

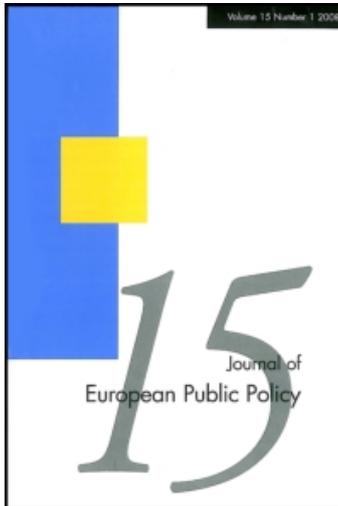
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An American/European divide in European integration studies: bridging the gap with international political economy

Amy Verdun¹

ABSTRACT There appears to be a divide in the literature between American and European approaches to European integration studies. This article discusses the differences between the two types of approaches, and what problems occur from having this divide. It is argued that IPE offers a venue for dialogue between those who focus exclusively on the EU (labelled here as ‘European approaches’) and those who see the EU case to be part of more general phenomena and who seek to produce general theories (‘American approaches’). The article suggests that IPE offers a useful body of literature to narrow the gap between ‘American’ and ‘European’ studies of European integration.

KEY WORDS American and European approaches; critical theory; European integration theories; European Union; institutionalism; international political economy; international relations; neorealism; social constructivism.

INTRODUCTION

The field of European integration studies has gone through a turbulent fifteen years in terms of its scholarly analysis and its implications for European integration theory. Whereas the origins of European integration theory can be traced back to American international relations (IR) literature, present day theories are inspired by a wide range of approaches and case studies produced on both sides of the Atlantic. Though we see many fascinating theoretical approaches in the literature, the relationship between the empirical case studies and theory is not always clear. Some scholars are mainly interested in describing the phenomenon in which they are interested. They want to reflect on the theoretical approaches available in order to place matters in perspective, but are not necessarily interested in developing or improving existing theories. Others use the case of European integration and policy-making in the European Union (EU) as a way to develop new theoretical approaches or to amend existing theories. As a result there appears to be a gap between these case study-oriented and theory-oriented approaches. Furthermore, it seems to be

that the former often comes out of European schools whereas the latter proliferates in the United States. Thus, one could provocatively claim that there is a split between European and American scholarship, which is characterized by how theory and empirics are treated.

This article examines why there is a gap between the more theory-oriented American and case study-oriented European scholarship in the field of European integration/EU studies and how the gap can be narrowed. It suggests that the international political economy (IPE) literature can serve as a vehicle to bridge the gap. To develop this argument the article is structured as follows. The first section offers an analysis of the split between American and European scholarship in the field of European integration/EU studies. The second introduces the field of IPE and reviews four of its schools of thought: neorealism, institutionalism, social constructivism and a collection of approaches critical of the status quo referred to here as the critical school. Section three discusses how IPE can contribute to bridging the gap between the two approaches in the field of European integration. The last section draws some conclusions.

THE EU AS A *SUI GENERIS* CASE? VIEWS FROM BOTH SIDES OF THE ATLANTIC

The developments in European integration theory mirror the rapid changes that have occurred in contemporary Europe, in particular those that have taken place since the late 1980s. In Europe this sea change has led scholars to being interested in understanding this process, which to many observers seems excessively complex and not easily comparable with other political processes at the national level, or indeed elsewhere in the world. Frustrated with the inability of the traditional integration theories to explain, predict or clarify the outcome of the European integration process, numerous scholars have moved to focusing more narrowly on the EU as a unique case and developing specific theories about the European integration process (for a review of European integration theories, see Verdun 2002).

It has long been questioned whether the European integration process should be considered a *sui generis* case or a case that resembles others (cf. Wallace 1983). A number of scholars – usually Europeans – tend to treat it as the former (see *inter alia* Shaw 1999). These scholars argue that the integration process is sufficiently distinct that it merits being conceptualized differently and requires specific theories. In doing so, they offer explanations that are often exclusively applicable to the EU. Others do not argue the case quite as forcefully, but argue instead that the European integration process is in between a *sui generis* case and a case like many others (see *inter alia* Kohler-Koch 1997). Scholars on the other side of the Atlantic, however, tend to focus on the European integration process as an example of a process of institution building and policy-making not dissimilar to those in other parts of the world (see, for example, the debate in a 1997 issue of *ECSA Review*, i.e. Caporaso *et al.*

1997). They see the European integration process as a reaction to pressures that many countries, also those outside Europe, are facing (see also Cohen 1998; Mattli 1999). Countries in some parts of the world may make different choices from those in other parts, and hence do not proceed towards regional integration in the way that Europe has done. These scholars would argue that the EU is not fundamentally different from other forms of governance. It is just in a different stage of institutionalization (see also Jupille and Caporaso 1999).

In terms of their contribution to the literature, the studies that adopt a *sui generis* approach of the study of the EU tend to move away from contributing to the wider political science literature.² Instead, they develop theoretical approaches that are derived from European integration studies, and typically assume that their approaches are not necessarily applicable to studies beyond those related to the EU. Even though there are notable exceptions, this development has had the effect, in particular in American circles, of making European integration studies less important because the connection between it and the broader political science literature has become less obvious. As Simon Bulmer has put it: 'The *sui generis* assumptions of some political integration theory and the lack of interdisciplinary dialogue have risked confining European integration to an intellectual "ghetto" within the social sciences' (Bulmer 1997: 8).

As a result of their view of the European integration process as being comparable to processes going on elsewhere, 'American scholars' tend to place their study of the EU within a broader framework of theoretical approaches that are of a more general nature. Their aim typically is to show that the European integration process is yet another case with which they can show that a particular theoretical approach can be proven to be right or wrong. In other words, their aim is to contribute to the general theoretical literature using the case of the EU.

By contrast, many 'European scholars' seem more inclined to invent a new *ad hoc* approach, or label, to signal their specific approach, which they have derived from their exclusive study of the European integration process. These European scholars often aim at making a new contribution to the more narrow literature on European integration. In doing so they do not concern themselves too much with questions regarding what European integration studies can contribute to the overall political science literature.

The categories 'American' and 'European', mentioned above, are introduced here for purely analytical reasons and also to be provocative. The terms 'American approach' and 'European approach' (or 'American scholar' versus 'European scholar') should be seen as terms that are used to capture a group of scholars who fit broadly into these categories. In this article we understand a 'European approach' to be aiming at examining the European integration process as separate from processes in other parts of the world. In the extreme case this approach considers Europe to be a *sui generis* case. The theoretical contribution to the literature that this approach makes applies only to the case

of Europe. It does not aim at taking the integration process to be an example of a phenomenon that exists outside Europe. In turn, the 'American approach', as we use it here, aims at fitting into the broader approaches of political science literature. According to this approach, the European integration process is only one case, and hence one should examine other cases as well. These studies aim at contributing to the wider political science literature.

Though the dichotomy is clearly artificial and provocative, the names of these categories are selected to reflect the apparent cultural differences in academia on both sides of the Atlantic. There are, of course, Americans who contribute to the European approach (Peterson 2001), and Europeans who apply an American approach (Hix 2002).³ Furthermore, let us be clear that there are indeed European integration scholars who adopt approaches that speak to the general political science approaches and/or who make broader comparisons in their studies (*inter alia* Börzel and Risse 2002; Hix 1994; Knill and Lenschow 2001; Majone 1997, 2001a, 2001b; Scharpf 1997). Likewise, there are numerous American trained scholars who have a keen interest in European integration as such and who have incorporated European scholarship in their research (*inter alia* Ingebritsen 1998; Mattli 1999; McNamara 1998; Moravcsik 1998; Pierson 1996; Pollack 2001).

The above mentioned two trends – to examine European integration merely from either a European perspective or an American perspective, i.e. too much specificity or too much examining Europe as just another case study – are each unrewarding. A criticism of the American approach is that these scholars are so busy trying to prove to their fellow (American) political scientists that they are eager to make a contribution to the general literature that they are unable to appreciate the complexity, diversity and uniqueness of the European integration process. Also, they often choose their case studies in such a way that they can contribute most easily to that literature, rather than being necessarily genuinely interested in the European integration process as such. They shy away from the fact-finding, descriptive, explorative research or research with inductive methodologies designed to gather information about the integration process. By contrast, one can criticize the European approach for being overly inward-looking or for reinventing the wheel. One sometimes wonders to what extent the new approach is really all that new or significantly different from what more general approaches offer. Furthermore, it is often unclear how these theoretical approaches can be falsified or tested, as it is not clear that they could apply to other cases. In fact, the authors of these approaches often state that it is not their intention or ambition that their theories be generalizable beyond the scope of the EU.

So why would authors stick to one or the other trend? Sometimes it appears that scholars are merely signalling to one another to what body of literature they belong rather than fully engaging with one another in a scholarly debate. The process that seems to be going on is one in which debates are happening in distinct academic territories. This behaviour can be found in the way the research problem is identified, the literature to which one wants to make a

contribution, the academic references cited, and the theoretical and methodological approaches chosen. It may be that this territorial divide is logical if one takes into consideration the academic criteria in both Europe and North America. In Europe it is broadly felt that one needs to contribute to the overall literature, and preferably find a label/approach that will be associated with one's name, thus contributing to one's fame in the field. In North America one's reputation depends on how well known one is in the general field study, e.g. political science. In North America the field journals are typically rated lower than general journals (i.e. *American Political Science Review* is considered to be a 'higher ranked' journal than *International Organization*). More importantly, contributing to regional studies is considered even of less scholarly value than contributing to a general field journal (i.e. a publication in *IO* is considered to be of higher scholarly value than a publication in a regional journal, such as *Journal of Common Market Studies*).

The divide in European integration studies seems to have also been taking place in the area of IPE. Scholars in this field study the processes that lie in the broad intersection of international politics and economics. IPE deals with questions such as why actors (states, sub-state actors and international institutions) collaborate. Research questions include regional integration, financial market integration, regulation (deregulation and re-regulation), transfer of sovereignty, multilateralism and so on. We shall argue below that IPE offers a venue for dialogue between those who focus exclusively on the EU and those who see the EU case to be part of more general phenomena. It is, of course, not the intention to profess that IPE is the only body of literature that can be of use to studies of European integration, or that others would be less valuable. Rather the aim is to address how we can make sure that the various approaches continue to have a dialogue together. IPE is seen as 'one' route to get there. Let us now turn to a brief introduction of that literature.⁴

THE FIELD OF IPE

The IPE literature has typically been composed of work by authors at the crossroads of international politics and international economics, and as such the field contributed importantly to the understanding of the integration process (Lawton *et al.* 2000). Throughout the early post-war period IPE had not yet been developed as a field of study of political science, but was occupied by scholars in the economics discipline. With the increasing quantification of the economics discipline and the increasing use of mathematics and formal models in that discipline, the study of the intersection of international politics and economics slowly became abandoned by economists and increasingly occupied by political scientists. They included in particular scholars who studied the realm of international trade, finance and regional economic cooperation. Among the early scholarly work we find Baldwin (1971), Cooper (1968), Kindleberger (1970), Keohane and Nye (1972) and Strange (1970, 1971, 1972).⁵ IPE continued to grow particularly as the world experienced

global recession and hyperinflation in the 1970s, the debt crisis, and increasing international interdependence. Before the word 'globalization' had gained popularity, IPE scholars were already studying the effects of increasing interconnectedness of international economics and politics (Gilpin 1987). Topics that remained of interest to IPE scholars were in particular international finance, monetary policy, exchange rate policy, trade, economic co-operation, regional economic integration and so on.

In the 1980s IPE became more attractive as a field owing to the eagerness of scholars to understand prominent processes in the international domain: the debt crises, increasing interdependence, policy learning, and slowly but surely regional integration, and changes in policy-making signalled, for example, by the prominence of neoliberal politics and its accompanying processes of liberalization, deregulation and financial market integration. The growth of financial markets was another important characteristic that had taken off in the 1970s and continued to influence world politics throughout the 1980s and beyond. In the 1990s, after the end of the Cold War and with the rise of 'globalization', IPE obtained yet more popularity amongst political scientists. The concept of globalization emerged even though it is often argued that the world may not be quite as globalized as it was in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Though the concept is often not carefully defined, it is generally accepted that it includes three things: (1) internationalization, (2) the information and technological revolution, and (3) liberalization. States, markets and non-state actors reacted to these phenomena in a number of ways. Increasingly, national governments have been moving towards further opening up of their economies to selected other countries and markets, while at the same time not wanting to open up completely. The easiest way to open up while protecting is by creating an institutional framework which includes some states and/or markets, but excludes others. Non-state actors, such as large corporations, have also gained importance in recent years. They too have been keen to have an institutional framework of this nature (see Cowles 1995; this issue). IPE deals with these topics, and the European integration process is a typical example of a response to these challenges posed by globalization and financial market integration. But before IPE started to take off in European integration studies it was the field of IR that made the first major contribution to the theorizing about the European integration process.

As is well known, IR theories, developed by scholars in the United States, lay at the heart of the two most widely cited traditional integration theories: neofunctionalism (Haas 1958, 1964, 1968) and intergovernmentalism (Hoffmann 1966). Neofunctionalism tried to offer an alternative to the realist school of thought. It saw the European integration process as a direct response to functional needs of states. It also foresaw that domestic, transnational and supranational actors would engage in regional integration to improve their efficiency in governance given their relative close proximity and the various possibilities for collaboration. In studying the European integration process, it had in mind comparisons with other parts of the world. Ernst Haas's

neofunctionalist approach was soon challenged by Stanley Hoffmann's intergovernmentalism. This approach, in contrast to neofunctionalism, belonged to the realist school. It argued that the European integration process could only be understood if one examined the interests and power positions of various national state leaders and their interests. The obstructive behaviour of the French President Charles de Gaulle in particular lay at the basis of Hoffmann's work. Another theoretical approach promoted in this period was an approach developed by Karl Deutsch. He examined groups of élites, and the communication amongst them (Deutsch *et al.* 1957, 1967). Deutsch's approach did not attract the attention that neofunctionalism and intergovernmentalism did. However, it has been argued that constructivism, which gained popularity from the 1980s onwards, in fact follows in the footsteps of Deutsch. The two dominant integration theories lost their appeal in the 1970s (Haas 1975, 1976; Webb 1983).

In their overview of IPE literature since the 1950s Katzenstein *et al.* (1998) argue that European integration theory was strongly influenced by American scholars until the early 1980s. Since then American scholars have been less inclined to create their own general theories of European integration based on their own research, but rather have relied on the empirical work conducted by the Europeans (Katzenstein *et al.* 1998: 655). Though fewer in number, contributions to the European integration literature by American scholars have been quite prominent, such as Moravcsik (1998), Pierson (1996), Tsebelis (1994). Numerous publications, in fact, have come out in the IPE flagship journal *International Organization* (*inter alia* Moravcsik 1991; Pollack 1997; Sandholtz 1993). Since the early 1990s, both European and American scholars have published scholarly pieces on European integration that have adopted theoretical approaches which borrowed concepts and insights from comparative politics, public policy, but also from IPE.

Four schools of thought in IPE

Although IPE scholars have traditionally been subdivided into three schools, liberalism, mercantilism and Marxism (Woods 2001), this article will focus on the schools of thought (and divisions amongst them) that have become more dominant in the past decade. Based on the ongoing debates in the IPE journals, such as *International Organization*, one could say that it is fairly common to subdivide the IPE approaches into four categories: neorealism, neoliberal institutionalism, social constructivism and the critical approaches.

Neorealism

The neorealist approaches are among the IPE approaches that take the state as the dominant actor in determining the outcome of international politics. The seminal work by Waltz (1979) argues that the international system can only be understood by looking at the actions of states. They act in their own

self-interest, and try to maximize their interests based on fixed *ex ante* preferences. The outside world is perceived as being in a state of chaos in which anarchy prevails. At times a major player can impose order on this chaos. But that state will only do so when it is in the interest of that major player. The original work by Waltz did not allow for any role for domestic politics or international organizations. However, in reply to its critics neorealism opened up to the possibility of domestic forces possibly affecting state preferences and perceived interests (Keohane 1986). Yet, for the outcome of international bargaining and co-operation the locus of attention remained the state. Realist approaches have found their way into the study of the EU, especially in explaining the behaviour of inter-state bargaining (Garrett 1993; Grieco 1995).

Neoliberal institutionalism

The neoliberal institutionalist approaches accept that states are the primary actors in the world and thus that neorealism 'provides a good starting point for the analysis of co-operation and discord [in the international system]' (Keohane 1984: 245). However, in addition one should recognize that institutions can have an effect of their own. Institutions are defined by Keohane as 'sets of practices and expectations'. They can facilitate inter-state agreements and enable states to pursue their own interests through co-operation (Keohane 1984: 246). More recent institutionalist approaches have emphasized a larger role for institutions. They have emphasized the importance of path dependence, socialization and policy learning (Hall and Taylor 1994). Institutions, in this more recent view, set the path for the development of policies, rules and procedures. By having this historic precedent and standard operating procedures, the policy-making process is influenced. Sometimes emphasis is placed on the fact that international institutions can be more effective in imposing rules and regulations. Thus nation-states will be inclined to follow those rules and regulations more frequently, consistently and without clear direct links to self-interest, than realist accounts would lead us to believe. In recent years institutionalism has been frequently adopted in studies of European integration (*inter alia* Bulmer 1994a, 1994b; Pierson 1996).

Social constructivism

Since the second half of the 1990s the social constructivist school has gained much terrain and has appeared to be a 'new' school of thought. However, as always with so-called 'novelties', the approach had been around for quite some time. Already in the 1960s Berger and Luckmann (1966) outlined their social constructivist approach. They identified three core assumptions. The first concerns the nature of the individual. He/she is taken to be a social creature who creates and institutionalizes new knowledge about 'reality' and finds his/her personal identity based on social processes. The second assumption is that

our observation of 'reality' may be an artefact, as it is coloured by whoever observes or interprets it. The third concerns how social scientists study social action. They are involved in the process, and hence their action and previous socialization colour their findings. Social constructivism was made more prominent in IPE literature through the work of Ruggie (1975, 1998) and others (*inter alia* Checkel 1998, 1999; Finnemore 1996; Risse 2000). More recently European integration scholars have adopted the social constructivist approach in their studies (Christiansen *et al.* 1999; Diez 1997; Marcussen 2000).

Critical approaches

There is not one uniform school of thought that encompasses the so-called 'critical approaches'. Often reference is made to a number of them, such as various forms of Marxism, the British critical school (Palan 1992), the Amsterdam school (Van der Pijl 1998), the neo-Gramscians (Cox 1981, 1983, 1995), but also various forms of post-materialists, such as reflectivists (Jørgensen 1997) and post-structuralists (Walker 1989). These approaches all have in common that they criticize the traditional approaches of IPE and IR. They argue that the traditional schools focus too much on the state and fail to understand how the underlying structure divides power and wealth. They are critical in that they see the status quo as benefiting the rich and the already well-off. Moreover, they argue that the international structure widens the gap between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots'. These approaches not only criticize the traditional approaches for their normative values and their objects of study, they also criticize the academic method of rationalism and causal models with hypotheses testing. They share with the social constructivists the assumption that there is no clear 'reality out there' but that this world is to be interpreted, and that the researcher plays an important role in that process. In recent years some European integration studies have been inspired by these more critical approaches in their studies. In particular the work of European scholars has been more open to these approaches (*inter alia* Van Apeldoorn 2002).

These four approaches have in common that they focus on the questions regarding the role of the state and the interaction between the state and the system. The neorealists place most emphasis on the state. The neoliberal institutionalists add to that the importance of institutions, as either rules and regimes or more formal organizations. The social constructivists add to these elements the fact that the actors (states, policy-makers, social scientists) are all influenced and formed by their culture, education, socialization and identity, and thus these will influence the role they play in this interplay between states, institutions and the system. The critical schools underline that those interactions are not value free, and that the outcome ought to be taken into consideration when politics are made, and are studied.

IPE AND EUROPEAN INTEGRATION STUDIES

IPE approaches were a welcome addition to IR approaches. The latter typically focused on foreign policies and on the policies of states *vis-à-vis* other states. IPE offered to look at economic interactions between states which opened up the 'states' and included many more actors and factors, in particular the transnational and domestic actors (state and non-state actors). European integration theories have built on the original two integration theories in a number of ways, and in so doing have taken on important IPE characteristics.

As mentioned above, intergovernmentalists were originally pure realists. However, the most recent intergovernmental approach to European integration, by Andrew Moravcsik, gradually took on a more liberal perspective on the integration process. It incorporates the role of domestic interest groups in helping to define national state preferences. Economic factors are taken very seriously. However, even though the incorporation of domestic politics in this approach is a real innovation compared to the traditional approach, the approach still stresses that the states have ultimate influence over the process. The effects on the process of the actions of institutions, supranational actors and the like are dismissed (Moravcsik 1998). This approach is very useful in studying treaty negotiations and intergovernmental bargaining as well as examining the state preferences of EU member states. It offers scholars conceptual tools to analyse the state-specific characteristics and interests as well as the power-play that goes on among them.

The observation that EU member states have no longer felt the need to protect sovereignty at all cost has puzzled many neorealists, and in turn has given more ammunition to studies of institutionalism. Institutionalisms in all kinds of guises have been used to explain why states give up their sovereignty or 'pool their sovereignty' (Keohane and Hoffmann 1991). Regimes, sets of rules and formal organizations are able to offer services to states that they in turn would be unable to safeguard by merely focusing on national state preferences. Neofunctionalism has some similarities with neoliberal institutionalism, focuses on the degree of 'order' in society. It hypothesizes under what conditions societal actors, the state and the supranational actors would transfer their loyalties to the supranational level. It theorizes about inter-state cooperation from a functional perspective. Thus it hypothesizes the transfer of sovereignty on the basis of policy-making efficiency and effectiveness. In recent years the study of the EU by those who are broadly favourable to the claims of neofunctionalism increased dramatically (Burley and Mattli 1993; Stone Sweet and Sandholtz 1997, 1998; Tranholm-Mikkelsen 1991). Various authors, in a number of different ways, have each given persuasive accounts of the European integration process by adopting an historical institutionalist approach (*inter alia* Bulmer 1994a, 1994b; Pierson 1996; Wincott 1995). These approaches are able to examine the European integration process that continues to go on outside the grand bargaining and the intergovernmental conferences

(see in this context also the multi-level governance approaches, Hooghe and Marks 2001; Marks *et al.* 1996⁶). It offers conceptual tools to examine the role of institutions, be they actual organizations, a regime or a set of rules. The concept of path-dependence offers us insights into how some processes are influenced by decisions made in the past. It offers us an approach that is suitable for examining the ongoing policy-making process, and the role of supranational institutions in this process.

Social constructivists have further refined their object of study. They argue that the integration process falls prey to the visions and images that the politicians, policy-makers, but also social scientists have in mind. They also argue that the role of socialization, knowledge and perceived reality is helping to create the Europe of tomorrow. More recently scholars with this inclination have been arguing forcefully against some of the assumptions of rationalist approaches, in particular those of intergovernmentalism, arguing that much socialization and preference formation occur in between the moments of intergovernmental bargaining. In this view the bureaucratic politics and interdepartmental politics (for example, competition between various Directorate Generals within the Commission) are as important as the grand bargains that take place at Intergovernmental Conferences or at European Summits (Christiansen *et al.* 2002). These approaches offer conceptual tools to examine the process behind the process; that is, the subtleties within institutions, member states, and the policy-making process. It questions the capacity of the state-centric and institutionalist approaches to identify unambiguous preferences, interests, policies and so on. These approaches are inclined to consider more factors that aim at describing the process. In so doing, they want to keep open the option that ideas, culture, language, personalities, sub-entities may be of crucial importance, thus leading to different variables (often many variables) as being important.

The critical school argues that the integration process has become too much focused on economic integration within the context of a neoliberal regime. It also argues that the kind of integration created in Europe benefits the already well-off. Critical approaches aim at correcting the imbalance. They also work at conceptualizing how a fair and just Europe can be created. Critical approaches are concerned that the European integration process will weaken state–society relations. Numerous neo-Gramscian perspectives question the underlying hegemonic nature of the European integration project (Bieler and Morton 2001; Van Apeldoorn *et al.* 2002). Finally, they call for the strengthening of democratic processes in the EU and increasing the accountability, transparency and legitimacy of EU governance. These approaches are in many ways in opposition to the ‘mainstream’ approaches. They question the rationality of market forces and the ‘choice’ that it assumes. Instead they develop concepts that can assist the analysis of how the integration process may be influenced by power relations that have been built up in the course of the integration process.

Most of these IPE approaches, especially those applied to the EU, have also managed to incorporate domestic factors, something for which the field of IR

has been strongly criticized (Hix 1994; Jupille and Caporaso 1999; Kassim 1994). IPE has for that matter been able to overcome the problems that critiques have identified with 'pure' IR approaches. Each of these approaches offers analytical tools and plausible suggestions (indeed sometimes hypotheses) that social scientists interested in the integration process can reflect on. The strengths and weaknesses of these approaches are quite different from one another. But each of these approaches offers tools and concepts that are generalizable within the context of the broader IPE approaches, and as such offer a possible entry point for general discussion.

So what would be the benefit of adopting IPE approaches in European integration? First, IPE offers a range of diverse theoretical frameworks, which in turn facilitate an implicit or explicit comparison of the European integration process with other processes. Hence it offers tools for broader theorization. Second, IPE is sensitive to insights from various fields, such as comparative politics, IR, public policy literature and so on. As such it caters to the European approach, in that it is sufficiently open to the specificity of the European integration process; the specificity or uniqueness of the European integration process can be analysed and discussed with IPE approaches. To advocate IPE as a venue for debate is to aim at finding a middle ground where the debate can take place. In recent years there have been claims that IR would no longer be useful for explaining European integration (Jachtenfuchs 2001: 259). What we argue here, however, is that IPE would offer a suitable body of literature to explain European integration. In another contribution to the literature there has been a move away from the diversity set out above. It is not very useful that the debate in the literature has moved to one on the dichotomy between the so-called 'rationalists' and the 'constructivists' (Pollack 2001) or the 'rationalists' versus the 'reflectivists' (Smith 2001). Pollack argues that rationalists broadly speaking hold the same rationalist assumptions about research design:

I would argue that liberal intergovernmentalism, rational-choice institutionalist analyses and even Grieco's purportedly neorealist voice opportunities hypothesis are all part of an emerging rationalist research programme which is rapidly establishing itself as the dominant paradigm in European integration theory, at least in the United States.

(Pollack 2001: 233)

This debate obscures the fact that there are cultural differences, and fundamentally territorial divides about the theoretical culture and body of literature one wants to belong to. The rules of the game in academia on both sides of the Atlantic seem to differ, and this split does not benefit the genuine exchange of ideas. But what that dichotomy also does not emphasize is the degree to which some approaches do not reflect on the case of the EU/European integration process to be informing the literature within a broader framework rather than on the EU/European integration process alone. As we have seen in the review of the IPE literature above, the constructivists are as legitimate an IPE approach as are the rationalist approaches. What we want to argue here is that the case

of the EU is just one among many cases. We argue here that IPE offers a good body of literature for examining the integration process exactly because of its openness to rationalist and constructivist approaches, its general interest in the very thing that the integration process often deals with, i.e. international economic co-operation.

CONCLUSION: BRIDGING THE GAP

This article has argued that 'American' and 'European' scholarship on the EU and the European integration process is divided. It is argued that there is a split between the cultures of scholarship on both sides of the Atlantic. Indeed, a comparison could be made between the behaviour of scholars and that of dogs peeing to demarcate their territory. The European approach has been increasingly moving away from general theories and has been more inward-focusing, thereby only seeing the case of Europe as the one that is interesting to study because of its inherent characteristics. In order to appear on the radar of the more general political scientists as well as American scholars with an interest in EU studies, these approaches need to be more outward looking and consider how their theories can be applicable to cases other than that of Europe. The American approach by contrast has been moving toward less case specificity in favour of contributing to the more general literature in political science. The article is also critical of the American approach that is overly preoccupied with theory and with making a contribution to the general political science literature and in doing so fails to appreciate the specificities of the case of Europe. The article suggests that an IPE approach will enable American scholars to do justice to the uniqueness of the European integration process while at the same time allow them to focus on more general theorization. Overall, the article argues that IPE as a field offers useful analytical and theoretical tools for EU/European integration studies to become more visible in the eyes of the generalists, while still respecting the diversity of theoretical approaches that exist on both sides of the Atlantic.

The benefits of using IPE approaches in European integration studies are threefold. First, IPE approaches focus the research design on seeing the EU/European integration process as one case in the broader study of regional integration. They thereby transcend the *sui generis* or $N=1$ debate. Second, IPE approaches as applied to the EU have responded to the critics from comparative politics and public policy in that their focus is on many more actors than on states alone. IPE approaches allow for the study of both state and non-state actors (domestic, transnational, supranational and international actors). Third, the kinds of debate going on in the European integration literature are also present in the IPE literature. These are the ones referred to above, i.e. rationalists versus constructivists/reflectivists, but also the issue of generalizability and falsifiability of theoretical approaches. The advantage of using IPE approaches is that it continues to strive to place these debates within a broader framework, and not only focus on the case of EU/European integration. It also means that similar

theoretical discussions regarding other areas of study can have their influence on the debates taking place about the study of EU/European integration.

In conclusion, though it may be natural to be signalling to what body of literature and what academic community one belongs, it would be beneficial if the transatlantic debate remains lively. Let us hope that in the years to come the two approaches will come closer together. This article has suggested that IPE could offer a useful bridge across the emerging divide.

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NOTES

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- 2 This article reflects on how European integration studies contribute to the political science literature, even though academic scholarship in the area of European studies can and does contribute to interdisciplinary knowledge and thus will also contribute to other disciplines such as law, economics, public administration, environmental studies and so on.
- 3 An example of this inverse advocacy could be seen in action at a conference co-sponsored by UACES and the Central European University held in Budapest in April 2000. John Peterson (an American national) and Simon Hix (a British citizen) were each advocating the virtues of respectively 'European' and 'American' approaches. At some point it was so amusing to see them profess the benefits of the 'other' approach that the Chair of that panel, Helen Wallace, jokingly suggested that they should switch passports.
- 4 New journals have also been set up to try to bridge the gap. For example, the journal *European Union Politics* was founded with the almost exclusive aim of becoming a regional journal that will be taken seriously by mainstream American political science. Thus it seeks to include pieces that discuss research on European politics and adopt methodologies and theoretical approaches from mainstream American political science.
- 5 It is generally argued that IPE is a subfield of IR – scholars such as Strange argued that this statement should be reversed (see, for example, Strange 1988).
- 6 Note that multi-level governance approaches have much in common with these institutionalist approaches. It is the view of this author that they can also be considered IPE approaches in so far as they are aiming at a more generalizable knowledge claim.

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