

Security communities and the habitus of restraint:

Germany and the United States on Iraq

Corneliu Bjola (McMaster University) and

Markus Kornprobst (The Ohio State University)

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ABSTRACT. Borrowing from Norbert Elias, we introduce the habitus of restraint to the study of security communities. This habitus constitutes a key dimension of the glue that holds security communities together. The perceived compatibility of practices emanating from the habitus that members hold fosters the collective identity upon which a security community is built. The violation of a member's habitus by the practices of another member, however, disrupts the re-production of collective identity and triggers a crisis of the security community. Our analysis of Germany's reaction to Washington's case for war against Iraq provides empirical evidence for the salience of the habitus for the internal dynamics of security communities.

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Introduction

At first glance, it is surprising that Saddam Hussein triggered the deepest post-WWII rift in the usually amicable relationship between the United States and Germany. The two countries share many values that should have prevented action taken against a vicious dictator from becoming a contentious issue. Saddam Hussein's longstanding record of gross human rights abuses and aggression against other states should have been yet another reason to draw the two allies even closer together.

This scenario, however, failed to materialise. Not only did the United States and Germany fail to find a common ground on Iraq. They even started to fundamentally question the nature of their relationship. Politicians exchanged several rounds of insults, ranging from Hitler-Bush comparisons in Germany to likening Berlin's policy towards Iraq to the ones of Libya and North Korea in the United States. Intellectual elites and the public joined the chorus of sometimes severe criticism against the other country.

This study focuses on Germany's reaction. Why did Germany react with such vigour to Washington's argument for war against Saddam Hussein? The existing literature cannot explain this empirical puzzle. The realist literature on alliances revolves around the concept of balancing. Germany, however, did not balance against the United States. Complex interdependence focuses on the sensitivity and vulnerability of a state vis-à-vis another. Washington's threats to punish its unreliable ally, however, did not make Berlin forgo its anti-war stance. Diversionary theories of war and peace cannot explain why the incumbent in the German elections campaigned against the war but his challenger did not. Finally, the constructivist literature on security communities fails to explain Germany's reaction because the internal dynamics of security communities remain little understood.

In order to improve our grasp of these dynamics, we introduce the habitus of restraint to the study of security communities. Our contention focuses on the ways of how enduring dispositions shape foreign policy. Following Norbert Elias's conceptualisation of the habitus, we identify two layers of deeply internalised predispositions that are distilled from history: a set of internal checks and self-restraints against the use of force in world politics; and, underpinning these constraints, a durable set of anxieties and feelings of shame concerning past uses of force in international relations.

In a security community, some dimensions of a member state's habitus are idiosyncratic whereas others are shared with other members of the community. The extent to which a habitus is shared across a security community is unclear to its members. The habitus, being a second nature, does not lend itself to be put under scrutiny and reflected upon by those who hold it. Yet the perceived compatibility of practices generated through the habitus are apparent to the members. A member state may perceive a compatibility between the range of conceivable practices that emanate from its habitus on the one hand and its perception of the practices of other members on the other, or it may perceive a mismatch between the two.

We contend that the perception of compatibility or incompatibility has major repercussions for the internal dynamics of security communities. The perception of compatibility helps to re-produce collective identity. It assures the members that the community is firmly built on common ground. Standing on this common ground makes it possible for members to fine tune their practices through bargaining and argumentation, and sometimes even to agree effortlessly on a set of practices that seem self-evident to everyone. The perception of incompatibility, by contrast, disrupts the collective identity on which the security community is built and propels it into

crisis. Practices outside of a state's range of practices as delineated by its habitus violate this state's most taken-for-granted outlook on the world. This violation triggers demarcation from instead of identification with the member state whose practices are perceived to deny and reject the self-evident.

This process provides a plausible explanation for Germany's reaction against Washington's case for war against Iraq. Germany's habitus of restraint, constituted largely by constraints underwritten by anxiety and shame pertaining to the Second World War, clashed with Washington's practices. The latter were outside of the range of conceivable practices that Germany's habitus circumscribed. This made agreement on a course of action impossible, disrupted the identification with the United States, and gave rise to sharp demarcation.

This paper is organised into six sections: First, we review the existing literature. Second, we discuss Elias's concept of the habitus and define it in a manner that makes it amenable to empirical research on security communities. Third, we describe the efforts by the United States to sway the world community into supporting its stance on Iraq. Fourth, we investigate into Germany's dominant habitus. Fifth, we analyse how Germany came to demarcate itself from the United States. Finally, the conclusion summarises our findings and highlights the leads that the habitus of restraint provides for further research.

Shortcomings of the existing literature

Four literature sets pertain to the research puzzle: realist scholarship on alliances, sensitivities and vulnerabilities of states as identified in the complex interdependence literature, the diversionary theory of war, and constructivist research on security

communities. None of these approaches, however, can explain convincingly the schism between the United States and Germany during the Iraq crisis.

According to the classical version of the realist approach,¹ states protect their security by maintaining a favourable equilibrium of power in the system, either by increasing their military capabilities or by building military alliances. Stephen Walt's refinement of the balancing argument maintains that states do not balance against power alone, but against states that are perceived to pose the greatest threat.² Realist scholarship, however, cannot explain the German reaction to Washington's stance on Iraq. Germany did not try to balance against the United States. German criticism of the Bush Administration's stance on Iraq was not accompanied by any attempt to increase its military power or to engineer a military counter-alliance. Germany was also far from considering the United States a threat to its security. The United States possesses strong offensive capabilities and still maintains a significant number of troops in Germany, but Germany has not felt threatened by them. On the contrary, Germany continues to regard the US military presence on its soil as an essential component of its security and defence policies.³

The neo-liberal theory of complex interdependence contends that the flow of money, goods, information, and people across international borders has given rise to a relationship of asymmetrical interdependence among states. As a result, a high degree of sensitivity and vulnerability of a state's economy to global flows can be easily

¹ Hans Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: the Struggle for Power and Peace* (New York: Knopf, 1973); Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading: Addison-Wesley, 1979); Joseph M. Grieco, 'Anarchy and the Limits of Cooperation: A Realist Critique of the Newest Liberal Institutions', *International Organization*, 42 (1988), pp. 485-507.

² Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987).

³ Joschka Fischer, 'Europe and the Future of the Trans-Atlantic Relations', 19 November 2003, at <http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/www/en/laenderinfos>.

rendered by another state into a political leverage.⁴ Complex interdependence, however, does not provide a compelling account of Germany's reaction. There are two reasons for this: First, the German economy was not particularly vulnerable and sensitive to a regime change in Iraq. The level of trade between Germany and Iraq before the war was insignificant for the German economy. Iraq ranked 138th with regard to imports and 83rd as far as exports were concerned among Germany's trading partners. Second, the German economy was very vulnerable and sensitive to US reprisals for not going to war against Iraq. The United States represented the third most important exporting country (7.33% or 39045.6 Euro Mn), and the second most important importing country (9.32% or 61669.3 Euro Mn) for Germany.⁵ If anything, complex interdependence would predict that Berlin should have been swayed by US pressure.

The diversionary theory of war is one of the most influential explanations of war. Staying in power is assumed to be the key preference of governing elites. War is a means that they readily use if it serves the purpose of staying in power.⁶ Of course, a diversionary theory of war cannot explain German criticism of the United States. After all, it was Washington and not Berlin that went to war. But what about a diversionary theory of peace? Did the Chancellor, trailing in the opinion polls, reject the military option in order to exploit the anti-war sentiment of the electorate and secure his re-election?⁷

⁴ Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye. *Power and Interdependence* (New York: HarperCollins, 1989).

⁵ Federal Statistical Office, 'Foreign Trade', at http://www.destatis.de/themen/e/thm_aussen.htm.

⁶ Birger Heldt, 'Domestic Politics, Absolute Deprivation, and the Use of Armed Force in Interstate Territorial Disputes: 1950-1990', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 43/4 (1999), pp. 451-478; Ahmer Tarar, 'Diversionary Incentives and the Bargaining Approach to War', *International Studies Quarterly*, 50/1 (2006), pp. 169-188.

⁷ Stefan Kornelius, for example, answers this question in the positive: Stefan Kornelius, 'Der Gourmet als Kellner: Joschka Fischers langer Weg', *Internationale Politik*, 58/9 (2003), pp. 31-37.

At first glance, there seems to be evidence for this contention. Schröder rejected the military option at the beginning of his electoral campaign, which was seriously hampered by his failures in the economic realm. His popularity among the electorate increased significantly after he had announced that Germany would under no circumstances participate in a war against Iraq. The major problem of the diversionary explanation, however, is that only Schröder embarked on an anti-war course but not Edmund Stoiber, his challenger at the polls. Furthermore, leaders in other countries, such as José Maria Aznar, Tony Blair, and Silvio Berlusconi, risked their political careers by going to war. Rational choice explanations, such as diversionary theories, assume nomothetic laws. Thus, it is puzzling for this approach if some leaders risk losing power because they act against the will of the populace, but others seize the opportunity and acts in accordance with his or her interests in maintaining in power.⁸

The constructivist turn in International Relations Theory was triggered by the shortcomings of rationalist approaches to explain important international phenomena. Do ideational explanations fare better than the accounts discussed above? Considering the long-time friendship between the United States and Germany, the literature on security communities seems apt to shed light on the German reaction. Karl Deutsch coined the security community concept.⁹ Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett elaborated on the concept. A security community is much more than an alliance. It is a community of states defined by three characteristics: (1) shared identities, meanings,

⁸ As far as Schröder is concerned, Helga Haftendorn makes a compelling argument that Schröder's electoral tactics influenced how he rejected the military option, i.e. very early and unilaterally, but not that he rejected it: Helga Haftendorn, 'Sicherheitspolitik im strategischen Dreieck Berlin-Paris-Washington', *Politische Vierteljahresschrift*, 45/1 (2004), p. 4. On a more general note, there are at least two important shortcomings of the diversionary theory: First, the preferences of elites are assumed instead of explained. Second, the critical question of where mass support for or mass opposition against war comes from in the first place is outside of the scope of the theory.

⁹ Karl Deutsch, *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957).

and values; (2) many-sided and direct relations; (3) a certain degree of long-term reciprocity. These conditions generate collective identification as well as mutual trust, and give rise to dependable expectations of peaceful change. Positive identification with one another prevents members of the security community from even considering the use of force against one another.¹⁰

The security community concept captures US-German relations much better than the concepts of alliance or complex interdependence, which omit the ideational dimension of the relationship. Unfortunately, however, little has been written on the internal dynamics of security communities.¹¹ How is collective identity reproduced? How does the collective identity of a security community unravel? How does a security community overcome a collective identity crisis? A plausible explanation of this study's research puzzle requires answers to these questions.

Criticising Adler and Barnett for neglecting situations in which the collective identity is threatened, Janice Mattern introduces the concept of representational force to the study of security communities. According to the author, collective identity can be rescued from situations of crisis by the use of a 'narrative gun'. Government elites of one state pressure the elites of another state into forgoing their dissent by forcing them into the non-choice of either violating an aspect of their identity or complying with the collective identity as represented by the author of the representational force.¹²

¹⁰ Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett, 'A Framework for the Study of Security Communities', in Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett (eds.), *Security Communities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 29-66.

¹¹ The literature on the socialisation of Central and Eastern Europe by the core members of the trans-Atlantic security community is a notable exception in this regard: Frank Schimmelfenning, 'International Socialization in the New Europe: Rational Action in an Institutional Environment', *European Journal of International Relations*, 6/1 (2000), pp. 109-139; Michael Williams and Iver Neumann, 'From alliance to security community: NATO, Russia, and the power of identity', *Millennium*, 29/2 (2000), pp. 357-387.

¹² Janice Bially Mattern, 'The Power Politics of Identity', *European Journal of International Relations*, 7/3 (2001), pp 349-397.

Mattern's argument is tailored to exactly the type of situation that occurred in the trans-Atlantic security community between Germany and the United States prior to the United States-led military operation in Iraq. Does her argument help to explain the sharp disagreement between Germany and the United States about the resort to force against Saddam Hussein? The two states failed to reach a consensus on a vital issue. According to Mattern, the two states or at least one of them should have used representational force to coerce the other back into the 'we-feeling'. The United States did exactly that. George W. Bush made clear that not supporting the United States meant leaving the common ground with the United States: 'Either you are with us or you are against us.'¹³ Donald Rumsfeld put Germany in the dubious company of Libya and Cuba when he listed the countries opposed to war.¹⁴ The narrative gun, however, did not have the effect that Mattern predicts. It did not help to fasten the security community. If anything, it made the diplomatic skirmishes between Germany and the United States even worse.

Habitus and security community

Despite the use of a 'narrative gun', Germany continued to oppose the war against Iraq. What exactly was Germany defending so strongly, even at the risk of undermining the relationship with its most important ally? This section borrows from Norbert Elias's conceptualisation of the habitus in order to address the internal dynamics of security communities.

Elias embeds his concept of the habitus into his theory of the civilising process. The author contends that, although the civilising process remains in its

¹³ George W. Bush, quoted in *Algemeen Dagblad*, 14 February 2002.

¹⁴ Donald Rumsfeld, quoted in *Tagesschau*, 6 April 2003.

infancy¹⁵, modern societies have made some – albeit anything but irreversible – progress towards deeply internalising an aversion against cruelty and violence. Learning was the key mechanism that gave rise to this aversion. Greater control of violence and aggression in the modern state was accompanied by a changing sensibility towards violence and cruelty to the extent that such acts became gradually morally repugnant and ‘progressively thrust behind the scenes of people’s communal life’.¹⁶

Elias provides four important clues about the constitution of this habitus: First, the habitus is made up of constraints about the use of force.¹⁷ Second, the constraints that make up the habitus are underpinned by deeply-seated anxieties and feelings of shame.¹⁸ Third, the restraints that make up the habitus are distilled history. A nation’s historical practices and experiences become sedimented into its habitus.¹⁹ Fourth, the habitus is deeply internalised. Elias maintains that fears and shame – along with the constraints they buttress – are initially not internalised but their existence is dependent on overt sanctioning potential by, say, a chief or a monarch. Yet over time, they sink in.²⁰ Elias’s habitus, therefore, is in Hegel’s words, ‘a second nature’²¹ or in

¹⁵ Norbert Elias, *Zeugen des Jahrhunderts. Im Gespräch mit Hans Christian Huf* (Berlin: Ullstein, 1999), pp. 86.

¹⁶ Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process: Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), pp. 365.

¹⁷ In his *Civilizing Process* the constraints ingrained in the habitus go somewhat beyond the use of force. Yet Elias consistently emphasised the issue of the use of force and downplayed constraints pertaining to other aspects of social life. See his reflections on his work in Elias, *Zeugen des Jahrhunderts*, pp. 67.

¹⁸ Elias, *Civilising Process*.

¹⁹ Norbert Elias, *The Germans: Power Struggles and the Development of Habitus in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*. Oxford: Polity, 1996, pp. 19.

²⁰ Elias, *Civilising Process*; Elias, *Germans*.

²¹ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1969), pp. 340.

Bourdieu's words, 'history turned into nature.'²² The habitus is distilled history that is deeply ingrained and taken for granted.

It is not that Elias's work is without its problems. Elias's *Civilising Process* was published at the eve of the Second World War and the Holocaust. Reacting to these catastrophes, much of his later work sought to comprehend this de-civilising process rather than a civilising process.²³ Elias never problematised the concept of civilising even though the label 'civil' may actually be a dangerous tool in the hands of a Self that is eager to brag about its supposed superiority and to discriminate against the Other based on its alleged inferiority. It is not quite clear whether Elias' underlying assumptions about human nature are warranted. He assumes human beings to be dangerous animals as long as they are unconstrained by the forces of the civilising process. Yet some of the constraints that the civilising process imposes – including those that are deeply internalised – may not be as benign as Elias makes them out to be.²⁴ Finally, there is not just one habitus, but there are many habitus, which govern different spheres of life. Elias makes a strong case for a habitus that restrains actors in using force. Yet other habitus encourage actors to use force,²⁵ and again others have very little to do with physical force.²⁶

Despite these problems, however, Elias's conceptualisation of the habitus as a habitus of restraint is very useful for making sense of the dynamics of security communities. We define the concept as a two-layered set of deeply ingrained and historically distilled predispositions: the first layer consists of a set of internal checks

²² Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), pp. 78.

²³ Elias, *Germans*.

²⁴ Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, *Dialektik der Aufklärung: philosophische Fragmente* (Amsterdam: Querido, 1947), Michel Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité I: La volonté de savoir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1976, pp. 99-173).

²⁵ Lois Wacquant, *Body and Soul: Notebooks of an Apprentice Boxer* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

and self-restraints against the use of force in international politics; the second layer, underpinning these constraints, encompasses a durable set of anxieties and feelings of shame emanating from past experiences with the use of force.

To some degree, every security community shares a habitus of restraint, henceforth simply referred to as habitus. The very existence of a security community is dependent on this restraint. In a security community, member states do not even contemplate the use of force against one another any more. Restraint becomes a second nature. Furthermore, the habitual restraint also provides much needed shared orientation for the security community in its interaction with the outside. Security communities do not use force on a random basis regardless of any predispositions about what distinguishes legitimate from illegitimate uses of force.

A security community, however, is not a monolithic bloc. It consists of member states. As Elias points out correctly, these member states have different histories and distil these histories into different habitual restraints as well as into different sentiments of fear and shame that underpin these restraints. Of course, this does not mean that the habitus of a nation ends abruptly at its territorial borders. Some aspects of the habitus that are dominant in member states are shared across the community while others are peculiarities arising from how nations sediment their own histories into the habitus.

The extent to which a member state perceives a compatibility between the range of conceivable practices that emanate from its habitus and the practices of another member is of key importance for the dynamics of a security community. Compatibility fosters the re-production of the collective identity that holds the security community together and provides the possibility to reach agreement on a

²⁶ Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990).

course of action. In some cases, this harmonisation occurs effortlessly and virtually automatically. In other cases, it is the outcome of argumentation and bargaining processes. Incompatibility, by contrast, not only makes a common course of action impossible but it also disrupts the collective identity that holds the security community together. It shows a member that the taken-for-granted foundation for acting on an issue area of utmost importance – the use of force – turns out to be rejected by a fellow member. The disruption of the collective identification process gives rise to a crisis of the security community.

This rupture threatens the very existence of a security community if the mismatch pertains to the use of force by a member of a security community against another member, because the habitual restraint vis-à-vis other members is the core feature of a security community. Yet severe crises also occur if the mismatch is pertinent to the use of force against a non-member. Even in this case, the mismatch shakes the shared ideational foundation on which the security community is built. The crisis may be only temporary. The international constellation, for example, may change and the question of the use of force may no longer be on the agenda. Yet the crisis may come to threaten the very existence of the security community if the perceived mismatch endures.

Does this account focusing on the habitus provide a plausible explanation for Germany's vigorous opposition to Washington's case for war against Saddam Hussein? Did Germany react with such vigour because Washington's practices were outside of the range of conceivable practices that Germany's dominant habitus delineated? Our empirical analysis proceeds in three steps: First, we provide an overview of the construction of the Iraqi threat and the advocacy to counter this threat

through military force by the Bush Administration. Our analysis starts with 11 September 2001 and ends with the beginning of the war against Iraq.

Second, we investigate into the German habitus. Uncovering the habitus is not an easy task. The habitus is deeply ingrained, which makes it difficult to detect it. We chose to focus on discourse on major international crises since the end of the Cold War, in order to identify the habitus. In the heated debates during a crisis, actors invoke what they take for granted. Relating what appears to them most self-evident to the pervasive uncertainty of a crisis situation helps actors to cope with the situation. We analysed three grand debates on the use of force in Germany since the end of the Cold War and prior to the controversy about regime change in Iraq: the Second Gulf War in 1991, Kosovo in 1998, and Afghanistan in 2001. We examine the debates in the *Bundestag* – the decisive chamber of the two-chamber Parliament in matters of foreign policy – and in the two leading news magazines *Focus* and *Spiegel*.²⁷

Third, we trace the German reaction to the US advocacy for war against Iraq. We use five sources in order to capture this reaction in detail: (1) interviews with decision-makers;²⁸ (2) *Bundestag* debates²⁹; (3) *Focus* and *Spiegel*; (4) the three influential policy orientated journals *Internationale Politik*, *WeltTrends*, and *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*; and (5) public opinion data.

²⁷ The following *Bundestag* debates dealt in depth with the resort to force: *Verhandlungen des deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll* 12/2, 14 January 1991; 12/3, 17 January 1991; 13/242, 19 June 1998; 13/248, 16 October 1998. We analysed all issues of *Focus* and *Spiegel* from August 2002 to March 2003.

²⁸ We interviewed decision-makers in the Chancellery (Chancellor's office), Foreign Ministry, Ministry of Defence, as well as the standing committees on foreign affairs and defence in the *Bundestag*. For the most part, we use these interviews as background of our analysis and make only those interviewees explicit who agreed to be mentioned.

²⁹ The following debates focused on the resort to force against Iraq: *Verhandlungen des deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll* 15/25, 13 February 2003; 15/30, 12 March 2003; and 15/32, 15 March 2003.

Bush's resolve: call to arms

The proposal to attack Iraq had been pushed up on the political agenda of the Bush Administration in the period immediately after 11 September 2001.³⁰ It became official policy approximately a year later when the Administration announced that confronting Iraq pre-emptively was an essential part of the global War Against Terrorism.³¹ According to Washington, regime change in Iraq was necessary in order to root out the possibility of weapons of mass destruction being traded and used against the United States and its allies by Saddam Hussein and the terrorist networks that he allegedly supported.

The linchpin of the US argument to attack Iraq revolved around the notion of the imminence of the threat posed by the Iraqi regime. In his speech at the United Nations on 12 September 2002, US President George W. Bush described the Iraqi regime as 'a grave and gathering danger,' seeking to acquire weapons of mass destruction, and cooperating with terrorist networks such as Al-Qaeda.³² In Washington's view, there was unambiguous evidence that Iraq posed such an imminent threat. Bush argued that various intelligence assessments and the systematic obstructions of the UN weapons inspections by Saddam Hussein provided sufficient proof that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction and posed a threat to international peace and security by sponsoring terrorist networks.

Having made up its mind about the threat that Iraq posed, the Bush Administration tried to persuade the international community of the necessity to take military action. Initially, Bush's attempts were partly successful. The United Nations

³⁰ *Washington Post*, 17 April 2004.

³¹ White House, 'The National Security of the United States of America', 22 September 2002, at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.html>; *Washington Post*, 12 January 2003.

³² George W. Bush, 'Remarks by the President at Signing of the Joint Resolution', Speech given on 16 October 2002, at: <http://usinfo.state.gov/topical/pol/arms/02101603.htm>.

Security Council passed Resolution 1441 in November 2002, which threatened ‘serious consequences’ against Iraq if it failed to comply with the strengthened weapons inspections regime. The UN weapons inspectors continued their work for another five months. Washington’s attempts to persuade the world community of more determined action against Iraq, however, were seriously hampered by the lack of compelling proof for the imminence of danger. The weapons inspectors did not find weapons of mass destruction and pleaded for more time to complete their task.

At times, the Bush Administration dismissed questions about evidence by reversing the burden of proof. In the post-9/11 environment, Donald Rumsfeld argued, the nature of the evidence required for launching a military attack has significantly changed. The burden of proof no longer falls on the attacking side but on the side suspected to possess and develop weapons of mass destruction.³³ Yet the United States also attempted to persuade potential allies through evidence. In an effort to strengthen the case for war, US Secretary of State Collin Powell laid out the US file of evidence on the Iraqi weapons of mass destruction programs before the UN Security Council.³⁴

With the persuasion efforts not yielding the desired success, Washington resorted to a policy of rewards and punishments in order to engineer the ‘Coalition of the Willing’. This policy ranged from promises of developmental aid to threats of unspecified consequences, the re-allocation of US military bases abroad, cancellation of foreign and military aid, reduction of financial investments, and denial of access to Iraqi oil and reconstruction projects. Traditional allies were not exempted from such a treatment. Pentagon officials discussed, for instance, a plan to punish Germany’s

³³ Donald Rumsfeld, ‘Statement before the House Armed Services Committee on Iraq’, 18 September 2002, at: <http://www.house.gov/hasc/openingstatementsandpressreleases/107thcongress/02-09-18rumsfeld.html>.

‘treachery and ineptitude’ over Iraq, by harming its trade and economy.³⁵ Despite these measures, however, Washington failed to get the stamp of UN approval for military action against Iraq. On 17 March 2003, the United States withdrew its proposal for a Security Council resolution explicitly authorising the use of force. Rejecting the calls in the international community to strengthen the weapons inspections regime, Washington started its military campaign against Iraq on 19 March.

This highlighted two important shifts in US foreign policy: First, Washington had moved away from multilateralism towards unilateralism. The Bush Administration was not willing to compromise on what it perceived to be a vital issue of foreign policy. Richard Perle, chairman of the Defence Policy Board, Vice-President Dick Cheney and Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, as well as other close advisors to George W. Bush such as Richard Armitage, Paul Wolfowitz and Douglas Feith, have advocated in favour of a more determined unilateralism since the end of the Cold War. A 1992 Pentagon Paper on ‘Defence Policy Guidance’, taken up later by the ‘Project for a New American Century’, argued that the United States should use its unchallenged military power to unilaterally pursue its own interests, and to maintain its global hegemony.³⁶ Returned to power with the Bush Administration in 2000, the members of this neo-conservative group have pushed forcefully for a change of direction in US foreign policy.³⁷

Second, US foreign policy had embraced pre-emptive war. According to the Bush Doctrine, imminent danger has to be countered with military force before it is

³⁴ Colin L. Powell, ‘Remarks to the United Nations Security Council’, 5 February 2003, at: <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2003/17300.htm>.

³⁵ *Observer*, 16 February 2003.

³⁶ Thomas Donnelly, ‘Rebuilding America's Defenses: Strategy, Forces and Resources for a New Century’, at: <http://www.newamericancentury.org/RebuildingAmericasDefenses.pdf>.

too late. This is the central lesson of 11 September.³⁸ The doctrine represents a major departure from prior international practices. The right of self-defence has been traditionally defined rather narrowly in order not to undermine the sovereignty and non-interference principles in international law and due to the difficulties to unambiguously demonstrate the imminence of a threat prior to launching a pre-emptive attack. The ominous mentioning of the threat posed by the 'axis of evil' by President Bush in his 2002 State of the Union Address hinted at possible other targets of pre-emptive attacks.³⁹

Germany's habitus: constraints, anxiety, shame, and history

Undoubtedly, there have been changes in German foreign policy since re-unification but the intersubjective foundation based on which these changes have occurred has proven to be rather enduring. In the 1990s, three international crises triggered major debates on the use of force in world politics in German society: Iraq (1991), Kosovo (1998), and Afghanistan (2001). These debates show that there is a dominant two-layered habitus in Germany, constituted by a set of deeply-seated constraints on the use of force and their underpinning sentiments of anxieties and shame. These sentiments are distilled from history, in particular the Second World War.

Interpretations of German history are translated into four dimensions of the habitus. The first and perhaps most influential dimension pertains to the nature of war. War is seen as nothing glorious but as a horrible phenomenon that causes large-scale suffering. When Germans think of war, they think of the images of WWII: destroyed

³⁷ Maureen Ramsay and Lionel Cliffe, 'War on Iraq: an honourable deception?' *Contemporary Politics*, 9/4 (2003), pp. 1-11.

³⁸ White House, 'The National Security of the United States of America'.

³⁹ George W. Bush, 'Speech on Iraq made in Cincinnati, Ohio', 8 October 2002, at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/2309049.stm>. This hint is more detailed in David Frum and Richard Perle, *An End to Evil: How to Win the War on Terror* (New York: Random House, 2003).

cities, large numbers of civilian and military casualties, terrified civilians, broken soldiers, and ethnic cleansing. The participation in the 1991 Gulf War may have been disputed, but not the nature of war: Hans-Jochen Vogel, who opposed the war, emphasised that '[t]he images of this time [WWII] are constantly before my eyes. We feel and suffer with the victims in the entire region [Middle East], with the people who die there.'⁴⁰ Those who argued in favour of the military option concurred. Otto Graf Lambsdorff invoked the images of the past and asserts: 'We know what we talk about [...]. War is not the father of all things, it is the father of all horror.'⁴¹ Similar views were prevalent during the debates on Kosovo and Afghanistan.⁴²

Given the images of two world wars, Germans are highly sceptical about the possibility of a just conduct of war. Air strikes, in particular, trigger collective memories of the bombing nights that reduced German cities to rubble. Vera Wollenberger claims that with the beginning of air strikes on Baghdad in 1991, 'war showed its true face. It is a campaign against the Iraqi people [...] It is a crime against humanity.'⁴³ Wollenberger was part of the pacifistic wing of the Greens. Its principal opponent within the party was Joschka Fischer. Despite all their disagreements, they agreed on the nature of war. Fischer described it as follows when he made his case in favour of intervention in Afghanistan: 'War is disgusting. There is no such thing as a clinically clean war. It is in the nature of war that there are innocent victims.'⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Hans-Jochen Vogel, *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll 12/3*, 17 January 1991, pp. 48.

⁴¹ Otto Graf Lambsdorff, *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll 12/3*, 17 January 1991, pp. 51. See also: Helmut Kohl, *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll 12/3*, 17 January 1991, pp. 46.

⁴² See, for example, Wolfgang Gerhardt, *Verhandlungen des deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll 13/248*, 16 October 1998, pp. 23144; Rudolf Scharping, *Verhandlungen des deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll 13/248*, 16 October 1998, pp. 23149; Gerhard Schröder *Verhandlungen des deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll 14/198*, 8 November 2001, pp. 19285; Friedrich Merz, *Verhandlungen des deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll 14/198*, 8 November 2001, pp. 19289.

⁴³ Vera Wollenberger, *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll 12/3*, 17 January 1991, pp. 54.

⁴⁴ Joschka Fischer, *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll 14/198*, 8 October

The second dimension of the habitus pertains to the degree of readiness to use military force and is also based on the lessons of two world wars. War is justifiable only as absolute last resort. Various members of the *Bundestag* put it similarly to Heidemarie Wiecezorek-Zeul: ‘We Germans know what two world wars meant in terms of humanitarian suffering and horrible sacrifices. In our people, therefore, there is a deep seated scepticism and caution against any kind of sabre-rattling and the playing down of the danger of war.’⁴⁵ Out of 50 speakers in the debates on the Second Gulf War, Kosovo and Afghanistan, every single one of them emphasised that the use of force must only be a means of last resort, many of them using the legal terminology ‘*ultima ratio*’.⁴⁶

The principal reason to use force as a last resort is embedded in the collective memory of Hitler’s regime. Dictators who attack other states or slaughter their own people need to be confronted before it is too late. A principal argument before the Second Gulf War was that Saddam Hussein had, in stark violation of international law, annexed another state. This, Otto Graf Lambsdorff and, similarly many others with him argued, had to be opposed by the international community: ‘[...] if nothing helps, if the aggressor does not let lose of its prey, do we then accept the violation of

2001, pp. 19293.

⁴⁵ Heidemarie Wiecezorek-Zeul, *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll* 12/2, 14 January 1991, pp. 41. For similar lines of argumentation see, Helmut Kohl, *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll* 12/3, 17 January 1991, pp. 46; Hans-Jochen Vogel, *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll* 12/3, 17 January 1991, pp. 48; Otto Graf Lambsdorff, *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll* 12/3, 17 January 1991, pp. 46; Vera Wollenberger, *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll* 12/3, 17 January 1991, pp. 54; Helmut Kohl, *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll* 12/3, 17 January 1991, pp. 67; Joschka Fischer, *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll* 14/198, 8 October 2001, pp. 19293.

⁴⁶ *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll* 12/2, 14 January 1991, pp. 21-55; *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll* 12/248, 16 October 1998, pp. 23127-23161; 19283-18698. The shared benchmark does not guarantee shared conclusions about the application of the benchmark. During the 1991 debates on Iraq, government and opposition disagreed whether the use of force was legitimate. The opposition argued that non-military means had not been exhausted yet, whereas the government endorsed the view of the Security Council that the use of force was a matter of last resort.

law and do we Germans forget the experiences where acquiescence to dictatorship eventually leads or may lead?’⁴⁷ The key term acquiescence also featured prominently during the Kosovo debate. The world, and given their history, Germans in particular, must not turn a blind eye to large-scale humanitarian suffering caused by a despotic regime.⁴⁸ Gerald Häfner and Angelika Köster-Loßack, for example, compare the German experience to the Kosovo. They caution

that organised murder, expulsion and kidnapping of an entire people must never ever be accepted again and that we have to oppose murderers, even by the use of military force as last resort [...]. We have to continue to transform an era of violence and suppression, as it was characteristic for much of the 20th century (of which we Germans are especially guilty), into an era in which not terror and violence but tolerance, peaceful conflict resolution, and the abidance by law regulate the relations within and among states.⁴⁹

The third dimension of the habitus concerns alliances. Metaphorically speaking, Germans are children of Konrad Adenauer and not Wilhelm II. Most Germans interpret the experiences of WWI and WWII as evidence that Germany must never ever embark on a *Sonderweg* (special path) again. This term, used by historians to describe the alliance policies (or lack thereof) by Wilhelm II, has become a pejorative

⁴⁷ Otto Graf Lambsdorff, *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll 12/2*, 14 January 1991, pp. 32. See also Helmut Kohl, *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll 12/2*, 14 January 1991, pp. 22;

⁴⁸ Of course, the habitus is, albeit quite enduring, not carved into stone. It evolves over time. There are some indications that episodes of the breakdown of Yugoslavia, in particular Srebrenica, have become sedimented into the habitus. A feeling of shame for having stood by mass killings half a century after the Holocaust seems to have come to modify the constraints constituting the habitus (interviews with Ulrike Merten, Winfried Nachtwei, and Gert Weisskirchen in Berlin, 24-25 January 2006). Yet only a study exploring the long durée of the habitus in detail can provide plausible insights into the way it changes.

⁴⁹ Gerald Häfner und Angelika Köster-Loßack, *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll 13/248*, 16 October 1998, pp. 23168. For a similar view see: Klaus Kinkel, *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll 13/248*, 16 October 1998, pp. 23131; Gerhard Schröder, *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll 13/248*, 16 October

term. Germany has to act in concert with its allies, but never unilaterally. Ulrich Irmer put this very clearly: ‘No, we must not opt for *Sonderwege* when it comes to fulfilling our international duties. We must not even opt for *Sonderwege* if this demands taking difficult and most difficult decisions [resort to military force].’⁵⁰ Instead of embarking on a *Sonderweg*, Kinkel emphasised, Germany needs to fulfil its ‘European peace responsibility’ and prove its ‘reliability in the alliance.’⁵¹ Wolfgang Bötsch cautioned that ‘Germany must not stand apart’ when its allies attempt to deal with crises.⁵² Schröder and Fischer stressed the need to act in concert with NATO.⁵³

Finally, the fourth dimension of the habitus pertains to the vision of a horizontal world order. The historical reference points are Germany’s role during the age of imperialism and Hitler’s attempt at world domination. Much in the same way as the *Sonderweg* has become a pejorative term, *Realpolitik* and *Machtpolitik* (power politics) have become reminders of a past from which most Germans seek to distance themselves. In order to prevent the tragedies of the past from re-occurring, the current world order would have to be built on three principles: the rule of law, pluralism and dialogue, as well as partnership in crisis management. Gernot Erler’s assertion in favour of the rule of law in international relations was a commonplace in all analysed debates: ‘It remains our most fundamental persuasion that we have to be fully committed to a world order in which the power of the law triumphs over the power of the stronger.’⁵⁴ The United Nations is seen as the principal guarantor of the rule of

1998, pp. 23136.

⁵⁰ Ulrich Irmer, *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll 13/248*, 16 October 1998, pp. 23151.

⁵¹ Klaus Kinkel, *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll 13/248*, 16 October 1998, pp. 23129.

⁵² Wolfgang Bötsch, *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll 12/2*, 14.1.1991, pp. 30.

⁵³ Gerhard Schröder, *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll 14/198*, 8.11.01, pp. 19284.

⁵⁴ Gernot Erler, *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll 13/248*, 16.10.1998, pp.

law in international relations.⁵⁵ Dialogue and co-operation have been key words in all three *Bundestag* debates. The principal means to resolve conflicts and prevent disputes from arising is the respect for the ‘plurality of cultures’⁵⁶, ‘cultural dialogue’⁵⁷, ‘intercultural dialogue’⁵⁸, as well as co-operation and integration across cultures and states.⁵⁹ If crises emerge despite these attempts to build bridges, they need to be managed by the international community and not by a hegemon. The United Nations on the world stage, and the European Union as well as the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe are seen as the key actors of crisis management.⁶⁰

In short, the dominant habitus predisposes Germany to be reluctant against military interventionism. Given the predominant interpretation of German history,

23156.

⁵⁵ Helmut Kohl, *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll* 12/3, 17 January 1991, pp. 47; Alfred Dregger, *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll* 12/3, 17 January 1991, pp. 49; Klaus Kinkel, *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll* 13/248, 16 October 1998, pp. 23128; Wolfgang Gerhardt, *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll* 13/248, 16 October 1998, pp. 23143; Michael Müller, *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll* 13/248, 16 October 1998, pp. 23166; Eberhard Brecht, *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll* 13/248, 16 October 1998, pp. 23168; Gerhard Schröder, *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll* 14/198, 8 November 2001, pp. 19286; Peter Struck, *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll* 14/192, 11 October 2001, pp. 18689.

⁵⁶ Joschka Fischer, *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll* 14/192, 11 October 2001, pp. 18693.

⁵⁷ Rudolf Scharping, *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll* 13/248, 16 October 1998, pp. 23149.

⁵⁸ Joschka Fischer, *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll* 14/192, 11.10.01, pp. 18693.

⁵⁹ Helmut Kohl, *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll* 12/2, 14 January 1991, pp. 23; Willy Brandt, *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll* 12/2, 14 January 1991, pp. 28; Joschka Fischer, *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll* 13/248, pp. 16 October 1998, pp. 23142; Wolfgang Schäuble, *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll* 13/248, 16 October 1998, pp. 23140.

⁶⁰ See, in particular: Klaus Kinkel, *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll* 13/248, 16 October 1998, pp. 23128; Wolfgang Gerhardt, *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll* 13/248, 16 October 1998, pp. 23143-4; Ludger Vollmer, *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll*, pp. 23152; Michael Müller, *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll*, 13/248, 16 October 2001, pp. 23166; Eberhard Brecht, *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll* 13/248, 16 October 2001, pp. 23168; Gerhard Schröder, *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll* 14/198, 8 November 2001, pp. 19284-5; Peter Struck, *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll* 14/198, 8 November 2001, pp. 18689; Joschka Fischer, *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll* 14/198, 8

military force is seen as justifiable only in extraordinary circumstances, i.e. if it is directed against a Hitleresque regime and if it is – in sharp demarcation from Germany's past – part of a genuine multilateral effort.

Iraq delineated by the habitus: Germany's criticism of the United States

The habitus marked out a space of conceivable positions on the Iraq crisis. An unequivocal pro-war stance was outside of this space. While the habitus made a range of positions on the Iraq issue possible, it predisposed Germany to an unequivocal anti-war stance. The United States was accused of fighting a war for no legitimate reason and attempting to command as opposed to consult the world community. In the perception of many, Washington threatened to throw the world back into an era of domination. This perception triggered harsh criticism, sometimes even explicitly linking US practices to Germany's past attempts at world domination.

The discourse was dominated by two views: the majority was unambiguously opposed to the use of force; a minority refused to rule force out unilaterally. The minority view was articulated by the leadership of three of the four opposition parties in the *Bundestag*, Christian Democratic Union, the Christian Social Union and the Free Democrats but not always backed on the grassroots levels. The news magazine *Focus* shared the ambiguous stance on the use of force.

Even the ambiguous minority used the habitus as the benchmark for its argumentation. Two arguments were put forward against ruling force out: First, war as a last resort is justified against Saddam Hussein. He is a dictator who must to be confronted before it is too late. Michael Glos, for example, made the analogy with Hitler explicit:

Nobody – and most definitely nobody within the trans-Atlantic community – wants war. We know the lessons of the history of two world wars [...]. Yet we must keep in mind the consequences of pacifism in the last century. If the community of free nations had confronted Hitler early enough through political and – as *ultima ratio* – military means, Germany and the world would have been spared of a lot.

Applied to the case of Saddam Hussein, this lesson meant to pressure the dictator into complying with the weapons inspection regime through the threat of force. If this turned out not to be sufficient, the international community would have to use force.⁶¹

Second, the decision to go to war would have to be a multilateral one. If Saddam Hussein failed to comply with the weapons inspectors regime, it would be up to the international community, including Germany, to decide together whether military force should be used or not. No state should take a unilateral decision for or against war. The proponents of this multilateral decision accused Schröder of embarking on a new *Sonderweg*. Hans-Dietrich Genscher, the former foreign minister, criticised the ‘hyper-Germanness’ of Schröder. Michael Glos and Wolfgang Schäuble compared Schröder to Wilhelm II.⁶² Edmund Stoiber warned that Schröder had left the path towards the Europeanisation of national foreign policies and had embarked on ‘a renaissance of national *Sonderwege*.’⁶³ The *Focus* warned that

⁶¹ Eckart von Klaeden, *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll 15/25*, 12 February 2003, pp. 1846; Christian Schmidt, *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll 15/25*, 12 February 2003, pp. 1855; O. Berbalk et al., ‘Kein Ja für nichts’, *Focus*, no. 6, 3 February 2003, pp. 20-26.

⁶² Michael Glos, *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll 15/25*, 13 February 2003, pp. 1891-2; Wolfgang Schäuble, *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll 15/25*, 13 February 2003, pp. 1901.

⁶³ Edmund Stoiber, *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll 15/32*, 14 March 2003, pp. 2521.

Schröder was about to isolate Germany and to foster a new German nationalism.⁶⁴ Intellectuals were also part of the anti-*Sonderweg* chorus against Schröder. Arnulf Baring warned that Germany stood at the crossroads as it did in 1871. A German Way would lead to a disaster again. Only the embeddedness of Germany into the trans-Atlantic community would offer a promising future.⁶⁵ Wilfried von Bredow warned that National Socialism had shown clearly that a German way could only lead into a catastrophe.⁶⁶

This twofold argumentation for at least considering the use of force – from the beginning merely a minority view – weakened over time. The closer the war came and the more obvious Washington's unilateralism became, the weaker the advocacy became.⁶⁷ The majority, however, unequivocally rejected the use of force from the outset. The benchmark for its argumentation was the same habitus that underpinned the ambiguous proponents' reasoning. Yet the opponents linked the habitus to the Iraq crisis in a fundamentally different manner. They employed the last resort and alliance dimensions of the habitus for their argumentation against the use of force. Additionally, they drew upon the nature of war and the world order dimensions to make their case against war.

The opponents of the military option rejected the argument that war was a last resort. According to the *Spiegel*, the US intervention was a 'war of aggression'⁶⁸, a

⁶⁴ G. Bauer et al., 'Schröders Ausweg', *Focus*, no. 33, 12 August 2002, pp. 18-21; B. Bäumlisberger, 'Kanzler: Ende der Show', *Focus*, no. 9, 24 February 2003, pp. 19-30; Nicola Brüning et al., 'Glasklares Verwirrspiel', *Focus*, no. 49, 2 December 2002, pp. 22-26; Michael Mutz et al., 'Uneingeschränktes Nein', *Focus*, no. 37, 9 September 2002, pp. 28-29.

⁶⁵ Arnulf Baring, 'Einsame Mittelmacht. Ohne die USA gibt es keine Zukunft für Deutschland', *Internationale Politik*, 58/12 (2003), pp. 51-56.

⁶⁶ Wilfried von Bredow, 'Neue Erfahrungen, neue Maßstäbe: Gestalt und Gestaltungskraft deutscher Außenpolitik', *Internationale Politik*, 58/9 (2003), pp. 1-11.

⁶⁷ In the *Focus*, for example, contributions critical of Washington increased markedly: O. Berbalk et al., 'Amerika im Krieg', *Focus*, no. 7, 10 February 2003, pp. 169-171; M. Bommersheim et al., 'Ist der Krieg noch zu stoppen?' *Focus*, no. 9, 24 February 2003, pp. 173-178; Peter Gruber, 'Schöne neue Welt', *Focus*, 12, 17 March 2003, pp. 218-222.

⁶⁸ Dieter Bednarz et al., 'Der Schachzug Saddams', *Spiegel*, no. 32, 5 August 2002, pp. 101.

‘crime’⁶⁹, ‘a war about the milk cow’⁷⁰, and a ‘crusade’.⁷¹ The United States was accused of insisting on war independently of the outcome of the weapons inspections.⁷² In Parliament, Social Democrats and Greens criticised that war was anything but an *ultima ratio* in the case of Iraq. Fischer emphasised that ‘all peaceful means really have to be exhausted’, but that this was ‘not the case at all.’⁷³ Schröder stressed that this did not mean appeasement. He proposed several measures to make the weapons inspections more effective.⁷⁴ A number of politicians and political commentators compared North Korea and Iraq. They questioned why the United States offered the former a dialogue whereas the latter awaited military action although North Korea was more advanced with the development of weapons of mass destruction than Iraq.⁷⁵ Public opinion data suggest that the public overwhelmingly supported his view that war against Iraq would not have been a matter of last resort. Emnid surveys show that 61 percent of the populace saw no legitimate reason for war in May 2002. This figure grew to 74 percent in August 2002, and to 83 percent in February 2003.⁷⁶

⁶⁹ Rudolf Augstein, ‘Die Präventiv-Kriegstreiber’, *Spiegel*, no. 35, 26 August 2002, pp. 110.

⁷⁰ Dieter Bednarz and Jan Fleischhauer, ‘Kampf um die Milchkuh’, *Spiegel*, no. 33, 12 August 2002, pp. 106; milk stands for oil.

⁷¹ Hans Hoyng and Gerhard Spörl, ‘Krieg aus Nächstenliebe’, *Spiegel*, no. 8, 17 February 2003, pp. 90.

⁷² This view was expressed in *Spiegel* and *Focus*. See, for example, Dieter Bednarz et al, ‘Der Schachzug Saddams’ and Ottmar Berbalk et al., ‘Wasserdichte Beweise’, *Focus*, no. 50 (9 December 2002), pp. 49-53.

⁷³ Joschka Fischer, *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll 15/25*, 13 February 2003, pp. 1885.

⁷⁴ Gerhard Schröder, *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll 15/25*, 13 February 2003, pp. 1878.

⁷⁵ A number of deputies stressed this issue in the Bundestag: Gerhard Schröder, *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll 15/25*, 13 February 2003, pp. 1875. Gernot Erler, *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll 15/25*, 13 February 2003, pp. 1890. For a more detailed argument see also Joachim Krause, ‘Nordkorea und Irak: Unterschiedliche Maßstäbe in der Bewertung’, *Internationale Politik* 58/2 (2003), pp. 43-48.

⁷⁶ Emnid, *Umfrage und Analyse*, no. 3/4 (2003), pp. 13. The following question was asked: ‘Do you consider a military intervention by the United States in Iraq justified?’

The opponents of force also rejected the argument that Germany had embarked on a dangerous *Sonderweg* à la Wilhelm II. Gert Weisskirchen argued vehemently against the comparison between Schröder and Wilhelm II. The former's goal is peace whereas the latter's was the aggrandisement of the German Empire by virtually any means. Furthermore, Weisskirchen contended, Germany was not isolated at all. A majority of European Union members was reluctant to participate in war. Many other nations, such as China and Russia, also shared the German scepticism to attack Iraq.⁷⁷ Fischer accused the Christian Democrats of trying to isolate France.⁷⁸ Many intellectuals joined the chorus that defended Schröder against the allegation of breaking off Germany's ties with its allies.⁷⁹ Public opinion concurred again with Schröder. The public did not regard Germany as isolated. According to an Emnid survey in September 2002, 56 percent did not consider Germany isolated. In February 2003, this figure even increased to 73 percent.⁸⁰

Yet the opponents of military force did not only connect two of the habitus dimensions differently to the Iraqi crisis. They also emphasised two aspects of the habitus that the proponents of intervention did not address: nature of war and world order. Former Chancellor Helmut Schmidt argued that Germans understand the horrors of war much better than US Americans:

⁷⁷ Gert Weisskirchen, *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll 15/25*, 13 February 2003, pp. 1905.

⁷⁸ Joschka Fischer, *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll 15/25*, 13 February 2003, pp. 1887.

⁷⁹ See, for example: Ulrich Menzel, 'Comeback der drei Welten: Der amerikanische Sonderweg und die Alternativmacht Europa', *Blätter für deutsche und internationale Politik*, 48/12 (2003), pp. 1453-1462; Richard Herzinger, 'Siamesische Zwillinge: Amerika und Europa streiten sich heftig – und gehören doch zusammen', *Internationale Politik*, 58/6 (2003), pp. 1-8.

⁸⁰ Emnid, *Umfrage und Analyse*, no. 3/4 (2003), pp. 15. The following question was asked: 'Do you consider the allegation justified that the federal government isolates the Federal Republic of Germany in the international community?'

One thing is for sure: Approximately half a century after the Second World War, Auschwitz, Dresden and Stalingrad, the fear of war is even a bit greater in Germany than in other European states. The American nation, by contrast, has never experienced war in its own country.⁸¹

In the *Bundestag*, Christoph Zöpel made the same argument, but stressed that Europeans shared the fear of war.⁸² Joschka Fischer, Ludger Vollmer and Gert Weisskirchen warned in vivid words of the consequences that a war against Iraq would have for Iraqi civilians.⁸³ When the air strikes against Bagdad began, Hans Hyong et al. immediately invoked the bombardment of Dresden in the *Spiegel*:

With devastating aerial bombardments Washington attempted to force Saddam Hussein into an early capitulation. [...]. For many observers, Dresden came to mind when the pictures of the enormous fire power and pitiless destruction were sent around the globe.⁸⁴

An equally forcefully articulated reason against intervention was based on the world order dimension of the habitus. Many anti-war advocates accused the United States of violating the most basic lesson of international relations history: Imperialism leads to instability and war. Only multilateralism and dialogue can provide a peaceful international order. In the *Bundestag*, Schröder warned in diplomatic words that the

⁸¹ Helmut Schmidt, 'Das ist grober Unfug', *Spiegel*, no. 6 (3 February 2003), pp. 36-41.

⁸² Christoph Zöpel, *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll 15/25*, 13 February 2003, pp. 1907.

⁸³ Joschka Fischer, *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll 15/25*, 13 February 2003, pp. 1886; Ludger Vollmer, *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll 15/25*, 13 February 2003, pp. 1900, Gert Weisskirchen, *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll 15/25*, 13 February 2003, pp. 1906.

⁸⁴ Hans Hoyng et al. 'Höllenfeuer in Bagdad', *Spiegel*, no. 13 (24 March 2003), pp. 16-17.

might of the strong must not replace the might of the law in international relations.⁸⁵ The resort to war in particular, Gernot Erler and Peter Struck emphasised, must not be the unilateral decision of the only remaining superpower but a multilateral decision taken within the framework of the United Nations.⁸⁶ The *Spiegel* accused the United States of imperialism in several articles, and stressed the role of historical lessons: 'In Paris, Moscow and Berlin, very different experiences with imperial ambitions were made, different conclusions were drawn from history.'⁸⁷ Public opinion agreed with the criticism of the United States. According to an Ipsos survey, 57 percent of Germans felt that the United States played a negative role in safeguarding world peace. Only 23 percent thought that the United States played a positive role.⁸⁸

Many intellectuals accused the United States of no longer resisting the lure of imperialism. Ernst-Otto Czempiel, one of the leading peace researchers in Germany, argued that the United States have embarked on an imperial style of rule.⁸⁹ Christian Tomuschat, a leading expert on international law, concurred.⁹⁰ Werner Link, Ottfried Nassauer, Claus Leggewie Lutz Schrader argued in a similar vein, often juxtaposing historical experiences that differ between Europe and the United States.⁹¹ Many

⁸⁵ Gerhard Schröder, *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll* 15/25, 13 February 2003, pp. 1876. It is remarkable how similar this *Bundestag* speech is to Willy Brandt's before the Second Gulf War. The terminology employed for arguing against war is largely borrowed from Brandt.

⁸⁶ Gernot Erler, *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll* 15/25, 13 February 2003, pp. 1890, Peter Struck, *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestags: Plenarprotokoll* 15/25, 13 February 2003, pp. 1899.

⁸⁷ Erich Follath and Gerhard Spörl, 'Der entfesselte Gulliver', *Spiegel*, no. 12, 17 March 2003, pp. 123.

⁸⁸ Eurobarometer 60.1, National Report (Germany), Autumn 2003, pp. 17-18.

⁸⁹ Ernst-Otto Czempiel, 'Die stolpernde Weltmacht', *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, B 46 (2003), pp. 7-15.

⁹⁰ Christian Tomuschat, 'Der selbstverliebte Hegemon: Die USA und der Traum von der unipolaren Welt', *Internationale Politik*, 58/5 (2003), pp. 39-47.

⁹¹ Werner Link, 'Imperial oder pluralistischer Frieden? Plädoyer für eine Politik der kooperativen Balance', *Internationale Politik*, 58/5 (2003), pp. 48-56; Ottfried Nassauer, 'Aktive Asymmetrie: Neubestimmung der Sicherheitspolitik im euro-atlantischen Kontext', *Blätter für deutsche und internationale Beziehungen*, 48/8 (2003), pp. 946-954; Claus Leggewie, 'Globalisierung versus Hegemonie: Zur Zukunft der transatlantischen Beziehungen', *Internationale Politik und Gesellschaft*, no. 1 (2003), pp. 87-111; Lutz Schrader, 'Europas Antwort auf Bushs Grand Strategy', *WeltTrends*, 42 (2004), pp. 37-50.

commentators sought to distance Europe from the United States and the Bush Administration. Jürgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida, for example, argued that European visions for a world order are, partly due to historical experiences, different from the ones predominant in the United States.⁹²

It is this juxtaposition that crossed, when done by less sophisticated thinkers than Derrida and Habermas, the border of the reasonable and acceptable. In the eyes of some critics, the Bush Administration became the imperial evil that Germans and Europeans had striven to overcome since WWII. Ludwig Stiegler, the leader of the Social Democratic caucus in the *Bundestag*, compared George W. Bush to the Roman Emperor Augustus, who once sought to incorporate *Germania* into the Roman Empire. He also likened Dan Coats, the US ambassador in Germany, to Pjotr Abrassimow, the former Soviet ambassador in East-Berlin, whose powers came closer to the ones of a governor than an ambassador.⁹³ Other comparisons also alluded to the allegation of US imperialism. Walter Kolbow, deputy foreign minister, alleged that Bush is ‘not a partner but a dictator.’ He later sought to downplay this accusation, but, for obvious reasons, his characterisation of Bush as ‘a dictator of one-sided decisions’⁹⁴ hardly accomplished to do that. Hertha Däubler-Gmelin, the justice minister, had no qualms comparing Bush directly to Hitler – a not particularly apt comparison that understandably caused much anger in the United States.⁹⁵

In short, the *habitus* predisposed Germany to take an anti-war stance. Its four dimensions rendered an unambiguous pro-war stance inconceivable. The *habitus* did not make an ambiguous position for war as a last resort impossible but its nature of

⁹² Ulrike Guérot and Andrea Witt, ‘Europeas neue Geostrategie’, *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, B 17 (2004), pp. 6-12; Jacques Derrida and Jürgen Habermas, ‘Nach dem Krieg: Die Wiedergeburt Europas’, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 31 May 2003.

⁹³ Karen Andresen et al., ‘Freund oder Feind?’ *Spiegel*, no. 40 (30 September 2002), pp. 114.

⁹⁴ Walter Kolbow, quoted in *NTV*, at: <http://www.ntv.de/3105930.html>.

war and world order dimensions weakened this reasoning. The majority, emphasising these two dimensions and interpreting the link between the war as last resort and alliance dimensions different from the ambiguous proponents of force, chastised – often in very provocative terms – the war as unjustified.

Conclusion

For the last half a century, the German-American friendship has been a cornerstone of (West-)German foreign policy. Germany's sharp disagreement with the United States over Iraq was a major exception to this pattern. Not only did Germany refuse to follow Washington's lead but it also distanced itself, in quite unequivocal and angry manner, from its long-time friend. Why did the US advocacy for war against Iraq have this effect?

In order to provide a plausible explanation, we introduced – borrowing from the work of Norbert Elias – the concept of the habitus of restraint to the study of the internal dynamics of security communities. We argued that Germany's habitus of restraint, largely distilled from the Second World War, generated a range of conceivable practices that were incompatible with Germany's perception of Washington's case for war. Washington's practices were outside the pool of tenable practices that Germany's habitus marked out. Given this mismatch, not only was there no path available to reach agreement on a course of action. The mismatch even disrupted the shared identification that had been the pillar of German-US relations for half a century.

These findings allude to the usefulness of the concept of the habitus for the study of international relations in general and research on the internal dynamics of

⁹⁵ Peter Gruber and Jürgen Schönstein, 'Auftrag geplatzt', *Focus*, no. 40 (30 September 2002), pp. 212-214.

security communities in particular. There is a three-fold added value: First, the relationship between an actor's range of practices that its habitus delineates on the one hand and its perception of the practices of others on the other hand helps to understand patterns of conflict and co-operation. Compatibility makes co-operation possible. It provides the common ground for argumentation and bargaining, and sometimes even for what Bourdieu called 'a conductorless orchestration'.⁹⁶ Incompatibility, by contrast, makes co-operation impossible and even hampers – especially if the incompatibility persists – future co-operation because it disrupts the actors' collective identity. The trans-Atlantic security community, for example, would be put to a hard test if the resort to war were constantly on its agenda and if the case made for war by some members would persistently violate the deeply ingrained dispositions of restraint of other members.

Second, the habitus draws attention to the salience of historical lessons in political decision-making. To some extent, the findings of this study echo research on historical analogies. This study concurs that authoritatively interpreted historical facts serve as orientation for actors who try to cope with a novel situation whose unfamiliarity challenges them.⁹⁷ At the same time, however, this study goes beyond the notion that actors choose historical facts more or less freely and consciously in order to make up their minds about a situation. The distilled history that makes up the habitus is a second nature. Making use of the distilled history is not a choice but a necessary element of the process through which actors cope with the world. To some extent, the findings of this study also mirror Constructivist research on foreign policy.

⁹⁶ Bourdieu, *Practical Reason*, pp. 59.

⁹⁷ Yuen Foong Khong, *Analogies at war: Korea, Munich, Dien Bien Phu, and the Vietnam decisions of 1965* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992); Scott Macdonald, *Rolling the Iron Dice: Historical Analogies and Decisions to Use Military Force in Regional Contingencies* (Westport: Greenwood, 2000); Jeffrey Record, *Making War, Thinking History: Munich, Vietnam, and Presidential Uses of Force from Korea to Kosovo* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2002).

Research on German foreign policy, for example, often points to the inadvertent salience of the lessons of Germany's militaristic past.⁹⁸ This study is indebted to this research in various ways but it paints a more complex picture. It does not employ a mechanistic logic of appropriateness, according to which norms virtually determine the decisions of policy-makers. Instead, this article emphasises that deeply ingrained historical interpretations merely mark out the range of conceivable practices.

Third, the habitus of restraint – the particular habitus on which this study has focused – plays a critical role for the resort to and the conduct of war. Elias's conceptualisation of a two-layered habitus, constituted by deeply ingrained constraints on the use of force and its underlying anxieties and feelings of shame, adds to existing studies on the institution of war.⁹⁹ It opens up a more profound layer, firmly situated in the actors' deep background, of this institution for research. It is worth noting in this context that the habitus of restraint is not a peculiarly German phenomenon. Of course, the German habitus of restraint has its ideosyncracies for obvious historical reasons. The habitus of other nations may be constituted by different sets of constraints and different underlying anxieties and shame. Yet they have a habitus of restraint nonetheless. The shame of the My Lai Massacre and the fear of a repetition of what happened to US soldiers in Somalia, for example, buttress a number of habitualised constraints for the conduct of war. These constraints, in turn, help explain the United States' reluctance to engage in ground warfare and attempts – however tragically unsuccessful they often are – to minimise civilian casualties.

⁹⁸ Thomas Berger, 'Norms, Identity, and National Security in Germany and Japan', in Peter J. Katzenstein (ed.), *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), pp. 317-356. Thomas Banchoff, 'German Identity and European Integration', *European Journal of International Relations*, 5/3 (1999), pp. 259-289.

⁹⁹ Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), pp. 178-193; Kalevi Holsti, *Taming the Sovereigns: Institutional Change in International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 275-299.

As encouraging as the findings of this study are, many more theoretical and empirical explorations are needed to gain further insights into the salience of the habitus in world politics. Two avenues of research seem particularly important: First, how do actors come to select a habitus? Actors are socialised into the habitus and, through their practices, re-produce it. Yet how exactly does this socialisation work? What explains why certain historical experiences become sedimented into the habitus – at times even revolutionise it – and others do not?

Second, how does the habitus interact with other ideational and material forces? The habitus enables actors to cope with the world without determining the outcome of their practices. It delineates the social parameters within which actors carry out their practices. Yet within these parameters, the habitus makes a variety of practices possible. Other forces explain in more detail what practices out of a range of possible practices an actor generates.