superpower but not a superstate.'

The convergence of views is in fact taking place because the traditional French meaning of the concept is also changing. The development of Europe as a strategic actor concerns the capability (pouvoir) to carry out the so-called 'Petersberg tasks', rather than power projection (puissance) in its own right. Thus, less emphasis is made of the realist notion of Europe puissance as an attribute of hard power in a balance-of-power system. Instead, this meaning has given way to an emphasis on Europe as an ethical and restrained power. As a senior French policy-maker puts it, 'the ambition to make Europe into a power in its own right is unwise... it should regard power as a means to be used rarely and deliberately rather than as an objective of its foreign policy, and it should discard traditional power politics as the measure of its success' (Andréani 1999: 26). On a deeper level, it could be argued that this evolving European role conception is indicative of how the process of integration indeed has begun to cement a 'cooperative security system', where the security of each is perceived as the responsibility of all.

Concluding remarks

The central theme of this chapter has been the analytical utility of a political–cultural approach to explore perceptions of long-term foreign policy
change and stability in contemporary Europe. The picture that emerges from this type of analysis is that the process of European integration in foreign and security policy is marked by some ambivalent, if not contradictory, trends. In the early years of the twenty-first century, EU member states are, on the one hand, endowing the Union – through CFSP – with the means to act militarily. This integrative move has been made possible by the evolving role conception of the EU as an ethical and restrained power, in combination with the decline of the role of ‘independent’. Yet, on the other hand, the CFSP itself remains overwhelmingly intergovernmental in form. This indicates that the actors involved still regard their interaction in a strategic and self-interested manner. Legitimation of foreign policy action still takes place primarily at the level of the nation-state. As the analysis above has highlighted, the roles that policy-makers in Britain, France and Germany conceive of for their countries are a mixture of preference and position roles. These three states, perhaps with the partial exception of Germany, conceptualise foreign policy objectives first and foremost in a national mind-set. Despite years of intensive interaction, the perceived partnerships between Britain, France and Germany illustrate the uneven processes of socialisation and collective identity formation. What has become notably Europeanised in foreign policy is the means to fulfil foreign policy goals. It would thus be premature to predict yet again the ‘withering away of the state’ as a key foreign policy actor, even though the process of European integration is increasingly compromising its pre-eminence.

Notes

I would like to thank Adrian Hyde-Price for valuable comments on this chapter.

1 Interview with Pauline Neville-Jones (former European Correspondent and Political Director of the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office), London, 16 January 1996.
2 The combination depends on the extent to which civic or ethnic elements predominate in the identity construction.
3 Since taking office in 1997, the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, has given a number of speeches where he has attempted to articulate a vision of what a British identity stands for. See also the speech by Linda Colley (‘Britishness in the 21st Century’, Millennium Lecture, 1999) and a recent commission on multi-cultural Britain chaired by Lord Parekh.
4 Cf. for example the centralised French model of the state with a strong executive; the German federal model dispersing authority on different political levels; and the British informal model based on the common-law approach.
5 Biddle and Thomas (1966: 7) distinguish between ‘role-playing’ and ‘role-taking’: role-taking is an attitude already frozen in the behaviour of the person. Role-playing is an act, a spontaneous playing; role-taking is a finished product, a role conserve.
6 On the other hand, if national identity is contested, the stability of role conceptions is more likely to be challenged.
7 Charles de Gaulle formulated a distinct vision of France’s uniqueness and role as a guiding light – une certaine idée de la France – drawing on France’s historical legacy of the 1789 revolution and the Enlightenment.
8 German foreign policy-makers are known to avoid acknowledging potential role conflicts in case that would involve privileging a particular institution or set of relationships to the detriment of another. According to Garton Ash (1996: 92), this *Sowohl-als-auch* (as-well-as) approach to foreign policy means that German foreign policy-makers 'choose not to choose'.

9 French *exceptionalisme* between the two superpower blocs.