

POLITICAL CULTURE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS.

American Hegemony and the European Challenge.¹

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International Relations have been dominated by American approaches and theories since the beginning, while European scholars and ideas are much less published. More important however is why and how the two major strands of research differ. According to us, the answer to this is hidden in the fact that political culture is of major influence on social sciences and vice versa. With help of a meta-theoretical classification based on two dichotomies (individual vs. social and material vs. ideational) we will analyze the background of the differences between American and European practice of IR. We will conclude the paper with the notion that European IR has the better part as it best fits "reality". Finally, the differences between the European and the American approach to security will be used as an illustration.

Introduction

Almost thirty years ago, Stanley Hoffmann published a well-known article in which he described the state of International Relations (IR).² The discipline, he argued, was born and raised in America, but had accomplished less than desired. If quantitative yardsticks were used, then American IR had accomplished very much, especially in comparison with the European contributions to the field. The discipline was flourishing in many American universities, while libraries were overloaded with publications of American scholars. In Europe, on the other hand, the number of chairs in IR was limited and the research output was much lower.

Hoffmann's disappointment, however, referred to the qualitative aspects of American IR. He blamed the discipline for a lack of scientific depth and one-sidedness, as a result of, among others, the dominance of behaviorism, the emphasis on the dominant role of the US in the international system, and the political and financial ties between the universities and the centers of political decision-making. The American IR, in other words, should remain at more distance:

"... the discipline of international relations is, so to speak, too close to the fire. It needs triple distance: it should move away from the contemporary, toward the past; from the perspective of superpower (and a highly conservative one), toward that of the weak and the revolutionary – away from the impossible quest for stability; from the glide into

policy science, back to the steep ascent towards the peaks which the questions raised by traditional political philosophy represent.”³

This conclusion however does not mean that Hoffmann bets on European IR, since a simple diversion between American and European scholarship is not very useful. IR may be raised in America, it is not (only) an American discipline. Nicholas Spykman, for instance, was a Dutchman who played a significant role in the first days of the discipline. American IR, moreover, has been enriched by the many (European) immigrants before, during and after World War II. Understanding the ideas and approaches of, for example, Hans Morgenthau, Henry Kissinger, Zbigniew Brzezinski and Edward Luttwak, requires knowledge of the history of their native countries and the reasons of their immigration. Many names can be added to this, such as John Ruggie and Alexander Went. On the other hand, a reverse trend is also visible: American scholars are coming to Europe in order to do research and to lecture at European universities. This trend is likely to continue. Nonetheless, the existence of rival European and American approaches in IR is real – at least with respect to the so-called mainstream approaches.⁴ As mentioned, this has nothing to do with ignorance or cognitive closure. The main question in this paper therefore, will be: what causes the differences between the European and American mainstream approaches in IR?

In order to answer this question it is important to realize that a precise and clear-cut differentiation between international political reality and a scientific approach of this reality remains artificially. Reality is not a given, but is established through a process of perception and interpretation.⁵ Place and time are important aspects of any perspective and should therefore be taken into account in order to understand the extent to which one IR perspective differs from that in other places at different moments and even during the same periods of time. For example, Spanish writers during the late Renaissance lived in a growing empire and ‘Atlantic’ Europe, while their Italian colleagues saw the fate of their contracting city-states in terms of insecurity amidst expanding ‘Continental’ powers. This led to different views on war and its prevention. As Knutsen concludes: “Such differences in cultural and political context help explain why sixteenth-century Iberian authors formulated the foundations for modern international law, whereas their Italian counterparts developed theories of balance of power.”⁶ The period researchers lived in has also determined the research agenda and its contents. Thus, Grotius witnessed the terrible Thirty Years’ War which prompted questions pointing to his formulations of *Ius ad Bellum* and *Ius in Bello*; the ‘War to End all Wars’ mobilized peace movements and peace-loving international lawyers and exalted some politicians and large parts of the public believing in harmony, morality and the force of world opinion which would be formalized in

Idealism; and the Second World War meant the soaring of Realism culminating in its paradigmatic near-monopoly during the Cold War. Social scientists, in other words, are part of their political culture, and herein lies, according to us, the answer to our above mentioned question.

Political culture and social sciences

Almost forty years ago, Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba introduced the concept of political culture in order to study the stability of political systems.⁷ Usually this concept refers to beliefs about and orientations on politics in society.⁸ The historian Keith Baker has elaborated further on the concept of political culture and noticed that:

“If politics, broadly conceived, is the activity through which individuals and groups in any society articulate, negotiate, implement and enforce the competing claims they make one upon another, then political culture may be understood as the set of discourses and practices characterizing that activity in any given community.”⁹

Political culture therefore embraces both discourse - the intellectual means - and practices - the habits, routines and codes of conduct - of politics.¹⁰ From this, it follows that political culture and its underlying assumptions not only taint political practice, but also affect the study of politics as an academic discipline. As an academic activity, social science is both part of the existing political culture and constitutive element in constructing the political culture.

Given these mutually constitutive roles of culture and social science, the differences between the American and European IR perspectives may well have increased since the 1977 stocktaking of the American social science. The end of the Cold War has left the US as the only superpower, capable and willing to use its strength while unremittingly convinced of its redounding cultural and liberal-democratic assets to further a peaceful world order. At the same time, Europe has changed dramatically, in particular through the deepening of the integration of the European Union (EU) and its enlargement. The political emancipation of the EU and the prospect of a further enlargement have led to new and complicated meanings of important issues such as national responsibility, international governance and world order. These developments, have inevitable led to a new European culture of international relations: a new vision on security and cooperation, and new perspectives onto herself, the wider Europe and the world at large. The role and meaning of the EU in the regional and the international political system, and the accompanying political problems, form important challenges to the European IR community. It is therefore important to understand whether and to what extent this new political culture reflects the scholarly contribution to its philosophical, historical and social foundations, and, moreover,

how the European IR can make a contribution to the discipline as a whole. Discourse and praxis, political culture, and the study of these aspects within the discipline have (and had) profound and lasting consequences for the institutionalization of Europe. As Jean Monnet who started the European enterprise by building institutions first, later on reportedly acknowledged, perhaps surprisingly: “[Si j ‘avais su,] j ‘aurais commence par la culture.”¹¹ This thought is worth pondering for European IR specialists for reasons of regional concern as well as for balancing mainstream thinking in the American tradition on a global scale.

American domination of the study of IR

The American scholarly output was and still is overwhelming comparing to the European production. Not only because the number of scholars is much higher, but also because various departments are able to specialize themselves – a luxury only a few European departments of IR can afford. Moreover, it takes European social scientists more time, often by the need of translations, and more effort to publish their articles against the American up-stream. In this respect, there is hardly any change comparing to 1977. Ole Wæver has studied the American dominance in IR by comparing the number of American and European articles in a number of important IR journals in the period 1970-1995.¹² He concluded that American dominance in American journals was overwhelming, while American authors were also responsible for half of the articles in European magazines. Our small analysis of the American journal *International Organization (IO)* and the European (British) journal *Review of International Studies (RIS)* in the period 1995-2004 shows that Wæver’s conclusions still hold (see table 1 & 2).¹³

	American	British	Rest of Europe	Rest of the World
1970	92	0	4	4
1975	100	0	0	0
1980	67	14	5	14
1985	80	10	5	5
1990	78	0	19	3
1995	86	5	10	0
2000	96	0	4	0
2004	76	18	0	6

	American	British	Rest of Europe	Rest of the World
1975	0	100	0	0
1980	40	40	7	13
1985	26	65	0	9
1990	15	74	6	6
1995	46	42	5	7
2000	30	63	4	2
2004	41	47	9	3

More important than this quantitative dominance, however, is the fact that American preference for rational choice approaches, including neo-Realism and its variations, has not changed either.¹⁴ Although there have been made numerous adjustments, there is no such thing as an ontological turning point; not even after the major international changes in 1989-91. According to Waever, 'rationalism' - which he uses as a generic term for the rational choice approaches, game-theory or public choice approaches, and soft rational choice approaches (non-formalized rationalism) - is still the most important line of study. In the period 1995-97, it is responsible for 78% of the content of *International Studies Quarterly (ISQ)* and for 64% of *International Organization*. While European journals such as *European Journal (EJ)* and *Review of International Studies* are only for 42% respectively 17% filled with this subject.¹⁵ 'Reflectionism' - which, according to Waever, consists of approaches such as constructivism, post-structuralism and feminism - fills in *ISQ* and *IO* only 25% respectively 8% of the content, while this approach is responsible for 40% of the articles in *EJ* and *RIS* - the remaining is classified as 'other'. Our limited follow-up analysis of *IO* and *RIS* in 2004 had a similar result. *International Organization* is dominated by rationalism, while the approaches in *Review of International Studies* are more evenly distributed (see table 3 & 4).¹⁶

	rationalism	reflectionism	other
1995	65	23	12
1996	74	17	9
1997	52	35	13
2004	68	28	4

Table 4: Content <i>Review of International Studies</i> (in %)			
	rationalism	reflectionism	other
1995	18	32	50
1996	9	55	36
1997	24	36	40
2004	24	45	32

Domination of American thinking is strengthened by American academic and political culture. The hierarchically organized educational system, the appraisal of scientific journals and the national system of peer review are likely to be (partly) responsible for this. In short, Waever still seems right when he claims that: “mainstream IR enthusiastically integrates with theories peculiar to the United States”.¹⁷

Political culture and IR in the US: materialism and individualism

American approaches in International Relations are characterized by two basic principles: materialism and individualism. In the first place, these approaches assume the existence of a material reality outside the actor, which can be known and measured. Actors – states - are considered rational political unities that are trying to reach their conflicting interests in an anarchical environment. The international structure is determined by material capabilities and the distribution of these capabilities forms the framework within which the actor performs as required. The social scientist prescribes what ‘is’, especially with regard to the state and its security. Actors are not free to give an interpretation of their selves, others and their environment, since they are all given.¹⁸

In the second place, mainstream American IR theories are taking an individual, in contrast to a holistic, approach to reality. As mentioned, they are rational approaches that consider states as rational and goal-oriented political actors, which further their goals in a materially constructed reality. Their constant endeavor to the fulfillment of their own interests is a constant and exogenous given. Therefore, these theories can be considered as micro- or individual approaches.¹⁹ In the end, even Kenneth Waltz’ theory of structural realism is assuming an interaction of states within a given materially determined structure, in order to explain the whereabouts of international politics. Waltz, fore instance, does not explain the end of the Cold War from a systemic point of view, but he instead points to major policy blunders of an individual actor: “the Soviet Union was in a steady decline.... They just kept doing the same

wrong things, year after year”.²⁰ This however does not imply that all actions and interactions can be traced back to individual behavior, but, instead, it means that it deals with the connection between what actors want, the environment in which they strive to further their interests, and the outcome of this interaction.²¹

In the United States both academic discourse and political culture are framed by this material and individualistic approach of reality. Power, whether hard or soft, remains central to this mainstream thinking. Being a world power for so long, this is understandable. Being the only superpower left for more than a decade, it is likely that American IR will continue to focus on the position of the nation state in the world system. The strong predisposition of American scholars to approach IR in the framework of US foreign policy towards other states and regions, or world order, is unlikely to diminish.

Individualism as the outstanding characteristic of American liberalism and American political culture is likely to maintain its impact on mainstream IR thinking. Regardless one’s political affiliation, individuals are at the core or beginning of society. This is reflected as much in the Constitution by the Founding Fathers as in the above mentioned preference for micro-analytical approaches in social sciences. In American IR this is reflected in the importance of the individual state as political actor – particularly for a state so powerful. The sheer size of the country and its population as well as the huge, independent power the US represents tend to renege worries about what happens elsewhere as possibly disrupting threats to individual life, whereas the aggregate of power and dominant – national – views reinforce the individual position of the national state in the world. The internal politics of the US – in which individual actors shape their local and national environment with a minimal interference of (federal) government – is reflected in preferred international politics. The aggregations of hard and soft powers of the nation are seen as instrument to shape world order as an extension of the preferred, individually and locally construed political environment. The prescient view of Alexis de Tocqueville as regard America’s ‘exceptionalism’ and the identity based on this ‘American model’ embodied in President Wilson’s view on world order are still the ingredients of the American political culture and the American social sciences.²²

The units of analysis are separated from each other as individual, non-federal actors in the national context and as the unitary, national actor in the global context.²³ Political science, decision-making models and structural theories remain relatively autonomous in their primary orientation on domestic politics, foreign policy and IR. This however does not mean that American IR has come to a standstill. Interdependence has been recognized as a fact of life and studied extensively including the impact of transnational transactions. Regimes and communities

have become important concepts including the notions of principles and norms.²⁴ International political economy has rapidly been developed as, at least, a sub-discipline of IR, pointing out the importance of markets and non-state, economic actors.²⁵ These and other enrichments of IR theory did in part stem from an IR perspective, but also, perhaps even more so, from the discourse on the American position in the world and the practice of power politics.²⁶

The enduring competitive academic culture and the dominance of material-individual approaches did to a large extent paved the way of (only) adapting IR mainstream insights.²⁷ Power politics invites to exclusiveness in approach even though one reckons with the inclusion of competing actors with compelling claims on a range of issues. Different views and opinions are being heard politely, but the dominant political and academic culture limits the possibility to internalize these different theories. In the end, the American paradigm debate is not a real debate as it seems to focus on aggregation of powerful individual debaters, such as Waltz, Keohane or Mearsheimer, or clustered views that fall within the material and individual domain.²⁸

Martin Wright's question of why there is no theory of international relations may still be worrisome.²⁹ If so, his *Three Traditions*, may be the right approach to distinguish three omnipresent tendencies in IR and universally and historically valid clusters of theories around which we can put all different paradigms. The Hobbesian tradition has been preserved forcefully in American IR with important inroads being made into the Grotian tradition. Here is where the discipline has stranded in paradigmatic debates about American power and world order. However, evidence of contemporary history in Europe points to the inclusion of a third tradition, namely the Kantian perspective.

European political culture: Pluralism and the Kantian perspective

The historical developments of 1989, caused by many unintended consequences of political policy and deeds and unforeseen by anybody in the field, have in a sense revolutionized the world of IR. A dozen years after the collapse of communism, new international relations are a fact. The war-torn continent Europe faces the chance of irrevocable peace conditions within the EU and stabilization of peaceful change in Europe as a whole and even beyond. In Western Europe, three generations have not witnessed war and the knowledge from, for instance, high school students of WW-II, is waning. Even though vulnerability to external threats is engrained in the European mind, including the Cold War threat of nuclear annihilation, fear for war has faded away after a long period of peaceful conditions and integration. A Kantian culture exists in the minds of Western European citizens and is no longer an exclusive perspective in Central and Eastern Europe.

The reality of this Kantian culture is reflected in the first pillar of the EU and in other sensitive areas such as monetary harmonization, common trade policy and external relations. Even in the field of foreign and security policy, although far from 'common', there are remarkable indications of consent or convergence of views and attitudes. Enlargement, association, foreign aid and assistance, human rights and international law, peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance are among those that easily spring to mind. There are also shared views that run counter to Realist core thinking, notably the lack of interest in defense in general and the drastic decline of defense expenditure in particular. With the exception of the big, formerly colonial powers, England and France, the military instrument in international politics, other than peacekeeping and peace-enforcing, is notoriously unpopular. The French or German way of building international order is not just subject to the idiosyncrasies of some political leaders, but is supported by a large majority of the population. Politics in Europe may go astray for some and may have taken fresh, purposeful directions for others; but for both cases, political culture reaches beyond the individual and material, and beyond the national orientations hovering over Brussels and its institutions. Just as Monnet did sigh for, political culture has become a driving force in European institutionalization and part of European IR.

An all-European mainstream IR, however, is hard to find. If one looks for unified approaches, typical national contributions are rare, and, even then, they are often represented by individual scholars rather than by 'schools'.³⁰ The writing of scholars like Jürgen Habermas and Dieter Senghaas in Germany, or Raymond Aron and Pierre Hassner in France is influential, but these individuals do not form national schools within European IR. Instead, they are representatives of a modern European culture that stems from centuries of discourse between the great philosophers of the Enlightenment, such as Rousseau and Montesquieu, and those of the dialectics of war and peace, such as Kant and Clausewitz.³¹ The legacy of these and others forebode a continuation of the struggle for theory, not a recipe. Reflection and diversity have been important characteristics of European political culture due to the influence of both Enlightenment reason and Romantic relativism.

European pluralism can be seen as reaction to dogmatic theocratic world views of Muslim and Orthodox centers of power, and to Catholic views on universal, hierarchical rule of the church. This has important consequences for the European approach to liberalism: comparing to the American version of liberalism, it pays much less attention to individualism. The emancipation of mankind of religious or other dogmas is more important, and is captured in the well-known slogan 'liberté, égalité et fraternité'. In other words, a precious balance is sought for between individualism and what is called liberal-, social- or Christian-democratic political order.

It differs significantly from an equally powerful formula of revolutionary thought for the new American political order, encapsulated in ‘life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness’. In America, liberalism as individualism rather than as pluralism prevailed: an aggregation of individual views rather than a social construct. European liberalism, on the other hand, is concerned with freeing people of natural, political or religious restrictions, and is more pluralistic and diverse. The question right then is whether and in which way European liberalism finds its way to European approaches in international relations.

European approaches to the study of IR

In order to characterize European IR approaches, we identify a second extremity in contrast to the material-individual pole. Both dialectically opposed poles will span the totality of space in which the paradigm-debate will take place (see figure 1).³² In order to do so, we have to go back to the age-old agent-structure dichotomy showing up again under many guises as if there is a recent gist to it. Although materialist and individualist approaches have often and for long periods of time dominated the field of IR, there is also a tradition describing international politics as socially constructed: not only do actors create international structures, their identities and interests are likewise constructed by shared ideas, common rules and norms.³³ The influence of material factors on reality is thus determined by the way in which actors perceive and react to reality: idealism (or ‘ideationalism’) is of overriding importance. This implies however that existence of material reality as such, has not been denied.³⁴ Furthermore, material-individualism has been criticized for being ‘undersocialized’.³⁵ It does not accept what must be the case in reality, namely “the simultaneity of the individual and collective dimension of human agency”.³⁶

The opposite of a material and individual approach is thus an ideational and social approach. This *social-idealism* – as we call it – criticizes the material-individualistic approach because it ignores that rationality presupposes sociality and socialization.³⁷ The nature of international politics is determined by knowledge and beliefs actors have about each other, while these are primarily constituted by social structures. In other words, concepts like power, influence and interests do not have neutral and independent meanings as they are depending on dominant social structures. The social-idealist approach rejects therefore, the a-historic material-individual notion of states as rational actors with interests, powers and identities that are preceding international structure. Social-idealism is a genuine opposite pole to material-individualism. Identities and interests of different actors are not given by nature but constructed by shared ideas.

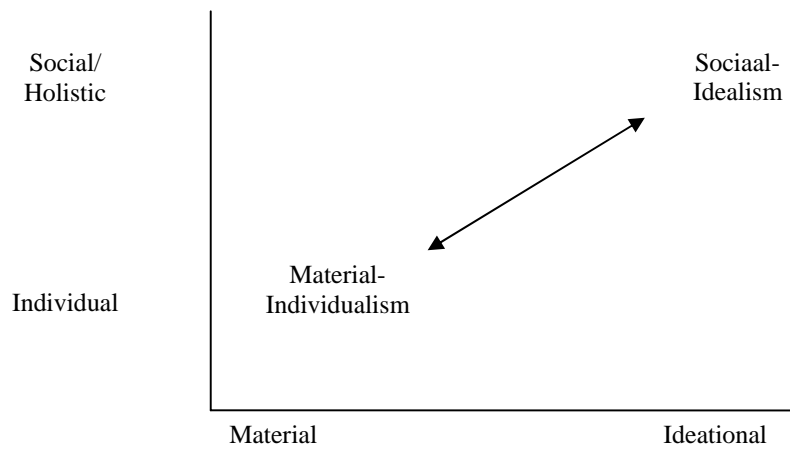


Figure 1: IR approaches, opposing poles

In the European tradition, Enlightenment and Reason have brought the liberation of the mind and a belief in progress, but the limits of science and the complexity of reality have been made clear by both philosophers and European history. Science is not the same as, postulated, truth. European understanding of science is therefore remote from the American belief in scientific infallibility that is reflected in the dominance of material-individual approaches in American IR.³⁸ The European approach is characterized by reflection and diversity, and, therefore, accept, one way or the other, that social-idealistic elements should be added to material-individualistic assumptions, in order to explain and understand reality.³⁹ In other words, European approaches are moving upwards and to the right in figure 1. The degree in which differs by author or approach, but in each a social-ideational development can be observed. The ‘Critical school’ and the ‘Frankfurter Schule’, for instance, represent reflection on dominant ontological insights and postulated truths. They are based on Marxist theses and profess a role of social sciences in the emancipation of the suppressed. However, ‘inconclusiveness’ is not the exclusive claim of views of Marxist origin. The French contributions of for example the geopolitical scientist Yves Lacoste and the strategic thinker Ramon Aron are also characterized by social-ideational assumptions.⁴⁰ Even within the British contributions to IR, traces of social-ideational thinking can be found. Although empirical inclination and pragmatism pervade the English contributions since Carr’s polemical introduction of ‘realism’, the author also made clear that there is structure that constraints man, but also society in which men purposefully act. The political culture of common sense and the force of habit are balanced by the conviction that

without purpose there cannot be politics.⁴¹ English pragmatism finds therefore common ground with continental sociological elements.

The English School pragmatically applies Kant's enlightened observations about states and world citizenship.⁴² There is an interaction of rights and duties not only between governments and citizens at the national level, but also between governments and citizens of different states. International law and diplomatic relations are of essential importance for the internal political order of states. World order is infused with norms and rules that subsequently affect the individual state. Kant posits not only that states are able to create preferable international structures, but he also points at a reverse relationship: the international structure does have important effects on states. Without international law and international organization Kantian 'republics' will be hard to find.⁴³

Hedley Bull has taken up this theme when making a distinction between a system of states and a society of states. According to him, the former is formed when two or more states have contact between them. The latter can be regarded as a much broader concept. Not only do states form a system because of their mutual relations, they also form a society as they share a common set of norms and rules that affects their behavior. An international society exists when "a group of states, conscious of certain common interests and common values, form a society in the sense that they conceive themselves to be bound by a shared set of norms and rules in their relations with one another."⁴⁴ These 'generalized principles' define the substance or nature of a multilateral polity, in the words of John Ruggie, and are constitutive in building an international society.⁴⁵ Law, according to John Vincent does not produce international order, but it has to "identify the constitutive principle in the international organization of humankind – the society of states."⁴⁶

The English School moves (somewhat) from the left-below position in figure 1 towards the right-upper area, but remains pragmatic. Both facts and standards are taken along in the analysis, but pragmatism prevents too much influence of ideational input. The idea of human rights and individual sovereignty became subject of John Vincent's theorizing, though the tension with 'reality' made him a prudent practitioner. He summarized the tension between human rights and the question of individual sovereignty versus state sovereignty as follows: "Either *Realpolitik* and world community, or no world community."⁴⁷ That was during the Cold War in 1982, and understandable in the given context. It is possible that the original contributors to the English School would have extended the concept of 'international society' in the realm of ideas. Bull already made a sociological turn as he himself indicated at the end of his life,⁴⁸ and such a development can also be observed in the latest work of Barry Buzan.⁴⁹

The multiplicity of actors in international affairs and, by implication, the problem of simultaneous play of levels of analysis was thus established in the British IR community. This is a crucial step towards continental sociology, where the state, nation and ethnicity, and world society have been subject of investigation for ages.⁵⁰ Not just the cosmopolitan world of the Enlightenment epitomized by Kant's thought and contemporary practice, but also the discovery of Jean Bodin of international sovereignty of nations implied by his definition of sovereignty in the national context, or the interdependence of Montesquieu's multi-issue world politics presented in a truly holistic fashion, or the pessimistic conclusion of Rousseau about the 'rotten' state organization and, as a corollary, the impossibility of an international peaceful order. They all introduced the level-of-analysis problem of events occurring in relation with each other – not as phenomena that can be separated and analyzed independently. Diversity and holism, instead of parochialism, are the features of these approaches.⁵¹

German and French approaches, especially, are aware of the above mentioned problems. Habermas, for example, points to the existence of a post-sovereign ideology and a conscience of a so-called cosmopolitan solidarity in the current post-national constellation.⁵² The EU, he stated, must promote democratic civil society in adjacent areas. Legitimizing the functional mechanisms for integration is very important at the level of the society and is often in sharp contrast with economic requirements imposed on the governments leading to social injustice. Yet, a European identity and legitimization of 'Brussels' decisions require popular solidarity within and between societies. In that respect, Europe presents a model for world order. The complex situation in current Europe corresponds, according to Habermas, in important ways to the problems of postwar Germany. It is therefore understandable that the German IR community is not as strongly focused on state and state-policy as its American counterpart. Neo-realism and positivism never have reached a strong position in Germany.⁵³ Gerald Holden notes that no firm debate between constructivists and rationalists has taken place simply because "the rationalist side of this debate has been fairly weak."⁵⁴ Neo-institutionalism and constructivism are dominating the field.

In France, social scientists were opposed to state-centric approaches over a long period of time. Vidal de la Blanche, a French geographer from the early 20th century, acknowledged back in 1898 that outside the level of the state, a diversity of complex relations existed between national, regional and sub-regional relations and human activities.⁵⁵ Already in that period, the importance of the human and social factor was recognized as correction on the state-centered determinism. Later this topic resonates in the post-modern approach of Foucault and the critical approach of Lacoste: the interconnectedness of several problems at several levels is a too extensive and a too complex matter to comprehend them separately. Marie-Claude Smouts thus asset that the

traditional divide between political thought, political science and international relations is completely outdated.⁵⁶ Hassner, furthermore, addresses the role of ideas at all levels of IR, at the state level, that of the nation and in international society and pointedly refers to the fact of trans-national interpenetration.⁵⁷ The perspective of an independent, sovereign state can be maintained neither in theory, nor in practice. The state is still a powerful actor, but not sovereign and it is better to speak, with Bertrand Badie, about the capacity of the state *vis-à-vis* the nation and ethnicity at the national level, on the one hand, and *vis-à-vis* the trans-national and interstate transactions, on the other, in constructing world governance.⁵⁸ While multilateralism between states exists in regimes and institutions, they represent ‘top-down’ arrangements; world governance also refers to the public space, including a wide range of non-governmental influences and arrangements: “Governance is the sum of the many ways individuals and institutions, public and private, manage their common affairs.”⁵⁹

The English School established the idea of a society of states being more than a mere international system. German and French authors transcend the limitation of state-centrism and include national citizens (nation) and world citizens (society of societies). Interaction takes place in an international, public space. Hence, the multiplicity of actors, the inevitability of pluralism, the new understanding of sovereignty of the state, and the new modalities of international relations that no longer resemble the traditional balance of power.⁶⁰

These developments compared with mainstream American IR show departures from individualism to holism (and sociability), from nationalism to internationalism, from individuals to responsible citizens, from rational choice to sociological processes of construction. Politics in Europe is a process in which men or states start under unequal conditions, and equality should be established through fair, that is responsible, social intervention. Whereas in American conception the state in anarchical conditions disengages itself as much as possible from individual life, the self-help society and reigning free-market, in European IR the state itself is a sociological construction and a reflection of social life, responsible society and a market that is (ideally) responsive to it. Sovereignty for the one is imposed as an invention of convenience but nonetheless a necessary evil; for the other, sovereignty has to be legitimized and is a common achievement. Badie therefore suggests replacing the simply state-people discussion by ‘the triangular game’ between three kinds of actors: the state, trans-national actors, and identity entrepreneurs:

“Each one draws individuals into the international arena, the first as citizens, the second as sovereignty-free individuals, and the third as primordial community members. Each kind of actor is thus promoting a special type of commitment: civic commitment to the

state, utilitarian and pragmatic commitment to transnational networks; primary commitment to identity entrepreneurs.”⁶¹

The role of the state is preserved up to a certain extent. It is placed amidst global society and communitarian - that is: ethnic, religious and nationalist - society. This is an important distinction, for globalization implies interaction at the state level and in the economic and monetary and other utilitarian areas, but the world of values, beliefs and identities is fragmented and defies globalization. The nature of the international system having taken a truly global dimension is still affected by the nature of interior regimes – based on either state or communitarian identity.⁶² This is illustrated by the relations within and with the Islamic world: no separation of state and church, but a fragmentation in power relationships between state and radicalism, between modernism and conservatism, and between ethnic and national identities. State power and communitarian powers are caught in regional conflicts which are internationalized, even globalized, since 9/11. The Cold War between states and blocks is over, but not the values and identities as the sources of tension between the nature of domestic and the nature of international order.⁶³

Armed violence and fragmentation are still threatening world order although they have got their own dimension in the new era of globalization. The multiplicity of actors and the interwoven levels of analysis interfere to a large extent with traditional, mostly Realistic, thinking. Terrorist organizations, revolutionary forces and organized crime are undermining the state monopoly on the use of violence and military security: violence has been privatized on a global scale. Governments, parliaments or bureaucracies in failing states are being infiltrated by these actors. As a result, these states are not threatened by crime and corruption, but they are criminal and corrupt. The interaction between the different levels, according to Hassner, leads to two dangerous processes: “l’embourgeoisement du barbare et la barbarisation du bourgeois”.⁶⁴ The incapacity of governments to act against these processes, leads to an increase of terrorism and organized crime, which can have far-reaching regional and global consequences in the current situation of interdependence. Violence and insecurity today have their origins much less in ideological confrontation and war between states and to the more so in an amalgam of social, political and economical processes within society.

Security is thus much broader than purely military policy alone. Defense policy remains a necessary requirement, but a narrow realist definition of national security is not sufficient to counter the current threats and violence. A policy aimed at the stabilization of political, economic and social instable regions should be added to this. On comparison the differences of the European and American security strategy turns out to lie in this area.

The American security strategy is a military-strategic document aimed at defense policy in a narrow sense, though it has a political impact on a global scale.⁶⁵ The world is considered a dangerous place, hence the American nation and people as well as American values should actively be protected with every means available: “Defending our Nation against its enemies is the first and fundamental commitment of the Federal Government... To defeat this threat we must make use of every tool in our arsenal.”⁶⁶ National interest is defined in military-strategic terms – the war against terror – and is imposed to the rest of the world: using diplomacy or violence. The security strategy matches the current, parochial American political culture, in which the ‘promised land’ or ‘city on the hill’ should be defended against the evil enemies, while at the same time the world should be changed according to one’s own image.⁶⁷ Together with other countries if possible or alone if necessary: “we will be prepared to act apart”⁶⁸ Interference of others in one’s own affairs is seen as a violation of sovereignty and therefore strongly disapproved – hence the rejection of the International Criminal Court - while at the same time political or military intervention in other states is seen as a right: “the United States cannot remain idle while dangers gather.”⁶⁹ The American political culture of materialism, individualism and exceptionalism, the domination of rationalism, and the strategy of military power and interventionism seem to fit in seamlessly.

It has taken a long time before the European Union could produce a similar document, but in 2003 Javier Solana was able to present a truly European security strategy.⁷⁰ The document is of course a compromise, though an important one. The world is not considered a threat, but a complex and mutual interdependent society “in which the internal and external aspects of security are indissolubly linked.”⁷¹ Large-scale aggression is seen as improbable. The document points to a complex of new threats that are “more diverse, less visible and less predictable”: such as terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, regional conflicts, state failure and organized crime. Security therefore is not only a state affair, but deals also with the quality of life of individuals and groups of citizens. Moreover, it is “a precondition of development”, since lack of security will result in “a cycle of conflict, insecurity and poverty.”⁷² Causes that can lead to the threat or use of violence - still the distinguishing criterion in security issues - are thereby not only seen in military terms but contain political, economic and social dimensions as well. The European security strategy fits in with European political culture, which is aimed at multilateral cooperation and acknowledges the multidimensionality of problems - though legal and legitimate use of violence however is not rejected. The complex social-ideational assumptions of the European approaches in IR have found their way to the European security culture and European

security institutions which, according to us, should be more capable in finding solutions for the contemporary security challenges than the one-dimensional American approach.

Conclusion

In this paper we have tried to analyze and explain the major differences between European and American IR approaches. According to us, political culture can help to explain these differences. With help of a meta-theoretical classification that is based on two dichotomies - individual vs. social and material vs. ideational – we have subsequently analyzed the background of these differences. A major disadvantage of this classification is that it threatens to put forward the mainstream debate on IR paradigms to be *the* problem of social *sciences*. By substituting paradigm for theory, like in game theory, the intangible and fluid world of IR becomes more tangible and solid. It offers a way out of the complexity making life much more comfortable for scholars. At the same time, however, we should ponder - with Hoffmann – whether we do not too easily surrender some essential ins and outs of *social* science and compromise the interconnections between scientific knowledge, history, theory and the autonomy of social science as a distinct field of research. There is no such thing as the theory or the social science, in fact a mission to discover the true IR approach is nothing more than “an elusive quest”.⁷³

Within social science it is at least required that a theory is internally consistent and is able to give a satisfactory explanation for historical events or other facts.⁷⁴ A consistent argument that cannot hold against an (historical-) empirical test, is of little use. This implies that a theory that is based on one of the extremes in figure 1 can offer interesting insights, but at the same time never offers complete insight, because it turns a blind eye for the other part of ‘reality’. Therefore, the debate on paradigms does not lead to a more comprehensive approach. It cuts the world in pieces and half-truths and notwithstanding the achievements in refining the existing tools for analysis, paradigmatic debates do not solve this. Methodological and epistemological advances are achieved, but the essence of the dichotomy of meta-theoretical, or ontological, orientations remain hidden behind them.

The debate on paradigms should therefore be seen as a *dialogue*. A single paradigm will always tell an incomplete story because of the complexity of social reality. The study of international relations should therefore not be lured in a comfortable *either-or* reasoning (one-dimensional thinking); on the contrary, theoretical ambition requires an *and-and* approach (multi-dimensional thinking). In order to understand social phenomena, it is necessary to reckon with both meta-theoretical poles – two dialectically opposed and simultaneously existing truths – that influence social reality. A superior internally valid theory should therefore pay attention to both

the historical-empirical requirement and the aforementioned metaphysical principle. Herein lies the importance of European IR as it does not deny the existence of a material reality, while at the same time acknowledge the fact that this reality is socially constructed.

The important contribution of the European IR approach is this *and-and* or multi-dimensional thinking. This, however, does not mean that the above mentioned type of thinking is ethical, national or geographical bound. The European approach can establish itself in other parts of the world, such as the United States, as well.⁷⁵ Moreover, though not subject of this paper, it is even possible that approaches from different political cultures are wrestling with the same problems and, therefore, can be placed on the same continuum (see figure 1) as well.⁷⁶ If and when European (and other) scholars are able to find each other in this idea and strengthen the achieved common insights, European IR will be able to establish itself as a necessary and distinct discipline breaking through the (one-dimensional) American dominance.

Notes & References

¹ This paper appeared last year, in a slightly different form, in the Dutch journal on peace and security *Vrede en Veiligheid*, (34(4): 460-483).

² Hoffmann, Stanley (1977), An American social science: international relations, *Daedalus* 106(1), pp. 41-60.

³ Hoffmann (1977), p. 59.

⁴ Cf. Groom, A.J.R & Peter Mandaville (2001), Hegemony and autonomy in international relations: the continental experience, in: Crawford, Robert M. & Darryl S.L. Jarvis (eds.) *International relations – Still an American social science?*, Albany, State Univ. of New York Press, pp. 151-165.

⁵ Cf. Assem, Arjan van den (2005), De bekering van een wetenschapsbeoefenaar (The conviction of a scholar), *Vrede en Veiligheid* 34(1), pp. 58-79.

⁶ Knutsen, Torbjorn L. (1997), *A history of international relations (2nd edition)*. New York, Manchester University Press, p.69.

⁷ Almond, G. and S. Verba (1963), *The civic culture. Political attitudes and democracy in five nations*. Princeton.

⁸ Compare Almond and Verba's definition of political culture as the "pattern of orientations to political objects among the members of a nation." (Almond & Verba (1963), pp.14-15).

⁹ Baker, Keith M. (1987), Introduction, in: K.M. Baker (ed.), *The French revolution and the creation of modern political culture, 1, The political culture of the old regime*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, p.xi.

¹⁰ Cf. Klashorst, Gert Onne van de (1990), Politieke cultuur: het klassieke begrip en een nieuwe werkdefinitie (Political culture: the classical concept and a new workdefinition), in: Hans Righart (ed.), *De zachte kant van de politiek (The soft side of politics)*. Den Haag, SDU Uitgeverij, pp.51-65.

¹¹ Cf. Gauger, Hans-Martin (2004), J'aurais commencé par la culture, *Le Forum*,

http://www.leforum.de/artman/publish/article_147.shtml, read 10/30/2005.

¹² Waever, Ole (1998), The sociology of a not so international discipline: American and European developments in international relations, *International Organization* 52(4), pp.687-727.

¹³ The results from the period 1970-1995 are from Waever (1998), p.698, the rest stems from our own research.

¹⁴ Waever (1998), pp.688-689.

¹⁵ Waever (1998), pp701-702; cf. Waever, Ole (2004), Isms, paradigms, traditions and theories – but why also ‘schools’ in IR?, paper presented at the ECPR, The Hague, sept.9-11, 2004, 23 p.

¹⁶ The results from the period 1995-1997 are from Waever (1998), p.702, the rest stems from our own research.

¹⁷ Waever (1998), pp.688-689.

¹⁸ Cf. Legro, Jeffrey W. and Andrew Moravcsik (1999), Is anybody still a realist?, *International Security* 24(2), p.5-55, especially pp. 12-18. See also Volten, P.M.E and A van den Assem, (2003), *Transcending paradigm bashing: Realism and Idealism in international politics*, Paper for the International Relations Session at the European Political Science Network EPSNET Conference 'Political Scientists in the New Europe' Paris.June 13-14, 28 pp.

¹⁹ Cf. Keohane, Robert (1988), International institutions. Two approaches, *International Studies Quarterly* 32(4), pp.379-396; Alexander Wendt (1994), Collective identity formation and the international state, *American Political Science Review* 88(2), pp.384-396; John Gerard Ruggie (1998), What makes the world hang together? Neo-utilitarianism and the social constructivist challenge, *International Organization* 52 (4), pp. 855-885.

²⁰ Cf. Institute of International Studies, theory and international politics; Conversation with Kenneth N. Waltz, *Conversations with History*; UC Berkeley. <http://globetrotter.berkeley.edu/people3/Waltz/waltz-con0.html>, read 10/25/2005.

²¹ Cf. Lake, David A. and Robert Powell (eds.) (1999), *Strategic choice and international relations*. Princeton, Princeton University Press, pp. 20-21.

²² Cf. Kissinger, H. A. (1994), *Diplomacy*. New York: Simon and Schuster, pp. 29-55.

²³ The level-of-analysis problem, formulated forty years ago, will live on this way.

²⁴ Cf. Keohane Robert O. and Joseph S. Nye (1989), *Power and independence*. 2nd edition. Harper Collins Publishers; Krasner, Stephen D. (ed.) (1983), *International regimes*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press.

²⁵ Cf. Gilpin, Robert (1987), *The political economy of international relations*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

²⁶ See for instance Keohane, Robert O. (1984), *After hegemony. Cooperation and discord in the world political economy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press; Nye, Joseph S. (1990), *Bound to lead: The changing nature of American power*. New York: Basis Books.

²⁷ Cf. Legro and Moravcsik (1999).

²⁸ The debate is therefore parochial in character; cf. Groom and Mandaville (2001).

²⁹ Wight, Martin (1991), *International theory : the three traditions*. London, Leicester University Press.

³⁰ The English School may be an exception (cf. Groom & Mandaville (2001), pp. 151-165).

³¹ Cf. Volten, P.M.E. (1998), Kant en Clausewitz: Eeuwige vrede en totale oorlog. (Kant and Clausewitz: Eternal peace and total war) *Transaktie* 27(3), pp.356-373.

³² Cf. Volten and Van den Assem, (2003); De Deugd, Nienke (2005), *Ukraine and the issue of participation with the Euro-Atlantic security community*. Groningen: PhD Thesis, p.15.

³³ Wendt, Alexander (1999) *Social Theory of International Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p.4.

³⁴ Cf. Adler, E. (1997), Seizing the middle ground: Constructivism and world politics, *European Journal of International Relations* 3(3), pp.3129-363.

³⁵ Wendt (1999), p.4.

³⁶ Rosenberg, Justin (1994), The international imagination. IR theory and ‘classic social analysis’, *Millenium* 23(1), p.94.

³⁷ In recent academic work a variety of social theories can be found, such as constructivism, critical theory and gender studies. All of them have accepted the importance both of social structures, contrasting the individualist approach, and of common ideas and information instead of material forces. Hence our plea for the overarching concept of social-idealism. Moreover, it suggests more continuity in contemporary debates than often is assumed.

³⁸ Ralf Dahrendorf calls this, back in 1963, applied enlightenment, cf. Hoffmann (1977), p.45.

³⁹ Cf. Hollis, M. & S. Smith (1991), *Explaining and Understanding International Relations*, Oxford, Clarendon Press.

⁴⁰ *Peace and War* for instance is made up of different parts: history, philosophy, theory and sociology (Aron, Raymond (1966), *Peace and War: A Theory of International Relations*. New York: Praeger). See also Lacoste, Yves (1993), *Dictionnaire de Géopolitique*. Paris: Flammarion; See for a interesting oversight

of geopolitics in France: Criekemans, David (2005), *Geopolitiek, 'geografisch geweten' van de buitenlandse politiek*. (Geopolitics, 'geographic conscience' and foreign policy) Antwerp: PhD Thesis, pp.380-394.

⁴¹ Carr, E.H. (1964), *The twenty years crisis, 1919-1939: An introduction to the study of international relations*, New York, Harper & Row.

⁴² Cf. Wendt (1999).

⁴³ Kant here emerges as a path breaking scholar of IR, placing the state at the centre of his theory, but also explicitly linking national an international order. According to Gallie, a truly, second Copernican revolution of his. Cf. Gallie, Walter B. (1978), *Philosophers of war and peace: Kant, Clausewitz, Marx, Engels and Tolstoy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

⁴⁴ Bull, Hedley (1977), *The anarchical society. A study of world politics*. London: Macmillan, p.13

⁴⁵ Ruggie, John G. (1998), *Constructing the world polity*. New York: Routledge.

⁴⁶ Vincent, R. John (1990), Order in international politics, in: Miller, J.D.B. & R.J. Vincent (eds.), *Order and violence. Hedley Bull and international relations*. Oxford: Claridon, p. 54. Vincent thus depicts international law as a cart, not as a horse (cf. Neumann, Iver B. (1997), John Vincent and the English School of IR, in: Iver B. Neumann & Ole Wæver (eds.), *The future of international relations: Masters in the making*. London: Routledge, p.40).

⁴⁷ Vincent, R. John (1982), *Realpolitik* and world community, in: James Mayall (ed.), *The community of states*. London: Allen and Unwin, p.83.

⁴⁸ Cf. Linklater, Andrew (1996), Rationalism, in: Scott Burchill & Andrew Linklater et al (eds.) *Theories of international relations*. New York: St. Martins Press, pp. 103-128.

⁴⁹ Cf. Buzan, Barry (2004), *From international to world society. English school theory and the social structure of globalization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

⁵⁰ For instance, the Kantian notions of Republic, national citizens and contract, international law between Republics and the world citizens and their moral-legal obligations.

⁵¹ Cf. Crawford & Jarvis (2001).

⁵² Habermas, Jürgen (2001), *The post-national constellation*. Cambridge: Polity Press, pp.104-112.

⁵³ Hellmann, Gunther, Klaus D. Wolf & Michael Zürn (2003), *Die neuen Internationalen Beziehungen. Forschungsstand und Perspektiven in Deutschland*. Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlag.

⁵⁴ Holden, Gerard (2004), The state of the art in German IR, *Review of International Studies*, 30, p.455.

⁵⁵ Vidal de la Blanche, p. (1898), La géographie politique à propos des écrit de Mr. Frederic ratzel, *Annales de Géographie* 7(32), pp.97-101; cf. Criekemans (2005), pp.210-216.

⁵⁶ Smouts, Marie-Claude (2001), International cooperation: from coexistence to world governance, in: Marie-Claude Smouts (ed.), *The new international relations: Theory and practice*. London: C. Hurst and Co., p.84.

⁵⁷ Hassner, Pierre (2000), Le rôle des idées dans les relations internationales, *Politique Étrangère*, 3(4), pp.687-702.

⁵⁸ Badie, Bertrand (2001), From sovereignty to the capacity of the state, in Marie-Claude Smouts (ed.), *The new international relations: Theory and practice*. London: C. Hurst and Co., pp.15-28; Badie, Bertrand (2000), D'une souveraineté fictive à une post-souveraineté incertaine, *Studia Diplomatica*, 5(5), pp.5-14.

⁵⁹ Commission on Global Governance (1995), *Our global neighbourhood*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

⁶⁰ Badie, Bertrand (2000), Vers la responsabilité cosmopolitique: A propos d' Habermas, Après l'État-nation, *Les Temps Modernes*, 610, pp.95-104.

⁶¹ Badie Bertrand (2001), Realism under praise, or a requiem? The paradigmatic debate in international relations, *International Political Science Review*, 22(3), p.255.

⁶² Hassner (2000), pp.692-696.

⁶³ This notion is a contribution of Aron; Cf. Aron (1966).

⁶⁴ Hassner, Pierre (1998), Recrudescence de la Violence: Par-delà le Totalitarisme et la Guerre, *Esprit* (dec.), pp.19-20.

⁶⁵ Bush, George W. (2002), *The national security strategy of the United States of America*. Washington DC: The White House.

⁶⁶ Bush (2002), p. iv.

⁶⁷ Henry Nau's recent work typify this inside-out approach; cf. Nau, H.R. (2002), *At home abroad : identity and power in American foreign policy*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

⁶⁸ Bush (2002), p. 31.

⁶⁹ Bush (2002), p. 15.

⁷⁰ Solana, Javier (2003), *A Secure Europe in a better World: European Security Strategy*. Brussels, European Council, 12 December.

⁷¹ Solana (2003), p.2.

⁷² Solana (2003), p.2.

⁷³ Ferguso, Y.H. & R.W. Mansbach (1988), *The elusive quest: Theory and international politics*. Columbia, Univ. Of South Carolina Press; Sullivan, M.P. (2002), *Theories of international relations: Transition vs. persistence*. New York, Palgrave MacMillan. Zie ook Kolodziej, E.A. (2005), *Security and international relations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

⁷⁴ Mortimore G. W. & J. B. Maund (1976), Rationality in belief, in: Benn, S.I. & Mortimore, G.W. (eds.), *Rationality and the Social Science: Contributions to the Philosophy and Methodology of the Social Science*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, pp. 11-33.

⁷⁵ This has been aptly demonstrated by the growing popularity of constructivism and feminism in America.

⁷⁶ Cf. Cox, Robert W. (ed.) (1997), *The new realism: Perspectives on multilateralism and world order*, London, MacMillan Press LTD, especially chapter5-8.