The London School of Economics and Political Science

A Genealogy of the Balance of Power

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Abstract

The Balance of Power is one of the foundational concepts for the academic discipline of International Relations. Most treat it as a theoretical or analytical concept – a tool that scholars use to investigate the workings of world politics. However, there is a gap in the literature on the balance of power; it is also a concept used by political practitioners and diplomats in concrete debates and disputes throughout centuries. No one has systematically investigated the concept as a 'category of practice', and I seek to redress this omission. I ask, how, why, and with what effects has the balance of power concept been deployed across different contexts? This is important, because the discipline needs to investigate the histories of its dominant concepts – the balance of power deserves attention as an object of analysis in its own right. I combine a genealogical reading (by what accidents of history did we end up *here*?) with conceptual history (how was the balance used *then* as a rhetorical resource in making arguments?). The result is a history of *practical* international thought. I trace the trajectory of the balance of power concept empirically and concretely – from its emergence in England based on a domestic republican tradition, to its elaboration at the British-founded University of Göttingen in Hanover, on to Prussia and Germany, before finally ending up in the USA with the emergence of IR as a discipline. Throughout this trajectory, the concept of the balance of power has been centrally linked to what historical actors took to be European polities and their relations. In this trajectory, 'shifts' in the balance of power, is governed more by how the concept itself is deployed, than any material or territorial assessment of power alone, or by any deliberate refinement of the concept. It has affected and constituted international politics and foreign policies across time, as well as our own discipline of IR.

Contents

Preface

Once the scaffolding has been dismantled, it can be difficult to fathom certain processes important for understanding the construction of a project – also with an academic dissertation. The Preface is conventionally the place to mention them.

Over the course of the past three years, this project has changed in two important ways. Firstly, I decided to start the genealogy in the mid-1600s – later than originally intended, given what seemed to be the almost routine invocation of the 'ancient roots' of the concept. In fact, as I came to realise, the balance of power became a concept public enough to be used in political controversies only in the mid-17th century. This proved fortunate, as the amount of historical, empirical work invested has in any case proven quite substantial and at times exhausting – again more than initially expected.

The second major change concerns the problem or puzzle in focus. Because I have wanted to examine the balance of power as a concept used in historical practice, as distinct from a theoretical tool used in modern-day analytical practice within the field of International Relations, I begin by framing the research puzzle as an opposition between the balance of power as analytical statement, and the balance of power as participant practice. However, it emerged, distinguishing between these two ways of approaching the balance of power is itself an effect of the historical trajectory of the concept in use. As a result, this project also claims to have established the conditions of possibility for my framing of this puzzle in the first place. That does not invalidate the research question, but it adds a reflexive layer to the project: the discipline of IR, with the debate between 'practice' and 'theory', should be seen as yet another effect of the historical trajectory of balance-of-power rhetoric. Reflecting on my own research question and this project as I go along, as part of the discipline which is also an effect of balance-of-power rhetoric, I therefore critique myself in real time, as Daniel Levine has succinctly put it.[1]

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[1] Levine, Daniel J. 2012. *Recovering International Relations.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 18.

That is, by exploring the practical usage of the concept, I have also explained the initial situation. At least it is my hope that T.S. Eliot's words from *Four Quartets* might ring true: "We shall not cease from exploration / And the end of all our exploring / Will be to arrive where we started / And know the place for the first time."

Oslo, December 2015

Acknowledgements

As for genealogy, I also wish to express thanks to my parents, for always being supportive in all respects, and to my wife Alejandra. At times, my work on this thesis threatened to become rather hegemonic in our daily lives. I thank her for bandwagoning and not balancing.

Taking any of the persons above out of the equation would have affected the result negatively, and the usual disclaimers apply.

Introduction

International Relations (IR) has generally treated the balance of power as an analytical theory moulded by scholars – but in the empirics of how this concept has actually been applied by diplomats and politicians for over 350 years there lies a hidden world of power politics that concerns far more than a stable distribution of capabilities. Taken seriously as an empirical phenomenon, the balance of power is not solely about the balance of power at all.

The analytical concept has been criticised, among other things, for not providing an efficient tool for explaining international phenomena. Still, its prevalence within the discipline of IR endures. Balance of power theory as we know it has become one of the foundational, analytical theories in the discipline – not because it depicts international reality efficiently but because it, for an array of other reasons, became a central concept of political practice during the historical evolution of European international politics. Modern academics have adopted this politically and rhetorically strategic concept, without reflecting on its varied and distinct uses in the world of policy, as against the world of academic knowledge.

The *first* goal of this project is to investigate systematically how, why, and with what effects the balance of power has been used in practice by diplomatic and political actors in their political and intellectual projects in various contexts since the mid-1600s. When concepts are treated as 'analytical categories', the goal is often to make the concepts as context-independent as possible. Context is however crucial in studying a concept as 'practical category'.

On another level of analysis, categories such as 'theoretical' and 'practical', and any transitions from one to the other, can be studied in their own right as empirical phenomena of the social world. Because of the important connexions between practical and analytical categories in IR, a *second*, more reflexive, goal here is to explain the processes whereby the balance of power as an object named in the terms of practical everyday language transited into an 'object named by the terms of a discipline-specific terminological repertoire', itself 'defined and differentiated in the process of being

associated with the terms of such a repertoire'.[1] An investigation of the balance of power as deployed in practical use will also shed light on how the analytical concept emerged and developed in the scholarly discipline of IR. As a 'genealogy' of the concept – a term which I clarify in Chapter 1 – this will be 'an attempt to read the present in terms of the past by writing the past in terms of the present'.[2] Indeed, our present-day condition is in important ways the reason why 'the balance of power' can be seen as meriting historical attention in the first place.

Therefore, these two goals are interrelated. In this project, the analytical, often structural, theory of the balance of power in IR is of interest less for the substantive explanations it offers about international politics, and more as a result of the contingent historical trajectories under investigation. When I choose to confront the analytical category of the balance of power empirically, this means that the IR discipline is both analytical standpoint and historical effect.[3] This interrelation, as argued in Chapter 1, can be best captured by combining a genealogical reading with a more 'nitty-gritty' exploration of controversies and debates, showing the uses and effects of the concept in and across contexts.

This is both a highly empirical and theoretical project, but I assume no definition of the 'international', or what international politics really is. With some minimalist starting assumptions, I set out to look for instances where the balance of power has been used in controversies, to see the picture of international politics that emerges. I treat the balance of power as a concept, and concepts as relational: concepts exist solely by virtue of their relation to other concepts and concerns; and concepts cannot be studied apart from their *use*, where processes of contingently linking concepts to other issues are crucial.

Such links have been recurrently made between the balance of power and the nature of polities or states, their relations, and a purported system or structure. This history of how the concept has been used, and of the ways historical actors have linked it to other concerns, is thus by implication also the history of how actors have differentiated between

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[1] Scholz, Bernhard F. 1998. 'Conceptual History in Context: Reconstructing the Terminology of an Academic Discipline', pp. 87–101 in Iain Hampsher-Monk et al. (eds) *History of Concepts: Comparative Perspectives*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, p. 87.

[2] Lindstrom, Lamont. 1982. 'Leftamap Kastom: the Political History of Tradition on Tanna, Vanuatu', *Mankind* 13(4):316–329, p. 317.

[3] Walker, Rob B.J. 1993. *Inside/Outside: International Relations as Political Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 5–8.

polities, how they have considered the relations between these polities, and their relation to an international system, seen through the lens of the concept of the balance of power. However, I do this by treating the balance of power as a 'category of practice',[4] focusing on the participants in balance-of-power politics. This is a history of *practical* international thought.

Starting with few assumptions about either international politics or the study thereof, I find that when approached as practical international thought, the balance of power is not really about the balance of power as we know it at all. The stability or instability of the international system or the international order has less to do with the phenomenon of the balance of power as such, and more to do with how that concept has been applied in practice. Put differently, even though it concerns a concept, this is a study of the signifiers, not of the signified. It is the contingent linking of the balance of power concept to other concerns that has effects.

I trace the trajectory of the balance of power concept empirically and concretely – from its emergence in England based on a domestic republican tradition, to its elaboration at the British-founded University of Göttingen in Hanover, on to Prussia and Germany, before finally ending up in the USA with the emergence of IR as a discipline. Throughout this trajectory, the concept of the balance of power has been centrally linked to what historical actors took to be European polities and their relations. As we shall see, this changed dramatically during the timespan under study here.

This has profound implications for how we think about the balance-of-power concept in the discipline: by systematically analysing and documenting its use in practice, I show how the deployment of the concept itself has had consequences, and has in fact been a crucially important concept – but in other, more concrete, ways than normally imagined. It has affected and constituted international politics and foreign policies across time. I investigate how the concept became central in IR, and how it is the result of the lack of a distinct Weberian moment of abstract reflection, which has made the discipline different from other social sciences.

Knowing the practical history of the balance of power implies knowing how to use the concept in correct ways. Isolating the concept as exclusively an analytical tool, or

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[4] Brubaker, Rogers and Frederick Cooper. 2000. 'Beyond "identity"', *Theory and Society* 29(1):1–47, p. 4.

confusing analytical and empirical statements, means overlooking important phenomena in world politics, and leads to inconsistent and erroneous uses of the concept. The balance of power is not a realist concept, it does not exist 'out there', and it is not solely an analytical model: it has had concrete effects on politics and social configurations, and not least, on the trajectory of the international system, and the polities comprising it, at critical junctures and inflection points in the course of the past 350 years.

The context: The balance of power as a master concept in IR

From the international lawyers and historians preceding the formation of the IR discipline, throughout the interwar years, to Kenneth Waltz's *Theory of International Politics*, Mearsheimer's *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, and contemporary theories of US hegemony or retrenchment, the balance of power has been at the centre of debate in academic International Relations. It is frequently asserted that the idea of the balance of power has been a constant feature of international politics ever since the ancient Greeks, and is therefore well-suited as a scholarly tool for analysing historical empires and ancient political systems.

'No other single proposition about international politics', Brooks and Wohlforth write, 'has attracted more scholarly effort than the balance of power. It is perhaps as central in today's thinking as it has been at any time since the Enlightenment'.[5] Sheehan labels it 'one of the most important concepts in history'.[6]

Three of the most central IR publications on the modern concept of the balance of power – by Hans Morgenthau, Hedley Bull and Kenneth Waltz[7] – are flanked by an array of writings on the concept, debating such issues as whether it promotes peace or war, whether it is European or also extra-European, if there is *one* balance or also various sub-balances; also, the connexions between balancing and deterrence, the balance of power as a mechanical-structural system or as intentional foreign policy prescription, whether it

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[5] Brooks, Stephen G. and William C. Wohlforth. 2008. *World Out of Balance: International Relations and the Challenge of American Primacy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, p 7.
[6] Sheehan, Michael J. 1996. *The Balance of Power: History and Theory*. London: Routledge, p. 1.
[7] Morgenthau, Hans. 1948. *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf; Bull, Hedley. 1977. *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics*. New York: Columbia University Press; Waltz, Kenneth N. 1979. *Theory of International Politics*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

guarantees the independence of all states or only of the 'great powers', to mention only some.[8]

Although primarily associated with realism in IR, the concept is discussed in other approaches as well. For instance, Richard Little investigates the balance of power as 'metaphor, myth and model' from an English School perspective,[9] Stacie Goddard connects the scholarly defined balance-of-power concept to a constructivist theory of legitimation and rhetorical coercion,[10] and other authors to be mentioned in the coming chapters, like Ian Clark and Andreas Osiander, hold similar perspectives.[11] Also international historians of various leanings have discussed the concept. However, as I will show, most of this literature confuses analytical and empirical claims, and the concept as category of practice and as a tool of scholarly analysis.

However, others have lamented the state of balance-of-power theory. One problem frequently stressed is that the concept 'has too many meanings'[12] and is 'vague'.[13] The early writings on the balance of power had 'considerable defects', since they failed to distinguish between the different meanings of the concept. There was little 'logical coherence' or 'analytical acuteness';[14] 'very often it was no more than a phrase used to inhibit thought. Frequently appealed to, it was seldom analysed in real depth or

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[8] See *inter alia* Nelson, Ernest W. 1943. 'The Origins of Modern Balance of Power Politics', *Mediavalia et Humanistica* 1:124–142; Vagts, Alfred. 1948. 'The Balance of Power: Growth of an Idea', *World Politics* 1(1):82–101; Haas, Ernst B. 1953. 'The Balance of Power: Prescription, Concept, or Propaganda?', *World Politics* 5(4):442–477; Gulick, Edward Vose. 1955. *Europe's Classical Balance of Power: A Case History of the Theory and Practice of One of the Great Concepts of European Statecraft.* Ithaca: Greenwood Press; Claude, Inis L. 1962. *Power and International Relations.* New York: Random House; Snyder, Glenn Herald. 1965. *The Balance of Power and the Balance of Terror.* San Francisco: Chandler; Seabury, Paul (ed.). 1965. *Balance of Power.* San Francisco: Chandler; Wright, Moorhead (ed.). 1975. *Theory and Practice of the Balance of Power, 1486–1914: Selected European Writings.* London: Dent; Lider, Julian. 1986. *Correlation of Forces.* Aldershot: Gower; Little, Richard. 1989. 'Deconstructing the Balance of Power: Two Traditions of Thought', *Review of International Studies* 15(2):87–100; Schroeder, Paul. W. 1989. 'The Nineteenth Century System: Balance of Power or Political Equilibrium?', *Review of International Studies* 15(2):135–153.

[9] Little, Richard. 2007. *The Balance of Power in International Relations: Metaphors, Myths and Models.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[10] Goddard, Stacie E. 2009. 'When Right Makes Might: How Prussia Overturned the European Balance of Power', *International Security* 33(3): 110–142.

[11] Clark, Ian. 2005. *Legitimacy in International Society.* Oxford: Oxford University Press; Osiander, Andreas. 1994. *The States System of Europe 1640–1990: Peacemaking and the Conditions of International Stability.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

[12] Sheehan, *The Balance of Power: History and Theory,* p 2.

[13] Claude, Inis L. 1989. 'The balance of power revisited', *Review of International Studies* 15(02): 77–85.

[14] Anderson. Matthew Smith. 1993. T*he Rise of Modern Diplomacy, 1450–1919.* London: Longman, p. 150.

formulated with genuine rigour'.[15] Paul Schroeder laments 'the ambiguous nature of the concept and the numerous ways it has been defined, the various distinct and partly contradictory meanings given to it in practice and the divergent purposes it serves [...] and the apparent failure of attempts to define balance of power as a system and specify its operating rules'.[16] Sheehan, in consequence, emphasises all the 'incorrect usages' of the term: 'an incorrect usage remains that even if it is used frequently', he argues,[17] and such wrong usage comes 'at the expense of clear comprehension'.[18] Still, the typical analytical move in the literature is to acknowledge the various meanings and uses, while trying to identify a 'core meaning', or a 'central proposition' of the concept. Sheehan proposes its meaning can be 'discovered', even if the concept has too many meanings.[19] As shown below, I hold a rather different view on the heterogeneity and correctness of its use.

Contemporary debates over the balance of power as a concept range from denials that a balance-of-power system is or ever has been operating – more frequently, the assertion of the same – to sophisticated attempts at improving or amending the concept by introducing notions of 'soft balancing', or associated explanations like 'bandwagoning', 'buck-passing' or 'hegemonic transition'.[20] But despite criticisms, with some arguing that classical balance-of-power theories no longer apply to international politics, and despite the fact that social scientists outside of the IR discipline have shown scant interest in the concept,[21] the balance of power has been and remains a particularly important concept in international politics and for the academic discipline of IR. Abandoning the concept altogether is therefore not desirable, as that would mean ignoring all the uses, experiences, and utterances of actual actors who have been using this term massively, albeit variably, throughout history.

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[15] Matthew Smith Anderson, quoted in Black, Jeremy. 1983. 'The Theory of the Balance of Power in the First Half of the Eighteenth Century: a Note on Sources', *Review of International Studies* 9(01):55–61, p. 55.
[16] Schroeder, 'The Nineteenth Century System', p. 135. See e.g. Haas, 'The Balance of Power' for a list of multiple definitions. See also Butterfield, Herbert and Martin Wight (eds) 1966. *Diplomatic Investigations*. London: George Allen & Unwin, p. 151.
[17] Sheehan. *The Balance of Power: History and Theory* , p.15.
[18] *Ibid.*, p. 23.
[19] *Ibid.*, p. 1.
[20] Wright, Quincy. 1983[1942]. *A Study of War*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press; Organski, Abramo F. K. 1968. *World Politics.* New York: Knopf.; Walt, Stephen M. 1987. The Origins of Alliances. Ithaca: Cornell University Press; Christensen, Thomas J. and Jack Snyder. 1990. 'Chain Gangs and Passed Bucks: Predicting Alliance Patterns in Multipolarity', *International Organization* 44(2):137–168; Wohlforth, William C., Richard Little, Stuart J. Kaufman, David Kang, Charles A. Jones, Victoria Tin-Bor Hui, Arthur Eckstein, Daniel Deudney and William L. Brenner. 2007. 'Testing Balance-of-Power Theory in World History', *European Journal of International Relations* 13(2):155–185.
[21] Little, *The Balance of Power*, p. 49.

Simply eliminating the concept would leave us with a 'surplus' of very central historical empirical material that cannot be accounted for. We would find ourselves concentrating on some alternative analytical concept to that of the balance of power, imposing it on historical actors without taking into account what they were actually saying, meaning, and knowing when they referred to 'the balance of power'. To ignore the ways in which the concept has been used across different contexts as a 'category of practice' and not only as scholarly analytical tool would be to cut short an array of historical empirics of use which has also had effects on foreign policy and international politics – and on how the present-day concept of the balance of power concept has become so central to IR.

Therefore, my purpose is not to criticise or demolish the concept of the balance of power or the actors using it. This would be to deny its long genealogy, and to ignore the crucial ways in which it has shaped historical trajectories, the IR discipline included. Rather, I will criticise the stories that are typically told about it.[22]

The problem: Why a genealogy of the balance of power matters

The balance of power has been thoroughly explored in almost all strands of IR theory, so it would seem that little new can be said about the concept, other than applying it to new cases to corroborate or refute its analytical usefulness. Do we really need yet another study of the balance of power – which is already one of the most meticulously investigated analytical concepts in IR?

Being a part of this discipline has obvious advantages for trying to understand what is going on within it. However, unreflective membership can have its disadvantages, not least since presuppositions and routine practices in the discipline may themselves be potentially problematic and in need of explanation.[23] In IR, the self-evident way to go about investigating the concept, it seems, is to treat the success of balance-of-power theory as its own explanation.

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[22] Shapin, Steven. 1996. *The Scientific Revolution*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p. 165.
[23] Shapin, Steven and Simon Schaffer. 1985. *Leviathan and the Air-Pump*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 5.

Against how the balance of power is normally treated, I argue that the balance of power is not really about the Balance of Power as we know it at all, but about an array of other concerns. The reason for this – which is a central observation in this project – is that the balance of power as a concept is not only an analytical and observational category of present-day analysis, a theoretical tool for scholars to make sense of international politics, but has also been central to how practitioners have made sense of their surroundings and have promoted their political projects for more than 350 years, denominating the practical knowledge of historical actors.[24] In controversies and policy debates, the balance-of-power concept has emerged, been deployed, and changed through contingently linking it to other concerns. The 'balance of power' was historically a concept of participants in diplomatic practices, only later put to systematic, analytical use – first by the realist tradition. An 'experience-distant' analytical category is based on the balance of power as developed and deployed by historically situated social actors.[25] The problem is that there is no reason to believe that historical categories of practice match current analytical categories, so the contextual uses and deployments of the balance of power need not be investigated through the analytical tool of balance of power *theory*. There are, in fact, no logical connexions between the two categories. One can investigate how the balance of power became a socially powerful concept – but by conflating analytical and practical categories, one reifies and reproduces a political concept within academia. In a way, theoretical analysis inadvertently becomes part of practical politics. And this is precisely the tension that IR theory has had to grapple with.[26]

To my knowledge, no publication in IR on the balance of power has systematically separated the concept as theory from the concept in practical use as basis for analysis. Consequently, there has been no systematic analysis of how, why, and with what effects the balance of power and associated concepts have been used in practice across different contexts. Knowing this will mean knowing the history of a key concept of the IR discipline, and how that concept became central. The discipline needs to investigate the histories of its dominant concepts. This lack of attention is significant, because knowing the practical history of the balance of power means knowing how to use the concept in correct ways. Secondly, not knowing this would incur costs: it would mean not knowing

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[24] Brubaker and Cooper, 'Beyond "identity"', p. 4.
[25] *Ibid*.
[26] Guzzini, Stefano. 2004. 'The Enduring Dilemmas of Realism in International Relations', *European Journal of International Relations* 10(4): 533–568.

the central importance of the balance of power as something that has concretely affected and constituted international politics and foreign policies across time. I find that it is indeed a crucial concept – but in other ways than normally imagined. Isolating the concept as analytical tool overlooks important phenomena in world politics. Only half of the concept's potential is currently being realised, so to speak, and with the danger of realising it in inconsistent and wrong ways. Also, there is value in decoupling the study of the balance of power from IR theories, realism in particular. The balance of power merits attention as an object of analysis in its own right.[27]

What I will (and will not) do

I will not use academic theories of the balance of power to detail and explain its workings. What I want to understand is the historically varying status of the 'balance of power' and associated concepts. Instead of relying on the balance of power as an analytical tool in searching for explanations and understanding of present and historical phenomena in international politics, I want to let the participants in balance-of-power politics specify what it means and consists of. I treat the balance of power as a concept: a resource that historical actors can seize on and use to make sense of relevant occurrences and events in their historical context.[28] This is not a focus on 'ideas'; neither do I consider the balance-of-power concept as existing 'out there' in the world. Given my assumptions in this study, the balance of power as a concept cannot be studied apart from its use in concrete controversies and debates, where it has been linked to *other concerns*, and has influenced the differentiation of polities and their relations to a perceived system.

The balance of power is not explicitly mentioned by Thucydides or Machiavelli, although their writings are seen to represent the balance of power *idea*, as David Hume argued.[29] As I will show below, during the mid-1700s, the concept came under attack. In 1742, one rescue mission was undertaken by Hume, who sought to establish firmly that the balance of power had been a commonsensical idea, reconstructing a historical tradition from the

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[27] Nexon, Dan. 2009. 'The Balance of Power in the Balance', *World Politics* 61(2):330–359, p. 332.

[28] Jackson, Patrick Thaddeus. 2006. 'The Present as History', pp. 490–500 in Robert E. Goodin and Charles Tilly (eds) *The Oxford Handbook on Contextual Political Analysis.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 497.

[29] Hume, David. 1987[1742]. 'Of the Balance of Power', pp. 332–341 in David Hume, *Essays Moral Political and Literary*. Indianapolis: Liberty Fund.

ancient Greeks and up until his own time. Even if not expressed, the principle, he held, 'is founded so much on common sense and obvious reasoning, that it is impossible it could altogether have escaped antiquity';[30] it had 'naturally discovered itself in foreign politics'.[31] Being the first to draw the line so far back in time, he constructed an age-old tradition of the balance of power against those seeking to question its very existence. And indeed, the balance of power had been occasionally mentioned throughout the 15th, 16th, and 17th centuries as a metaphor to describe a political situation. For instance, Machiavelli's friend Francesco Guicciardini, in his *Storia d'Italia*, describes Italy as being in a 'state of balance' between the different city states. The English translation of this work from 1579 was dedicated to Elizabeth I, styled as the holder of the balance of power amongst Christian monarchs.[32] Richard Little has established exactly this – how the balance of power has been invoked as metaphor and myth ever since Guicciardini.[33] However, despite brilliant analyses of modern IR scholars, Little's book is not really an historical investigation of how this 'metaphor' has been used across time: what he does is to sensibly categorise it as having had both 'adversarial' and 'associational' aspects.

I will not search for the 'origin' of the balance of power, in the sense of when it was first mentioned, or the like. Neither is it my goal to investigate how the balance developed teleologically until today – as Michael Sheehan could be taken to imply when he writes that the balance in Renaissance Italy was not 'a fully developed form', and that 'important elements of the theory were missing', and had to 'await the evolution of the interstate system'.[34] Instead of starting with Renaissance Italy, I begin in the mid-17th century. That is because I am investigating the balance of power as a *concept*. Unlike Little, I do not take up the instances when the balance of power has been mentioned as a metaphor, as a description by analogy. Rather, by treating it as a concept, I start the investigation when, as I show, the balance of power became so public that it could be use in political debates, contentions, and controversies, as a rhetorical 'weapon', linked to other concerns. This requires something more than status as merely an infrequently invoked descriptive metaphor, similar to 'soft power' or 'broken heart'. It requires a certain stability, which came about at a particular moment in time, in this case linked to

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[30] *Ibid.*, p. 337.
[31] *Ibid.*, p. 334.
[32] Sheehan, *The Balance of Power*, p. 35.
[33] Little, *The Balance of Power*.
[34] Sheehan, *The Balance of Power*, p. 32.

domestic republican arguments. In Chapter 2, I analyse exactly how this stability came about – when the balance of power emerged *as a concept*.

My focus is therefore on how relations are made in practice; on shifting social processes and constellations, and how this in turn produces boundaries and concepts. Taking for granted that there is a dichotomy between IR theories and other forms of social analysis is therefore not a good starting point. As mentioned, I make few assumptions about what the international is, or what international politics is. I begin the empirical investigation with a few assumptions, to see where they can take me and with what results.

What I mean by treating the balance of power as a concept is further detailed in Chapter 1. For now, let me simply point out that the temporal limitations of this study are due to this analytical choice – to investigate the balance of power as a relative stable, publically available rhetorical resource to be used in both constructing and unravelling arguments and positions, and with tangible effects.

Since I will not study the balance-of-power concept apart from its use, and since its use implies processes of linking the concept to other concerns, a genealogy of the balance of power will also by implication be a practical history of the international system. What I have seen emerge is also a history of how historical actors have linked the concept to other concerns, conceived of their polity or state, others' polities, and how they stand in relation to each other and to the international 'system', whose definition is also part of the participant practices I investigate. Actors have held varying conceptions of what the polities were, and what the international system was. The balance-of-power concept provided the link between the two in varying ways across time and space – the balance of power could 'fill in the gaps', so to speak, between polities and the international system. It has been the central concept for arguing about system and stability – but has also, through its deployment, concretely affected that system. Arguing about stability may lead to instability, and vice versa.

How I will do it

This way of treating the balance of power has consequences for how I have conducted my investigation and research. To substantiate the above claims, the following are what I have been looking for, and the data I have used in the search:

Looking for controversies

I have looked for *controversies* involving the balance-of-power concept. My methodical tool is to search for and examine episodes of controversy and conflict where the balance of power concept has been centrally involved. The advantage of this is that these controversies involve disagreements over the reality, properties, meanings, and implications of the concept of the balance of power, 'whose existence and value are *subsequently* taken to be unproblematic or settled'.[35] Furthermore, in such controversies, historical actors have attempted 'to deconstruct the taken-for-granted quality of their antagonists' preferred beliefs and practices',[36] precisely by drawing attention to their conventional status and, for instance, challenging either the artificiality of assumptions or the inexactness of their implications. Studying concepts in controversies is like studying a ship in a bottle. After the complicated process of inserting the parts, cutting the strings, applying the glue and letting it dry, the result seems almost magical. How the little vessel came to be made is difficult to fathom. The advantage, then, of looking at controversies is that these are unstable situations, allowing us to 'catch a glimpse of the glue being inserted and the strings being pulled'.[37]

The point is not to determine who was *right* in these disputes. At times, some version of the argument that historical actors were 'misunderstanding' the real meaning of the balance of power appears. Michael Sheehan, for example, revisits British debates over whether or not to go to war between 1733 and 1756, but with the aim of establishing whether these wars were really 'balancing wars' or not.[38] His emphasis is on British

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[35] Shapin and Schaffer, *Leviathan*, p. 7, emphasis added.
[36] *Ibid.*
[37] Potter, Jonathan. 1996. *Representing Reality: Discourse, Rhetoric and Social Construction.* London: Sage, p. 26.
[38] Sheehan, Michael. 1996. 'Balance of Power Intervention: Britain's Decisions For or Against War, 1733–56', *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 7(2): 271–289.

motivations, and 'only the War of the Austrian Succession can be readily identified as a war in defence of the Balance of Power'.[39] Furthermore, the uses of the concept are still compared with an analytically fashioned Balance of Power.[40] The focus is on the balance of power as a potential explanation for war, and for Britain as objective 'balancer'. What is not relevant to Sheehan's account is the historical actors' own understanding of their situation, and the reasons and effects of this 'exaggerated' use of balancing rhetoric or self-conception as balancer. In the end, the goal is to prove or disprove the theory of the balance of power, in this instance whether Britain was 'right' or not in invoking the balance. I am not evaluating the correctness of the concept: the category of 'misunderstanding' has no place in this project.[41] A controversy is rather a window of opportunity for seeing how the balance of power has been used in practical argumentation, and with what effects.

As I take my starting point in relations rather than ready-made analytical entities, controversies are seen not as clashes between established groups, but as dialogical and productive processes of forming positions on issues, with consequences and effects. Now that I have gone through centuries of source material, some episodes stand out in the above sense, thus being an analytical limitation.

However, this is not a history project. What I am doing is firmly rooted in International Relations as a social science; and, in terms of ontology, theory, methodology, methods, or data collection, this statement is not altered by the fact that my empirical material is mainly taken from 'the past'. However, this does affect the availability of data – which is a purely practical issue, no different from any other problem of access.

As explained in Chapter 1, a genealogy is an exemplary and episodic history, not a covering history of the linear evolution of the concept. My limitations are therefore not so much temporal as substantial: balance-of-power rhetoric at elite levels has not been so frequent that reading to empirical exhaustion is impossible.

Still, this requires a great deal in terms of narrowing down the range of data, the sites of debate, and actors. Some data and sources are more important than others – but how to decide?

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[39] *Ibid.*, p. 287
[40] *Ibid.*, p. 288.
[41] Shapin and Schaffer, *Leviathan*, p. 12.

Coming to grips with England

First, I do not use countries as 'cases'. Country-units are less relevant than the relational/social processes associated with the concept of the balance of power – and these are transnational, even if they emerge from a country or a domestic setting.

Even if the focus in many of the chapters is tilted towards England and Britain, Britain is not a 'case study', but a focal point for studying the emergence of and debates concerning the balance of power. This is, as I will show empirically, because the English debates prove to have contributed to making the balance of power a concept in important ways. England thereby came to be seen as crucial to the balance of power in Europe by historical actors themselves. During at least the 17th and 18th centuries, for most other countries, invoking the balance of power was a reaction, whereas in England it was seen as the continuation of a longstanding tradition.[42] From the late 1600s, England considered itself, and was also appealed to by other nations, as the 'holder of the balance of Europe'. Britain could argue from an almost institutionalised position as the 'balancer', for instance using this position to discredit the Austrians during the Utrecht negotiations in 1712, as shown in Chapter 3.

Furthermore, and pertaining to the genealogical precepts of this project, England is a case often raised in the historical and analytical literature on balance-of-power theory. For that reason alone, it makes sense to examine it from a different methodological perspective.

That I focus on English texts is also the result of a more practical limitation: my own language abilities. I have consulted German and French sources where relevant, also secondary sources, but closer readings of a broader selection of primary documents in these languages would have been too time-consuming, given that I cannot read them with the same ease as I do English sources. That being said, the above-mentioned analytical arguments for focusing on English sources would *in any case* override this practical concern.

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[42] See Holbraad, Carsten. 1970. *The Concert of Europe: A Study of German and British International Theory*. London: Longman, p. 136.

A note on eurocentrism

The balance of power as a concept emerged in Europe, and served to define what Europe was and what its interest was. In this sense, the concept is, empirically speaking, euro-centric. Most historical actors saw events occurring outside of Europe as a mere sideshow for the really important thing: the balance of power in Europe.[43] It is difficult to find central controversies involving the balance of power regarding overseas possessions or colonialism.

That as such is not a problem. What may be problematic is how the concept has become an unreflective expression of the nature of international politics writ large. The problem here would be that it did not *remain* euro-centric in the transition from political practice to academic analysis: empirically speaking, it was applied exclusively to Europe, and at times explicitly to rule out other parts of the world as being Oriental Despotisms, uncivilized, and unable to practice the balance of power, lacking reason or modern state capabilities.

Important work remains to be done on how subaltern actors in 'peripheries', including the early USA, have considered and argued about the structures of international politics. However, that is not my job here, as I focus on the actual deployment of the concept, which took place almost exclusively amongst European political and diplomatic elites.

What I look at

It is within these elites that I have identified the major controversies involving the balance of power as a concept. Since controversies, debates and contentions are important in this study, and the elite-level is the most prevalent site for debates on the balance, I examined parliamentary records of debates, speeches, and statements, combined with debates in the broader 'public sphere' as expressed in pamphlets, political literature, and opinion writing, to show the room and limits for rhetorical manoeuvre. Parliamentary debates are particularly well-suited, as they include lengthy statements, are public, and are publically

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[43] Simms, Brendan. 2007. *Three Victories and a Defeat*. London: Penguin.

contested.[44] Further, in controversies, as in argumentation in general, giving reasons is essential. Diplomats are 'trained to find reasons',[45] making it particularly instructive to study them and how they make use of the available rhetorical repertoire. I have used (mainly British) parliamentary archives, pamphlets and other published primary sources, as well as secondary accounts.

I give no automatic priority to primary sources, but they are important, given my purpose. Primary sources have been crucial for identifying concrete controversies, debates, and processes of linking that have actually taken place. They have also been useful for challenging or corroborating more analytical, broad claims in the secondary sources, which I use mainly to establish the broader historical picture and context.

It has been important to keep spaces open. For example, as the empirical investigation proceeded, I found it necessary to include the analysis and rhetoric of what came to be self-identified academic communities at an earlier point than I had expected, in the 18th century (see Chapter 4).

… and how I look at it

The context *within* a text also matters. Most of the time, there is something routine about mentions of the balance: the term is included without much elaboration. I have discarded hundreds of documents that mention the balance, but that provide little empirical leverage for making my points. That is in itself a finding – the routine aspects of the balance of power. But also, even if mentioned only once in a text, it might be mentioned in the preamble. And looking at other texts, I might find that it is repeatedly used in preambles. That says something about its status. Also, the term might be invoked at a particularly tense moment in a parliamentary debate, and/or totally change the debate by being introduced. Or it may be used ritually in a variety of other ways, thus making a change in such ritual use all the more evident. These things – uses in a context – make a difference, as I will show.

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[44] See Hansen, Lene. 2006. *Security as Practice*. London: Routledge, p. 82 *et passim.*
[45] Kiernan, Victor G. 1970. 'Diplomats in Exile', pp. 301–321 in Matthew Smith Anderson and Ragnhild Hatton (eds), *Studies in Diplomatic History*. Hamden, CT: Archon Books, p. 306.

Consequently, other tools than the mere enumeration and quantifying of the appearance of the string of words that is 'the balance of power' must be used. Some kinds of data are for me more important than others, but more important does not mean more frequent. The quantity or frequency of the mentions of the balance of power is not the point.

The genealogy of the concept thus includes both long-term developments, and specific moments. As opposed to viewing the concept as somehow 'timeless' and unchanging, I organise the story of this around four inflection points in the trajectory of the concept, and one broader episteme shift.

Structure and contents: Two epistemes, four inflection points

I have looked for controversies, and have identified four *inflection points* in the uses of the concept, which for me are what connects balance-of-power rhetoric to concrete effects. Inflection points are rhetorically indeterminate situations, so I include these inflection points not in order to determine a match between perceptions and reality, but to detail a practical situation where one or more communities act to resolve a problem (see Chapter 1).

What actors say and do is not about one-off choice situations, but about investigating the historical processes that have affected social configurations. The social, cultural, and historical context is a 'structural' constrain, because what counts are the relations and *actual interactions* between actors and positions, and not inherent dispositions of actors and positions. This goes beyond an argument ranking preferences, or based on individual interests.

For me, an inflection point is therefore not a 'choice situation', but something that occurs when concepts suddenly expand or restrict the space for action. Inflection points are therefore important in causally *explaining* action.[46] Treating the balance of power as a concept allows me to identify such inflection points *empirically*, not only in logical or abstract space, and thereby to move away from stable ideas, mental properties and the

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[46] Jordheim, Helge. 2012. 'Staten, genealogien og historien. Quentin Skinner i samtale med Helge Jordheim'. *Nytt norsk tidsskrift* 29(1): 59–66, p. 61.

philosophical, into the concretely political and rhetorical.[47] Inflection points redirect a process, and are rhetorical and narrative because an inflection point, or a turning point, cannot exist without also establishing a new direction or new place to turn to – 'not all sudden changes are turning points, but only those which are succeeded by a period evincing a new regime'.[48] The historical events 'themselves', and when they happened, are less important than their potentially becoming inflection points in the history of the balance of power as a concept, marking shifts from one condition of possibility to another.

To identify the four inflection points in the historical trajectory of the balance-of-power concept, I have looked for *controversies* where the balance of power has been invoked – and they seem to appear in the wake of wars and calamity. Concepts, as part of an available rhetorical repertoire, are crucial meaning-making tools after major crises, when order needs to be restored somehow. New questions and answers are posed about international politics, international order, the nature of political units, and the political 'system'. These inflection points are therefore also part of the relational history of how differentiation between polities and the conception of an international structure come about, are made sense of, and change by means of the balance-of-power concept.

I have divided the structure of this project into four sections, each consisting of two chapters. Thus I address one inflection point in sets of two chapters. The balance of power is and has been a socially powerful rhetorical tool, and this must be explained. Therefore, the first chapters in each of the four sections – Chapters 2, 4, 6, and 8 – trace the preconditions for the deployment of the balance of power in a given historical context. I broaden the investigation to wider society by situating balance-of-power rhetoric in a social context. In these first chapters I survey what the landscape of debates looked like – these chapters map when, where, and how the concept was produced and disseminated.[49] The second chapters in each pair – Chapters 3, 5, 7, and 9 – examine how the balance-of-power concept, already part of the rhetorical repertoire, has been applied in specific

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[47] Crick, Nathan. 2014. 'Rhetoric and Events', *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 47(3):251–272, p. 265.

[48] Abbott, Andrew. 2001. *Time Matters: On Theory and Method*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p. 258.

[49] See Jackson, Patrick T. 2006. *Civilizing the Enemy: German Reconstruction and the Invention of the West*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

controversies, how it was linked or delinked to particular political concerns and policies, legitimating or delegitimising them, and the effects on subsequent developments.[50]

In addition, the project has two *parts*, I and II. This is because I also identify a broader shift between two *epistemes*, occurring from the late 18th century.

Epistemes concern knowledge – or rather, what makes possible particular configurations of knowledge. It is a more basic condition, or a limitation, for making claims that can be evaluated as true or untrue, as scientific or unscientific. It is not the condition for making true statements as such, but the condition by which one can have a discussion about whether something is true or false at all, without rejecting it out of hand. Contra Michel Foucault's 'regimes of truth', I consider an episteme not as 'the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements',[51] but what allows something to be the subject of such a discussion, and such a potential distinction at all, in the first place.

This is a broad analytical category, including certain assumptions, often implicit, behind a certain configuration of knowledge in practice. Separating between two epistemes, I try to make these assumptions explicit. This concerns precisely the participants' views of what kind of polities exist, and their relations to the international structure.

I hold that the balance of power shifted, from being a republican concern with *protecting* something – the public interest – to being seen as a liberal expression of free-flowing private interests; the independence of atomistic nation-states and national positions. It was less about protecting the freedom *to* act from the dominance of a 'Universal Monarchy' (or similar), and more about freedom *from* interference and interventions. This corresponds to the emerging distinction between abstraction and reality that centrally affected how the balance of power could be criticised, and then how it developed in Prussia, later Germany (see Chapter 8).

Table 1 shows the change in episteme, from Part I to Part II, to be demonstrated in the ensuing chapters:

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[50] *Ibid.*, p. 28.

[51] Foucault, Michel. 1984. 'Truth and Power', pp. 51–75 in Paul Rabinow (ed) *The Foucault Reader*. New York: Pantheon, pp. 72–73.

Time	Style of argumentation	Interest	Abstract-theoretical knowledge	Practical-applied knowledge
18th century	Republican	Public (common good)	European order and commonwealth; opposition to Universal Monarchy, dominance, and arbitrary rule.	
19th century	Liberal	Private (freedom and passions)	Autonomy, independence, anti-intervention	Statistics, measuring dispositions, capacity, influence, trajectories

Table 1: The episteme shift

This highly stylized and ideal-typical table shows the shifts in episteme as context for balance of power rhetoric. It is episteme, so, empirically speaking, it is the domain of knowledge that most concerns me, and the arrows show the temporal development.[52] The public interest of Europe is something different from national capabilities, and national positions, which, in turn, are different from the criticisms of the Congress of Vienna (Chapters 6, 7) which emphasised the independence of states. However, this liberal focus on state independence and anti-intervention, by unintended effects, affected the German view of making the *state* the first principle of international politics.

Chapter overview

In Chapter 1, I argue that applying a different methodological perspective and conceptualising what we study in new ways can offer a new empirical perspective on the

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[52] Inspired by a figure in Guzzini, Stefano. 2013. *Power, Realism and Constructivism.* London: Routledge, p.10, there used for a different purpose.

much-written-about concept of the balance of power. One immediate concern in drawing attention to methodological issues in the first chapter is to justify the research questions and topic in light of existing research and approaches. That is, I dwell on general issues of methodology at the outset also because this project differs considerably from conventional takes on the balance of power on precisely this point: methodology. I then explain my central assumptions concerning genealogy and concepts, and how they differ from competing accounts.

The main inflection point in the *first section* is how the very *deployment of* the balance of power *concept* was the fundamental element for the construction of an order, leading to the view that there existed a European *system* in which every and any polity might have to be constrained to avoid hegemonic dominance and arbitrary rule – or 'Universal Monarchy'.

The first chapter in the section, *Chapter 2,* addresses the emergence of the balance of power *as a concept* from about the 1660s. This does not mean that the term 'balance of power' did not figure before then, but this was the period in which it became public and commonplace, and started influencing and being used as a 'weapon' in policy debates. The balance of power was not a stock-in trade 'realist' concept from the beginning: it was heavily influenced by classical *republicanism*, focusing on virtue, mixed constitutions, checks and balances in a domestic setting. The concept emerged through links made between resistance to Universal Monarchy, the concept of interest, and the protection of the public, or the commonwealth, as opposed to the private. From the 1670s, the balance of power emerged as a way to counter France in particular, seen to be threatening Europe with establishing a Universal Monarchy. However, once the balance of power had become firmly established after the Glorious Revolution of 1688, it appears that the concept was not so much needed as a justification for English foreign policy: it was now used more for *domestic* legitimation purposes and in internal party struggles, precisely because it had become so commonplace. This had important effects at the Peace of Utrecht in 1713, where domestic developments in England would affect the deployment of the concept, and European politics as a whole.

In *Chapter 3,* I focus on the controversies and debates surrounding the case of the Treaties of Utrecht of 1713. The uses of the balance-of-power concept led to a revised view of the international system. The focus was less on the single threat of France,

because *any* state might be seen as a potential threat. The public interest of Europe was what had to be protected – and the balance of power was an expression of this, rather than of dynastic politics. This was connected with domestic developments in Britain. I show concretely these domestic, republican influences from Britain, how they conditioned the deployment of the balance of power, and the conception of how and what kinds of polities existed in the system.

In the Utrecht negotiations themselves, the once-pivotal Austria was relegated to the sidelines. Austria, while at least tacitly accepting the *principle* of the balance of power, sought to question its *implications*, by linking the concept to inherent rights of succession and the integral stability of coalitions – but failed. Austria's range of policy options at Utrecht was narrowed because of its previous investment in the balance-of-power concept. With a shift in Britain, Austria found itself stuck in a now outdated conception of the balance of power. Due to contingent developments in British politics, the concept and the implications connected to it had been reassembled, and that prevented Austria from using the balance in ways consistent with earlier registries. The Austrians were left rhetorically exposed.

The inflection point in *Section 2* is an all-out attack on the very concept of the balance of power itself – not only on its implications, as had been debated at Utrecht.

This section begins with *Chapter 4*, empirically charting the emergence of what was to become the crucially important distinction between reality and abstractions, between practical and 'useless' knowledge. In the mid-18th century, a distinction between abstract and practical knowledge became salient in political argumentation. Importantly, however, such a position on knowledge could not be used against the balance of power until that concept had become connected to international law, where such discussions about the abstract versus the practical were already ongoing. This happened at the British University of Göttingen in Hanover. That distinction *itself* became a new resource to be exploited in political arguments and legitimating tactics. The possible epistemic backing for central political claims changed, and that affected the balance of power as well.

The charge was levelled against the balance that it was a 'chimera' – a vague theoretical invention of jurists and theorists; further, that it was not concerned with practical realities and was therefore not properly scientific, but political and moral. The Göttingen scholar

Johan Heinrich Gottlob von Justi turned the concept of 'interest' *against* the balance-of-power concept, by advocating for self-interests and passions as the true basis of international politics, rather than any European 'public interest' embedded in the balance.

The domestic aspects of polities became important as the expression of the real nature of the international, rather than the 'abstract' public interest or Commonwealth of Europe. This is an important inflection point in the trajectory from an English republican tradition to a Prussian and German conception of the balance of power, eventually, much later, to have influence on the formation of IR theory in the USA. This also marks the beginning of the episteme shift, from a republican protection of the European public interest, to the steady atomisation and individuation of states and polities.

In *Chapter 5,* this distinction unfolds in practice in the British debates concerning the Russian occupation of the Ottoman-held coastal town Ochakov (Özi in Turkish), on the northern coast of the Black Sea. This central distinction between abstraction and practice allowed for attacks on the balance of power in concrete policy debates. Precisely these rhetorical resources were deployed in the Ochakov controversy in 1791–92. I show how a group of British politicians were attacking the balance of power by distinguishing between abstraction and practice, while others countered such attacks with arguments from tradition. British Prime Minister Pitt was attacked and suffered his first foreign policy defeat when his use of the balance of power was denounced as an abstraction, and his opponents shifted to liberal arguments concerning the independence and individuality of states. This heralded a new problem in the international: that of interventions. This was also a central preoccupation of Edmund Burke who, inspired by the Ochakov debate, would define central parameters for the debates in the early 19th century – which is the topic of the next section.

The *third section* is the first section in *Part II.* The Göttingen University attack on the balance inadvertently led to a more liberal focus on individual states and their interaction. Here we see the change in episteme that defines *Part II*: this is not only a new inflection point, but illustrates the shift of an entire episteme. The balance of power was now less about the protection of the republican public interests against structures of dominance like Universal Monarchy, and more about the independence of relatively isolated states and a liberal focus on freedom from interference. From protecting something, the balance was

increasingly seen to be about calculating the capabilities of atomistic nation-states, and predicting trajectories.

In the general *Chapter 6,* I argue that the Congress of Vienna is significant in the genealogy of the balance of power. However, it is not important because the balance-of-power concept was frequently used. Rather, the 1814–1815 Congress of Vienna was important for the balance of power not so much because of what happened in the negotiations or at the Congress itself, but in what was going on 'around' it: shifting, contextual rhetorical coordinates that would impact the balance-of-power concept on its 'return' when the Congress broke down. Contrary to common assumptions, the balance of power was *not* in fact used during the Congress of Vienna: a different concept, 'equilibrium', appeared on the scene. This is not a trivial semantic point, as too often assumed in the literature on the balance of power. The public interest of Europe was now seen as being the *equilibrium of Europe*, to be managed by an exclusive group of 'great powers'. The problem was now not whether powers deemed too strong should be allowed to exist, as had been the case, but whether powers deemed to be *too weak* should. In an important reversal, the main problem was not the opposition to Universal Monarchy, but how to get rid of the small states now seen as useless, destabilising and lacking proper internal governance.

In an equilibrium there was no place for a 'balancer', which had been the traditional role of Britain. So, in a turn from the previous century, British politicians brought the classical concept of the balance of power back and used it to *oppose* the European Congress 'equilibrium', and to defend national independence and the small states in the system. The inflection point here is therefore how the balance of power came to be associated with the independence of states, increasingly moving away from 'protecting the public interest', as that was now associated with the hierarchical Congress equilibrium which ignored the independence of states. The balance of power was now less about protecting something like the public interest, and more about dampening the disruptive dynamics between nations in the European body. Balance-of-power arguments now worked when they could mediate between conflicting national passions and national positions. Thus, the balance of power no longer expressed a common European interest: it participated in its demise**.**

In the second chapter in this section, *Chapter 7*, I show concretely how the balance of power was used to *oppose* the Congress system by emphasising the independence of states, and against interventions. Debates concerned the incorporation and erasure of the small state of Genoa in 1815, and the controversies in the 1822 Congress of Verona, when the Congress of Europe faltered. I explore what happened when the balance of power was 'brought back', but now in a very different way: not to defend the public interest, but to protect individual state independence and a multiplicity of states. Actors picked up the classical concept of the balance of power to argue against interventions conducted in the name of the Congress equilibrium. These were steps in the trajectory towards emphasising national position, which is the topic of the next, final section.

In *Section 4*, I start by looking at developments in Germany throughout the 19th century in *Chapter 8*, where the triumph of the *state* pushed the European public interest out of the way. This is the second inflection point in the 19th century, whereby the whole notion of a European public interest itself was questioned. In Prussia, Hegel used the balance of power to sharpen the contrast between the state as idea, and the practical realm of politics. The balance of power was political, as opposed to the natural idea of the state. The main development in this was how the impersonal state replaced the balance of power as a first principle of international politics. This state-centrism implies that the balance of power is not a first principle of international politics, but rather a management principle in the context of the progressive self-awareness of nation-states. The state as a first principle led to a focus on national positions in balance-of-power rhetoric rather than on protecting the public interest. The nation-state came before the balance of power, as a natural unit that could be known both on a transcendental and on a practical level, particularly through the use of statistics. Balance-of-power rhetoric shifted, from emphasising the protection of the 'public interest' of Europe, to emphasising national positions and national interests in power-political competition. The balance of power was no longer about a European public interest: it now concerned a multitude of independent, atomistic nation-states competing, as in a market, in power-political struggles.

In *Chapter 9,* I first show how international lawyers rejected the balance-of-power concept as being too close to engaged politics. For liberal lawyers, what was to be fought was no longer any Universal Monarchy, but *international anarchy*. In this sense, it is what one is arguing *against* that turns and changes. However, international anarchy was

in turn appropriated by scholars focusing on the state, as an analytical description of the condition and system in which nation-states found themselves. Political science took up the concept of the balance of power, and embraced it as an expression of political practice.

Making the state the *a priori,* and rejecting the public interest of Europe, were elements in the Prussian and German views of the balance of power. These had a central influence on the gradual establishment of the academic discipline of IR, particularly the development of a theory of international politics in the 1950s and 60s.

What I show throughout these chapters is how formerly separate elements of political practice have come together, in different ways in different times, to produce the concept of 'the balance of power'. In Chapter 9, in an interesting reversal, we see how the balance of power has been appropriated in IR to account for the practices that are grouped together to form the concept itself.[53] The emphasis on the 'public interest' of Europe, or a European international society, had disappeared.

Balance-of-power rhetoric had an important role in creating a disciplinary jurisdiction for IR. Indeed, the balance of power made IR possible in the first place. The concept changed hands, in a manner of speaking: whereas politicians might refer to it occasionally, the disputes, contentions, and debates involving the balance of power moved into the emergent academic field of IR, which sustained and reproduced the concept. The balance-of-power concept, imported from Germany, made the discipline of International Relations a possibility. The identification of the balance of power with practice met resistance in the USA, because 'scientific legitimacy' was needed. And so, practice became its own theory.

It is here that I close the circle. We can already see what has become the fate of IR – a confusion between practice and theory. That was also my rationale for embarking upon this research project.

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[53] Culler, Jonathan.1997. *Literary Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 5.

CHAPTER 1

Methodologies, Ontologies, and a Genealogy of the Balance of Power Concept

Criticism of Balance of Power theory often singles out the failure of theorists to predict when balances will emerge, the difficulty of measuring power and other intangible factors, and simply the lack of evidence for balancing, especially in today's world.[1] The response frequently involves attempts at broadening the concept, to include notions of 'soft balancing' and the like, so as to fit a larger or different universe of cases. This, the rebuttal goes, is a prime case of conceptual stretching.[2] Still, whatever the quandaries over concepts, definitions, and their fit to reality, the fact remains that any new empirical input or new cases of balancing will be selected on the basis of the analytical definition used. What is to count as balancing is always decided in advance, given the properties of the balance of power as defined by the scholar in question. Kaufman, Little and Wohlforth, for example, aim to 'test the logic and universality of balance-of-power theory against pre-modern evidence'.[3] Their pre-modern case studies are all interstate systems, they claim, and as such relevant for testing balance-of-power theory based on a range of theoretical propositions.[4] The justification for testing balance-of-power theory in the first place is that it is 'one of the most influential ideas in IR', that it is central to the debates of scholars as well as practitioners, its broad scope, and its foundational role in the evolution

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[1] Paul, Thazha Varkey. 2004. 'Introduction', pp. 1-25 in T.V. Paul, James J. Wirtz, and Michael Fortmann (eds.), *Balance of Power: Theory and Practice in the 21st Century*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, p. 3, 9.

[2] Sartori, Giovanni. 1970. 'Concept Misformation in Comparative Politics', *American Political Science Review* 64 (4): 1033–1053.

[3] Kaufman, Stuart J., Richard Little and William C. Wohlforth . 2007. 'Introduction: Balance and Hierarchy in International Systems', pp. 1–21 in Stuart J. Kaufman, Richard Little and William C. Wohlforth .eds. *The Balance of Power in World History*. London: Routledge, p. 4.

[4] *Ibid*, p. 18−19.

of the academic study of IR.[5] The dilemma is that Kaufman, Little and Wohlforth, as indeed many others, find that the balance of power is in fact *not* very efficient for explaining international politics.

If that is the case, we have an array of historical documentation on how balance of power has figured centrally amongst political practitioners, especially in Europe, that cannot be accounted for. We have 'left-over' historical empirics, or a 'surplus of meaning',[6] concerning the balance of power – on how people have been constantly talking of, writing on, and referring to it. What can we do with this, and how?

As explained in the introduction, my alternative is to examine precisely such rhetorical aspects of the balance of power rather than starting from a standard, analytical definition. How has this term framed situations in particular ways, legitimating certain courses of action, and with what effects? The focus shifts from academic definitions, to definitions employed by historical actors in their context. One goal, then, is simply to look at new 'things' by moving away from confirming, disconfirming or amending contemporary theories, and instead taking seriously the statements and uses of the concept amongst historical actors.

Still, introducing new things to study does not tell us much about how and why to study them. These 'new things' might easily be accommodated into existing analytical approaches, say by comparing historical statements to contemporary definitions. Alternatively, other kinds of historical data on the balance can be seen to 'speak for themselves'. In Chapter 9, for example, I examine how Morgenthau focused on the 'practice' of diplomats as in itself being a theory of the balance of power and in international politics.

Therefore, to make the most out of this historical material on the uses of the concept, we need a different *methodological* approach. Despite the increasing variance in the substantial things to prioritise for study, different kinds of methodologies – specifying the

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[5] *Ibid*., p. 13.
[6] Ricoeur, Paul. 1976. *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning*. Fort Worth, TX: TCU Press.

purposes and goals of research – have not been much discussed in IR in general and in the literature on the Balance of Power in particular. And this, I will argue, is one reason why there have been so few real challenges to the dominant ways of studying the balance of power.

Applying a different methodological perspective and conceptualising what we study in new ways can explain new things about international politics and provide new empirical facts and perspectives on the much-discussed concept of the balance of power. Another, immediate concern in drawing attention to issues of methodology in this first chapter is therefore to justify the research questions and topic in light of existing research and approaches. How does my approach differ from how others have treated the balance of power? The reason for spending some time on general issues of methodology at the outset is also that this project will differ considerably from conventional takes on the balance of power on precisely this account: on methodology. I wish to make my presuppositions clear (particularly since some of my objects of study are indeed the presuppositions of *others*) to enable readers to judge the project on its own merits and to avoid misunderstandings.

To keep a steady methodological hand on the tiller, it is important to negotiate the differences between a community of researchers and their procedures, on the one hand, and any (historical) community as an object of research on the other. The methodological question to be asked is *how* to make such a separation in practice, given one's particular outlook on the world (one's 'postulates'). If this is not clear, one might find oneself jumping freely and unreflectively between analytical categories and categories of practical and historical use, all within the same research project.

This first part on methodology has another function, because these methodological musing are not only of a meta-methodological relevance – they also address the production of limits of academic communities. This is also relevant for my concrete, empirical investigation, particularly from Chapter 4 on, as I identify a shift in episteme. It concerns different standards for evaluating knowledge claims, which are of crucial importance for this project, but which have also been crucial for the historical actors I investigate. That is, this section on methodologies, and the interaction of different communities, is also important empirically for this project, and not only as abstract

methodological and theoretical problems. In short, different *communities* have different communal ways to go about solving practical problems.

After this methodological prelude, I go on to flesh out my assumptions as concerns genealogy, concepts, and how to study them.

You, me, and science

What separates an academic community from other communities? Is it some kind of privileged access to the world that is not granted others? No, surely the scholar's or scientist's way of making sense of the world cannot be so radically different from that of other people. The separation rather concerns the practices of a scientific community: to count as competent and professional scholars, we must be orderly and systematic in what we do, in specific ways, acknowledged by our peers,[7] based on a scholarly 'vocation',[8] 'carried on for the sake of advancing the system of knowings and knowns'.[9] We always stand within a community, looking out. And when doing research, one of the communities in question is the professional, scientific one, where there are certain expectations as to consistency.

The problem is that social life in general is not particularly consistent, orderly or systematic, so the categories we as social scientists use, the delimitations we must make, and the way of going about this, are not already given.[10] They must, in some sense of the word, be *imposed*. Being immersed in the same social world as everyone else, social scientists manage to pull off such 'imposing' in a consistent way through tools such as methods and methodology.

When doing such imposing, subjective ideas and presuppositions, from within the context in which one finds oneself, play a role here, as in any other social practice. When researching a historical phenomenon, for example, 'one cannot verbalize a practice

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[7] Shotter, John. 1993. *Conversational Realities; Constructing Life through Language*. London: Sage, p. 25.
[8] Weber, Max. 2004. 'Science as a Vocation', pp. 1–31 in Max Weber, *The Vocation Lectures.* Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing.
[9] Dewey, John and Arthur F. Bentley. 1960. *Knowing and the Known*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press, p. 281.
[10] Jackson, Patrick Thaddeus. 2006. 'The Present as History', pp. 490–500 in Robert E. Goodin and Charles Tilly (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook on Contextual Political Analysis.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 495.

without offering a theory',[11] and that theory will inevitably be a view from the present. The question then becomes: when doing academic research as the particular kind of practical activity that it is, what do we do with this inherent positionality? That is a pre-eminently methodological issue.

It is also a question at the core of this project, given its focus on the local, contextualised rhetoric of those involved in historical phenomena. In discussing the character of such necessary 'imposing', therefore, it is important to focus not only on how to delimit what to study (deciding on ontological categories), but also *how* to study it (methodology). The former tells a story of the researched; the latter in addition tells the story of the researcher.

Methodology, then, also concerns how the researcher goes about interpreting and 'making meaning'. In the present project, these issues of interpretation and meaning assume extra importance since what is to be interpreted are the interpretations of others. This is a special case of a 'double hermeneutic'– interpreting an already interpreted world.[12] To rephrase my aim here, it is a clarification of how two different interpretative communities relate to each other – a given historical community under investigation on the one hand, and a contemporary community of researchers or scientists on the other. In both communities, 'traditional categories are the gospel of everyday thinking […] and of everyday practice',[13] but the categories and their purpose are not the same in each community.

Postulates

To understand what methodologies are, where they come from, and how they are selected, let me take a quick look at 'philosophical ontology', or what I will call 'postulates'.

The Stanford Encyclopedia defines ontology as 'a philosophical discipline that encompasses besides the study of what there is and the study of the general features of

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[11] Pocock, John Greville Agard. 2009. *Political Thought and History: Essays on Theory and Method.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 87.

[12] Giddens, Anthony. 1976. *New Rules of Sociological Method: A Positive Critique of Interpretative Sociologies.* London: Polity, pp. 158–159.

[13] Feyerabend, Paul. 2010[1975]. *Against Method.* London: Verso, p. 11; Marcuse, Herbert. 1977[1941]. *Reason and Revolution: Hegel and the Rise of Social Theory.* London: Routledge.

what there is also the study of what is involved in settling questions about what there is in general'.[14] Ontology can therefore mean both the study of what it is to be or exist, what existence in general would mean, how something can be said to exist, and the study of something that exists; a thing or an entity.[15] These are both taxonomic categories. To separate these two meanings of ontology, they have been called *philosophical* and *scientific ontology,* respectively.[16] Whilst the former involves basically everything and anything (what all things that exist are said to have in common), the latter is a particular focus of study: limiting a *scientific* ontology is an *a priori* or pragmatic preference for not granting existence to too many things *in theory*.[17]

For the state of the art in IR on questions of philosophy of science and methodology I may note Patrick T. Jackson's *The Conduct of Inquiry in International Relations*.[18] Linking philosophy to methodology, he argues, can foreground methodological concerns, making the discipline aware of the different methodologies existing, to be able to move on to discussing empirical problems in light of such a methodological pluralism. The basic point is that the ontological presuppositions behind methodologies are 'philosophical ontologies'. Offhand, most would probably associate ontology with scientific, not philosophical, ontology. Therefore, to clearly distinguish philosophical from scientific ontologies I will refer to philosophical ontologies as 'postulates'.[19] This seems apt, since to 'postulate' is to assume or assert something, and postulates are the elaboration of 'conditions of existence'.[20]

Data cannot speak for itself. Knowings and known are difficult to separate. Still, the researcher, like anyone else, has to start from somewhere – and that somewhere is such a postulate. Importantly, there are no particular logical or scientific reasons for selecting postulates – they are more like subjective choices, or the value commitments and

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[14] Stanford Encyclopedia. 2011. 'Logic and Ontology'. Available at: http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/logic-ontology/ [21.05.2013].

[15] Lawson, Tony. 2004. 'A Conception of Ontology', Cambridge mimeo, Cambridge Social Ontology Group (CSOG). Available at: www.csog.group.cam.ac.uk/A_Conception_of_Ontology.pdf [07.05.2013], p. 1.

[16] Patomäki, Heikki and Colin Wight. 2000. 'After Postpositivism? The Promises of Critical Realism', *International Studies Quarterly* 44 (2): 213–237, p. 215; Lawson, 'A Conception', p. 2; Jackson, Patrick Thaddeus. 2011. *The Conduct of Inquiry in International Relations*. London: Routledge.

[17] Lawson, 'A Conception', p. 8.

[18] Jackson, *Conduct*.

[19] Dewey and Bentley, *Knowing*.

[20] Lawson, 'A Conception', p. 3.

presuppositions of a researcher.[21] As P.T. Jackson also points out, such postulates can never be verified or settled, but 'depend – in the final analysis – on a measure of *faith* […] because they cannot be revolved (*sic*) empirically or rationally*'*.[22]

A postulate is all-embracing, including 'all of us' – researchers and our objects of research alike. It is the social writ large. And the standing of this postulate is contingent, subjective, and 'unscientific'. A postulate would be difficult to 'prove' empirically. Instead, postulates enable us as researchers to 'proceed to cultivate the garden of our choice'.[23]

How to justify a postulate? If my postulate is – as it in fact is – that 'language and utterances do not correspond to an externally existing referent in the world, but are performative of the world', then must not that utterance be subject to the same systematic, evaluative standards entailed by my postulate on performativity? Does the very act of writing suppose the argument's opposite?[24] The position seems to implode in a cloud of inconsistency. Could there be a consistent response if someone disagrees with my postulate?

There is no need to break philosophical eggs to make an explanatory omelette: The point is that a postulate does not involve disagreements with scientific, factual claims, but is based on something different from science – *it doesn't 'stay within the scientific family'*.[25] As Richard Creath has noted:

> the central *philosophical* issue is not over the factual claims that the speaker adopts or that most speakers adopt such conventions […] Rather, what ought to be said is: ' I *propose* that we adopt such and such convention.' This is not a factual claim, and the sort of argument that would be appropriate on behalf of such a proposal would be [a] pragmatic argument, i.e., one which tries to show that such conventions would be useful.[26]

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[21] Weber, *Science.*
[22] Jackson, *Conduct*, p. 34.
[23] Dewey and Bentley, *Knowing*, p. 60.
[24] Abbott, Andrew. 2001. *Chaos of Disciplines*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, p. 81.
[25] van Fraasen, Bas C. 2002. *The Empirical Stance*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, p. 48; Abbott, *Chaos*, p. 83.
[26] Creath, Richard.1987. 'The Initial Reception of Carnap's Doctrine of Analyticity', *Noûs* 21(4): 477–499, p. 490, first italics added.

Postulates are not scientific truth-claims about what the world is really like – they are more like a collection of views, opinions, values, stances that need not imply any kind of dogmatism. What distinguishes science, on the other hand, is what is done *once a certain viewpoint or postulate is adopted*.[27] This, again, means that scientific inquiry is defined by its communal, practical processes. Thereby the importance of introducing this abstract category of 'postulates' becomes clear, as we can conceive of *methodologies as the 'operationalisation' of postulates.*

Methodology

As seen, there is a difference between postulates, a philosophical outlook on how the world hangs together, and (scientific) ontology, which is the substantive assumptions about concrete bits and pieces of reality. And it is such postulates, and not scientific ontologies, that are connected to methodology. In producing scientific facts, methodologies are the standards of significance and the standard of 'objectivity'. What is significant can be found only 'in relevance to the end in view'[28] – and methodology is what specifies that end or the goal of research. Methodology translates general and subjective postulates about the world into scientific research procedures and goals for inquiry.

Thus, the main reason for focusing on methodology is that *all* research involves methodological assumptions, because we are all enmeshed in the same social world – social scientists included. Having a methodology is unavoidable. The real choice we face is whether to make such methodological presuppositions explicit or implicit in our research. By leaving them implicit, we may be unable to expose and deal with inconsistencies and limitations.

What is meant by 'methodology' is often unclear. It may sometimes refer to the study of the purely technical application of specific methods. However, the more normal usage, which is consistent with the above, is to speak of methodologies as the principles, practices, and goals that are followed in order to be systematic in one's research.

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[27] van Fraasen, *The Empirical Stance*, p. 48; Feyerabend, *Against Method*, p. 199.
[28] Carr, Edward Hallett. 1990[1961]. *What is History?* London: Penguin, pp. 120–121.

Methodology is a way of exposing and communicating one's choices and strategies, for 'better understanding how analyses might compete or complement each other, and for stronger theoretical accounts'.[29] This is the sense in which I will continue to speak of methodology. To clarify by comparison; methodology is not the same thing as methods, even if it is often held to be.[30] Confusing the two 'obscures an important conceptual distinction between the tools of scientific investigation (properly methods) and the principles that determine how such tools are deployed and interpreted',[31] which is *methodology*.

Also in IR, methods and methodologies are often confounded. However, when IR scholars do write about methodology proper, it has traditionally taken one of two forms. First, some discuss methodology in order to justify that the predominant practices in the discipline are basically fine and 'scientific' enough. This serves to rationalise mainstream methodological practices, effectively disconnecting methodology from different postulates, and rather moving it in the direction of a universal, scientific rationality. King, Keohane and Verba correctly point out that 'authors who understand and explicate the logic of their analyses will produce more valuable research', but this is their imperial moment: 'The appropriate methodological issues for qualitative researchers to understand are precisely the ones that all other scientific researchers need to follow', which is 'the methodology of inference'.[32] Their focus on this particular methodology, write King et al.,

> is not intended to denigrate the significance of the process by which fruitful questions are formulated. On the contrary, we agree with the interpretivists that it is crucial to understand a culture deeply before formulating hypothesis or designing systematic research projects to find an answer.[33]

The role of those methodologies derived from postulates that assert the necessity of interpretation, then, is merely to prepare the ground for the 'real' scientific effort – and that is to formulate hypothesis, eventually to be able to verify the veracity of claims,

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[29] Hansen, Lene. 2006. *Security as Practice*. London: Routledge, p. xix.
[30] Sartori, 'Concept Misformation', p. 1033.
[31] American Heritage Dictionary. 2000. 'Methodology'. Available at: www.thefreedictionary.com/methodology [21.05.2013].
[32] King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane and Sidney Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, pp. 230–232.
[33] *Ibid*., p. 37.

which 'can only be accomplished through the logic of scientific inference, which we describe'.[34] Common methodological practice in IR – resting on inferential logic, deductivist modelling, hypothesis testing, and strict cross-case comparison – is systematised and taken as the standard against which to measure alternative approaches. In such cases, a focus on methodology will not change much, but serves mainly a conservative purpose.[35]

Others may venture outside of the discipline, importing methodological and theoretical 'gurus',[36] and then insist on the new correct criteria and methodologies for the discipline. The argument would then be that methodologies based on positivist logics, such as the above, are wrong and damaging for the discipline: what we all should do, is to use Bourdieu, Foucault, or methodologist X or, alternatively, become more 'historical', more 'anthropological' etc. Unfortunately, such claims often take the form of mere assertions of what should be done, often without showing it in practice.[37] Methodological debate is reduced to the formula 'you should not be doing your job; you should be doing mine'.[38]

The problem is not the particular methodology X per se: it is rather 'the dogma that nothing (or almost nothing) else counts'.[39] Both these slants, then, reject methodological pluralism, and insist on certain methodologies as being universally applicable and desirable.[40]

But there can be no universal methodology. Different research goals or aims correspond to different methodologies. Such goals are not obvious or given, but must be selected on the basis of the researcher's postulates and values. Talking about methodology as a way of attaining objectivity is only an ideal – an ideal which may perhaps never be fulfilled.[41] The goal and purpose of a social science project, embedded in its methodology, stem from the scientist's subjective postulates on the nature of the social, distinct from the scientific process itself.

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[34] *Ibid.*, p. 37–38.
[35] Lawson, Tony. 1994. 'Why Methodology?', mimeo, Association for Heterodox Economics. Available at: www.hetecon.net/documents/Post-GraduateWorkshop/AHE-MW-2012-25.pdf [07.05.2013], p. 3.
[36] Hollis, Martin and Steve Smith. 1991. 'Beware of Gurus: Structure and Action in International Relations', *Review of International Studies* 17(4): 393–410.
[37] Lawson, 'Why Methodology?', p. 3.
[38] Pocock, John Greville Agard . 2009. *Political Thought and History. Essays on Theory and Method.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 51.
[39] Lawson, 'Why Methodology?', p. 8.
[40] *Ibid.*; Jackson, *Conduct.*
[41] Weber, *Vocation.*

Consequently, selecting which methodology to use is not a scientific activity, but is based on ones' general postulates. Discussing methodologies is not the same thing as doing science. Neither is the task of methodology to issue prescripts, rules, or standards for others to follow. It is rather about clarifying for oneself and others what the goal of research is, and on what criteria it should be judged. Methodology should be discussed not because it will decide how to do research, but because it can indicate possibilities. Neither is methodology a question of specific substantial issues – methodologies rest on postulates, and postulates cannot deliver substantive theorising about international politics. The point is to encourage explanatory efficiency. Substantial claims are rather associated with ontology.

Methodology vs. (scientific) ontology

The point of focusing on methodologies, then, is firstly to make it clear that there are no methods or specific orientations indispensable to doing research. Differently put: *an alternative methodology can make a difference*. Secondly, methodology is different from (scientific) ontologies – there is no given way to treat a catalogue of things said to exist, just as there is no given way to study a state, a society, or war.[42] Methodology and ontology are often confounded, and this is particularly pronounced when it comes to the study of knowledge.

In fact, knowledge is often not studied empirically at all. General claims and postulates about knowledge are often found at the beginning of texts, serving only as a 'confession of faith' before going on to the actual study of something else. Too often, the concern stops at the level of postulates. Historical knowledge on knowledge is lacking. If knowledge is such a fundamental thing, however, it would be reasonable to expect it to be studied empirically. Perhaps reflections on how to study knowledge may be lacking because knowledge is somehow seen to be a 'special case', not like studying any other entity or practice. This, again, results from the methodological puzzle introduced above: On the one hand, knowledge is a problem that researchers must deal with because, in our own practice, we are in the business of knowledge production. On the other, we have the logically unrelated problem of conceptualising knowledge 'out there'−the 'folk models'.

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[42] Jackson, *Conduct,* p. 205.

One is of methodology, another of knowledge as a concrete phenomenon to be studied in particular sites. In other words, there are postulates on the overall nature of knowledge and there are specific claims on (the context dependence of) knowledge itself (sociology of knowledge). The latter pertains to ontology.

For example, a familiar 'constructivist' position is that the construction of knowledge and the construction of reality are interlinked; and that it makes no sense to separate theory categorically from empirical reality, as knowledge always has a practical and conventional baseline. My wish with this project, to focus ontologically on how historical actors make sense of their own circumstances rather than on scholarly categories, might seem to resonate with this, indicating some sort of constructivist analysis. Would not this be the focus of sociologically or anthropologically inspired studies of international politics, focusing on how actors go about constructing their own worlds, and 'things' such as the 'balance of power', through their use of language? This 'instinctive' reaction would be the result of the widespread confusion between methodology and ontology. Deciding to study the accounts of participants rather than studying a scholarly fashioned entity is a matter of according priority to *what* to study, and bears no necessary relationship to the question of *how or why* to study it.

Saying that the world is socially constructed could be a postulate, without any connections whatsoever to a particular scientific ontology. In IR, however, the converse is most often the case: constructivism denotes a set of ontological entities – such as norms, values, identities – rather than a distinct approach and goal for social research. Such a scientific ontology, in turn, would tell us nothing about how to study it. A case in point is how Alexander Wendt can consistently pair a constructivist or 'idealist' ontology with a positivist methodology.[43]

What words and concepts actors use need not be connected to one particular postulate on the nature of the social world, and need not involve assumptions about social constructions at all. Sayings, doings, and uses of concepts can equally well be quantitatively plotted into diagrams, subjected to regression analyses, attributed to psychological or other structural dispositions, or form part of a rational choice

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[43] Wendt, Alexander. 1999. *Social Theory of International Politics.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Barkin, J. Samuel. 2010. *Realist Constructivism. Rethinking International Relations Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

explanation. As Abbott observes, constructionist work is often associated with 'interpretative' as opposed to 'positivist' methodologies, but 'this methodological reliance is not necessary in principle'.[44]

To put it in different terms, postulates and ontologies are not really competing. However, we cannot engage in both at the same time. This is precisely the difference between postulating a social condition *tout court,* concerning 'all of us humans' – of which methodologies are the operationalization – as against the specific, scientific ontologies we operate with when studying or analysing empirically concrete material in the world. Unnecessary conflicts arise when *philosophical* claims encounter *specific analytical claims*.[45]

This distinction is important because the problems emanating from not taking participants' accounts into consideration, as noted above, can be dealt with in numerous ways. *There is no self-evident methodology to apply to a scientific ontology of participant rhetoric.* The problem is that such an ontology is often seen as 'constructivism' by definition, without much attention to methodological choices. Focusing on the balance of power as a 'category of practice' as opposed to analytical ways of studying the balance of power is not a given: it must be connected to methodology – the goal of doing this in the first place.

How/what knowledge is possible and what the world under investigation is made of are two different questions, on two different levels. These are often conflated, particularly when studying knowledge, as it is assumed that one can be reduced to the other. Adding these levels together can serve the function of protecting against 'anything goes' attitudes. If, for example, a postulate on 'everyday knowledge' also automatically defines objects of research, there can be 'discoverable' or indisputable standards for truth claims. The proving and the proven are added together. When constructivism invokes 'common sense', or 'everyday knowledge', this is often treated as *both* a philosophical postulate *and* as the given object for research into concrete varieties in empirical phenomena. But, as seen, there is no *a priori* given way to 'operationalise' philosophical postulates.

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[44] Abbott, *Chaos*, p. 65.
[45] Culler, Jonathan.1997. *Literary Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 118.

However, if we separate clearly between these levels, the key to resolving the dilemma of a 'constructivist' postulate on knowledge and the fear that 'anything goes' is to situate it within a (scientific) community. The formal or logical rigour aspired to in methodological application is not a question of some foundational notion of a parallel rationality between scholar and object of study,[46] but – bluntly put – of *being taken seriously* within your community. We are all part of the social world, and of different practical domains, but through methodology, science is distinguished by 'the passage from conversational and other "practical" namings to namings that are likewise practical – indeed, very much more practical – *for research'*.[47]

One can be part of a rule-dependent practical activity, or one can stand outside of it, but then inevitably analysing it from *another* rule-dependent practical activity – in this case, academic research. An overall account of the nature of knowledge does therefore not imply that how participants in a social phenomenon explain and understand their activity is the same as how scientists explain and understand that same activity. The situation of scientists, or researchers, differs from the situation of the participants under investigation only because they partake in different practical domains of activity. Accordingly, 'there is no reason that we should assume symmetry between our own situation and the situation of the people we study'.[48] The difference in the concerns of participants and scientists regarding what is done and known and why it is done and known,

> renders the subject matters that are proper, necessary, in the doings and knowings of the two concerns as different as is H_2O from the water we drink and wash with […] Scientific knowing is that particular form of *practical* human activity which is concerned with the advancement of *knowing* apart from concern with *other* practical affairs.[49]

What we do with the subject matter, however, can never be seen as detached from either postulates or methodologies. Bearing this in mind makes it easier to see how the choice of focus on scholarly definitions of the balance of power versus that of the participants is really a choice of ontology, and does not entail logical connexions to methodology. I therefore argue for the efficiency of focusing on participant accounts instead of scholarly theories of the Balance of Power *in a specific way*, *given my methodology*. My

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[46] Toulmin, Stephen. 1958. *The Uses of Argument*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
[47] Dewey and Bentley, *Knowing*, p. 162, emphasis added.
[48] Jackson, *Conduct*, p. 139.
[49] Dewey and Bentley, *Knowing*, pp. 281–282.

methodology is genealogy. This is a methodological precept, because it specifies the goal of investigation, also by situating the scholar, as I will detail below.

Focusing on the rhetorical practices and conceptual uses of those we study, then, will not matter much unless it is accompanied by methodological reflection on the position of the scholar and the very aim of studying participant rhetoric and not something else.

Consider this: Even if I use exactly the same historical empirics, the same quotes and source material as authors elaborating a scholarly definition of the balance of power, my goal in using these quotes is different. I have a different methodology, a different aim: I am looking for the historical constitution of the balance of power in arguments, and the effects of using the balance-of-power concept in a given historical situation. I am not summoning these actors as historical witnesses to the correctness of my own analytical view of what the balance of power really is.

The above has been abstract, and may seem overly detached. However, in addition to being a methodological point framing this project, it is also an assumption relevant to the empirical material: the distinctions between such communities emerge at certain points in time, and my argument below is that how knowledge claims and theories are assessed and used within different communities makes a difference regarding the balance of power: a central development was the increasing distinction between abstractions and reality or political practice – a distinction which was itself *used* to make political points, eventually impacting the constitution of the IR discipline. In other words, the above concerns not only me and us, but has also been a consequential division in historical practice – be it scientific communities, or communities who otherwise operate with different standards of validity.

My assumptions and methodology

This project is an empirically, not conceptually, driven analysis. The subject is the balance of power, and my data are published utterances. Therefore, at one level, this project is a *documentation* of balance-of-power rhetoric across time and space. It

documents how political elites have used the concept of balance of power. This is necessary work and is of value for the discipline of IR since it fills a gap in scholarship.

However, it is also a profoundly theoretical analysis. As made clear above, it is not enough to say that I will examine 'participant rhetoric' or the balance of power 'in practice', because it is not self-evident what that might entail, or what the purpose of this might be. The goal of this project is not to reconstruct a theory of the balance of power based on historical empirical evidence of use. My goal is to write a *genealogy* of the balance of power as a *concept*.

A genealogy aims to show historical trajectories whereby elements that in their immediate context would seem unrelated, at later points accidently come together to shift conditions of possibility and eventually produce our present condition. A genealogy therefore most often deals with large historical shifts, often spanning hundreds of years. However, I also want to paint a more fine-grained picture of how the balance of power has been deployed in concrete policy debates and controversies, being contingently linked to *other* concerns, and thereby produced *effects*. Therefore, I specify the genealogy by also employing a specific form of conceptual analysis, whereby concepts cannot be studied apart from their *use*. By doing this, I also achieve a contrast to how conceptual analysis is normally conducted in the discipline as a way to sharpen tools for investigation.

Traditionally, a conceptual history often concerns the personal and historical circumstances of given authors.[50] This, however, plays down the possible future roles that a text or utterance may play – the concern is with the time and place in which the text or utterance was produced, and is only incidentally relevant to later developments.[51] What I do is to combine and use a particular form of conceptual analysis for the purposes of a genealogical analysis.

To combine historical analyses of concepts with a genealogy, I emphasise how a genealogy negotiates between the agency of the present-day scholar and the historical actors. Such a genealogical analysis is therefore also a *methodological* precept, where the present is an inevitable analytical standpoint. Writing a genealogy is doubly

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[50] See Skinner, Quentin. 2002. *Visions of Politics*. *Vol 1*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 97–99.

[51] Culler, *Literary Theory*, p. 66.

hermeneutical, because it includes both the agency of the present-day interpreter (myself), and the interpretations of historical actors.

Such a change in theoretical and methodological focus *enables me* to investigate the contingent linking of the balance of power to other concerns. The key mechanisms in explaining change over time are the concrete processes of linking the balance-of-power concept to *other concerns,* producing historical breaks or inflection points. That means I can make use of historical material that *is not usually considered relevant* for the balance of power. In so doing, I also historically and empirically amend common balance-of-power arguments and examples in IR.

The almost self-evident status of the balance of power as an analytical and experience-distant concept in IR means that, throughout the project, I face a fight on three fronts:

- On an ontological level, against the notion that the balance of power is somehow objectively existing 'out there' in the real world. My assertion is however that the balance of power is relationally constituted in historical practice.
- On the empirical level, against alternative timings, datings, and concrete historical accounts of the balance of power.
- As regards causality and effects, against those who hold that the balance of power is epiphenomenal − an 'idea' that serves to legitimise the interests and policies that the actors would have followed in any case. My claim is rather that the concept of the balance of power has discursive and constitutive effects on policy in the first place.

These points recur throughout the chapters. To be able to make them convincingly, I will present the assumptions which have affected how I identify and use data and sources as presented in the introduction.

What is it about my assumptions that make this a different kind of study of the balance of power?

In Chapter 7 of this project, a centrally placed actor, British Prime Minister Canning, will ask: 'is the balance of power a fixed and unalterable standard? Or is it not a standard perpetually varying, as civilization advances, and as new nations spring up, and take their

place among established political communities?' He declares that 'to look to the policy of Europe, in the times of William and Anne, for the purpose of regulating the balance of power in Europe at the present day, is to disregard the progress of events, and to confuse dates and facts which throw a reciprocal light upon each other'.[52] In Chapter 9, we will see how British Foreign Minister Austen Chamberlain argued that practising politicians like himself 'decide the practical questions of daily life by instinct rather than by any careful process of reasoning, by rule of thumb rather than by systematic logic'.[53]

Unlike some present-day analysts who use history as their justification, centrally placed historical actors themselves, in the midst of political turbulence, did not consider the balance of power as a 'timeless principle', and did not have a coherent theory about what it was.

So what is the balance of power? Just as there is no reason to believe that today's scholars have captured the essence of the balance of power, neither is there any reason to believe that any of the politicians, authors, philosophers, or pamphleteers to be encountered in the ensuing pages should have a coherent theory about the balance of power that could answer this question.[54] Politicians and diplomats seize on the available, dominant concepts and use them for their purposes, not knowing whether that will be a successful exercise until after the fact. They do not know any better than us what the concept really 'is'.

This in turn also means that there is little reason to think that the balance-of-power concept as used in the IR discipline corresponds to the balance of power as it has been used across time and space by historical actors 'thrown' into the world, facing practical problems. However, this is an assumption often implicitly made in much of the literature. For instance, Paul Schroeder claims (as I also claim in Chapter 6 regarding the Congress of Vienna), that there is a difference between the language of 'balance of power' and 'equilibrium'. I agree, but Schroeder goes on to say, '*the language of the Vienna era certainly demonstrates* that the international system required and rested on political

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[52] Commons Sitting, December 12, 1826. Walsh, Robert. 1835. *Select Speeches of the Right Honourable George Canning*, Philadelphia: Key and Biddle, p. 466, emphasis added.

[53] Chamberlain, Austen. 1930. 'Great Britain as a European Power', *Journal of the Royal Institute of International Affairs* 9(2):180–188, p. 180.

[54] Jordheim, Helge. 2012. 'Staten, genealogien og historien. Quentin Skinner i samtale med Helge Jordheim'. *Nytt norsk tidsskrift* 29(1): 59–66.

equilibrium – but not that there was a balance of power'.[55] His point is that a 'balance' and an 'equilibrium' are different animals in his, and presumably our, *analytical* language. In cases where historical actors *did* use the balance-of-power concept, Schroeder is in effect saying that, yes, they talked about a 'balance of power', but they were *wrong* in doing so, and this did not make sense, because there really was no Balance of Power. Not only is there a parallel between their uses and ours, but on top of it, they mistook one concept for the other. Schroeder's argument would imply that the historical actors' use of the concept 'balance of power' two centuries ago is parallel to 'our' analytical concept. In addition, Schroeder compares 'equilibrium' as participant rhetoric, with 'balance of power' as theoretical, analytical category – 'apples with oranges', as the saying goes. Then, in the end, he asks, 'if the case against the balance of power interpretation is so clear, why have many excellent scholars adopted it?'[56] He answers that the reasons are the flexibility of the concept, the weight of tradition and convention, realism in IR, and Vienna as a customary 'data point'. This is probably all true. However, it remains to be asked: what do we do with the historical material detailing the uses of the concept amongst central practitioners in those times? The answer probably should not be that everyone was *wrong* in using it. That, in fact, would be validating the status of the contemporary concept Schroeder sets out to question in the first place.

If we assume that the balance of power is an entity, a 'thing', and we then search through history to identify what different politicians and authors had to say about this 'thing', we are making the mistake of trying to identify or reconstruct a theory that was not there and that has never existed.[57] If a concept is seen as somehow moving through time, 'the balance of power' in Canning's time and 'the balance of power' in Chamberlain's time may be mistaken as the 'same thing'.

The balance of power can mean many different things to many different people. This in turn implies that not one but many different valid stories can be told about the concept. So even if we should aim to 'tell it like it really was', selection is involved.[58] The theory behind the choices one makes in this respect is the methodology: where, who, and what to

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[55] Schroeder, Paul W. 1992. 'Did the Vienna Settlement Rest on a Balance of Power?', *The American Historical Review* 97(3):683–706, p. 695, emphasis added.
[56] *Ibid.*, p. 704.
[57] Skinner, *Visions*, pp. 62–63; 85–86.
[58] Shapin, Steven. 1996. *The Scientific Revolution*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p. 10.

study, and not to study, within which research tradition, and what counts as valid and relevant data and knowledge.

My genealogy of the balance of power will emphasise how this concept was contingent, diverse, and problematic, used by a range of historically, politically, and morally situated historical actors. It will also question the ways in which the balance of power has been treated in the discipline of IR. However, I must stress that this is not a criticism of the balance of power concept. I do not aim to strip the concept naked, revealing it as untrue or unreliable, or its historical uses based on 'misunderstandings'. The purpose is not to criticise the concept or the actors using it, but the stories that are typically told about it. Criticising or indeed trying to demolish the concept would be to deny its long genealogy, and to ignore the crucial ways in which it has shaped historical trajectories, the IR discipline included.[59]

Rather, my focus on the practical uses of the concept over time aims at capturing new and interesting things worth understanding, about historical political processes, and about the IR discipline today. The balance of power has profoundly affected how what we now call 'foreign policy' has been conducted, how polities have been differentiated, and conceptions about international structure. The balance of power is important and had consequences, but, I maintain, in a different way than normally imagined, namely through its rhetorical deployment.

Genealogy

Does it matter how our theories, like theories of the balance of power, have emerged and been constructed? Some would say that whether people have been using and speaking about the balance of power in times past does not matter. It could equally well be just a fancy or even a dream, as long as we are *careful and scientific in testing such theories, whatever their origins*, against the evidence.[60] The methodological aspects of a genealogy are important because my only possible response to this would be methodological. I seek

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[59] Ibid, p. 165
[60] See e.g. Levy, Jack S. 2004. 'What Do Great Powers Balance Against and When?', pp. 29–51 in T.V. Paul, James J. Wirtz, and Michael Fortmann (eds), *Balance of Power: Theory and Practice in the 21st Century*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, p. 44.

not to establish systematic cross-case correlations and law-like conjectures, but to demonstrate that the historical trajectory and uses of the concept itself have effects – including the formulation of precisely such 'hypotheses' and treating the balance of power as an analytical tool.

There is little reason why we should not be interested in how we got from the 17th century to today, how our concepts have been used in the past, and what lineages connect us to the past. A story about the balance of power can be the story of such lineages, what we see as their causes, and how this led to the features of the present in which we are interested.[61] This is a genealogy – a history of the present in terms of the past.

My genealogy is a deliberately incomplete, but not false, depiction of a historical network of trajectories – developments that fork, break off, and long remain unaware of one another, before contingently coming together. Genealogy alludes to how random occurrences come together to drive a certain part of history forward. Events relate to each other in ways similar to individuals and (quite literally) their intercourse as depicted in a family tree.

The methodological aspects of a genealogy concern the relationship between the observer and the observed. If there are historical facts of matter, there will always also be an interpreter. Most would agree, but some would aspire to getting as close as possible to historical truth – to at least try to put themselves in the historical actors' shoes. One can be attentive to historical context and 'participant rhetoric', in trying to understand what historical actors really meant. The aim is then to give an objective picture of historical meaning. Still, the role of the scholar doing this investigation in the present would then disappear somewhat from view. By focusing solely on the interpretations of the historical actors we study, we assume that we can objectively assess what they really meant in saying and writing what they did. Conversely, if the focus is exclusively on our interpretation as scholars, then we fail to take into consideration the contingencies and variable contextual effects of a wide variety of public utterances in history, imposing an order that might not have been there.

The genealogical 'postulate' is that one cannot even come closer to an unhindered perspective of the past – because it is not at all clear what 'coming closer' would imply,

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[61] Shapin, *The Scientific Revolution,* p. 7.

and on what basis such a movement could possibly be adjudged to have been realised. What a genealogy does is to take this seriously, making the 'history of the present' not only an object of inquiry, but also a methodological precept. How we study what we study in the past is of relevance to us also because of the time and place we live in, and how what we choose to study has come to be seen as worthy of study. A genealogy therefore comes with a methodological selecting tool, which is my/our present context. This delimits what is important, and what is marginal.

This is not to say that categories and practices that are no longer important to us but were important to historical actors are not worth investigating – quite the contrary. The point, however, is that in questioning historical developments, we already know the outcome. The puzzle then becomes why and how such categories and practices fell out of use and were replaced by others, and how paths have crossed and concepts and practise intermingled, fused, or torn apart, to produce our present condition, as opposed to the infinity of alternative conditions.[62] This means, at a general level, acknowledging that what is taken to be 'truth' is always a precondition of an investigation, and not the result.

We find no increasing consensus or clearer direction as history moves along, only an unending battle over meanings in practice. A genealogy reconstructs these battles, and brings them to light – a light that can also be shed on present-day concerns.[63] It should now, therefore, be clearer what I mean when I say that in writing a genealogy of the balance of power, my goal is to identify and chart these different disputes and fights in which the balance of power has been involved, and how they have resulted in changing conditions of possibility for action.

Why not treat the balance of power as an 'idea', or norm?

One objection to my project could be that this could equally well be a constructivist 'history of ideas' or the history of norms transmission. It could, but I want to be more specific.

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[62] Cooper, Frederick. 2005. *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 18–20.
[63] Jordheim, 'Staten', p. 62.

As Chamberlain himself pointed out above, historical actors are 'thrown' into the world, as Heidegger put it, facing practical problems in need of solutions *in medias res*. The balance of power is a rhetorical resource that often served as a convenient sense-making tool in such situations, without actors necessarily reflecting much on its use. I choose to emphasise these aspects of the balance of power as a concept, and how actors through their use of it *stabilised* the concept – rather than stabilising the concept analytically *myself*, by defining it as an entity I can call 'an idea'.

If not rejecting any 'history of ideas' *tout court*, I at least want to specify it in ways that enable me to empirically detail the effects of using the balance of power. The problem with 'ideas' in this respect is that if we cannot show how such ideas exert independent, causal influence, then ideas might be brushed away as mere pretexts or covers for the 'real' interest of actors – or, alternatively, as filling in residual explanations for the *really* important, material explanatory factors. However, asserting the causal role of ideas is problematic if they, as they often are, are hypostatised and seen to be 'clashing' between themselves in abstract space. This makes it difficult to study how such 'ideas' are connected to actual debates, disputes, and empirical practices of historical actors. As Skinner once noted in critiquing the idealist Arthur Lovejoy, one is then writing 'a history not of ideas at all, but abstractions: a history of thought which no one ever actually succeeded in thinking, at a level of coherence which no one ever actually attained'.[64]

The mere presence of an 'idea' in this sense tells us little about how it concretely affects social practice or politics. As long as the concrete causal links between 'idea' and outcome are not specified, an idea does not explain anything. So what happens when, armed with such an abstract approach to the balance as an 'idea', we encounter such concrete but incoherent debates and practices in the sources and secondary literature? In applying idealism, we risk simply adding yet another variable to already existing 'materialist' accounts of the balance which, in a weird division of labour, has all but monopolised concreteness. Accepting the idea/materialism dichotomy makes it possible to explain residual factors, but not really to assert another explanatory framework in its own right.[65]

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[64] Skinner, Quentin. 1969. 'Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas', *History and Theory* 8(1):3–53, p. 18.

[65] Nexon, 'Zeitgeist?', p. 702.

If 'norms' or 'ideas' are hypostatised as entities, they become mysterious agents of change.[66] For example, while I argue in Chapter 3 that the very concept of an international system was constructed by rhetorically linking it to the balance of power around the Utrecht negotiations, Andreas Osiander asserts that the international system *in itself* wielded effects independent of actors' practices.[67] The risk in operating with such causally effective 'undetectable' and hypostatised entities is that such 'structures', 'concepts', or 'ideas' themselves become mysterious agents of change, 'making intermittent entries into the mundane world from the idealism's heavenly spheres',[68] or merely adding gloss to other explanatory frameworks. Structural forces clashing are what determine actor behaviour, and 'what actors do' is out of the theoretical picture. What is left to explain in accounts such as Osiander's is where such structuring principles come from, how they endure or change, and how such structural principles 'become inscribed into the practices of actors'.[69]

What if we add rhetorical practice to 'ideas'? Would not setting ideas in motion in this way solve the problem? No, because the risk in asserting that 'ideas' or their associated 'motivations' is acting upon the world through rhetoric lies in the potential charge of idealism – that this would imply a 'language miracle', whereby existential change occurs through the mere act of speaking. The solution for avoiding this idealist trap is to find a way of explaining how the balance of power is used and how invoking it can produce concrete effects in the world and on policy – without claiming that it is the balance of power concept *in itself* that is ultimately the cause or that does the acting.

The balance of power as a concept

Here, I take my cues from *relationalism*.[70] In my view, the balance of power is not a thing with certain properties, which then starts interacting with its environment, producing

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[66] *Ibid.*, pp. 701–702

[67] Osiander, Andreas. 1994. *The States System of Europe 1640–1990: Peacemaking and the Conditions of International Stability.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 4–5.

[68] Armitage, David. 2012. 'What's the Big Idea? Intellectual History and the *Longue Durée*', *History of European Ideas* 38: 493–507, p. 499.

[69] Nexon, 'Zeitgeist?', p. 702.

[70] See *inter alia* Emirbayer, Mustafa. 1997. 'Manifesto for a Relational Sociology'; Jackson, Patrick Thaddeus and Daniel Nexon. 1999. 'Relations before States: Substance, Process and the Study of World Politics', *European Journal of International Relations* 5(3): 291–332; Somers, Margaret R. 1994. 'The

effects.[71] If the balance of power is seen as an entity with relatively stable properties, as 'idea' or otherwise, then the effects or results of using the balance of power could, in the end, be traced back to its attributes.

Relationalism finds it more useful to treat relations as the primary ontological focus – especially when studying phenomena that might include unit-level changes,[72] as in my project. Instead of *starting* with defined entities, we can begin by looking at relations as the foci of study, so that it is possible to investigate also how any entity came about and how it might be changing. Seen from within a relational ontology, then, the entities are involved in constant transactions. Such a starting point makes it nonsensical to speak of entities as existing *before* the transactions or relations take place, as they cannot be taken out of the relational context within which they operate. Entities gain their characteristics not from what is inherently inside them, but what is *between* them – that is, through their relations.

Consequently, a further characteristic of a relational ontology is that relations are most often seen as unfolding processes.[73] This does not mean that everything is changing all the time, or that relations never stabilize and become enduring. Those are empirical questions. The default setting of a relational ontology is that the social is never coherent, but constantly in a process of change. What, then, makes relations take on a stable and enduring form? Instead of assuming order, and aiming to explain change, relationalism would take change for granted and explore the dynamics and power processes involved in (the history of) institutionalization or sedimentation of certain relations. To specify this rather broad ontology of relationalism, I will treat the balance of power as a *concept*.

Seeking to shift the agency from concepts 'in themselves' to actual historical actors, their struggles, contentions, and debates, I focus on the *effects of using the concept*.[74] What *'does' things* is how concepts are deployed during controversies, in concrete debates, contentions, and crises. The importance of concepts comes from political debates and

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Narrative Constitution of Identity: A Relational and Network Approach', *Theory and Society* 23(5): 605–649.

[71] Emirbayer, 'Manifesto', pp. 282–83.

[72] Jackson and Nexon, 'Relations before States', p. 292.

[73] *Ibid*., p. 289.

[74] Scholz, Bernhard F. 1998. 'Conceptual History in Context: Reconstructing the Terminology of an Academic Discipline', pp. 87–101 in Iain Hampsher-Monk, Karin Tilmans and Frank van Vree (eds.) *History of Concepts: Comparative Perspectives*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, pp. 90–91.

political practice, and is not disconnected from them. I do not distinguish between the concept as an idea 'in itself' on the one hand, and some set of isolated historical, social, cultural, political, or economic factors on the other, as if they were external to it. Here *concepts cannot be studied independent of their use.*

I see concepts as being commonly established and relatively stable rhetorical resources that historical actors can seize and use to make sense of relevant occurrences and events in their historical context.[75] What is common is not shared ideas or agreements about meaning, but a set of concepts to be used as public resources in arguments and to formulate positions. Concepts are *ways of looking at problems to generate arguments.*[76]

Concepts are therefore literally *useful* in debates and controversies. Concepts can be of use, but they do not *determine* meaning. Concepts are open for contestation – not despite being so common, but *because* of that. Concepts are vague, and therefore useful. Imagine trying to draw an exact picture of a blurred image. How can we judge whether the one corresponds to the other? It would seem that 'the degree to which the sharp picture can resemble the blurred one depends on the latter's degree of vagueness'.[77] The vaguer the picture, the more ways there will be of drawing an accurate one. The same happens when we use concepts that are so public, so common in their use, that they are difficult to pin down and define. Any attempt at drawing a sharp picture of an everyday concept can be both accepted and disputed. Wittgenstein asked, 'is it even always an advantage to replace an indistinct picture by a sharp one? Isn't the indistinct one often exactly what we need?'[78]

Similarly, concepts are vague and difficult to pin down, so different arguments can creatively be constructed or destructed from the same concept.[79] Inexact does not mean useless, and vagueness may contribute to efficient political use. Concepts contain the source of arguments, but at the same time also the source of that argument's counterargument. By using the balance-of-power concept, arguments can be both closed down and opened up. Agreement or assent is therefore not the basis for the existence of concept – they emerge through the contingent use of rhetoric for practical purposes in

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[75] Jackson, 'The Present as History'.
[76] Toye, Richard. 2013. *Rhetoric*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
[77] Wittgenstein, Ludwig. 1976. *Philosophical Investigations*. Oxford: Blackwell, sect. 77; Coates, John. 1996. *The Claims of Common Sense*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 79.
[78] Wittgenstein, *Investigations*, sect. 71; Coates, *Claims*, p. 53.
[79] Jackson, Patrick Thaddeus. 2006. *Civilizing the Enemy*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, p. 28.

context. Such ambiguities in concepts are not a fault of language: they are indispensable for the use of concepts in making sense of events.[80] The advantage of this framing is that the coherence or 'correctness' of the balance of power need not be a concern here, as it *is* for more traditional conceptual analysis that seeks to establish clear boundaries for explanatory efficiency. A wide range of historical actors have used the balance of power concept in differing ways, in attempts to legitimise different political projects. We can tell a story about those attempts, regardless of their success or coherence.[81]

From this perspective, all talk and accounts of what the balance of power 'really' is are attributions, not observations.[82] Such attributions are part of the processes that can stabilise and make a particular area of rhetoric seem incontrovertible. In consequence, when I examine participant rhetoric, the goal of treating the balance of power as a concept is not to impose an analytical stability, but to investigate the rhetorical stabilities that have actually emerged through rhetorical practice. Stability is not assumed: it is to be explained.[83]

Why the balance of power concept is not really only about 'the balance of power': The contingent linking of the balance to other concerns

Change occurs when a concept is creatively used during actual debates and contentions. An important mechanism in effecting such change is the rhetorical linking together of various concepts and concerns previously considered separate. This implies that *the balance of power is not really only about the balance of power 'in itself', but an array of other stuff too.*

Concepts do not contain a single inner rule that makes them consistent – they are continuously reinforced or challenged during controversies and events. In using concepts, we are not using something already set, but are linking up with events and other concepts in rhetorical practice, in disputes and debates. When a concept is 'stable', that is not

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[80] Toye, *Rhetoric,* p. 71, 77.
[81] Shapin, *The Scientific Revolution*, p. 5
[82] Anscombe, Gertrude Elizabeth Margaret. 2000[1957]. *Intention*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
[83] Richards, Ivor Armstrong. 1936. *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 11.

because of its inherent stability, but because the things and practices surrounding it are seen to be 'in their place'.

Even if we assume, for the sake of the argument, that concepts *do* have an inherent meaning and stability, actors would *still* be obliged to find new ways of expressing them, given the situation and concatenation of other factors, and such new ways of using a concept will not leave it completely unaltered.[84] The application of existing concepts to new events and circumstances is always 'risky', because this may serve to change them and thereby the limits for action and the conditions of possibility, intentionally or not.[85] However, not any kind of links can be made – a concept both enables and restricts – so one cannot use the balance of power for just anything at any time. For example, as I will show in Chapter 3, Austria's attempt to link the balance to dynastic politics did not succeed, because of the already established uses and meanings of the balance of power as the fight against universal monarchy, and against private interests.

These links are not inert connexions through resemblance. When the balance of power is linked to other concerns or other concepts, these links are concrete: the linkages are made explicitly during debates and controversies.

By linking or delinking to political positions and political projects, concepts are used as resources for legitimation or de-legitimation. Such processes of legitimation are central to social action, and this need for legitimation restricts our space for action. A criticism that the balance of power was used to legitimise something that the *actors would have done in any case* misses the point. The concepts that are used to legitimate actions can also be a part of a causal explanation for those actions[86] – not a cover for 'real interests', or a pretext. As Skinner has put it, concepts will 'attach to political relations', making it 'appropriate to analyse political theories as contributions to ideological controversies and as weapons of vindication or subversion in the strategies of local political forces whether or not the author intends or recognises it'.[87] That is, concepts are used with effects, also *regardless of the user's intentions*. The balance of power affects the space for action, the

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[84] Toye, *Rhetoric*, p. 70.
[85] Sahlins, Marshall. 1985. *Island of History*. London: Tavistock.
[86] Jordheim, 'Staten', p. 62.
[87] Tully, James H. 1983. 'The Pen is a Mighty Sword: Quentin Skinner's Analysis of Politics', *British Journal of Political Science* 13(04):489–509, p. 496.

scope of possible political alternatives – the ways of framing and justifying an issue are also part of producing a policy.[88]

In sum, the contingent linking of the balance of power concept to *other concerns* and other concepts is a key mechanism – examining such relational processes enables me to historically amend common arguments about the balance in IR. This is so because the focus on linking, and therefore also my (scope and use of) historical material, differ from what IR scholars often draw on.

Conclusions

In continuation, I will show how links were often made to the standing and differentiation of polities, and their relation to the overall structure or system of the international – from 'the public interest of Europe' to 'international anarchy'. This is also the history of the emergence and change of the state as a type of political unit, and what it meant for historical actors. It is a history of how political units, what is being 'balanced' in the balance of power, have been performed in relation to others. As we shall see, this changes dramatically in the timespan under study here.

Tracing a genealogy of the balance of power concept, and how it was linked to other concerns, is also an engine of social change.[89] It can show how and when different conceptions of what a political entity is may change over time, and how the balance of power has been centrally involved in this, through processes of contingent linking. The history of the balance of power is also *by implication* a history of how political entities – that which is to be balanced – may change over time, as well as how the 'power' in the balance of power also changes over time, eventually becoming associated with the capacities of atomistic nation-states, mainly through the development of 'statistics' and state-centrism.

At any given point, more conceptual options existed than those to be detailed here, but my aim is to explore the options actually chosen, in context, and their effects. I do not

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[88] Gourevitch, Peter. 1978. 'The Second Image Reversed: The International Sources of Domestic Politics', *International Organization* 32(4): 881–912, p. 904.
[89] Skinner, *Visions,* p. 178.

think it makes sense to separate between events in themselves and the concepts and rhetorical resources used to describe, explain, or make sense of them. There is not a world of real politics on the one hand, and an external 'intellectual' context on the other – precisely the point made above. This is why actors respond not only to events or 'practical politics', but also *to the theories used to describe or explain it.*[90] These are not two, parallel histories: they are interlinked, as concepts and rhetoric participate in making something an 'event' in the first place, and in presenting historical narratives. This is a further reason why in this chapter I have focused on illuminating potential relationships between theorising and political practice, and also how that distinction itself is used in practice to score political points in struggles over legitimation. This speaks to what I began by saying: how knowledge claims are assessed within different communities makes a difference. The general methodological points above concern not only me and us, but have also been consequential in historical practice – be it scientific communities, or communities with otherwise differing standards of validity.

In the next chapter, I begin the genealogy by looking at the emergence of the balance of power as a concept in English debates in the late 17th century. We will see how this came to develop as a concept in early modern Europe through contingent rhetorical links to other central concepts and debates of the period, with the prevalence of debates over *Universal Monarchy*, *interests* and the *public and private* spheres.

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[90] Hampsher-Monk, Iain. 1984. 'Political Languages in Time – The Work of J.G.A. Pocock', *British Journal of Political Science* 14(1):89–116, pp. 104–106.

PART I

CHAPTER 2

The Emergence of the Balance of Power as a Concept in Early Modern Europe

The balance of power was not a stock-in trade 'realist' concept from the beginning, but was heavily influenced by classical republicanism, focusing on virtue, mixed constitutions, checks and balances, intimately connecting domestic politics with the 'international' system of Europe. As noted in the previous chapter, I do not consider the balance of power to have any internal logic of its own that 'made' it evolve. Context, as well as concrete policy debates in England and across Europe, influenced its emergence and were influenced by it. The various debates came together in the period of the Anglo–Dutch wars: England could justify attacking the Dutch because they were presented as a threat, an aspiring Universal Monarchy. Eventually, the English came to oppose the wars – by appealing openly to the balance of power, which in the process had become cemented as a concept and thereby as a rhetorical resource that could now be used to convince England that *France* was the real danger to Europe.

Increasingly, then, from the Glorious Revolution in 1688, when William III ('William of Orange') succeeded to the English throne, and until the 1713/1714 Treaties of Utrecht, it was in the name of the balance of power that England, Austria, and the Dutch organised alliances against France. The concept helped to join these polities together, even if unintentionally. The rallying force of the balance of power was used for what it was worth, and would have implications for English and international debates leading up to the Utrecht Settlement (see Chapter 3). In the process, England came to be seen as the leader and the 'hand that holds the balance', made possible by the natural opposition

between the balance of power and Universal Monarchy. Holland, on the other hand, was no longer seen as a 'Great Power'.[1]

Some authors, among them Paul W. Schroeder,[2] maintain that the Glorious Revolution in 1688 had nothing to do with European affairs, but was a matter of religion and domestic politics. Therefore, according to Schroeder, the assertion that England sought to balance against France is mistaken – it was rather to save the Dutch and their religion. However, as I will show, if we take the actors' rhetoric seriously, we cannot disregard the balance of power by dismissing present-day theory as an inefficient tool for analysis, exactly because of the boost in the usage of the concept at the time. If the *analytical concept* of the balance of power is taken as the point of departure, the actual debates and concepts employed in the period will be used incorrectly in the analysis. Schroeder writes that 'the primary British motive would be domestic, not international'[3] – to defend the domestic gains from the Glorious Revolution. However, I hold, the separation between the domestic and the 'international' was not so clear-cut – precisely because political actors were linking the central concept of the balance of power to other concepts like the 'public interest' and domestic debates over the mixed constitution. Even if often couched in religious terminology (like 'the Protestant Interest'), from the 1670s, opposition to France had become the main debate in English politics, intrinsically linked with domestic developments.

Early modern debates: Universal monarchy, interest, and the public/private distinction

In pamphlets published during the 30 Years' War, many issues concerning French–Spanish relations can be identified as problems of the balance of power – as seen from a present-day, analytical perspective. One pamphlet from the 1640s advocated setting the German princes up against France, which threatened to become a dangerous 'Universal Monarchy'; another proposed that England should make closer associations with the Dutch. However, none of these pamphlets associated the potential French threat of

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[1] Dehio, Ludwig. 1959. *The Precarious Balance*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, p. 81.
[2] Schroeder, Paul W. 1994. 'Historical Reality vs. Neo-Realist Theory', *International Security* 19: 108–148, pp. 135–136.
[3] Schroeder, 'Historical Reality', p. 136.

universal monarchy with the balance of power. Attacks on France's intentions were commonplace, but the balance of power was not invoked. France was seen as representing the threat of tyranny, a threat to the freedom of Europe – concepts that only *later* would be linked with the balance of power.

On the other hand, the term 'balance of power' *was* used before the period under investigation here, as noted in the introduction. 'Balance' as a metaphor for a political relation can be traced as far back as at least the 15th century. My focus, however, is on when it became a concept, widely and publically used and accepted as a resource in political struggles, and the analyses of such struggles. The first step in this is to chart prevalent debates of the period in which the balance of power emerged as a concept. I consider three dominant concepts in particular as important for the emergence of the balance of power: Universal Monarchy, interests, and the public versus the private.

Universal monarchy

The fight against what was called a 'Universal Monarchy' will be a recurrent topic in the following chapters, as this was commonly considered by far the most severe threat to European polities. In theory, a universal monarchy came to imply a tyrannical world ruler with sovereignty over all kings, in practice predominance or hegemony over Europe. Even if a literal world empire was unrealistic, the idea of a Universal Monarchy remained an important commonplace in European political culture for several hundred years.[4] As late as in the mid-19th century, Universal Monarchy was used, linked to the balance of power. To understand how this became so, it is worth having a short look at the prehistory of this concept.

That one Empire should and could dominate the whole of Europe had in fact long been a *legitimate* aspiration, particularly given the important prehistory of the Roman Empire. That empire, it was argued, had been successful because of its *pietas* – a loyalty to the community, its laws, and its religion. Empire in this sense implied order: the outside and inside of the Roman Empire had been separated by the particular virtues of the inside, or

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[4] Pagden, Anthony. 1995. *Lords of All the World. Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain and France c. 1500–c.1800.* New Haven: Yale University Press, p. 40.

rules of conduct. Empire or universal rule did therefore not entail the unconstrained use of power, but a regard for the common good of the community – the *utilitas publica.*[5]

Initially, Universal Monarchy was generally accepted by the European powers as a legitimate aspiration. It was based on mediaeval developments in political thought, where the general outlook was to start from the whole, while attributing intrinsic value to every part of the whole, right down to the individual – based on ideas about the divinely willed Harmony of the Universe. The principles of human society must emanate from the divinely organised universe,[6] so the principle of Unity also provided the foundation for hierarchical theories within societies. A Universal Monarchy therefore promised the installation of political order. European rulers like Charlemagne, Charles I, and Charles V all invoked such a Universal Monarchy, based on a Universal Church.[7]

As with the Roman Empire, some considered 'Europe' to be one *respublica christiana,* with a common law providing the framework.[8] A *koinos nomos,* a universal code of law, could establish links between secular politics and the spread of the Christian religion. Both were needed, in mutual support.[9] Inspired by the Roman Empire, a Universal Monarchy was not considered *literally* universal in its aspirations. With the growing awareness of the existence of different cultures and continents, becoming the ruler of the whole world was not a realistic option. Even the Romans, the English pamphleteer Charles Davenant pointed out, were only a small part of a bigger world, and they 'did at last sit down in quiet' after having conquered what they could and wanted.[10] Rather, universal rule meant the secular leadership of the 'inside' of Europe, being recognised as the leader of Christendom, or at least the Habsburg territories, in the fight against the infidels on the outside.[11]

However, a distinction gradually emerged between the divine and the temporal aspect of human societies and rule. Dante Alighieri, for example, had argued that the only solution for the divided Italy was foreign rule, but in the realm of *secular* politics. For the

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[5] Pagden, *Lords*, p. 29.
[6] Gierke, Otto. [1900] 1987. *Political Theories of the Middle Age*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
[7] Dehio, *The Precarious Balance*, p. 38.
[8] Lesaffer, Randall. 2002. 'The Grotian Tradition Revisited: Change and Continuity in the History of International Law', *British Yearbook of International Law*, 73:103–139, p. 112.
[9] Pagden, *Lords*, p. 29.
[10] In *ibid.*, pp. 38–39.
[11] Lesaffer, 'The Grotian Tradition', p. 114.

Habsburg Empire to serve as a uniting force, this required a separation between secular and religious authority. The Pope, Dante argued, was responsible for the human soul, whilst the emperor was responsible for the temporal well-being of humans on earth.[12] Even if the Church still accorded religious legitimacy to the Empire until 1648,[13] the Christian Empire itself became a secular institution. This division, however, requires some kind of ordering principle also for the *temporal* sphere, or an alternative 'Archimedean point' from which to think about and construct order. This became Reason, and ultimately the notion of 'natural interests', which accorded value to diversity.

Throughout the 17th century, Universal Monarchy increasingly faced opposition. It was no longer directly connected to 'God's plan', as Catholics and Protestants were pitted against one another, and different ways of organising human societies were gaining value. By the time of the Holy Roman Emperor and King of Spain, Charles V (1500-1558), a *fear* of Universal Monarchy was expressed. With the aid of money and official historiography, Charles V established continuity between the Spanish monarchy and the Habsburg Empire, and explicitly sought to dominate Europe.[14] In the *translatio imperii* to the Spanish Empire in the early 16th century, Charles V underplayed the Roman legacy of *pietas,* and rather emphasised the Christian view that differences between 'men' should disappear. However, that no longer resonated well throughout Europe. The Reformation had undermined Papal authority and the universality of Europe, and the old principles of law of the *respublica christiana* was no longer accepted.[15]

Fears arose that Spain, in particular, was bent on a Universal Monarchy that would lead to the enslavement of Europe. Spanish kings were the leaders of Catholicism against both Protestants and Turks.[16] Spain, by 'fraud, policy, treason, intestine divisions and war', aimed to fight the Protestant princes together with the Pope to achieve 'their long prosecuted Universal Monarchy'.[17]

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[12] See Dante's 'Monarchia', III, xvi, 10, in Bruno Nardi. 1996. *Dante Alighieri Opere minori*, *vol. 3*. Milan/Naples: Ricciardi.
[13] Pagden, *Lords*, p. 31.
[14] *Ibid*, p. 32.
[15] Lesaffer, 'The Grotian Tradition', p. 115.
[16] *Ibid.*, p. 114.
[17] William Prynne (attrib.). 1663. *Philanax Protestant*. S.n.: London, quoted in Steven C. A. Pincus, 1992. 'Popery, Trade and Universal Monarchy: The Ideological Context of the Outbreak of the Second Anglo–Dutch War', *The English Historical Review* 107: 1–29, p. 18.

The increasing opposition to Universal Monarchy in the 17th century was also a result of contrasting Asian or 'Oriental' rulers with those of Europe, and journeys and expeditions to the East could show the differences empirically. Jean Bodin had distinguished between different forms of monarchy. On the one hand, he had argued, there existed a *monarchie seigneuriale*, based on the Aristotelian master/slave logic, where the king had all power over his subjects. On the other hand, *monarchie royale* was based on limits to the *legibus solutus,* the absolute power of the monarch[18] – specifically concerning property rights, natural law, and the particular laws of the polity. Bodin had illustrated this difference by contrasting France with the Ottomans. The Ottomans practised *monarchie seigneuriale*, a boundless power where the king is the *owner* of his subjects.[19]

Further, Giovanni Botero in his *Relazioni Universali* had backed up this distinction with empirical observations from travel literature. Despotic forms of government, he had argued, extended across Asia and were not limited to the Ottomans.[20] Later explorers, like François Bernier, Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, Paul Rycaut and others, all pointed to the terrible consequences of despotic governments: taxation, lack of private ownership, oppression and violence, cruel arbitrary government, bad administration, the absence of reason and virtue, and the lack of nobility.[21]

If Universal Monarchy was a threat against Europe, it was also a potential threat *within* Europe. In contrast to Aristotle, Bodin had argued that the tyrannical form of monarchy was based not on the character and nature of peoples, even if these existed, but on the practice of territorial expansion and conquest. His different types of monarchies were not different species, but different modes of operation.[22] 'Oriental Despotism' and arbitrary power was not limited to Asia, but could also be present in Europe – as had, he argued,

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[18] Bodin, Jean. 1579. *Les six livres de la République, Livre Second, Chap. II: De la Monarchie Seigneuriale*, pp. 188–194; 'Chap. III: De la Monarchie Royale', pp. 194–200. Lyon: Jacques du Puys, Libraire Juré en l'Université de Paris.
[19] Curtis, Michael. 2009. *Orientalism and Islam: European Thinkers on Oriental Despotism in the Middle East and India*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 55.
[20] 'Il governo degli Ottomani è affatto despotico; perché il Gran Turco è in tal modo padrone d'ogni cosa compresa entro i confine del suo dominio, che gli habitanti si chiamo suoi schiavi, non che sudditi', Giovanni Botero, 1659. *Delle Relationi Universali, parte II, libro IV*, pp. 118–119. Venetia: Bertani.
[21] Curtis, *Orientalism and Islam*, pp. 39–43.
[22] Bodin, *Les Six Livres, Livre Second, Chap. II*, p. 189.

indeed been the case with Louis XI of France and the Emperor Charles V, following the example of Julius Caesar.[23]

Some held onto the aspiration of Universal Monarchy. For instance, in France, certain religious groupings had argued that the calling of the King was to create a Christian empire, and not merely extend the frontiers of the monarchy.[24] The problem, however, was that Europe in the 17th century was increasingly considered a multiplicity of individual communities, part of one *totus orbis*, but where lawful authority came from *ius publicum Europaeum* and not universal authority. Dynastic rights were subservient to the shared, public good and an integrated system, now called not Christendom, but *Europe*.[25] Montesquieu therefore likened the absolute powers of the French King to Oriental Despotism, and Michel le Vassor likened the power of Louis XIV to that of the *Grand Seigneur* or the *Grand Mogol*.[26] France was increasingly despised across Europe, for the king's attempt to seek Universal Monarchy unjustly, based on violence and betrayal. [27]

At least from the times of Charles V on, the fight against Universal Monarchy had become a central element in political debate on the continent. In England, in particular, countering Universal Monarchy had since the Age of Elizabeth been a central tenet of debates about the continent.[28] In the Restoration period, from about 1660, the debate was about Universal Monarchy, and much less about the nature of true religion.[29]

The historical examples invoked in making the case against Universal Monarchy (most conspicuously that of Charles V) held sway for centuries. As I will show in the next chapter, after 1706, when England was fighting a war to reunite Spanish and Austrian territories, Bolingbroke argued that these were the former possessions of Charles V's

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[23] Bodin, *Les Six Livres', Livre Troisieme, Chap. I*, 'Du Senat& de la puissance', p. 238.
[24] Pagden, *Lords*, p. 34.
[25] Lesaffer, 'The Grotian Tradition'; Schmidt, H. D. 1966. 'The Establishment of "Europe" as Political Expression', *The Historical Journal* 9: 172–178.
[26] Le Vassor, Michel. 1689. *Les Soupirs de la France Esclave. Qui aspire après la Liberté*. Amsterdam, pp. 25, 37, 65–66.
[27] *Ibid*., p. 36.
[28] Simms, Brendan. 2007. *Three Victories and a Defeat*. London: Penguin, pp. 10–12.
[29] Pincus, Steven C.A. 1995. 'The English Debate over Universal Monarchy', pp. 37–62 in John Robertson (ed.), *A Union for Empire: Political Thought and the Union of 1707*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 38.

Universal Monarchy, and represented a policy at the expense of the balance of power. He defended the Tory peace policy instead.[30]

In sum, Universal Monarchy would lead Europe into slavery and tyranny, as opposed to good forms of monarchy. The central opposition was between true monarchies and tyrannical ones, bent on universal expansion. The important distinguishing features were therefore the characteristics and properties of rule in single polities, but there was little talk about any *system* until after the Utrecht Settlements. However, eventually, the systemic notion of the balance of power would become the 'counter-concept' to Universal Monarchy, as Universal Monarchy and the 'true' or 'natural' interests were linked. But in the 1660s, with France increasingly seen as threatening to what had become a more shared notion of Europe, 'balance of power' was not a concept widely used – whereas 'Universal Monarchy' was.

Interest

The idea that 'one vice may check another' is well known, not least from the works of St Augustine. The 'passions' that came to be explicitly linked to serving such a countervailing role were known as 'interest'.[31] As we shall see, interest would in turn come to be viewed as crucial to the maintenance of international order and the balance of power. 'Interest' is a historical *product* – not a starting point.

The 'self-love' taken as the basis of interests, became increasingly legitimate as a moral principle, based on Classical Epicureanism.[32] 'Invisible-hand' arguments emerged from such social theorising, whereby 'the advancement of private persons will be the advantage of the publick', giving moral support to self-interest.[33] Montesquieu held that as a result of pursuing private 'passions', like glory-seeking or the desire for money, 'it

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[30] Trevelyan, George Macauley. [1932] 2013. 'Introduction', pp.vii–x in Bolingbroke, *Defence of the Treaty of Utrecht. Letters VI–VIII of The Study and Use of History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. ix.

[31] Hirschman, *The Passions*, pp. 10, 28.

[32] Force, Pierre. 2003. *Self-Interest before Adam Smith: A Genealogy of Economic Science*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[33] Lee, Joseph. 1653. *Considerations Concerning Common Fields*, quoted in Jill Phillips Ingram. 2006. *Idioms of Self-Interest. Credit, Identity, and Property in English Renaissance Literature*. New York: Routledge, p. 6.

turns out that everyone contributes to the general welfare while thinking that he works for his own interest'.[34]

By the late 17th century, there existed a reading public as well as an emerging public sphere. Widely read was Herzog von Rohan's work (1638) on the princes of Europe and their interests.[35] In line with a long-standing medieval tradition, the book was written as advice to all princes on the conduct of their foreign relations.[36] Rohan's became a classic, widely read, debated, commented upon, and cited.[37] The first two printings of the English version appeared within three years of publication.

Around the 1660s, the debate was still about the Habsburgs, and about preventing them from gaining Universal Monarchy. Rohan was one of the most central authors to warn against the danger from Spain. He depicted possibilities for a Universal Monarchy on a scale not seen since the Roman Empire. Rohan had visited England in 1600, and his arguments resonated well there, as the protection of Christendom – in the form of Protestantism – was his main concern, and he recognised England's special position in this.[38]

This book laid some of the foundations for the concept of 'national interest'. Rohan argued that, since impartiality was required in order to analyse interest, the 'Archimedean' standpoint was provided by interest *itself*. Princes may fail, but 'interest alone can never fail'. Interest itself will never betray the king. If a political leader, a state, or action more generally fails, it is because of a misperception of interest. A political failure can never undermine the validity of 'interest', but may easily be provoked by subjective 'passions' or 'private' interests.[39] Passion and private interests, in turn, threaten order and the system, and can lead to Universal Monarchy. As pointed out in Parliament in 1677, Spain's Philip II had himself written that aspiring to Universal Monarchy would lead to ruin, and make 'the rest of the World jointly his enemies'; however, he had

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[34] Montesquieu, Charles-Louis de Secondat. 1864[1748]. *De l'espirit des lois.* Paris: Librairie de Firmin Didot Fréres, p. 24; translated in Hirschman, *The Passions*, p. 10.
[35] Rohan, Henri, duc de. 1638. *A Treatise of the Interest of the Princes and States of Christendome*. London: Henry Hunt. See also Gunn, John Alexander Wilson. 1969. *Politics and the Public Interest in the Seventeenth Century*. London: Routledge.
[36] Gunn, John Alexander Wilson. 1968. '"Interest will not lie": A Seventeenth-Century Political Maxim', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 29: 551–564, p. 552.
[37] *ibid*, p. 552; Hirschman, *The Passions*, p. 36; Pincus, 'The English debate', p. 39.
[38] Gunn, '"Interest will not lie"', pp. 553–554.
[39] Bartelson, Jens. 1995. *A Genealogy of Sovereignty.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 174–175.

succumbed to the temptation because 'ambition blinds men, suffers them not to look back on such Experiences'.[40] The maxim 'interest will not lie' was thus popularised in England in the 17th century.[41] It was the political version of Descartes' truism: *interest, ergo sum.* You cannot doubt your interest, because without interest, you would not exist. Interest was a fundamental and universal way of human existence.

Even more important for my purposes here, Rohan was probably *the first author who squarely linked 'balance of power' to 'interest'.* The concept of 'interest' as such had not been particularly common before Rohan's book. Thus, one of the first consistent uses of the term 'interest' accompanied one of the early important books on the balance of power in Europe.[42] For Rohan, in international politics, 'the interests of the principal parties are often exactly opposite to one another' – one prince's interest is the mirror image of that of another, as Rohan aimed to show in the rivalries between France and Spain.[43] But even in such circumstances, both parties could gain from abiding by the rules of the game, eliminating some of the 'passions' through the concept of interest. Here, the balance of power played a central part. Putting aside both irrational passions and whimsies and the advice of unreliable councillors, parties were to pursue their goals as defined by the objective requirements of interest and the maintenance of the European balance of power.[44] One could arrive at the objective interest through studying a polity's military forces, its geographic position, its religious practices, and its reputation and ambitions. The innovation in Rohan's approach was the focus on how interests were oriented towards the future, how governments could be objects for knowledge, and how the balance of power bound this together.[45]

When self-interest was now applied to princes and polities, the balance of power became relevant for systematising and understanding the relations between polities. As opposed to Universal Monarchy, the 'tranquillity' and 'security' of Europe was a common good to be protected by treaties between princes as representatives of the natural interests of their

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[40] Parliament, Great Britain. 1742. *The History and Proceedings of the House of Commons from the Restoration to the Present Time. Vol. I,* 'The Sixteenth Session of the Second Parliament'. London: Richard Chandler, p. 263. The British Library.

[41] Gunn, '"Interest will not lie"'; Hirschman, *The Passions,* p. 36; Bartelson, *A Genealogy*, p. 174.

[42] This should, however, not be taken as a functionalist argument. Etymologically, 'interest' comes from medieval Latin, 'inter esse', meaning *to be* or *lie between,* 'between essences'.

[43] Hirschman, *The Passions*, p. 51.

[44] Gunn, '"Interest will not lie"', p. 552.

[45] Mathiowetz, Dean. 2011. *Appeals to Interest: Language, Contestation, and the Shaping of Political Agency*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, p. 68.

states.[46] The French pamphleteer Gatien Courtilz de Sandras also explicitly pointed out the importance of interest. His book on the interest of princes[47] was read across Europe, and was issued in several editions.[48] Sandras pointed out how the new preoccupation with 'interest' took precedence over dynastic squabbles and religious affinity in European Diplomacy[49] – the state was not solely a descendant of the Divinely Organised Universe, but had its own reason, a *raison d'état*.

With Marchamont Needham in the mid-1600s, the statement that 'interest cannot lie' received an important corollary. He connected the existence of true interest, based on universally applicable self-love, with the possibility of predicting outcomes: 'If you can apprehend wherein a man's interest to any particular game on foot doth consist', Needham wrote, 'you may surely know, if the man be prudent, whereabout to have him, that is, how to judge of his designs.'[50] This understanding of interest based on calculation was important for understanding and knowing the 'public business'. Natural interest, as opposed to passions, can be known and classified.[51] It was predictable, not 'passionate' as associated with private interests. Needham's writings became particularly important to the Whigs in England.[52]

In the development of interest – a concept to be explicitly linked with the balance of power in debates – two concerns were mixed: On the one hand, there was the practical need to be able to predict the behaviour of others (essential in diplomacy). On the other hand, this would also prepare the use of the more 'analytical' concept of the balance of power. I return to both developments in later chapters.

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[46] Lesaffer, 'The Grotian Tradition', p. 133.
[47] Courtilz de Sandras, Gatien. 1686. *Noveaux interets des Princes de l'Europe*. Cologne: Pierre Marteau.
[48] Meinecke, Friedrich. 1962. *Machiavellism. The Doctrine of Raison D'Etat and its Place in Modern History*. New Haven: Yale University Press, p. 245.
[49] Meinecke, *Machiavellism*, p. 244.
[50] Needham, Marchamont. 1659. *Interest will not lie. Or, a view of England's true interest*. London: Tho. Newcomb, p. 3, quoted in Gunn, '"Interest Will not Lie"', p. 557.
[51] Bartelson, *A Genealogy*, p. 176.
[52] See next chapter.

Republicanism, the public, and the private

The balance of power had not been a stock-in-trade 'realist' concept from the beginning. Rather, the concept of a balance of power was linked to classical republican arguments focussing on virtue, mixed constitutions, checks and balances.

Res publica can be translated as 'public thing', and the public, as opposed to the private, was seen as the Good Thing. With time, the concept of a *commonwealth* had become the translation of Cicero's *res publica*. Others suggested that the proper translation would be the 'public weal'.[53] Commonwealth was a way of talking about the public interest both as the common good of a community, and as a kind of polity or the form and purposes of a government. The commonwealth was a republican concept, linked to the public interest. Universal Monarchy, on the other hand, was linked to the private interest of a ruler.

Republicanism does not imply that a republic, in the modern sense, is the preferred form. Republicanism, or civic republicanism, is a broader term,[54] and was concerned with opposition to tyranny – be it in a monarchy, republic, or any other form of government. In short, it is concerned with the Roman ideals of political liberty. The republican aspects of liberty relate to 'liberty to' rather than 'liberty from'. This was not a liberty from concrete interventions, as in later periods, but a more fundamental liberty from structures of dominance, such as in a slave-master relationship. It was liberty from Universal Monarchy and *arbitrary* rule. Such Liberty was in turn seen as promoting the exercise and expansion of *virtú*.[55] Concerning English republicanism, Skinner and Pocock have also pointed out the centrality of the protection of law and parliamentary representation to liberty from tyranny. Without it, one would become a 'slave'. The publicness of liberties was thus emphasised.[56] In short, it was liberty as 'non-domination',[57] parallel to the resistance to both Universal Monarchy and 'private interests'.

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[53] Knights, Mark et al. 2011. 'Commonwealth: The Social, Cultural, and Conceptual Contexts of an Early Modern Keyword', *The Historical Journal* 54(3): 659-687, p. 666-667.
[54] Skinner, Quentin. [1978] 2010. *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought. Volume 1 The Renaissance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
[55] Pocock, John Greville Agard. 2011. *Political Thought and History. Essays on Theory and Method*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 136; Skinner, Quentin. 1984. 'The Idea of Negative Liberty', pp. 193–221 in Richard Rorty, J. B. Schneewind, and Quentin Skinner (eds) *Philosophy of History: Essays on the Historiography of Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
[56] See Skinner, Quentin. 1998. *Liberty Before Liberalism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Armitage, David, Armand Himy and Quentin Skinner (eds). 1995. *Milton and Republicanism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Pocock, *Political Thought*, p. 138.

The king's interest, therefore, was no longer exclusively private – unless he was despotic. Before Rohan, also Richelieu had discussed this. For Richelieu, the activity of the state should be 'purely and exclusively, *raison d'état*, the "public interest", purified of all particular and private motives and of all materially egotistical constituents'[58] – thus subjecting even the monarch himself to the 'Goddess Reason' inherent to the state. The king cannot act in his private interest, but becomes 'a soldier in the service of the idea'.[59]

Something extraordinarily important happens when this is accepted. The king's interest *had* to contain the public interest, and in consequence, the balance of power would serve as an unbreakable link between the individual ruler and country, and the 'public interest of Europe'. Not only did the concept of interest make possible the assessment of states – it also established the view that the balance of power is always the objective *public* interest. The 'private' became linked with 'passions'; and the concept of 'interest' eventually split into private versus public interests, where the king's interest had to contain the *public* interest.

Rohan had defined interest as dynastic, pertaining to princes and their dealings with one another. In a further expansion of the concept, in England during and after the Civil War, domestic groups were included in the equation of interest. With time, 'England's interest' came to be associated less with princely intent versus other European powers, and now included domestic struggles, religious interests, and commerce.[60] The prince, in turn, represented not only the state, but also the different groups within it. After devastating religious wars and domestic sectarian conflicts, people had started arguing that just as various interests between princes could lead to stability abroad, the same advantage could come from the tension between interests in domestic politics.[61]

Rohan himself had emphasised the important connexions between order in the state, and order outside of the state. He had assigned prominence to England in ordering European affairs, arguing that the stability and order of the English state was of the utmost importance. England, geographically isolated as it was, was so strong that only domestic disorder could undermine it – it was a 'mighty animal which can never die except kill

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[57] *Ibid*; Pettit, Philip. 1997. *Republicanism: A Theory of Freedom and Government*. Oxford: Clarendon.
[58] Meinecke, *Machiavellism*, p. 167.
[59] *Ibid*, p. 168.
[60] Hirschman, *The Passions*, p. 37.
[61] *Ibid.*, p. 51.

itself'.[62] As a result, Rohan was cited in national quarrels to support arguments against factionalism, and the importance of national unity through principles like the 'balanced constitution' inspired, *inter alia,* by Harrington's *The Commonwealth of Oceana* and republican thought.[63] As the poet John Suckling, invoking Rohan, wrote, in a chaotic world, 'pure interest alone (said the Duke of Rohan) cannot err'.[64] Praise of the balance of power in the English constitution is found 'virtually in all Augustan writings on politics'.[65]

One analogy for the commonwealth, which was the public interest, was the body politic. The health of the body relied on a proper balance among its elements. This metaphor could emphasise the mixed constitution of the *res publica*.[66] The spirit of liberty was instantiated in the mixed and balanced constitution 'whose parts were so balanced that no one part depended on the other, while the spirit of faction was embodied in any threat against the ideal constitutional structure'.[67] Bolingbroke would make further links between history, domestic factional struggles in Britain, and the balance of power in Europe (see next chapter). Republican arguments transposed domestic political dynamics onto the international scene, through some basic principles. Like many other writers of the period, Bolingbroke would employ the distinction between 'public' versus 'private' interests when discussing the balance of power. At the core lies the notion of a public constitution – England's constitution, and that of Europe. Bolingbroke thus 'projected onto the international sphere the preoccupation with balance and limitations on power which characterized his image of the English constitution. The very terminology of the domestic equilibrium could be transferred to the international.'[68] Or we could say that the 'domestic' and 'international' were inseparable – and this implied continuum between

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[62] Rohan, *A Treatise,* p. 55, quoted in Gunn, p. 554.

[63] See Harrington, James and John Greville Agard Pocock (eds). 1992. *The Commonwealth of Oceana and a System of Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; also John Greville Agard Pocock. 1965. 'Machiavelli, Harrington and English Political Ideologies in the Eighteenth Century', *The William and Mary Quarterly* 22: 549–583.

[64] Suckling, John. 1640/1660. *A Letter from Sir John Suckling to Mr. Henry German, In the Beginning of the Late King's Parliament anno 1640*, quoted in Gunn, *Politics and the Public Interest,* p. 71.

[65] Kramnick, Isaac. 1968. *Bolingbroke & His Circle*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, p. 137.

[66] Knight et al., 'Commonwealth', p. 674.

[67] Kramnick, *Bolingbroke*, p. 25; see also Herbert Butterfield. 1944. *The Englishman and His History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 2, 86–87.

[68] Kramnick, *Bolingbroke*, p. 182.

national and international politics was to be a 'hallmark of English political writing' for many years to come.[69]

The expressed wish was to subordinate 'private' interests to the public, just as in domestic settings. Another result of the focus on the public interest, then, was that this covered, by definition, all the political units and their 'equality' and 'autonomy'. It was a widespread idea, underscored by the importance of the principle of the balance of power. This, however, was also a very useful resource if others could be convinced that your goals were indeed an expression of the common interest of Europe.[70] England, for one, succeeded in gaining acceptance for its role as a 'balancer'.

As 'the interest of England' became important, it was linked to the 'international' scene, as English stability prevented both 'civil war' and international instability. Following the national, and natural, interest was therefore inherently linked with, perhaps even constitutive of, international order and the balance of power. Interest was in itself stability, wherever it was to be found.

The tyranny of Universal Monarchy had, as seen, been associated with the rule of a despot, 'owning' his subjects, and disregarding laws and freedoms. Now interest shifted from denoting the position between passion and virtue, to being split into 'private' and 'public' interest. The good and objective national interest was public. This was a central conceptual pair in political rhetoric. 'Private interests' were not inherently bad, but should not dictate policy, as they did in the personal and tyrannical rule in Universal Monarchies. With this split between public and private interests, the 'public' had gained an inherent value. It was no longer solely a question of avoiding tyrannical rule, but of positively *protecting* the public order. The means of doing so was the balance of power. In the early 1700s Swift could write that the 'badness' of tyrannical rule is not the rule of a single individual, but precisely the fact that the balance of power is being broken.[71] An 'eternal rule in politics among every free people' was the balance of power. This balance of power

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[69] Kramnick, *Bolingbroke*, p. 183; Evans, Gary. 2011. 'Partisan Politics, history and the national interest (1700–1748)', pp. 55–92 in David Onnekink and Gijs Rommelse (eds) *Ideology and Foreign Policy in Early Modern Europe (1650–1750)*. Farnham: Ashgate.

[70] Note Carr's later criticism of British policy as being guided by an idea of 'harmony of interests'. Carr, Edward Hallet. [1946] 2001. *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919–1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations*. London: Macmillan.

[71] Swift, Jonathan. [1701] (1774). *The Works of Dr Jonathan Swift, Dean of St Patrick's, Dublin. Volume II*. London: John Donadlson *[sic]*, pp. 83–84.

applied inside as well as outside of the states. What happens when the balance of power breaks down

> gives the truest account of what is understood in the most ancient and approved Greek authors by the word *tyranny*, which is not meant for the seizing of the uncontrolled or absolute power into the hands of a single person (as many superficial men have grossly mistaken), but for the breaking of the balance by whatever hand, and leaving the power wholly in one scale; for *tyranny* and *usurpation* in a state are by no means confined to any number, as might easily appear from examples enough.

For Swift, tyranny is not necessarily the 'private' power of an individual prince, but the act of breaking the public order – *that* is the wrongness of Universal Monarchy, and that is the wrongness of any internal development leading to tyranny. This is a change from the previous separation between types of monarchical power. It is no longer merely about the 'possession' of properties and subjects, but the breaking of public order. The connexion between the public interest and Universal Monarchy and tyranny is made through introducing the balance as 'counter concept', thus enhancing its systemic quality. What threatened to break the balance and the public interest was 'private interests'.

'Real interest' should not be doubted, but 'private interest' and accomplices to Universal Monarchy, also at home, could corrupt it. The private interest in money and ambition of such accomplices of Universal Monarchy could undermine the public and objective interest. Warnings against 'arbitrary government' referred to the danger of universal monarchy, but also to its 'accomplices' in domestic politics, corruption and wealth – in the case of England, 'giving up the ancient constitution'.[72] Public business could be predicted, but this could be corrupted and undermined by bad counsel. To avoid bad counsel and to reveal the real public interest, reasoning in the open was paramount. Optimal reasoning in public took place in Parliament, not behind closed doors. During these developments, the Parliament became steadily more important in English political life.

This provided an important dividing line whereby things would be evaluated very differently according to their status as public or private. This offered a potent rhetorical addition to balance-of-power arguments: every failure to balance, it could now be argued,

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[72] Bolingbroke. 1932 [1735]. *Defence of the Treaty of Utrecht. Letters VI–VIII of The Study and Use of History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

served to confirm the dangers of 'private' interests, since the public interest 'could not lie'. In Holland, it was argued that it was 'the private interests' of the ruling De Witts that brought increased prospects of a French Universal Monarchy; and in Britain, the private interests of various English monarchs had prevented the nation from recognising the dangers that threatened it from the lack of balance on the continent. In addition, internal troubles came from an unbalanced constitution.

In short, new conceptions of interests provided rhetorical resources for promoting the balance of power as a counter-concept to Universal Monarchy, as well as providing crucial links to other central debates of the time, lending legitimacy to the concept. To separate private from public interest, putatively neutral and external descriptions were required. For this, in turn, there must be something that could be assigned an objective quality – and that was the balance of power. In this sense, the objective quality of the balance of power came about by linking it to other concerns, such as the republican distinction between public and private interest**.**

With the extrapolation of such arguments to the international sphere, the 'liberties of Europe' were, eventually, to be protected from Universal Monarchy by the balance of power, just as domestic liberties were protected from tyranny by a balanced constitution. The public interest was what was considered objectively good for the state, and for Europe as a whole.

The connexion made between the domestic and the balance of power foreshadows arguments over independence and intervention in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.[73] Eventually, the debate over the balance of power was to move from balance concerning dominance, to balance concerning interference – that is, 'liberty from'.[74] Should the balance protect small states or nations? Could domestic regime type affect the European balance? Could one then legitimately intervene in the name of the balance? The balance came to function as 'inter-state policing': good government is necessary also in states

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[73] See Chapter 6, 7 in particular.
[74] See Berlin, Isaiah. 1958. 'Two Concepts of Liberty' in Isaiah Berlin (ed.) *Four Essays on Liberty.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

other than one's own, in order to uphold the balance, something that culminated in Vienna in 1815.[75]

Emergence in practice: from the Anglo–Dutch Wars to the balance of power

The balance of power concept did not develop due to some internal logic of its own, but emerged as a concept through contingent links to other concerns. Contingent circumstances and concrete policy debates in England and elsewhere influenced its development, and were in turn influenced by it. National differences provided an important practical context for the development of the concept, so resisting Universal Monarchy by means of the balance of power had its roots in ideal notions of a polity's internal constitution from the beginning, particularly based on republican arguments.

I have indicated how the threat of Universal Hegemony had come to be associated with Spain. By the 1650s, however, there was no obvious potential hegemon on the horizon.[76] With Spanish power clearly waning, the challenge was to identify the new aspirant to Universal Monarchy. At the time, England and the Dutch Provinces enjoyed extensive mutual trade, but were also fierce competitors. Today's balance of power theory would probably predict that England and the Dutch would join forces against France.[77] This did not happen. Instead, Charles II allied with France against the Dutch.

Supporters of the Restored monarchy, the Anglican Royalists, were convinced that the Dutch were turning into a new Universal Monarchy based on *trade.* After the 30 Years' War, it had become clear that the power of the state depended on economic resources.[78] Even if England at the time saw no immediate *economic* gains to be made from fighting the Dutch, their power and 'natural interest' in trade expansion might affect England negatively in the long-term future. Even the trading companies supported the war. War was not for commercial gains in this instance, but for protecting the common interest**,** based on resistance to Universal Monarchy. As France was a true monarchy (not a *monarchie signeuriale*), the faithless Protestants of the United Provinces were singled out

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[75] Foucault, Michel. [1978] 2004. Security, Territory, Population. Lectures at the Collège de France 1977–1978. London: Palgrave, p. 315.
[76] Simms, *Three Victories*, p. 29.
[77] Schroeder, 'Historical Reality, p. 133.
[78] Pincus, 'Popery', p. 19.

as the heirs to Spain.[79] These 'perfidious, self-ended neighbours'[80] were 'of the former King of Spain's mind'.[81] The Dutch had 'an immoderate desire to engross the whole traffic of the Universe',[82] and wanted to subject 'the trade and treasures of all countries and nations upon earth to their unlimited East-India *arbitrary government*'.[83] On the seas they were what 'the Great Turk' was on land.[84] They were taking English fish, capturing English colonies in the East Indies, massacring the English in the process.[85]

Additionally, the ruling John de Witt, who led the Dutch Republicans, seemed committed to the overthrow of the English monarchy. He had fallen from Protestant virtue, and the English associated him with secular materialism instead of godly virtue. De Witt bargained with France for a deal for dividing the Spanish monarchy (which failed). France in turn repeatedly urged England to oppose the Dutch. As late as 1670, Colbert de Croissy, the French ambassador to England, had argued that the King should be 'dissatisfied' with the Dutch; playing the royalist card, de Croissy argued that 'the Time was come of being revenged upon a Nation that had so little Respect for Kings'.[86]

England went to war with Holland in 1652–54, and the English king Charles II went to war again in 1665–67, but now suffered terrible losses to the Dutch. In 1667, however, the War of Devolution started where Louis XIV, who had become King of France in 1661, occupied the Spanish Netherlands, claiming Spanish inheritance rights by an obscure Brabant law.[87] Alarmed by France, Britain and Holland ended their war, and allied with Sweden in the Triple Alliance of 1668. Louis XIV negotiated peace at Aix-la-Chapelle, but continued working to break the Triple Alliance (in which he was to succeed in 1670, allying with England).

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[79] *Ibid*, p. 22.

[80] Andrewes, William. 1665. *Newes from the Starrs, or, An ephemeris for the year of man's redemption by Jesus Christ, 1666*. London: Tho. Ratcliffe, quoted in Pincus, 'Popery', p. 28.

[81] Downing to Clarendon, quoted in Pincus, 'Popery', p. 28.

[82] Clarendon to Parliament, quoted in Pincus, 'Popery', p. 24.

[83] Darrel, John. 1665. *A True and Compendious Narration (or Second Part of Amboyna)*. London: T. Mabb, for Nathaniel Brooke, pp. 9–10, quoted in Pincus, 'Popery', p. 24, emphasis added.

[84] *Ibid*, pp. 34–36, quoted in Pincus, 'Popery', p. 26.

[85] In the infamous Amboyna massacre in 1623, where a group of traders from the English East India Company were allegedly decapitated on orders from the local Dutch governor. Basset, D. K. 1960. 'The "Amboyna Massacre" of 1623', *Journal of Southeast Asian History* 1: 1–19.

[86] Parliament, Great Britain. 1742. *The History and Proceedings of the House of Lords, From the Restoration in 1660, to the Present Time, Volume the First, from 1660, to 1697*, 'Tenth Session of the Second Parliament'. London: Ebenezer Timberland, p. 105n†.

[87] Luard, Evan. 1992. *The Balance of Power: The System of International Relations, 1648–1815*. London: Macmillan, p. 62.

Sir William Temple is often considered the architect behind this Triple Alliance, together with the Dutch Jan de Witt. Temple had argued for the idea of a European system, based on the balance of power. He also warned about the dangers of the predominance of France, now on the offensive against the Spanish possessions. The allies in fact disguised their triple alliance as serving a mediating role between Spain and France, as Charles II still wanted to pursue a pro-French policy. Still, they had secretly agreed that the alliance could employ force against France to secure peace with Spain. In the end, however, England, Holland and Sweden used the alliance to bargain a deal with France, at the expense of Spain. The role of Britain as a 'balancer' in a system of different polities was foreshadowed in Temple's design – a view that would be widespread in England and, importantly, also amongst *other* countries for decades to come. That England should 'hold the balance' really meant suggesting that England should assume the leadership of Europe. It was possible to suggest this, even for countries other than England, because it was framed in balance-of-power terms: In focus was not a preponderant Universal Monarchy-style leadership, *but leadership in balancing*. Other powers did not speak of this as a threat, but rather almost as a public service. The balance of power made England's ascendancy possible.

In 1668, Temple argued, 'since we only draw a war upon ourselves by desiring a peace, to endeavour on the contrary to draw on the peace by making all the appearances of desiring a war' should be the idea, and the King asked Parliament for funds to strengthen Britain's forces.[88] At the time, however, the balance of power was not yet a 'concept' or 'commonplace' used by policymakers or in debates, so Temple's arguments stand as an early instance of using the balance of power against France, and promoting the idea of England as balancer.[89] This arguably gave rise to the Whig view on the balance of power.[90] But – where did this come from?

Temple knew the Imperial diplomat Franz Paul von Lisola. They were both later to serve as advisors to the Dutch-born King William III of England, known to be exceedingly

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[88] Sheehan, Michael. 1996. *The Balance of Power. History & Theory*. London: Routledge, p. 41.
[89] Sheehan, *Balance of Power*, p. 42.
[90] Bruce, John. 1796. *Review of the Events and Treaties Which Established the Balance of Power in Europe*. Publisher s.n., p. 49.

preoccupied with the balance of power.[91] In the same year as the war ended, in 1667, Lisola published a highly influential pamphlet, *Bouclier d'Estat et de Justice* (The Buckler of State and Justice).[92] Lisola was also involved in negotiations and contact between the English government, the French, and the Austrian Emperor Leopold.[93] The English state even supported the translation of his pamphlet into English.[94] It was mostly a juridical pamphlet, but also dealt with the impact of the wars on 'the interests of the Christian princes'. This supplied a crucial link between Rohan and later writings on the balance of power.

At the time, the Dutch (and, by some, the Habsburgs) were seen as the main threat to England and Europe. Lisola's *Bouclier d'Estat et de Justice* was 'the most influential political pamphlet published in the struggle now beginning against Louis XIV'.[95] This was conceivably the most successful PR campaign in early modern Europe, and a key event in the emergence of the balance of power as a concept, as it was successfully linked, for the first time, to what was seen a pressing concern of national interest.[96] After the 1670s, policy debates increasingly concerned the balance of power.

Lisola argued for Rohan's conception of the balance of power, but had one complaint – that Rohan had always used the balance of power in the wrong way. Lisola's innovation was *to use the Frenchman Rohan's concept as a weapon back against France itself.* Lisola tried to divert Europe's attention away from the Habsburgs, Austria and Spain, and towards France, by using the balance of power. If the balance had been employed forcefully and correctly, Lisola argued, then Europe would have enjoyed 'd'une profonde

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[91] See Troost, Wout. 2011. '"To restore and preserve the liberty of Europe": William III's ideas on foreign policy', pp. 283–304 in David Onnekink and Gijs Rommelse, *Ideology and Foreign Policy in Early Modern Europe*. Farnham: Ashgate.

[92] Lisola, Franz Paul von. (1667). *Bouclier D'estat et de Justice, Contre Le dessein manifestement découvert de la Monarchie Universelle, Sous le vain pretexte des pretentions de la Reyne de France*. No publisher indicated.

[93] A 'middle-man' despised by the French, see Keith Feiling. 1930. *British Foreign Policy 1660–1672*. London: Cass.

[94] Sir Daniel Fleming's Archives reveal that the English version of the book could be bought already in 1667. Historical Manuscripts Commission. 1890. *Twelfth report, appendix, part VII. The manuscripts of S.H. Le Fleming, Esq., of Rydal Hall* London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office. Command Papers; Reports of Comissioners, C.5889-IV. 19th Century House of Commons Sessional Papers. p. 377.

[95] Schmidt, Helmut Dan. 1966. 'The establishment of "Europe" as a Political Expression', *The Historical Journal* 9: 172–178, p. 173.

[96] Part of the same campaign was Anon. 1668 *A Free conference touching the present state of England both at home and abroad, in order to the designs of France*. London: R. Royston.

tranquillité'.[97] The Habsburgs, Lisola now argued, were lovers of peace. Charles V had in fact *not* aspired to Universal Monarchy – that was a lie spread by French diplomats. It was *France* that had long been plotting Universal Monarchy, and France was a threat to the liberties of Europe, commerce, and religion.[98] The European powers had deviated from the 'reason of state'.

Concepts are linked together not because they in some way naturally belong together, but because they are actively tied together in specific instances. Lisola, then, *linked the distinction between Universal Monarchy and the public interest of Europe to a policy of opposing France, all under the umbrella of the balance of power.* These associations resonated well in England, and Lisola gained a rather broad readership there.

In the same year as Lisola's pamphlet was spread in Britain, I find the first mention of the balance of power touching on the relationship between England and France. This was in a brief from Arlington to Sir William Temple. Arlington mentioned the importance of 'keeping […] the balance even between the two crowns'. The following year, Temple himself wrote that opposition to France was necessary to secure the Balance of Power. [99]

Further French aggression against the Netherlands followed in 1670, and a French–Dutch war ensued in 1672, culminating in Louis XIV invading the United Provinces. In the wake of the invasion, the Republic collapsed, de Witt was executed, and William III assumed the position of *Stadhouder*. Yet again, however, England joined the *French* in the war *against* the Dutch with its rebuilt fleet. However, the balance of power had now become a rhetorical resource to be employed in public debates. It was no longer just a question of a single threat from a Dutch Universal Monarchy.

An anonymous Austrian called out to England to fight against French power, instead of the Dutch. The author tried to convince England that the general principle of the balance of power in this case would benefit England's own interests.[100] In a 1671 pamphlet, from the Spanish Netherlands, we find the same argument that Europe's freedom depends on England. Both Spain and France, it argues, are seeking the alliance of England. However,

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[97] Lisola, *Bouclier*, p. 321. '…& fi elle avoit esté pratiquée avec toute la vigueur & la prudence qui estoit necessaire pour la render utile, l'Europe joüiroit aujourd'huy d'une profonde tranquillité'.
[98] Schmidt, 'The establishment', p. 173.
[99] Kaeber, Ernst. 1907. *Die Idee des Europäischen Gleichgewichts*. Berlin: Verlag von Alexander Duncker, p. 53.
[100] *Ibid,.* p. 50.

for the sake of the balance of power, they should side with the weakest part. As interest cannot lie, there should be no doubt about what to do: 'Henry VII held the balance between the two crowns, Elizabeth followed the same principle; just as Jacob, Charles I did the same, and also the current ruler has let that lead to the Triple Alliance and the Peace of Aachen […] that means, to follow England's interest!'[101]

In the same year, I also find the first mention of the balance of power in an English pamphlet. The author employs the concept to oppose the war the government was waging against the Dutch. England's freedom, he argues, is inextricably linked with that of Europe – and Holland in particular – and the balance of power is the means of protecting both.[102] In 1673, Temple followed up by proposing an alliance with Spain to maintain 'the true Balance of Christendom'.[103]

Another pamphlet, possibly also authored by Lisola, was published in 1673.[104] This addresses the political consequences of the French-English wars against Holland. This anti-French pamphlet was aimed at England. Directing his words to Charles II, the author argues that the only way to achieve public security in Europe is to 'hold the Powers of Europe in a balance'. The war against Holland, he argues, is wrong and no good can come of it for England. He appeals to the Dutch as well, telling them that the French aggression is a threat to English liberties. The Dutch, therefore, had better ally themselves with England against France, to preserve themselves. France, he insists, aims to rule the world. All the Powers – particularly Sweden and Portugal – must acknowledge what is right, as it 'has been a principle of states at any time, to balance the states of Europe in such a way that none of them come to such a size, that makes the others fear it'.[105] In 1674, Parliament insisted on peace with the Dutch.

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[101] Anon. 1671. *Le politique desinteressé o uses raisonnements justes sur les affaires presents de l'Europe*. Cologne: s.n., quoted in Kaeber, *Die Idee*, p. 51.

[102] Manley, Thomas. 1689. *The Present State of Christendom examined, and found languishing, occasioned by the Greatness of the French Monarchy*. Publisher: s.n., quoted in Kaeber, *Die Idee*, p. 55. Although published in1689 (and reissued in 1744), the pamphlet was 'wrote upon the occasion of the House of Commons vote to raise 80 000 l. to equip a fleet for the year 1671'.

[103] Temple, Sir William. 1673. 'To the Duke of Ormond, Written in October, 1673, Upon his Grace's desiring me to give him my Opinion, What was to be done in that Conjuncture', pp. 229–239 in Sir William Temple, *The Works of Sir William Temple, Bar', Volume the Second*. London: J. Clarke et al., p. 238.

[104] Anon. 1673. *Englands Appeal from the Private Cabal at White-Hall to the Great Council of the Nation, the Lords and Commons in Parliament Assembled*. London: s.n. This pamphlet, written by 'a true lover of his country', has variously been attributed to Sir William Coventry, Peter du Moulin, John Trevor, and Lisola himself (in the Wing short-title catalogue).

[105] *Ibid*; Kaeber, *Die Idee*, pp. 50–51

In the 1660s and 70s, winning England over to the anti-French side was an important objective,[106] and appeals to a balance of power that encompassed the natural interests of England and Europe as well as resistance to Universal Monarchy were introduced as a powerful rhetorical resource to this end. With the arguments presented in terms of the balance of power, an anti-French policy was facilitated by appealing to common interests. The debates at this point, now concerning the balance of power, were to frame subsequent debates about England's position, the 'French problem', and the European system. It now concerned more than only commercial or military strength – the future of Europe was in the balance.

After the third Anglo–Dutch war in 1672–1674, public opinion was shifting, from supporting the wars against the Dutch, to seeing France as the imminent danger.[107] This was not based solely on the protection of Protestantism, but also, importantly, on the concept of the balance of power.[108] After the departure of the De Witts in 1672, there were many voices urging an alliance with the Dutch against France. The publication of anti-French pamphlets increased – appealing to England and the Dutch to fight France in the name of the balance of power. The Dutch, rumour would have it, were already negotiating with the French. What was feared was a separate deal, leaving England alone in the fight against France. However, as was argued in Parliament in 1677 in the context of Universal Monarchy, the Dutch were interested in repressing the French, just as England and 'they knew their interest', so if England should join the Dutch, 'they cannot find one Syllable of Reason to desert the Common Cause'.[109] Natural interest, reason, and the fight against Universal Monarchy were linked in the balance of Europe as the public interest of Europe. 'Private interest' – the opposite of the public interest of Europe encapsulated in the balance of power – was seen as the reason why England had been fighting the United Provinces instead of the real enemy – France. France's designs had been supported by 'the *private interest* of the two De Witts' which 'hindered that common-wealth from being on her guard, as early as she ought to have been, against

[106] Anderson, Matthew Smith. 1993. *The Rise of Modern Diplomacy 1450–1919*. London: Longman, p. 157.

[107] Pincus, Steven C. A. 1995. 'From Butterboxes to Wooden Shoes: The Shift in English Popular Sentiment from Anti-Dutch to Anti-French in the 1670s', *The Historical Journal* 38: 333–361; Dehio, *The Precarious Balance*, p. 78.

[108] See Pincus, 'Butterboxes', p. 334.

[109] Parliament, Great Britain. 1742. *The History and Proceedings of the House of Commons from the Restoration to the Present Time. Vol. I,* 'The Sixteenth Session of the Second Parliament'. London: Richard Chandler, p. 263.

France'.[110] Destroying the mutual gains by trade, the wars had only made France more powerful commercially.[111] France had duped England.

Francophobia was prevalent in England as result of France being seen as a potential Universal Monarchy.[112] The French had infiltrated the English nation. French dress, manners, fashions, music, plays, fruit – all were accursed witchcraft. By playing on the concept of Universal Monarchy, some even suggested that France was promoting a 'Universal Fashion'.[113] The Papists had become so numerous in England because a 'great Prince aspiring to the Western Monarchy, and a great protector of the Popish interest' supported them.[114] As France represented Catholic Christendom, and often acted on behalf of *christianité*, its opponent increasingly started using the term 'Europe'. The religious denominator was overtaken by the new term 'Europe'.[115] The political collective was no longer Christendom, but the natural community of Europe, linked with the balance of Power in the defence of its 'liberties'.

Whether Louis XIV *really* intended to establish a Universal Monarchy, or whether he was only trying to secure his own borders, is not particularly relevant here. The fact is that the public rhetoric was increasingly geared towards opposing the French threat of Universal Monarchy by appealing to the balance of power.

The De Witts had been hostile towards England. With them out of the picture, and the Orange King William and the balance of power in, the rhetoric altered. The pamphleteer Henry Stubbe, formerly a staunch supporter of the anti-Dutch policy,[116] had changed his rhetoric. He now invoked ancient history to argue the soundness of opposing a growing power such as France. Not only did he now argue for a balance of power – he even justified his very own change of mind with the balance of power: as European politics had shown, the balance of power 'made it esteemed lawful and wise to change alliances,

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[110] Bolingbroke, *Defence*, p. 37, emphasis added.
[111] Pincus, 'Butterboxes', p. 341.
[112] *Ibid*, p. 351.
[113] Pincus, 'The English Debate', pp. 47–48.
[114] Henry Powle in debate in Parliament, Saturday, 23 October, 1675. Parliament, Great Britain. (1763). *Debates of the House of Commons, From the Year 1667 to the Year 1694, Volume III*. London: D. Henry and R. Cave, p. 334; Pincus, 'Butterboxes', p. 352.
[115] Schmidt, 'The establishment'.
[116] As the title of his earlier pamphlet indicates: Stubbe, Henry. 1672. *A Justification of the Present War against the United Netherlands. Wherein the Declaration of His Majesty is Vindicated, and the War proved to be Just, Honourable, and Necessary*. London: Henry Hills and John Starkey.

according as either side declines'.[117] The war against the Dutch was also against England's natural interest, which was based on trade and the seas, it being an island.

The Commons in Parliament were furious. They opposed Charles II throughout the 1670s with what was, relative to context, very strong language. In 1678, it was argued *directly to the King* that refusing the advice of Parliament was due to 'those misrepresentations of our proceedings, which have been suggested to your Majesty, by some particular persons, in a clandestine way'.[118]

In the 1680s, France was again seen as threatening Holland. This was now considered a Protestant bulwark against French threats, and Charles II was seen as neglecting it and allying with the enemy. Parliament again limited funding for the king's wars. With the accession of James II to the throne in 1685, tolerance was the order of the day. A Catholic himself, he opened up careers to Catholics and other 'dissenters'. Many, however, saw this as a pro-Catholic policy, and as running France's errand. Huguenot refugees from France joined with the opposition, to defend the Protestant interest and denounce the king.

Parliament was suspended, but the discussions and debates only moved elsewhere. Pamphlets flourished in the public sphere, and fomented fears of popery and universal monarchy.[119] It was argued that France would subject first the Netherlands, then Germany, to a 'complete Conquest of that branch of the miserable House of Austria'.[120] It was now a question of the 'holding and casting of the balance of Europe, and Protection of the Protestant Religion'.[121] 'Now, because there is no separate kingdom or state in Europe sufficient to balance the weighty body of the French monarchy', an anonymous pamphleteer wrote in 1680, 'there must be a new fond of power and interest raised up, sufficient to keep the balance of Europe from being called back into a chaos, out of which

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[117] Stubbe, Henry. 1673. *The history of the United Provinces of Achaia collected in Latine by the learned Jacobus Gothofredus; and rendred into English, with some additions, by Henry Stubbe.* London: Andrew Clark, quoted in Pincus, 'Butterboxes', p. 349.
[118] Bruce, *Review of the Events*, p. 60.
[119] Simms, *Three Victories*, pp. 33–35.
[120] Anon. 1810 [1680]. 'Discourses Upon the Modern Affairs of Europe, Tending to Prove that the Illustrious French Monarchy may be reduced to terms of Greater Moderation', The Hague: s.n., pp. 336–353 in *The Harleian Miscellany; or, a Collection of Scarce, Curious and Entertaining Pamphlets and Tracts, Vol. VIII*. London: Robert Dutton, p. 341.
[121] *Ibid*, p. 342.

the French may form an *universal monarchy*'.[122] England, having ever kept 'close to that righteous maxim of holding the balance of Europe',[123] would have to join the struggle.

James II sought to supress any discussion of European affairs, and was seen to adopt a French style of government – forming a standing army, contracting papists, and subduing Parliament and the 'public'. The revocation in 1685 of the Edict of Nantes, which had granted rights to French Protestants (Huguenots) now fleeing to England in growing numbers – did not help the situation. In the Dutch Republic, the Dutch *Stadhouder* William III (William of Orange) led a coalition opposing Louis XIV, while England remained passive. The English therefore welcomed William III's intervention and 'revolution' in 1688. At the invitation of Whig peers, he landed in England to accede to the throne, as he was married to the daughter of James II, Mary. James fled the country.[124] William III, whom Lisola and Temple had counselled, now asserted that England had long been prevented from having 'the share in the Balance of Europe that naturally belongs to it'.[125] By 1688, then, the battle for the Balance of Europe was seen as being fought in England. Charles Davenant later explained that 1688 happened because both the Dutch and England were opposing the growth of the French Monarchy.[126] The Glorious Revolution of 1688 bound the interest of England together with that of Europe: it was not only about 'what European absolutism might do to English freedoms, but what England could do for the "liberties of Europe", that is the balance of power'.[127] Changing England was necessary to preserve Europe, and preserving the European balance was necessary to protect England's interests and freedoms.

In addition, to foster loyalty to the new Orange King, his predecessors were denounced for having betrayed and destroyed the balance of power in Europe.[128] An English historical myth of continuous balance-of-power policy was constructed, but so was a history of failures to maintain that balance. Schroeder suggests that these wars against the Dutch discredited the balance of power.[129] However, at that time, the 'balance of power' was not a prevalent concept – it was not widely used in political struggles. The concept

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[122] *Ibid*, p. 343, emphasis added.
[123] *Ibid*, p. 348.
[124] Simms, *Three Victories*, pp. 36–37.
[125] Quoted in Schmidt, 'The establishment', p. 175.
[126] Pincus, 'The English Debate'.
[127] Simms, *Three Victories*, p. 37.
[128] Schmidt, 'The establishment', p.176.
[129] Schroeder, 'Historical Reality', pp. 134–135.

began to become a commonplace in England just as opinion was turning against France. With pamphlet wars emphasising the need to balance France, the retrospective story told was that successive English kings had failed to balance against France, betraying the 'age-old' concept of the balance of power. It seemed that the French had been seeking Universal Monarchy all along – this was now seen as credible. Even the Dutch wars themselves were blamed on a French divide-and-rule strategy to achieve Universal Monarchy, as the French had been 'mediating' between England and Holland.[130]

As Bolingbroke would later ask, why did the princes of Europe not foresee the changes in the balance? Cromwell in England, Bolingbroke answers, might have perceived it – but 'he was induced by reasons of *private interest* to act against the general interest of Europe',[131] joining with Spain against France, instead of joining the weaker parts against the stronger. The *real* balance of power was not recognised, because it was corrupted by private interests. Also in Holland, private interests obscured the true interests of Holland and of Europe. Holland's 'true interest', he wrote, 'was to have used her utmost endeavours to unite closely and intimately with England on the restoration of King Charles. She did the very contrary. John de Wit […] governed. The interest of his party was to keep the house of Orange down; he courted therefore the friendship of France, and neglected that of England' – and 'the pique of merchants became the pique of nations'.[132]

It was the failure of recent English policy, not of the balance of power concept, that was at issue. Charles II had not recognised the threat of Universal Monarchy shifting from Spain to France, and had done nothing to preserve the balance,[133] but rather the contrary. He had sent troops to Portugal, seen as undermining Spain, which many English now considered a potential *ally* to restrain French preponderance. Moreover, Charles had sold Dunkirk to France – an important bulwark against France on the continent. As Lord Townsend and Mr. Poyntz argued in Parliament, 'to have a good barrier against France in the Netherlands, is as necessary for us as it is, to preserve a balance of power on the continent, and to prevent all Europe's being enslaved by France'.[134] Charles had used the money from this sale to wage war in Portugal. He had gone to war with the Dutch in 1664–67, and in 1672–74, in alliance with France. This was seen as catastrophic and as

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[130] Luard, *The Balance of Power,* p. 23; Dehio, *The Precarious Balance*, p. 76.
[131] Bolingbroke, *Defence*, p. 31 emphasis added.
[132] *Ibid*., pp. 36–37.
[133] Simms, *Three Victories*, p. 30.
[134] in Bruce, *Review of The Events*, p. 63.

isolating England.[135] As Baxter writes,[136] alliances at the time were often termed 'social wars', and these wars were seen to have failed. However, 'the balance' was soon to replace 'social wars', becoming an even more explicitly 'social' and systemic concept. That substitution, and the accompanying linkages to the debates of the time, made a difference. Not only could the balance of power attribute blame and explain the failures of anti-Dutch policy: when combined with opposition to the concept of Universal Monarchy, and promoting the concept of the public interest, these resources could legitimise the shift in policy towards opposing France. This also inaugurated a new English policy of intervention on the continent as a 'balancer', despite – or perhaps because of – the failed Dutch wars.

First, by being linked in debates with the concepts of Universal Monarchy and the Public Interest, the Balance of Power had become a commonplace rhetorical resource that could be employed to rally support. With William III, the balance could be turned into political practice. Oddly enough, there appear to be fewer mentions of the balance of power in the pamphlets associated with the wars waged by William III.

Second, as the balance of power had become firmly established, it seems that the balance of power was not so much needed as a justification for English foreign policy, but was used more for *domestic* purposes in internal party struggles, precisely because it had become so commonplace. As I will show in the next chapter, debates over the balance of power now came to focus on its implementation and its usefulness, particularly regarding the Tory/Whig struggle over whether to intervene on the continent in its name. That is, one started to speak from 'within' the discourse of the balance of power, debating implementation, not principles.[137] This indicates how all the preceding rhetorical work had firmly established the balance of power as a concept to be used in solving practical policy problems.

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[135] Simms, *Three Victories*, p. 31.
[136] Baxter, Stephen M. 1966. *William III and the Defense of European Liberty 1650–1702*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, quoted in Schroeder, 'Historical Reality', p. 135.
[137] Jackson, *Civilizing the Enemy*, p. 188.

Conclusions

The 1670s and 1680s were the decades when 'balance of power' was introduced – albeit presented as being an English tradition dating 600 years back in time.[138] It was now a struggle against universal monarchy and for the balance of power, not a continuation of the religious conflicts of the Thirty Years War: England should protect Protestantism, but not in a crusade. Even if England should protect the Protestant countries, 'the general end of holding the balance of Europe is Universal'.[139]

Lisola's propaganda campaign helped to foreground the balance of power as a central weapon in the fight against Universal Monarchy, combined with awareness of the real interest of England. Richard Temple wrote that foreign alliances are for the purpose of securing 'the balance of power & obviating the designs [for universal monarchy]'.[140] The pamphlet campaign rhetorically linked various concepts that resonated well with the English experiences into a whole: the balance of power. When the balance of power rhetoric used by Lisola was turned against Louis XIV and his expansion, this forced the English King and English policymakers to explain the alliance with France, and the wars with the Dutch.[141] Continuing the war became difficult to justify in terms of a fight against 'universal monarchy', as it was now clearly not in the 'nation's interest' which, it was argued, 'is laid aside for private interest'.[142] Publically legitimate reasons were needed. The introduction of the balance of power played an important part in this, as it was connected to 'true interest'– and this true interest was now depicted, not as short-term self-interest, but as entrenched in a larger, public European interest. Interest is here a historical product, not an *a priori* assumption. France was identified as a threat to the balance of power, and the balance of power was what legitimated this policy shift.

From this implicit critique of government and king, it followed that England must be governed according to English customs. Further, debates had to be made public, not private, as the public interest is what was to be served in England, as in Europe as a whole. The language of interests was used to suggest wars against the Dutch or the

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[138] Anon., *Discourses Upon the Modern Affairs*, p 351.
[139] *Ibid*, p. 343.
[140] Temple, Sir Richard. 1667? *An essay upon government*, quoted in Pincus, 'Butterboxes', p. 353.
[141] Pincus, 'Butterboxes', p. 357.
[142] Lord Cavendish in Parliament, Oct. 31, 1673. Cobbett, William and Thomas Curson Hansard. 1808. *Cobbet's Parliamentary History of England. From the Norman Conquest, in 1066, to the Year 1803, Vol. IV., 1660–1688*. London: T. C. Hansard, p. 594.

French. Just as in the 'fundamental law' of the balanced constitution, there could be no universal rule, because of the differing natural interests of nations.[143] This, in turn, elevated the importance of Parliament – since interest cannot lie, a nation cannot act contrary to its interest in the representative assembly. Parliament was the place for public business. In short, 'foreign policy' would have to promote the real national interest, which could only be arrived at in public debates in Parliament. And, true enough, 'never again would an English Monarch go to war without consulting national opinion in Parliament'.[144] In the next chapter I show how, as political party conflicts became more prominent in England, embattled elites placed the balance of power centre-stage in their increasingly public debates over international political developments.

By focusing on an analytical balance of power theory (as does Schroeder), one may forget that even if the IR Realist world did not exist in the late 17th century, the balance of power did.[145] One may also forget that the balance of power was a concept used extensively also in domestic disputes and debates in England – even more so after the Glorious Revolution of 1688, when the balance of power finally had been 'secured' in practice by William III.

Schroeder is indeed correct in noting that whatever may seem to accord with predictive Balance of Power Theory were largely unintended and contingent outcomes.[146] However, the single act of 'opposing France' is not the issue, but the specific trajectory by which France came to be opposed.[147] When we examine the balance of power as historical 'category of practice', it does not make sense to present contingent historical facts as *opposed to* the balance of power, or the balance of power as *opposed to* domestic concerns.[148] It was contingency and agency that helped to stabilise it as a concept, as well as to change it. Domestic concerns were intimately entangled with the balance of power – and, ultimately, also the concerns of Europe.

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[143] Defoe, Daniel. 1689. *Reflections Upon the Late Great Revolution Written by a Lay-hand in the Country for the Satisfaction of Some Neighbours*. London: Ric. Chiswell; see also Manuel Schonhorn. 1991. Defoe's Politics. Parliament, power, kingship, and Robinson Crusoe. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 21–42.
[144] Pincus, 'Butterboxes', p. 361.
[145] Guzzini, Stefano. 1998. *Realism in International Relations and International Political Economy: The Continuing Story of a Death Foretold*. London: Routledge, p. 227.
[146] Schroeder, 'Historical Reality', p. 137.
[147] See Jackson, *Civilizing the Enemy.*
[148] Schroeder, 'Historical Reality', p. 139.

In this chapter, I have emphasised the emergence of the balance of power concept as a generally accepted principle. The next chapter will focus on struggles over the *implications* of it in context, once relatively stabilised. I will argue that struggles over the concept of the balance of power played a crucial part in enabling the Peace of Utrecht, as well as in shaping the settlement and its outcomes.

CHAPTER 3:

Fixing the Balance: Britain, Austria, and the Utrecht Settlement

In this chapter, I argue that balance of power rhetoric contributed to the differentiation of various polities within a European international system, at the expense of dynastic politics. I hold that domestic policy debates in Britain shaped outcomes at Utrecht, and the rhetorical resources available to Austria and others. Austria's influence on their international environment depended on historically contingent designs of domestic politics and policymakers, and a particular conceptualisation of the international system. How and when the balance of power emerged as a concept, how and when rhetorical links were forged and stabilised in Britain and internationally, and how and when one had 'invested' in the concept – all had effects during the Utrecht negotiations. Austria's range of policy options at Utrecht were narrowed because of previous investment in the balance-of-power concept. Due to contingent developments in British politics, the concept and the implications connected to it had been partly reconstructed, and that prevented Austria from using the balance in ways that had been available earlier. The Austrians were left rhetorically exposed. It was therefore the very *deployment of* the balance of power *concept* that was the fundamental element for the construction of a post-war international order.

The previous chapter took the story up to the time of the Glorious Revolution in 1688. William III had gathered an alliance of England, Holland, and Sweden, and from 1688 to 1697 fought against Louis XIV's France in the Nine Years' War, or the War of the Grand Alliance. This war was to terminate in the Utrecht Conference – a 'prominent landmark

[…] in the landscape of modern history',[1] repeatedly mentioned in contemporary writings on the balance of power because that concept was included in some of the treaty texts. Still, I will argue that this inclusion of the concept in treaties does not exhaust the importance of the balance of power in this period. However, some have acknowledged how Utrecht helped to establish the idea of a 'system' based on legitimacy or consensus.

Ian Clark argues that Utrecht marked the acceptance of the balance of power as a 'legitimacy principle' by international society.[2] Clark, writing from an English School perspective, is explicitly concerned with the legitimising function of the balance of power as a concept. Narrow self-interest could not explain the Treaty of Utrecht, he claims, but what made it possible was the willingness to give reasonable ground to others. However, 'self-interest' is also a historical phenomenon, and contrasting it to some supposedly liberal/benign motivation to restrain oneself and give reasons to others (as if reason-giving were not always a feature of the social world) removes power considerations from the role of rhetoric. Furthermore, Clark does not answer the crucial question of how conceptions of interest and the establishment of consensus on the balance of power came about – except for the balance of power, in the analytical sense, 'in itself' potentially making this possible.[3] To say that the balance of power led to the 'balance of power' being legitimated is a rather implausible (and tautological) thesis about the exact correspondence between a modern theoretical concept and historical actors' perceptions of their social environment.

Andreas Osiander attributes the success of Utrecht to the reliance on the balance of power as a 'consensus notion' in the international system. He argues that 'the international system has no physical reality. Ultimately, the international system exists exclusively in the mind. It is what people think it is. It is a mental construct, resting entirely on shared assumptions.'[4] Osiander aims to look at this international system 'not primarily in terms of what the participating actors do, but in terms of certain fundamental assumptions relating to the structure of the system'.[5] He posits that some basic structural principles 'determine the structure of the system rather than the day-to-day policies of the actors that

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[1] Clark, Ian. 2005. *Legitimacy in International Society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p 72.
[2] *Ibid*, p. 81.
[3] *Ibid*, pp. 71–84.
[4] Osiander, Andreas. 1994. *The States System of Europe 1640–1990: Peacemaking and the Conditions of International Stability*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 4.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 5.

make up the system'[6] and the existence of an 'abstract consciousness of the system that was independent of participation'.[7] Since the stability of the system requires common frames of reference and common expectations, 'consensus principles' regarding the structural principles are crucial.[8]

In such a theoretical framework, systemic variables, embedded in actors' minds but emanating from the structure itself, do all the causal work. The international system 'itself' has 'a kind of "Zeitgeist", which alters as a result of dialectical contradictions and complementarities' where actors' behaviour is dictated by the content of their ideas.[9] Structural forces clashing are what determine actor behaviour, whereas 'what actors do' is left out of the picture. What remains to be explained in accounts such as Osiander's is where such structuring principles come from, how they endure or change, and how such structural principles 'become inscribed into the practices of actors'.[10]

My take on the international system and order is different. Traditionally, balance of power as a type of international order is considered to be separate from hegemonic orders, even if the logic behind both kinds of orders is based on differences in capabilities. However, when looking at the balance of power not as an analytical take on the distribution of capabilities, but as a historical, empirical phenomenon, we see that the balance of power has actually effected and taken part in power transitions. In short, the rhetorical *deployment* of the *concept* of the balance of power influences the international order.

For concepts such as the balance of power to be enduring, they must be seen as legitimate in principle – apart from their concrete implications.[11] Even so, once the concept has become relatively stabilised, also the way of presenting these implications can be an arena for rhetorical struggle, and a factor in how the concept can be used for purposes of legitimation. This was particularly true in the early 18th century, with the complexities

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[6] *Ibid.*, p. 139.
[7] *Ibid*, p. 110.
[8] *Ibid*, pp. 6–7.
[9] Nexon, Dan. 2005. 'Zeitgeist? The new idealism in the study of international change', *Review of International Political Economy* 12: 700–719, p. 702.
[10] *Ibid.*, p. 702.
[11] Meyer, John W. and Brian Rowan. 1977. 'Institutionalized Organizations: Formal Structure as Myth and Ceremony', *American Journal of Sociology* 83: 340–363, p. 344.

and diversification of international politics increasing, now including developments from the Mediterranean to the Baltics.

Thus I argue that, at the time of the Utrecht Conference, the balance of power was no longer used as in a duality between France and the others, but increasingly as a systemic concept, opposed to *any* power aiming for predominance, and increasingly distant from dynastic politics. Here I begin with some historical background for the War of the Spanish Succession, which ended in the Utrecht Settlements. Continuing from the previous chapter, I pay particular attention to developments in England where party politics grew stronger, and the balance of power became the axis of debates. It is worth taking a closer look at the rhetoric and role of Bolingbroke (or St. John), often considered the personification of balance-of-power politics in the 18th century. Bolingbroke's writings, even his private letters, were framed as appeals to a broader public, often aimed at recipients he knew could spread the message, for example the Dutch (like the many diplomatic messages that were 'intercepted').[12]

From the 1680s, Austria was increasingly pictured as essential to the balance of power. In the Utrecht negotiations themselves, however, Austria was relegated to a position of almost irrelevance because of the social power of the balance-of-power concept – more specifically, Austria's previous 'investments' in the concept as developed in Britain affected its position.

Austria had to address two sets of audiences simultaneously. Its rhetoric therefore involved both the dynastic issue of legitimate succession, and the balance of power and the public interest of Europe. Whilst accepting the *principle* of the balance of power, Austria sought to question its *implications*, by linking it to inherent succession rights and the stability of coalitions. This was unsuccessful, given that the balance in the meantime had changed to become a more systemic concept.

In this period, Austria's range of policy options narrowed because Austria had already invested in the commonplace of the balance of power. But since Britain in certain senses had 'captured' the concept, with new developments there, the concept and its alleged implications changed, denying to Austria opportunities to use the balance that had been available at earlier points.

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[12] See Osiander, *The States System*, p. 24.

In short, the way the concept of the balance of power became settled and accepted during the Utrecht settlement rhetorically side-lined Austria, and thereby also led to a new post-war order and conception of the European 'system'. Contra Osiander, it was therefore the very *deployment of* the balance of power *concept* that was the fundamental element for the construction of a post-war international order.

The argument that developments in the British domestic setting shaped the outcomes elsewhere in Europe is not dependent on the formation, shaping, and ranking of preferences or capabilities, but timing matters, process matters, and sequence matters. The timing of concept developments shapes the abilities of actors to defend policies, internally and externally. Actors' influence on their international environment depends on historically contingent designs of domestic politics and policymakers.[13] The theoretical point is that contingent alterations in the uses of the concept through actual deployment in debates leads to new constraints and conditions of possibility for agentic action.

The War of the Spanish Succession

Already one year after the Glorious Revolution, in 1689, the Grand Alliance could force Louis XIV to conclude the Treaty of Aachen, renouncing his gains in the Spanish Netherlands. Soon after, Spain joined the alliance against Louis XIV.[14] Also Austria had emerged as an important player after Emperor Leopold I had driven back the Ottoman forces at Vienna during 'the glorious campaign' of 1683.[15]

Amid the ongoing fight against France, a fundamental challenge to the balance of power was seen to be emerging: the future status of Spain and its territories. The Spanish question would eventually turn into 'the hinge on which the whole reign of Louis XIV was turning'.[16] At issue were inheritance rights, and a dual claim to the Spanish throne. The death of Spain's Charles II was seen to be imminent, and he had no children. His

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[13] Nexon, Daniel. 2012. 'Historical Institutionalism and International Relations'. *E-International Relations*. Available at: www.e-ir.info/2012/04/16/historical-institutionalism-and-international-relations [02.05.2014].
[14] Michael, Wolfgang. 1908. 'The Treaties of Partition and the Spanish Succession', Chapter XIII, pp. 372–400 in Ward, A. W., G. W. Prothero, and Stanley Leathes (eds) *The Cambridge Modern History, Volume V, The Age of Louis XIV*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 376.
[15] Lodge, Richard. 1908. 'Austria, Poland, and Turkey', Chapter XII, pp. 338–371 in Ward, A. W., G. W. Prothero, and Stanley Leathes (eds) *The Cambridge Modern History, Volume V, The Age of Louis XIV*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 364.
[16] Michael, 'The Treaties of Partition', p. 376.

passing was dreaded in Europe[17] because, through marriages, both France and the Austrian Habsburgs had claims to his throne. The possible transfer of all Spanish territories to France was deemed fatal to the balance of power, which hitherto had been all about the fight against Louis XIV. On the other hand, if the throne went to German relatives in Austria, which had re-emerged strongly, that would threaten to reconstitute the dreaded Universal Monarchy of Charles V from the 1500s, seen as the archetypical European Universal Monarchy.

The candidates for the succession were Philip Duke of Anjou, grandson of Louis XIV of France (who was eventually to become Philip V of Spain), and the Austrian Habsburg candidate, Archduke Charles. Both solutions threatened to result in a new, strong Universal Monarchy in Europe, potentially including the Spanish Netherlands just across the channel from England.

Negotiating a solution was temporarily put on hold, given the intense fight against France, but in 1697, the Congress of Ryswick set out to solve the problem, and to make peace with France. The problem of the Spanish succession had finally been recognised as crucial, also by Louis XIV himself. Louis XIV and William III resolved to divide the Spanish dominions to prevent them from falling into the hands of either the French Bourbons or the Austrian Habsburgs in their entirety. This was the conclusion of the First Treaty of Partition, signed in The Hague on October 1698.[18]

The Congress of Ryswick illustrates an important change in how the balance of power and international relations in Europe were approached. With substantial French concessions, France's ambitions were restrained, and Louis XIV himself recognised that the balance of power in Europe was a problem. This marked the first step in a development from the threat of the single power of France, to seeing the balance of power as the expression of a far more complex international *system*, where *any* power might have to be restrained. I return to this later.

The partition treaty resulting from Ryswick, and the very idea of dividing the Spanish monarchy, built on the balance of power as it had developed in England. Republican

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[17] *Ibid.*, 379.
[18] Also known as The Treaty of The Hague.

writers in particular inspired the Whigs.[19] One central influence was William Penn. He was a friend of Slingsby Bethel, who had written an important tract on the various interests of the European Powers.[20] Penn's essay from 1693, *An Essay Towards the Present and Future Peace of Europe*, was based on the balance of power in the context of a variety of European interests, and can be seen as a central influence on the peace in 1697.[21] Penn had called 'civil interest' the foundation of government.[22] Like Bolingbroke later, he transposed this view of domestic government, characterised by 'Just weights and an even Ballance'[23] in support of the public interest, to the situation in Europe. To make his point that Europe needed a peace based on the balance, Penn invoked the vision of the revered figure of French King Henry IV (Henry of Navarre). Henry was seen as the epitome of all that had been good in previous times;[24] in Penn's view, 'he was upon obliging the Princes and Estates of Europe to a Politick Ballance, when the Spanish Faction, for that Reason, contrived, and accomplished His Murder, by the Hands of Ravilliac'.[25] For Penn, even the assassination of Henry in 1610, which in some respects triggered the dogmatic conflicts associated with the Thirty Years' War, had been carried out to prevent a balance of power. Penn quotes balance-of-power pioneer Sir William Temple, Lisola's associate from the previous chapter, in defending a peace based on the balance of power – what Temple himself had aimed for in establishing the Triple Alliance in 1668.[26]

In concluding the first Treaty of Partition and the peace of Ryswick, the 'sole interest' of the English king had been 'the universal Welfare of Europe'.[27] With that Treaty, England

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[19] Scott, Jonathan . 2000. *England's Troubles: Seventeenth-Century English Political Instability in European Context*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 494.

[20] Bethel, Slingsby. 1681. *The Interest of the Princes and States of Europe*, 2nd ed., London: John Wickins.

[21] Penn, William. 1693. *An Essay Towards the Present and Future Peace of Europe: By the Establishment of an European Dyet, Parliament, Or Estates.* London: s.n.

[22] Penn, William. 1679. *One project for the good of England that is, our civil union is our civil safety: humbly dedicated to the great council, the Parliament of England*. London: s.n., quoted in Scott, *England's Troubles*, p. 372.

[23] Penn, *An Essay*, p. 11

[24] See Toulmin, Stephen. 1990. *The Hidden Agenda of Modernity.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 45–56.

[25] Penn, *An Essay*, in 'The Conclusion'.

[26] See also Schmidt, H. D. 1966. 'The Establishment of "Europe" as Political Expression', *The Historical Journal* 9: 172–178.

[27] 'The Memorial of the Ambassadors of the most Christian King for the General Peace, deliver'd to the Ambassador Mediator Septemb. I. 1697 at the Palace of Ryswick', pp. 102–104 in Bernard, *The Acts and Negotiations*, p. 102.

had 'contributed such mighty Weights towards reducing the Kingdoms and States of Europe to the happy Balance they at present enjoy'.[28]

On 7 December 1697, Parliament responded to the King's speech announcing the good news from Ryswick: 'The Prospect of the Benefits your People will receive from the Peace is very pleasing: The Honour your Majesty has restored to England, of holding the Balance of Europe, gives your Subjects great Content.'[29]

The concept of the balance of power now stood strong. As it had surged in direct opposition to France, the negotiations were made in balance-of-power terms.[30] Louis XIV himself had recognised the unacceptability of Bourbon or French succession to the Spanish throne. Concretely, the partition treaty proposed that France and Austria share Spain's Italian possessions, whilst the Crown should be transferred to Charles II's most direct heir, his nephew Joseph Ferdinand of Bavaria, Prince of Asturias.

But the troubles did not end. Surprisingly, Joseph Ferdinand died in 1699 only six years old – and that before the frail King Charles II. This called for yet another solution, and it came from French King Louis XIV himself the same year. 'The question', Louis XIV wrote, 'has […] to be settled how a partition can be made into two equal halves and in a manner to assure the public tranquillity'.[31] Again, Louis acknowledged the strong social power of the balance of power, and that Europe would be alarmed if his power should be greater than that of Austria: 'I know how Europe would be alarmed to see my own power rise above that of the House of Austria, so that this kind of equality on which it makes its repose depend would no longer obtain between one and the other'.[32] On the other hand, he argued,

> But also the power of the [Austrian] Emperor is so increased, both because of the submission of the princes of the Empire, and because of the advantageous peace that he

[28] In preface to Bernard, Jacques (ed.). 1698. *The Acts and Negotiations, Together with the Particular Articles at large, of the General Peace, Concluded at Ryswick*. London: Robert Clavel/Tim Childe
[29] Parliament, Great Britain. 1803. 'House of Commons Journal Volume 12: 7 December 1697', *Journal of the House of Commons, volume 12, 1697–1699*, pp. 2–3.
[30] Michael, 'The Treaties', pp. 382–384.
[31] *Ibid*, p. 388.
[32] 'Je sais combien l'Europe serait alarmée de voir ma puissance s'élever au-dessus de celle de la maison d'Autriche, en sorte que cette espèce d'égalité dont elle fait dépendre son repos cessât de se trouver entre l'une et l'autre'. Louis XIV in letter to Tallard, ambassador to London, Feb. 1699. Legrelle, A. 1890. *La Diplomatie Française et la Succession D'Espagne. Tome III. Le Troisième Traité de Partage (1699–1700)*. Paris: F.-L. Dullé-Plus, p. 15.

has just concluded with the Porte [the Ottomans], that it is in the general interest, if it becomes even larger, that my [own power] should still be in such a state as to counterbalance it.[33]

Others also increasingly started to notice changes in Austria's position. As seen above, and as noted in the previous chapter, most of the debates concerning the balance of power after the Glorious Revolution of 1688 focused on domestic, British issues and were increasingly used in party struggles. The one exception was a pamphlet from 1694.[34] In addition to the usual attacks on France, it concludes under the heading 'A Balance to be made betwixt France and the House of Austria', arguing 'Tis the general Interest of all Christendom to resettle the House of Austria in a sort of equality with France. This Equilibrium is necessary for the Security of the People, and even for that of the Sovereigns too'. It is in the interest of England 'to re-establish this Equality, that she may have the Balance in her hand, and turn it to which side she pleases'.[35] After Ryswick in 1697, the balance on the continent between Austria and France stood increasingly central in English discourse.

Austria was now on the rise, Louis XIV argued, employing balance-of-power rhetoric in his arguments during renewed negotiations with London. However, William III still insisted on the importance of preventing the very specific threat of a *French* universal monarchy.[36]

A solution was reached with the Second Partition Treaty[37] in 1700. France would receive Spanish territories in Italy[38] and Lorraine. The rest of Spain would go to the Austrian Habsburg Archduke Charles (soon to become Emperor Charles VI), who was to succeed to the Spanish Crown. Archduke Charles was the son of Austrian Emperor Leopold I, who had fought France precisely in order to gain the Spanish Monarchy for the Habsburgs. Nevertheless, Emperor Leopold I refused: he wanted all or nothing – an

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[33] *Ibid.*; Michael, 'The Treaties', p. 388.
[34] Anon. 1706[1694]. 'Reflections upon the Conditions of Peace offer'd by France; And the Means to be employ'd for the procuring of Better', pp. 412– 422 in Count de Maiole (ed.) *A Collection of State Tracts, Publish'd during the Reign of King William III. Vol. II.* London: s.n.
[35] *Ibid.*, p. 422.
[36] See Legrelle, A. 1892. *La Diplomatie Française et la Succession D'Espagne. Tome IV. La Solution (1700–1725)*. Paris: F.-L. Dullé-Plus, p. 149-151; Osiander, *The States System*, p. 124.
[37] Also known as the Treaty of London.
[38] The kingdoms of Naples, Sicily, parts of Tuscany, and some other provinces.

undiminished Spain, or continued war.[39] In 1700 England, France, and the Dutch went ahead, signed the Second Partition Treaty, and officially communicated this to both Spain and the Emperor. On hearing the news, the Spanish King Charles II 'flew into an extraordinary passion', while his Queen set about smashing everything in her room.[40]

Yet another obstacle would emerge, this time triggering a renewed European war – the War of the Spanish Succession. When the Spanish king died in October 1700, a large group of nobles had gathered to open and read his will in public. The will was Charles II's final attempt at saving the integrity of the Spanish monarchy; it stated that the Spanish Monarchy should never be divided, and should pass in its entirety to the Bourbon Duke Philip of Anjou (becoming Philip V of Spain), grandson of the King of France.[41] This created unprecedented problems. The ball was now in Louis XIVs court, quite literally – would he accept this will?

Further, according to the terms of the will, if Louis XIV rejected this, the whole of Spain should go to the son of the Habsburg emperor. The Spanish wanted their empire intact, not divided. Louis XIV accepted the late King of Spain's will and the accession of Philip of Anjou to the Spanish Throne, thereby breaking the Second Partition Treaty with the allies. To justify this, as he wrote, he privileged 'the just cause' of legitimate succession and dynastic rights[42] over his treaty obligations – that is, over the balance of power on which the alliance and the peace were based. Genealogical principles were perhaps the only 'contender' to the balance-of-power concept, but proved unsuccessful in this case, as they would later in the case of Austria. French troops then violated the Dutch barrier and Louis XIV seized Dutch barrier towns.

Negotiations began among the allies, aimed at renewing the Grand Alliance between the Empire, Holland, and England. Now, however, as King William III's last speech to the Parliament in 1701 indicates, the party-political divisions within England were seen as threatening – not only to the interests of England, but to the balance itself:

> Let me conjure you to disappoint the only Hopes of our Enemies, by your Unanimity. I have
> shewn, and will always shew, how desirous I am to be the common Father of all my People:

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[39] Michael, 'The Treaties', p. 390.
[40] *Ibid*, p. 391.
[41] Michael, 'The Treaties', p. 393.
[42] Torcy, quoted in translation in Michael, 'The Treaties', p. 394.

Do you in like manner lay aside all Parties and Divisions; let there be no other Distinction heard of among us for the future, but of those who are for the Protestant Religion, and the present Establishment, and of those who mean a Popish Prince and a French Government…I will only add this, if you do in good earnest desire to see England hold the Balance of Europe, and to be indeed at the head of the Protestant Interest, it will appear by your right improving the present Opportunity […] By the French King's placing his Grandson on the Throne of Spain, he is in a Condition to oppress the rest of Europe, unless speedy and effectual measures be taken […] the Eyes of all Europe are upon this Parliament.[43]

The balance of power had become firmly established as a concept. There was no luxury of neutrality – or to paraphrase a more recent political leader, 'you're either with us or against us in the fight against the French Government'.[44] Balance was the ultimate good, with no middle way. The Alliance was put back together on 7 September 1701.

France was the main antagonist, but Austria and the Habsburgs had not been forgotten. In 1701, a pamphlet written by Marchamont Needham in 1678 was *reissued*. As seen earlier, Needham had introduced the possibility of predicting the balance based on interests. He referred to 'that excellent Prince the Duke of Rohan, in his little but weighty Book, stating the Interest of several Princes' and how Rohan 'determines it is the Interest of England to keep such a Balance of their Powers, as not to permit that either of them to grow so great as to be able to oppress another'. Already in 1678, the consequence of this was, according to Needham, 'that we ought ever to hold it even betwixt France and the House of Austria; and if either of them exceed, to reduce it to an Equality. This was accounted a principal part of the Antient Grandeur of the English Nation'.[45] It is significant that this pamphlet was now reprinted in 1701, with the explicit justification in the text that the same point now applied to new circumstances. There was an important continuity between Needham's analysis of interests and the Spanish problem, not as

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[43] Cobbett, William, John Wright and Thomas C. Hansard. 1809. *The Parliamentary History of England from the Earliest Period to the Year 1803, Vol. V., A.D. 1688–1702*. London: T. C. Hansard, cols. 1330–1331.

[44] Said to originate with Vladimir Lenin, later popularised by George W. Bush.

[45] Needham, Marchamont. [1678/1701] 1707. 'Christianissimus Christianandus: or Reasons for the Reduction of France to a more Christian State in Europe', pp. 394–422, in Count de Maiole (ed.) *A Collection of State Tracts, Publish'd during the Reign of King William III. Vol. III.* London: s.n., pp. 417–418. Note in text: 'First printed in Ch. 2d's Reign, but reprinted in 1701, as very applicable to that time', p. 394.

medieval analogy, but as an objectified lesson of history – an analogical confirmation of the current state of the balance of power.[46]

In 1701, another pamphlet asserted that it was in the interest of all to 'help keep the Balance betwixt France and Austria in an equal Counterpoise'.[47] Moreover, in speeches in Parliament, and in the King's/Queen's speeches, the importance of the Franco-Austrian balance was avowed, but this was not an exclusively British project. Austria was generally seen as a central player in Europe, particularly after defeating the Ottomans and vastly expanding its territories in the 1680s. With the increasing centrality of the balance-of-power concept, however, steps were taken to reassure others that these developments were not menacing. During the reign of Emperor Leopold (1658–1705), the Austrians had put great effort into arguing that this relative growth of Austria posed no threat to the balance of power. Philipp Ludwig Wenzel von Sinzendorf, later to become Austrian ambassador and envoy to the Utrecht negotiations, had insisted on this. In 1699, the year between the First and Second Partition Treaties, the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Colbert de Torcy, and Sinzendorf had *explicitly* agreed that Habsburg expansion in the east of Europe should be of no concern to the balance.[48]

Such international agreements were crucial given the particular position of Austria. After Charles II's will was made public in 1700, Emperor Leopold of Austria had been cautious, because he had a double audience to address. On the one side, Europe and the other polities had to be addressed in balance-of-power terms. On the other, a legitimate rhetoric for addressing the multifaceted 'German' audience and the Imperial Diet had to invoke the legal terms of dynastic succession. The Emperor had to use a mixed or multivocal rhetorical approach.[49] For idiosyncratic legal reasons, he could not accept the partition, nor Charles II's will: it was unlawful to relinquish Imperial territories without consent – consent that Leopold could not give, because that was in the hands of the composite estates.

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[46] See Mathiowetz, Dean. 2011. *Appeals to Interest: Language, Contestation, and the Shaping of Political Agency*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press.
[47] Defoe, Daniel (attrib.). 1707[1701]. 'The Duke of Anjou's Succession consider'd as to its Legality and Consequences, part I', pp. 22–44 in , in Count de Maiole (ed.) *A Collection of State Tracts, Publish'd during the Reign of King William III. Vol. III.* London: s.n., p. 40.
[48] Gaedeke, Arnold Heinrich. 1877. *Die Politik Oesterreichs in der Spanischen Erbfolgefrage*. Leipzig: Decker & Humblot, section ii, p. 138; Osiander, *The States System*, p. 136.
[49] Osiander, *The States System*, p. 133; see Nexon, Dan. *The Struggle for Power in Early Modern Europe*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

In addressing England, the rhetoric was different, couched in terms of an anti-French alliance, to secure the balance of power – which would surely be also in the interest of the British monarch.[50] This can be seen in the pamphlet *The Lion's Share* from 1701.

The Lion's Share

As noted, Austrian expansion in the eastern parts of Europe had been agreed to be no threat to Europe – but now that the territories of the pivotal European power of Spain were up for grabs, potential Austrian territorial expansion here did become a concern to the balance of power. Austria would have to respond in kind.

As the Spanish question emerged, and the idea of a division of the Spanish Monarchy gained traction, the Habsburgs continued to invoke the balance of power, at least in their externally aimed rhetoric. The central pamphlet in these efforts was *The Fable of the Lion's Share* from 1701.[51] It is an appeal to other countries, under the banner of the balance of power, denouncing the Second Partition Treaty of 1700. This pro-Habsburg pamphlet argued that any peace with France or division of Spain would dangerously weaken the Empire. Instead, England, Holland, and the Keiser should join Austria in its fight for the Spanish Crown. As the author summed up his argument,

> the Succession of Spain is not a particular Controversy between the Emperor and most Christian King, but a Busines of the utmost Importance to all Europe…there is no way of restoring the Balance of Christendom, which is so necessary for the Common Good, but by settling the whole Monarchy of Spain upon the Arch-Duke.[52]

The Partition Treaty was 'not only a Conspiracy against the Austrian Family, but against the liberties of Christendom; directly tending to enslave Mankind to the House of France'.[53] The pamphlet addressed the 'enormous injustice' in the Partition treaty in

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[50] '…nur einiges aequilibrium in Europa erhalten werde möge…des Königs von Engelland Intention zweifelsohne auch dahin gerichtet sei…' Count Wratislav, Dec. 6, 1700. Gaedeke, *Die Politik Oesterreichs,* section ii, p. 96, quoted in Osiander, *The States System*, p 134.
[51] Anon. 1707[1701]. 'The Fable of the Lion's Share, Verified in the Pretended Partition of the Spanish Monarchy', pp. 129–153 in Count de Maiole (ed.) *A Collection of State Tracts, Publish'd during the Reign of King William III. Vol. III.* London: s.n.
[52] Anon., 'Lion's Share', p. 129.
[53] *Ibid.*, p. 132.

breaking 'the Balance of the two Crowns, so necessary to Europe'[54] promising the enslavement of the whole of Europe by France. The author admits that objections to Charles V had been reasonable, as France at that time was not so powerful. Now, however, 'If the Crown of Spain passes from the Catholic King to the Arch-Duke Charles, the House of Austria increases not in Power, the State of Europe remains the same'.[55] The Archduke's lot was now 'vastly disproportionate to the French'.[56]

By now, these appeals are recognisable. This pamphlet had all the necessary 'ingredients' for making a convincing case: the threat of Universal Monarchy and enslavement, the public interest of the whole of Europe, joined in the balance of power, and even excusing the behaviour of Charles V centuries earlier. In addition, and crucially, the pamphlet argued that England *should* be the leader and 'holder of the balance of power'. Courting England as the 'holder of the balance' and as the authority on defining the balance of power was a recurrent rhetorical move that would have unintended consequences for Austria later.

This was how the balance of power was portrayed in Austria, and it was consistent with the English emphasis on the balance relying on an equal standing between Austria and France. However, as I will explain below, as general peace negotiations approached, and the English realised that they were increasingly fighting to reunite the historical possessions of Charles V at the expense of the balance, Austria would soon find itself lacking any sustainable way to rhetorically link the balance of power to their concerns. As anti-French argumentation would soon lose its sweeping centrality in the balance-of-power concept, the multivocality of the Austrian rhetoric would eventually break down, and Austria would come to appear as a representative of private interests and ambition, quite contrary to any conceivable notion of the balance of power. For the present, however, Austria was part of the coalition against France, together with England, Holland, and later Portugal and Italy/Savoy.

Just after the Alliance had been concluded, William III died, and Anne, the daughter of James II, succeeded to the throne. In 1702, upon her succession, the Lords declared their support to obtain 'such a Balance of Power and Interest, as may effectually secure the

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[54] *Ibid*., p. 153 .
[55] *Ibid*., p. 139.
[56] *Ibid*., p. 152.

Liberties of Europe'.[57] Also the Commons voiced their support for a balance of power. Parliament authorised war, and the War of the Spanish Succession broke out in 1702. Also this time, Protestants across Europe looked to Britain for leadership.[58] As William III had said, the eyes of Europe were upon the British Parliament.[59]

Queen Anne continued to support intervention in the name of the balance. In her opening speech to Parliament on October 27, 1705, she stated:

> Nothing can be more evident, than that, if the French King continues Master of the Spanish Monarchy, the Balance of Power in Europe is utterly destroyed, and he will be able in a short Time to engross the Trade and the Wealth, of the World. No good Englishman could at any Time be content to sit still, and acquiesce in such a Prospect.[60]

Tories, Whigs, and party politics in Britain

As argued, the balance of power had emerged out of the linking and rhetorical arrangement of Universal Monarchy, interests, and the public/private divide into a whole. Encapsulating many of the common concerns in the beginning of the 18th century, the concept increasingly moved to centre stage in domestic politics in Britain. As party-politics took shape, the emerging rift between Whigs and Tories centred on the balance of power. In addition, the further strengthening of the public sphere 'placed English […] politicians under an obligation to justify their foreign policy to the public; and because foreign policy and grand strategy became the primary motor of party-political polarization under Queen Anne'.[61] This coincided with the increasingly complex and fragmented political environment in Europe. These debates are important, because domestic debates in Britain would directly impinge on how the balance of power could legitimately be used with reference to Europe and the public interest, and in turn affect Austria's room for manoeuvre, as I show below.

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[57] The Lords Address to the Queen, 9 March 1702. Hansard, T. C. 1810. *The Parliamentary History of England, from the Earliest Period to the year 1803. Vol. VI. A.D. 1702–1714*. London: T. C. Hansard, p. 3.
[58] Simms, Brendan. 2007. *Three Victories and a Defeat*. London: Penguin, p. 50.
[59] Cobbett et al., *The Parliamentary History Vol. V.*, col. 1330.
[60] Parliament, Great Britain. 1767–1830. *House of Lords Journal Volume 18, 1705–1709*, 27 October 1705, pp. 6–9.
[61] Simms, *Three Victories*, p. 54.

Renewing the Alliance against France was the subject of party attacks and pamphlet campaigns in England. William III had to deal with a Tory majority which did not want war with France. On 11 November 1701, he had in fact dissolved Parliament to gain support for his policy of intervention. Only after the creation of 12 new peers would the new House of Lords support the renewed Grand Alliance. This was justified with the balance of power on the continent and, as Swift wrote, also to support the balance internally in government.[62] However, it further increased the polarisation between Whigs and Tories.

Political parties, and not only loose associations, became important. The main issue in these growing party struggles were precisely differences over the balance of power – policy and strategy regarding the continent, and the war with France and, in the end, peace or not.[63] For Tories, the Whigs were associated with trading companies and the 'moneyed interests'. Also, the Whig faction was traditionally the pro-war party. Tories, while very much in favour of wars at sea, increasingly became the 'peace-party': they were opposed to standing armies and expensive land wars on the continent, and harboured pro-French views. They even wanted to get rid of references to the 'peace of Europe' in parliamentary motions.[64] In consequence, the principal debates in Parliament, and in Europe, in the first year of the 18th century concerned whether to intervene in the name of the balance. This became particularly salient with the Spanish Succession crisis and the prospects of a final showdown with France.

The governing 'war party', the Whigs, responded to the Tory opposition by starting a 'pamphlet war', emphasising the continued threat to the balance of power of an expansionist France. The project of the Whig Party was to protect the balance of power in Europe, so as to protect English liberties at home. The Tories, on the other hand, were sceptical to the balance, favoured a 'blue-water policy' over continental involvements, and favoured a quick-fix peace with France. Interestingly, however sceptical the Tories initially were towards the balance of power, a Tory government was to be the most active user of the concept in making possible the Utrecht Settlement.

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[62] See Ehrenpreis, Irvin. 1952. 'Swift on Liberty', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 13: 131–146, p. 135.
[63] Biddle, Sheila. 1975. *Bolingbroke & Harley*. London: George Allen & Unwin, pp. 7, 221.
[64] See Schmidt, 'The establishment', p. 177.

In short, the core issue occasioning the increasing divide between Tories and Whigs was the standing of the balance of power. Was Britain, as the Whigs advocated, to lead balancing efforts or, as the Tories argued, to stay isolated as a relatively disengaged balancer?

The Whig–Tory conflict over such issues had long antecedents, as in the heated debates over a standing army after the treaty of Ryswick. The crucial difference between the two, at least in the Tory opinion, was between Court and Country. The Court represented the bureaucracy with its private interests and corruption, being for high taxation and a standing army. Many Parliamentary representatives paid a land-tax; they wanted to reduce expenditures, and feared that a large national debt would lead to despotism by strengthening the executive.[65] In addition, a standing land army in Britain was seen as a potentially sinister device for tyranny – a tool for monarchs to subvert freedoms, and associated with corruption and arbitrary government. A king, it was held, could govern either through nobles or through an army.

The Tories, the landed aristocracy, associated freedom with possession of land and property, and regarded a 'balance of property' as highly important. This balance could be destroyed by the selling and buying of land, which was seen as the result of the Whig 'monied men'.[66] Consequently, Parliament should be independent of the Court, so as to maintain 'the balance of the constitution' between King, Commons, and Lords.[67] The stability of this political system was even a precondition for individual morality. The political balance and the balance of property secured this stability within the state. Corruption, therefore, referred to more than bribery – it meant disturbing the balance and the public interest.[68]

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[65] Simms, *Three Victories,* p. 45.

[66] See Pocock, John Greville Agard. 1965. 'Machiavelli, Harrington and English Political Ideologies in the Eighteenth Century', *The William and Mary Quarterly* 22: 549–583, p. 553.

[67] Schwoerer, Lois G. 1966. 'The Role of King William in the Standing Army Controversy – 1697–1699', Journal of British Studies 5: 74–94; Pocock, 'English Political Ideologies', p. 568.

[68] Pocock, 'English Political Ideologies', pp. 569–570.

Ichabod! *Bolingbroke, Davenant, and the 'conservative' balance of power*

In this 'warfare between the noble ancient landed interest, and the new monied interest',[69] the strongest champion of these ideas of the 'country gentlemen', was Henry St John, 1st Viscount Bolingbroke.[70] As Bolingbroke later would write, in defence of his actions at Utrecht, reflecting the common discourse on Universal Monarchy and Oriental Despotism, the history of France

> is the history of one state under a more uniform and orderly government; the history of a monarchy wherein the prince is possessor of some, as well as lord of all the great fieffees: and the authority of many tyrants centring in one, though the people are not become more free, yet the whole system of domestic policy is entirely changed.[71]

The same elements were now threatening England. The Tories equated universal monarchy with the interventionist strategy of the Whigs, with the threat of a standing army, taxation, undermining liberties, and the balance of property, and control of opinion. Their countermove was to argue for a more open and public government in contrast to the corruption of private interest and moneyed men.[72] For instance, Jonathan Swift argued that Whig supremacy meant party rule – which meant 'tyranny' as opposed to the 'true public interest'.[73]

According to Bolingbroke, the financial revolution (ca. 1690–1740), with development of banking and credit, was the root of the evil that pervaded British society[74] and therefore also Europe. A true balance of power in Europe, in the public interest, had not been established because of the undermining and corruption of the state and of the aristocratic order established since the Tudors in England. Even worse, this basic principle – to

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[69] Burke, Edmund. [1790] 1953. *Reflections on the French Revolution*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 111; see also Defoe, Daniel. 1689. *Reflections Upon the Late Great Revolution Written by a Lay-hand in the Country for the Satisfaction of Some Neighbours*. London: Ric. Chiswell; Ehrenpreis, 'Swift on Liberty', p. 144.

[70] Pocock, 'English Political Ideologies', p. 572; see also Butterfield, Herbert. 1955. *The Statecraft of Machiavelli*. London: G. Bell.

[71] Bolingbroke. [1735] 1932. *Defence of the Treaty of Utrecht. Letters VI–VIII of The Study and Use of History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 10.

[72] McJimsey, Robert. 2006. 'Shaping the Revolution in Foreign Policy: Parliament and the Press, 1689–1730', *Parliamentary History* 25: 17–31, p. 21; Pocock, John Greville Agard. 1975. *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 423–469; Davenant, Charles. 1701. *Essays Upon I.The Balance of Power. II.The Right of making War, Peace, and Alliances. III.Universal Monarchy*. London: James Knapton.

[73] Ehrenpreis, 'Swift on Liberty', p 134.

[74] Kramnick, Isaac. 1968. *Bolingbroke & His Circle*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, p. 4.

maintain the balance of Europe – had been converted to a new use, to legitimise private interests against King and Country.

For Bolingbroke, the 'public interest' was linked to sentiments of conscience and obligation based on tradition as a mechanism governing the affairs of men. Whiggism, however, included in the concept of interest also 'the presumed will of the people' and popular government. This was linked to the financial order that Bolingbroke despised. 'The whole constitution of our country, and even the character of our nation' he wrote, 'has been altered […] the men called Whigs have made (worse use of) long wars and new systems of revenue'.[75] And he, as his Tory peers, worried about the increasing influence of Parliament over royal power, and how parliamentary service had gone from being a duty to becoming 'debased since it became a trade'.[76] Reflecting on the state of Britain, in a chapter tellingly titled 'Ichabod!',[77] Bolingbroke writes that the state itself 'is become, under ancient and known forms, a new and undefinable monster; composed of a king without monarchical splendour, a senate of nobels without aristocratical independency, and a senate of commons without democratical freedom'. He expands the reasoning:

> the very idea of wit, and all that can be called taste, has been lost among the great; arts and sciences are scarcely alive; luxury has been increased but not refined; corruption has been established, and is avowed […] public and private virtue, public and private spirit, science and wit, decline all together.[78]

Bolingbroke's ideal was Elizabethan England, where 'virtuosity, glitter, and dazzling personal force were set upon a sharply delineated stage and when the fate of England and Europe was worked out in public by a group of brilliant players around one central and most brilliant player'.[79] That had also been the age of the *real* balance of power. Now, all that was left was an empty public performance, and shallow and divisive party politics.

Charles Davenant also linked such ideas about prudence, order in the state, and order in Europe. His *Essay upon the Balance of Power* (1701) begins, 'There is no surer Mark that a Government is near its utter destruction, than when the People are observ'd to be

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[75] Bolingbroke, *Defence*, p. 148.
[76] ibid., p. 149.
[77] A term with biblical origins, used as an interjection to express regret for departed glory and loss of former high standards.
[78] Bolingbroke, *Defence*, p.150.
[79] Kramnick, *Bolingbroke*, p. 7.

careless and unconcern'd at a time when they are press'd and encompass'd with dangers of the highest nature'.[80] People were too intoxicated with private money to be concerned with the public interest. Decaying virtue and merit in Britain was leading to indifference

> in what relates to the common Welfare: *If their Purses feel heavy, they take little thought of what becomes of the ballance of Europe, nor to which side the Scale inclines.* If we represent to 'em the Growth and Power of France, and the dangers that threaten England, they are not at the least alarm'd, as knowing they have got wherewithal to buy their own Peace.[81]

Davenant concluded his essay on the balance of power thus:

> Nothing can more enable us still to maintain our Post of holding the Balance of Europe, nor contribute so much to our Preservation, as for all good English Men to lay aside the Name of Parties, and to join in due Obedience to the King, and firm Zeal for his real Service […] And to encourage his People to concur with him in this Great Work, nothing can more conduce than to see their Liberties put upon so firm a Foot, That there may be no more Danger of the Nation's falling at any time hereafter under Arbitrary Power.[82]

'Where there is no Council', he writes, 'there can be no real strength.'[83]

In Bolingbroke's diplomatic correspondence, in his history of England, in his articles in *The Craftsman*, and in the *Defence,* the balance of power is the 'cardinal prescription for England's dealings with the outside word'.[84] And the *real* balance of power, not the specious Whiggish one, was in the true interest of Britain and its foreign affairs, as opposed to 'those principles of conduct that […] have no other foundations than party-designs, prejudices, and habits; the private interests of some men and the ignorances and rashness of others'.[85] Bolingbroke also judged previous English rulers on the criteria that they adhere to the balance of power principle. Elizabeth was held high in regard, with Cromwell relegated to the other end of the scale (also because he was associated with standing armies).

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[80] Davenant, *Essays*, p. 1. On Davenant, and his possible role as a French spy, see Waddel, D. 1958. 'Charles Davenant (1656–1714) – A Biographical Sketch', *The Economic History Review* 11: 279–288.
[81] Davenant, *Essays*, p. 3, emphasis added.
[82] *Ibid.*, p. 99.
[83] *Ibid.*, p. 32.
[84] Kramnick, *Bolingbroke*, p. 182.
[85] Bolingbroke, *Defence*, p. 147.

Bolingbroke 'projected onto the international sphere the preoccupation with balance and limitations on power which characterised his image of the English constitution'.[86] As also William Penn had implied in his 1693 essay, Bolingbroke transferred the peculiarities of the English constitution and its preoccupation with equilibrium and the balance of power to the international order, a transfer that would continue to be a 'hallmark on English political writing' for years to come.[87] (And Hans Morgenthau in *Politics Among Nations* would indeed use 'checks and balances' to introduce the balance of power to US readers, see Chapter 9).

'And now, gentlemen, what next?'

In 1703, Portugal and the Duke of Savoy joined the Grand Alliance against France, and the Habsburg Emperor's son Archduke Charles was crowned Charles III of Spain. Still, both claimants to the Spanish monarchy – Austria and France – were courting Spain and, not least, Spanish public opinion, to garner support for their succession rights. During the war, France became increasingly unpopular also in Spain, as it was seen to be betraying Spain's interest.[88] Here the balance of power was used to support Spanish arguments against France, and, as was common, to appeal to England as the acknowledged keeper of the balance.[89]

From 1704, the allies won a string of crucial battles, and Louis XIV was increasingly ready to make peace after 1706. France repeatedly sought peace with the allies, and Louis was prepared to make great sacrifices for it. The allies, however, let the opportunity pass, imposing unacceptably harsh terms for a peace, so the war continued. This changed when the Tories, the pro-French 'peace party', replaced the Whigs in Britain. By then, France was slowly receding from the role of the singular, Universal Monarchy in Europe.

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[86] Kramnick, *Bolingbroke*, p. 182.

[87] *Ibid.*, p. 183.

[88] Osiander, *The States System*, p. 105.

[89] For example, a 'secret' memo from 1705, supporting France's claims using the balance of power, was intercepted and published in Spain with comments undermining France's views on the balance of power. It also appealed to England to intervene on the side of Austria. Anon. 1707. *Traducción de una memoria repartida en Olanda, a principio del año pasado de 1705. por un confidente de la Francia; y de su Respuesta, que vá al margen, para mas clara inteligencia.* Barcelona: Rafael Figuero, pp. 32, 45.

In 1706, the troops of Louis XIV had been ousted from the Spanish Netherlands and from Italy. Bolingbroke, who had had risen to prominence in British politics in the early 1700s, argued that the objectives of the war, and defending the balance of power, had been achieved in 1706 – France had been sufficiently weakened to restore the balance.

In 1706, as France was seen to be declining, Daniel Defoe asked, what would come next?[90] He argued that now, in an increasingly complex Europe, the balance of power was 'little understood',[91] and with England's role as 'balancer' growing in this context, it was time for a reassessment. Now, Defoe wrote, it did not only concern the fight against the Universal Monarchy of *France* – the original circumstances in which the balance of power emerged as a concept – but *preventing any part of the European system growing too large.* That was the role of England – a role now expanded beyond fighting against a single enemy, to effectively take care of and lead the entire system of Europe. In 1706, when Defoe wrote, the allies had gained the upper hand, and France was as seen being defeated. This was in itself a potential problem. 'WHAT'S NEXT?' he repeatedly wrote. Defoe listed the powers of Europe: there is a Spanish Power, an Austrian Power, Sweden, France, Germany, Holland etc. Therefore,

> Should *any* of the Branches of the present Confederacy push at a Conquest, and *by the Advantage of the falling Greatness of the French power*, engross to themselves a Dominion too large, or any Superiority of Power above his proper Sphere, that very Power or Prince would in his degree become equally obnoxious to the rest, *and the Balance of Power being thereby broken, would be as much the public enemy as the French are now*[92]

Europe was seen to have changed – and so had the balance of power and its implications, now championed by Bolingbroke and the Tories.

Still, the Austrian Emperor, and the British commander Marlborough, wanted to *continue* the war. Their battle cry was 'No peace without Spain', against any treaties of division. The Tory government, however, advocated peace from 1706 on. Still, after 1706 when the 'coalition government' was increasingly filled with Whigs, both Robert Harley, the

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[90] Defoe, Daniel. [1706] 1975. 'A Review of the State of the English Nation, iii, no. 65/66', pp. 45–49 in Wright, Moorhead (ed.) *Theory and Practice of the Balance of Power 1486–1914*. London: J. M. Dent & Sons.

[91] *ibid*., p. 46.

[92] Defoe, 'A Review', p. 49.

later Earl of Oxford, and Bolingbroke were replaced. The Tories had been too vehement in their promotion of peace.[93]

The London Preliminaries

The Tories accused Whig negotiators of setting excessively high demands for a peace with Louis XIV in the 1709/1710 negotiations at Gertruydenberg and The Hague. The continuation of the war was based on the Whig balance of power in strategic unison with the Dutch, as reflected in the Barrier Treaty with the United Provinces (1709). The Tories still despised the Dutch, as had been common in the mid-1600s, were sceptical of the Glorious Revolution, and were therefore also opposed to the balance of power, which was seen as a Whig project. Robert Harley was against the Barrier Treaty, arguing it would favour Dutch trade.

The war did not go well after 1710, and Queen Ann increasingly turned to the Tories. She aimed at a joint government, but the differences were too great – Bolingbroke, for one, was against the war, against the Dutch, and against all things Austrian.[94]

After the unsuccessful peace conference at Gertruydenberg in 1710, the Whigs were dismissed from office, and Harley and Bolingbroke, who had formerly led a coalition government, were recalled to office. They returned to power with a programme emphasising 'the public good of the nation', which included ending the war, attacking the 'moneyed power', and defending the church.[95] Their version of the 'balance' would promote all this.

The Dutch resented the new Tory government, which was now making approaches to France. The Dutch were afraid of Britain negotiating bilaterally with France and obtaining advantages for themselves. Indeed, that is exactly what happened. The Tory ministry secretly concluded a separate, bilateral peace with France, known as the 1711 London Preliminaries, which would become the basis for the Utrecht settlement.[96]

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[93] Kramnick, *Bolingbroke*, p. 8.
[94] Simms, *Three Victories*, p. 58.
[95] Kramnick, *Bolingbroke*, p. 9.
[96] Osiander, *The States System*, p. 8.

Now in power, the *Tories* used the rallying power of the balance of power for their own purposes. And this was also necessary to emphasise the benefits for Europe as a whole: The French Minister of Foreign Affairs Torcy, Louis XIV himself, and Bolingbroke and Robert Harley, the Queen's chief minister, all invoked the balance of power to justify ending the war. The balance of power as a commonplace – the issue which Bolingbroke now called 'the great article' of the whole settlement – would enable the peace.[97]

After negotiating the preliminaries, the Duke of Ormond, having replaced Marlborough as commander of the British forces, received Bolingbroke's 'restraining orders', effectively telling him to betray and abandon the allies in favour of the private settlement with France. Britain defected from the alliance, leaving the others to fight alone. The Dutch and the Austrians were furious. Despite this, the Dutch agreed to discuss a peace. The Whigs were equally furious, and strongly opposed the Preliminary articles. The Whigs equated peace with 'French interest' and Universal Monarchy, and the 'French interest' with the Jacobite Pretender, the contending would-be James III. By 1711, then, the peace had most definitely become the overriding party issue.[98]

Austria in the Utrecht negotiations

The history of the War of the Spanish Succession has been analysed in a relatively extensive literature. The role played by Austria is less known. A puzzling feature of the processes before and at Utrecht was the absence and near-irrelevance of Austria and its Emperor after 1711, not least since the allies in many respects had fought the war on his behalf. As opposed to the centrality of France (and the Dutch), Austria, with the Empire, was marginalised, and Bolingbroke and other diplomats treated it with indifference.[99] One of the keys to understanding this is balance of power rhetoric, and the special position of Austria.

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[97] Osiander, *The States System*, p. 126.

[98] Roscoe, E.S. 1902. *Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford, Prime Minister 1710–1714. A Study of Politics and Letters in the Age of Anne.* London: Methuen & Co., p 32; Biddle, *Bolingbroke & Harley*, p. 293.

[99] Ward, Adolphus William. 1922. 'Introduction', pp. 1–14 in Adolphus William Ward and George Peabody Gooch (eds) *The Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy, Volume 1.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 53; Ward, Adolphus William. 1908. 'The Peace of Utrecht and the Supplementary Pacifications', pp. 437–459 in Ward, A. W., G. W. Prothero, and Stanley Leathes (eds) *The Cambridge Modern History, Volume V, The Age of Louis XIV.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 450.

I hold that the domestic policy debates in Britain shaped outcomes at Utrecht, and the rhetorical resources available to Austria and others. Austria's influence on their international environment depended on historically contingent designs of domestic politics and policymakers, and a particular conceptualisation of the international system. How and when the balance of power emerged as a concept, how and when rhetorical links were forged and stabilised in Britain and internationally, and how and when one had 'invested' in the concept – all had effects during the Utrecht negotiations. Austria's range of policy options at Utrecht were narrowed because of previous investment in the balance-of-power concept. Due to contingent developments in British politics, the concept and the implications connected to it had been partly reconstructed, and that prevented Austria from using the balance in ways that had been available earlier. The Austrians were left rhetorically exposed. *When* balance of power rhetoric changed affected *how* actors could defend their policies.

After the death of Leopold in 1705, his son Joseph I had become Emperor, but in 1711 he died without an heir, amidst the preparations for Utrecht. The death of Joseph I now seriously raised the prospect of an Austrian Universal Monarchy because the 26-year-old Archduke Charles, now about to become Emperor Charles VI, was a claimant to the Spanish throne. Reunification of Spanish and Austrian inheritances became a real possibility, and that would mean reconstituting the Universal Monarchy of Charles V. When the Archduke Charles became Charles VI, the Habsburg argument that 'the interest of the Emperor is that of all Europe', and of the balance of power,[100] now seemed unwarranted. With this new situation, Britain was now fighting to place the Austrian Emperor himself on the throne of Spain, reconstituting the Universal Monarchy of Charles V!

This, in turn, helped the Tory cause in supporting a peace. It backed up Bolingbroke's argument that the Alliance had been established to prevent the hegemony of France, and that the 'no peace without Spain' argument and winning the Spanish monarchy for the Habsburgs could not be the aim. The Tories were more friendly towards France, and presented the balance of power rather as a general principle of a European 'system', as Bolingbroke repeatedly termed it, and not as a fight against the single power of France. This had an impact on Utrecht – a settlement that came about because of the peace policy

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[100] Anon., 'Lion's Share', p. 133.

of Bolingbroke and the Tories, and based on *their* conception of what the balance of power implied.

The Conduct of the Allies

In 1711, the year of the London Preliminaries, Bolingbroke had also been involved in founding a club simply called 'The Society', later 'the Brothers Club', with, amongst others, his close friend Jonathan Swift, and Alexander Pope. It was to be composed of people with 'power and influence', and who 'have a corporation of patrons to protect and advance them'.[101] Writing to influence policy was one of their stated aims.

And indeed, Jonathan Swift's *The Conduct of the Allies, and of the Late Ministry in Beginning and Carrying on the Present War*[102] from 1711 helped in publically supporting the idea of a separate peace with France, based on the balance of power. It exploited the new situation concerning Austria, arguing for a separate peace with France, as stipulated in the London Preliminaries. And peace had long been at the core of Tory policy.

A central point in the pamphlet was an attack on the moneyed power and private interests that supported needless wars and interventions. The Whigs, as Swift argued, were the 'war-party',[103] a government of politics of administration, and of manipulating politics to the degradation of public life.[104]

Swift's pamphlet was hugely influential, and sold remarkably well. Seven editions were printed in two months, 11,000 copies in all.[105] Swift worked with Temple, who together with Lisola was mentioned in Chapter 3 as among the pioneers of the balance-of-power concept in England. As a converted Whig, he was also hand-in-glove with Harley and Bolingbroke.[106] Swift was indeed a part of the political power elite; central politicians requested and were granted various alterations to the pamphlet in its new editions. It was

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[101] Bolingbroke to the Earl of Orrey, June the 12th, 1711. Parke, Gilbert (ed.). 1978. *Letters and Correspondence, Public and Private, of The Right Honourable Henry St. John, Lord Visc. Bolingbroke*. London: G.G. and J. Robertson, pp. 246–247.
[102] Swift, Jonathan. [1711] 1916. *The Conduct of the Allies, and of the Late Ministry in Beginning and Carrying on the Present War*. Edited by C. B. Wheeler. London: John Morphew/Oxford: Clarendon Press.
[103] Kramnick, Bolingbroke, p. 11.
[104] *Ibid.*, p. 6.
[105] Wheeler, C.B. 1919. 'Introduction, pp. xi–xlix in Swift, *Conduct*, p. xxxviii
[106] *Ibid.*, p. xlvii

therefore frequently used in policy debates, and had a considerable impact – 'The noise it makes is extraordinary', Swift remarked.[107]

The centrality of *The Conduct of the Allies* lies in how it provided the rhetorical tools for the debates – 'supplying ammunition', as Swift himself wrote, and 'the use of proper words in proper places'.[108] Swift attacked the Austrian Emperor Charles VI, his 'indifference […] to the Common Cause' and 'how little the Emperor regarded his Allies, or the Cause they were engaged in, when once he thought the Empire it self was secure'.[109] The Emperor, wrote Swift, chose to 'sacrifice the whole Alliance to his *private Passion*' by waging war and oppressing Hungary instead of fighting France.[110] How did the Emperor defend himself? The Austrians 'had nothing to offer but some general Speculative Reasons'.[111]

As Swift strongly (and successfully) argued, the public interest of Europe should outweigh private interests and ambitions. As seen in the previous chapter, the synchronisation between different interests had been argued in the case of England: England's interest was also the interest of Europe and therefore that of the balance of power. England could mobilise the Alliance around the shared concept of the balance of power and its implications, as England was still seen as the central player in the fight against France and Universal Monarchy. Britain could argue from an almost institutionalised position as the 'balancer'. Austria had no such role. A similar synchronisation failed with Austria, with its dual audiences. Austria could not link dynastic politics to the balance of power, as this had become precisely the difference between private and public interests that I considered in the previous chapter. These English arguments, united in the concept of the balance of power, were used to discredit the Austrians during the Utrecht negotiations in 1712.[112]

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[107] *Ibid.*, pp. xxxix – xl.
[108] *Ibid.*, p. xlii.
[109] *Ibid.*, p. 39.
[110] *Ibid.*, p. 39, emphasis added.
[111] *Ibid.*, p. 41.
[112] See Simms, *Three Victories*, pp. 64–65.

Austria's 'old rhetoric'

These debates in Britain did not go unnoticed in the Empire, and so Austria responded. The Imperial Government issued a pamphlet to the public as a direct response to the debates in London, which were increasingly geared towards supporting peace and the division of Spain. In 1712, Imperial publicist Jean Dumont wrote the pamphlet *Les Soupirs de l'Europe*.[113] Sinzendorf had recommended him to the Emperor, and Dumont became Charles VI's historiographer.[114]

The views of the balance of power in Dumont's pamphlet paralleled those established in the 1701 pamphlet *The Lions Share* (see above). There was criticism of Britain for abandoning its old principles, and of the London Preliminaries. Dumont referred to decade-old discussions in the English Parliament from 1701, the year the *Lion's Share* was published, when it had been argued that the Spanish monarchy should be restored to the House of Austria. This restoration, he argued, was why the war had begun in the first place. Why then should Spain now be given to the heir of France? That would not promote the repose and peace of Europe, he argued.[115] Further, 'So many Writings have already proved and demonstrated his Imperial Majesty's Title to the Whole Monarchy of Spain, without Exception, that no Man, who is not altogether a Stranger to the Affairs of Europe, can be ignorant of it, or call it in Question' – these were arguments 'founded on the Right of Blood'. Dumont even drew a 'Genealogical Table'.[116] These arguments from dynastic succession and 'blood' were combined with a particular view on the implications of the balance of power. Austria was playing both cards.

He goes on to argue that the division of Spain has nothing to do with the balance of power, and quotes the English Queen's speech to Parliament in 1703: '[there] could be no Ballance of Power in Europe, without Recovering the Monarchy of Spain from the House of Bourbon, and restoring it to the House of Austria'.[117] He also invokes William III in

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[113] Dumont, Jean. 1712. *Les Soupirs de l'Europe &c., or, The Groans of Europe at the Prospect of the Present Posture of Affairs. In a Letter from a Gentleman at the Hague to a Member of Parliament*. Publisher: s.n.

[114] Frey, Linda and Marsha Frey (eds). 1995. *The Treaties of the War of the Spanish Succession: An Historical and Critical Dictionary*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, p. 139.

[115] Dumont, *Soupirs*, pp. 31–32.

[116] *Ibid.*, p. 35.

[117] *Ibid.*, p. 75.

arguing that 'The Ballance of Power in Europe cannot be restor'd, but by restoring the whole Monarchy of Spain to the House of Austria'.[118]

Also relying on British sources and arguments, Dumont then foments fear of France as a Universal Monarchy. 'You will, undoubtly agree', he avows, 'that the taking away from the House of Austria one Half of her Dominions, to give them to a Prince of the House of France, would not be the means to restore the Ballance'.[119] One takes from the weak, and gives to the strong. Those for a partition 'do not deny the necessity of settling a Ballance of Power between the Two Houses; but they pretend that the method which for these Fifty Years past has been used to bring it about, is improper'.[120] Dumont makes the case that 'the House of Bourbon has in all […] respects infinitely the Advantage of the House of Austria'.[121]

Austria found itself in a particular situation, where two sets of audiences had to be addressed simultaneously. Involved were both the dynastic issue of legitimate succession, *and* the balance of power and the public interest of Europe. Austria attempted to link the two as a way of defining the implications of the balance of power, but they were not complementary. This can be seen in the multivocality of the rhetoric in Dumont's pamphlet – it had to be sufficiently ambiguous to be able to combine balance-of-power arguments and dynastic concerns, simultaneously. However, this dual rhetoric, courting two audiences at the same time, did not succeed, leaving Austria isolated during the Utrecht negotiations in 1712. Why did the rhetoric fail?

Austria's failure

Here I will show how Austria, whilst accepting the *principle* of the balance of power, questioned its *implications* by linking it to dynastic politics, succession rights, and the stability of coalitions, but failed.

Austria had previously been considered crucial to the balance of power, and Austria had couched its arguments in balance-of-power terms. Today's balance-of-power theory

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[118] *Ibid.*, p. 79.
[119] *Ibid.*, p. 82.
[120] *Ibid.*, p. 82.
[121] *Ibid.*, p. 90.

would predict a degree of balancing in response to Austria's vast territorial expansion and relatively more powerful situation in Europe in the late 17th century.[122] In contrast, balance-of-power *rhetoric* had the opposite effect, of dampening any concerns, as seen explicitly in Austria's interchanges with Britain. I do not need to invoke any objective distributions of 'material power',[123] or any 'real beliefs' on the part of the actors to make this argument. Changes in the balance of power owed more to the actual deployment of the concept in debates – 'objectifying' a version of the balance – rather than to any objective assessment of power and territory.

What underscores this point is precisely the effect on Austria of the new rhetorical links made in the debates that were conducted, and the eventual failure of the Austrian strategy during the Utrecht negotiations. This is clear from Austria's marginalisation at Utrecht, and can be illustrated in a rather 'pure' form, in the case of the rhetorical attacks on the Austrian ambassador, Philipp Ludwig Wenzel von Sinzendorf.

Emperor Charles VI had been elected in 1711, but did not renounce his claims to Spain and its territories in their entirety, even when offered substantial territory in Italy.[124] He eventually instructed Sinzendorf to oppose any peace congress based on the London Preliminaries.[125] However, Charles VI could not make his claims legitimate in the eyes of others.[126] When he insisted on Austria's rightful claims to the Spanish Monarchy, Austria's position was attacked on the grounds that the Emperor was ignoring the balance of power, thinking only of his own 'private interests' and ambitions. That was even less acceptable in view of the history of Charles V, the prototype of a Universal Monarch in Europe.

The Congress of Utrecht opened on 29 January 1712, but Sinzendorf did not arrive until he had been given assurances that the London Preliminaries were not binding for the Conference. As concerns policy substance, little of importance happened during the negotiations at Utrecht. Most of the action was bilateral, between Britain and France –

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[122] After 1683, the Habsburgs marched into the Balkans, Hungary, Transylvania, parts of Serbia and Romania, Sicily, Naples, Lombardy, the Southern Netherlands, and reinforcing the German territories, see Evans, Robert John Weston. 2006. *Austria, Hungary, and the Habsburgs: Central Europe c. 1683–1867*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 3–6.

[123] Osiander, *The States System*, p. 138.

[124] Ward, 'The Peace of Utrecht', p. 434.

[125] *Ibid*., p. 439.

[126] See Osiander, *The States System*, p. 134.

everything depended on an Anglo-French understanding.[127] They could dictate the terms in Utrecht.

What Austria could not accept were the implications conveyed regarding the balance of power: namely, the partition of the Spanish monarchy. Still, Austrian counter-arguments were to no avail. Basically, the balance was now increasingly seen as a system preventing *any* power from becoming too dominant.

The pamphleteers did not rest during the Utrecht negotiations. One significant pamphlet directly addressing, and attacking, Sinzendorf caused considerable commotion during the negotiations.[128] The anonymous author alleges:

> Since we can no longer ignore the objective that you aim for, what do you suspect that we think when you so heatedly oppose everything that could advance the conclusion of a general peace treaty? We must believe that you will try to make us continue the war until the entire fortune that the great Charles V. possessed at his greatest height has been put in the hands of the Emperor. *Is this the balance you want to offer Europe? Is an excess of power dangerous only when it is not in the hands of the House of Austria?* But is this the object, are these the principles, of our Alliances and Treaties of League? [129]

In retrospect, the charge that the balance applied to everyone except oneself could imaginably have been levelled against Britain as well – but that did not happen. As other countries had been using the very concept of balance of power to argue *for* Britain as the leader of the balance, or holding the balance of power, such criticism would not be sustainable. Appeals from other countries, including Austria, supporting Britain as being indispensable to the balance of Europe were routine.

The pamphleteer goes on to state that the real 'objects', 'principles' and the 'essential aim' of the Alliance was to prevent either the Empire and Spain, or France and Spain,

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[127] Ward, 'The Peace of Utrecht', p. 440.
[128] Osiander, *The States System*, p. 135.
[129] Anon. [1712] 1736. 'REMONTRANCES d'un Hollandois à Monsieur le Comte de Sinzendorff, Plenipotantiaire à Utrecht', Amsterdam, Nov. 1712, pp. 335–341 in Lamberty, Guillaume (ed.) *Memoires pour servir a L'Histoire du XVIII. Siecle*, *Tome Septieme*. Amsterdam: Chez Pierre Mortier, p. 338. Emphasis added.

from 'falling into the same hands'. The Dutch had been ignoring this for too long, due to Austrian trickeries.[130]

Now, however, none other than Jonathan Swift had revealed this sinister plan. The pamphlet's author addresses Sinzendorf directly: 'all this has been reported in English writings, and particularly in the one entitled, *The Conduct of the Allies*'. Austria had long sought to confuse and bewilder, but Swift's pamphlet 'made clear for the entire world the wrong that we have done to our nation [Holland], by sacrificing its interests in favor of the ambition of the House of Austria'.[131]

The appeal to Swift's *Conduct* makes for an important intertext. It connects the rhetoric from British policy debates directly with the international negotiations at Utrecht, using it authoritatively against Austria, and again emphasising the central role of Britain (and France).

This also illustrates how France was no longer considered the lone antagonist – in fact, Britain and France now stood together. It had become a question of protecting the system, the public interest of Europe, from *any* preponderant power, and in the case of Austria, the 'entire fortune that the great Charles V possessed' was an ominous historical token. Austria initially had to frame its arguments in balance-of-power terms, but the Austrian version of implementing it and a continued war could not be defended. In effect, being against the League was being for one's private interests and ambitions – and *thereby* against the balance of power.

Given the aims of this project, this argument does not depend on an analytical separation between 'material interests' and 'ideas'. The argument is therefore not that Charles VI privileged his 'material interest' over the 'ideas' of the balance of power, or the like. Neither is it about Austria's lack of political finesse, expertise, or awareness, but the effect of the Austrian rhetoric in context.[132] Nor is the fact that the Emperor initially refused to participate in the Utrecht deliberations particularly consequential to the argument. The point is that Austria was affected by the balance of power rhetoric, limiting its choices in the first place, regardless of whatever interest in debating and

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[130] *Ibid*.

[131] *Ibid*. Thanks to Pernille Rieker for assistance in translating these difficult pieces of 18th century French.

[132] Krebs, Ronald R. and Patrick Thaddeus Jackson. 2007. 'Twisting Tongues and Twisting Arms: The Power of Political Rhetoric', *European Journal of International Relations* 13(1): 35-66, p. 48.

talking. The Austrians were 'rhetorically trapped'. Irrespective of Austria's 'material interests', or the Emperor's 'real beliefs', Austria could simply not sustain its public opposition to the Utrecht Settlements, either at home or abroad.[133] Given the balance-of-power principle, and what was taken to be the 'correct' implications of it, Austria's attempt to link the concept with dynastic concerns failed. It was left with no effective rhetorical response, other than to give in – as it eventually did. The paucity of rhetorical resources left Austria to fight alone, which it did for some time, before finally accepting the partition scheme.

Austria's arguments appeared invalid in the historical context. As seen for instance in the pamphlet *Soupirs*, Austria had itself been appealing to England's role as 'holder of the balance'. However, from 1711, Austria began using earlier British balance-of-power rhetoric against Britain itself.[134] This was, firstly, an attempt at undermining Britain's latest position favouring a division of Spain by putting the spotlight on the inconsistency in British arguments. Secondly, Austria concurrently invoked legitimate succession and dynastic genealogy as reasons for its own claims to Spain.[135]

The failure of these arguments also illustrates how rhetoric may have unpredictable effects. Situations like the Utrecht Conference are socially, culturally, and strategically complex. In addition, historical investments in commonplaces like the 'balance of power' linger on, and may have path-dependent effects.[136]

First, the historical luggage associated with a potential unification of the Spanish and Habsburg Crowns was heavy. The example of Charles V still carried rhetorical force, and was frequently used in arguments as a historical parallel, or 'analogical confirmation'.[137]

Secondly, and as I will show in greater detail in the next chapter, Austria was linked with Hungary, and eastern Europe was a region seen as being on the margins of relations between the major European powers, and therefore as less relevant to the balance of power. This is a case of how the balance of power served to polarise, making broad

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[133] Krebs and Jackson, 'Twisting Tongues', pp. 42–44.
[134] Dumont, *Soupirs*.
[135] *Ibid.,* p. 35.
[136] Pierson, Paul. 2004. *Politics in Time: History, Institutions, and Social Analysis*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
[137] A term borrowed from Foucault, Michel. [1969] 2002. *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. London: Routledge, p. 64.

alliances more complicated, but also making the concept more socially powerful, as the borders of what constituted the balance became more firmly defined. As mentioned, back in 1699 France and Austria had agreed that eastward Austrian expansion was of little consequence for its standing in the balance of power. Bolingbroke later wrote of the Emperor that 'the Austrian ambition and bigotry exerted themselves in the distant countries, whose interests were not considered as a part of this system' such as Hungary or Transylvania. This was opposed to the 'ambition and bigotry' of Louis XIV as exerted in the Low Countries, the Rhine, Italy and Spain, 'in the very midst of this system'.[138] Austria's centrality in Europe was simply less than that of, for instance, Britain, Spain, France or Holland – powers deemed far more relevant to what was increasingly becoming a European system. All this was to change in the 1720s.

Thirdly, the contingent linking of the balance of power to other concerns is central – how concepts and positions are tied together. Such creative tying-together can potentially change the boundaries of what the balance of power can legitimately be taken to mean, by combining previously unrelated positions and concepts together. Austria, whilst at least tacitly accepting the *principle* of the balance of power, sought to question its *implications*, by tying it to inherent succession rights and the integral stability of coalitions, but failed. Austria's arguments here were based on a historical still life of the balance of power in the early 1700s, when Britain had favoured the Spanish monarchy going to Austria. But this conservative and static position on the balance did not resonate. The situation was not seen as one of static duality between France and the rest, as Austria implied in its pamphlet *Soupirs*, but as a rather dynamic *system*.

Conclusions: New implications of the balance of power

There is a central point to note about the arguments made in *Soupirs* in 1712, relative to the arguments made in the pro-Habsburg *The Lion's Share* published a decade earlier. The implications of the balance of power are taken to be practically *exactly the same* – unification of Austria and Spain in order to counter the all-encompassing French threat.

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[138] Bolingbroke, *Defence*, p. 56.

If we consider the status of the balance of power at the time of the Utrecht Conference, it becomes clear that the balance was no longer used as indicating a duality between France and the rest, but increasingly as a systemic concept, opposing *any* power that might aim for predominance. With Charles VI, Austria itself had emerged as a threat to the balance. That triggered new analyses of the balance of power.

In 1706, the first year when France was commonly seen to be declining, Daniel Defoe had asked, 'Well, gentlemen, and WHAT NEXT?'[139] A re-assessment was needed. The issue was now about *preventing any part of the European system growing too large.* The balance of power and its implications had changed. Appeals to a fixed standing of the balance of power from a decade ago were fruitless. The balance of power had emerged as an opposition to the concept of a Universal Monarchy, as an expression of a public, not private, interest, and being placed centrally in the opposition to France, with England as the central 'balancer'. By inserting the balance of power into this constellation, England had succeeded in 'capturing' the concept, and could continue to do so even when the implications of the balance of power and 'the public interest' of Europe changed.

During Utrecht, the balance of power allowed a portrayal of what was at stake as the public interest and peace of Europe. Echoing Needham's arguments, the rhetoric of interests served purposes of objectification, enabling actors to offer purportedly neutral descriptions (as opposed to private, normative agendas), by presenting rich, empirical details of other countries. The rhetoric of interest served to produce the balance of power as neutral and external, with a quality of 'out-there-ness',[140] a 'thing' needing 'protection' against *any* aspiring universal monarch. Any opposition would have to be couched in terms of *principle* of the balance of power, coming from within the balance-of-power discourse. Secondly, the *implications* of the balance of power were no longer only about the fight against France: they had expanded to being about protecting the public interest of the European system at large.

After 1711, in both these respects, Austria had no sustainable social basis from which to make its claims[141] and was seen as irrelevant to negotiations 'to settle and establish the

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[139] Defoe, 'A Review'.

[140] Potter, Jonathan. 1996. *Representing Reality: Discourse, Rhetoric and Social Construction*. London: Sage, p. 15.

[141] Jackson, Patrick. 2006. *Civilizing the Enemy*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, p. 181; Krebs and Jackson, 'Twisting Tongues'.

peace and tranquillity of Christendom by an equal balance of power'.[142] Arguing directly against the balance-of-power principle itself, or trying to establish a competing principle, would have been exceedingly difficult and costly.[143] On the other hand, rejecting a plan explicitly based on balance-of-power terms as agreed by the major powers meant, in effect, isolating oneself. It meant choosing *not* to align with the public interest, and consequently favouring one's own 'ambitions' and private interests over the balance.

Many of the positions and arguments in this chapter are recognisable from the preceding chapter, concerning the emergence of the concept during the Anglo-Dutch wars. Now, however, the balance of power as a principle had become taken for granted. It was a question of its implementation, and using the balance of power as a weapon in domestic debates which can, however, not be separated from the international and public.

The balance of power, seen as depending as much on developments within as between countries, served as a tool for translating, building conceptual bridges between the relations of peoples and their rulers – or, in modern terms, between the domestic and the international. The quality of government and the balance of power hung close together. As Charles Davenant argued, 'To put us in a Condition to hold the Balance, our Distempers at home must be first Cur'd'.[144] This also helped to link an array of new political developments under the purview of the balance of power – from constitutional developments in Sweden, to administrative changes in Spain, to political developments in Russia.[145] With this, and the Tory government of 1710 in Britain, the balance of power became more systemic.

Even if in power for only a relatively short period, the Tory government fundamentally shaped the concept of the balance of power through its pro-French and anti-Austrian rhetoric. From a Tory position, the balance of power equalled peace, which equalled Utrecht negotiations and a treaty with France. Being against any of these meant being against the balance of power and being for Universal Monarchy, war, ambition, and the private over public interests.

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[142] From Article II of the 'Peace and Friendship Treaty of Utrecht between Spain and Great Britain', July 1713.

[143] Berger, Peter L. and Thomes Luckmann. [1966] 1991. *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*. London: Penguin, p. 71.

[144] Davenant, *Essays*, p. 33.

[145] Black, Jeremy. 1983. 'The Theory of the Balance of Power in the First Half of the Eighteenth Century: A Note on Sources', *Review of International Studies* 9: 55–61, p. 59.

Increasingly from 1706, France was no longer the sole, overarching threat. The balance of power was no longer used only to fight the Universal Monarchy of France. Britain was the 'balancer', recognised by the others. If that standing originally came from the opposition to France, it had now been expanded to the whole European system, so that *any* state, not only France, might now need to be balanced. Austria failed in linking this to a stable conception of inheritance rights. It also indicates that the boundaries of the balance of power had become fairly fixed – there was little rhetorical 'wiggle room' for rebutting claims associated with the balance of power.[146] This will change in the next chapter.

True enough, Austria did attempt to 'capture' the concept of the balance of power from Britain, by using the British rhetoric against itself, and by claiming links between the balance of power and its own inheritance rights. In the run-up to Utrecht, however, the balance of power had become strongly linked with the systemic, public interest of Europe, pointing in a specific policy direction under the Tory government.[147] The balance of power now deprived Austria's rhetoric of a sustainable link to their position and to dynastic politics – because of Britain's position, Austria's own position multivocally emphasising succession rights, and a series of analogical confirmations establishing a narrative of how Austria all along, since Charles V in the early 16th century had been aspiring to a Universal Monarchy, just as had been argued concerning France and the Dutch before it. Austria did not have the rhetorical resources to answer Defoe's question, 'what's next'. By 1714, left without allies, the Emperor had few options but to settle for the peace.[148]

This shows how contingent alterations in the uses of the concept through actual deployment in debates leads to new constraints and conditions of possibility for agentic action, and how time and place matters. Things could have been different, for sure. And that is the point. There is always contingency. Other ways of framing stuff could have existed, and there could have been other ways of getting the same historical result or outcome, as seen in isolation. But the process, the way there, would have looked

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[146] Krebs and Jackson, 'Twisting Tongues', p. 48.
[147] Jackson, *Civilizing the Enemy*, p. 45.
[148] Luard, Evan. 1992. *The Balance of Power: The System of International Relations, 1648–1815*. London: Macmillan, p. 70.

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different, had it not been for balance-of-power rhetoric working out exactly as it did in this period.[149]

After Utrecht, the settlement became a bone of contention in British politics. Various central architects from Utrecht, including Harley, now the Earl of Oxford, and Bolingbroke, were impeached for precisely the same sins they had condemned in arguing for the peace. The accusations were of the gravest nature: that they had *betrayed the balance of power for the sake of their own private interests*.[150] These were still debates over how to implement the balance of power. However, as I will show in the next chapter, from the War of the Austrian Succession onwards, the very principle of the balance of power began to be challenged in the 1740s and 1750s.

Also the two preceding chapters have dealt with Europe in isolation. However, as the balance of power principle itself became increasingly disputed from the 1740s, another problem emerged – what to do when the balance-of-power system must confront its 'outside', particularly Russia and the Ottomans? What the case of Austria also shows is how one effect of the balance-of-power concept was a stratification of Europe. Even if a common European sociability 'did not admit of graduations so easily',[151] the balance of power in fact did. This balance was both inclusive and exclusive at the same time. That a hierarchy among actors within Europe was discarded at Utrecht[152] may be true of the practical procedures at the conference itself. However, at the same time, assessing the balance and the interests of its different component parts required stratification – there must be greater and lesser powers in order to classify *any* power.[153]

A factor that contributed to Austria's exclusion was that Spain, the European heartland, was now involved. For Britain, in particular, the problem was not Austria's 'objective' rise in terms of capabilities – in fact, before the War of the Spanish Succession, Austria had been allowed to grow. Paradoxically, then, there were no worries about the rise of Austria in the East partly *because* of the balance of power and how it was seen. The balance of power did not manifest itself as reactions to a rising power, but as a means to

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[149] Jackson, *Civilizing the Enemy*, p. 42.
[150] See debates in the House of Commons on the impeachment, 3 September 1715. Parliament, Great Britain. 1767–1830. 'Fifth Parliament of Great Britain: first session (17 March 1715–21 September 1715)', *Journal of the House of Lords: volume 20: 1714–1717*: 199–222.
[151] Osiander, *The States System*, p.111.
[152] *Ibid.*
[153] Bartelson, Jens. 1995. *A Genealogy of Sovereignty*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p 171.

overlook this. What mattered was that this growth now began to concern the major powers in Europe, Spain in particular. The balance of power here is not an expression of anarchy, but a means by which to establish hierarchies through authoritative justification.

That provides the starting point for the next chapter, dealing with developments after Utrecht, until the Ochakov crisis in 1791 and 1792, and how the epistemic backing of the balance of power came under attack.

CHAPTER 4

Attacking the Balance: Knowledge and Politics at the University of Göttingen

This chapter focuses on how the rhetorical coordinates were shifting in debates over the balance of power, from the Utrecht Treaties of 1713/1714. The main empirical focus is the emerging criticism of the balance of power as a concept, from about 1740–50. Criticism of the balance of power concerned what could be considered real and verifiable, as opposed to abstract speculations employed for partisan purposes. A precondition for this attack on the concept was therefore a reconfiguration of what *knowledge* is and should be used for. Without this reconfiguration of knowledge, attacks on the balance of power would not have taken place, at least not in ways detailed in this chapter. The balance was seen as an expression of a political tradition – British, in particular – and was justified by pointing to that same tradition. After Utrecht, the balance of power was taken for granted as a system, no abstract theory was needed to support it, and so the question of abstraction and 'real' practice did not arise. A distinction between abstract and useless 'university knowledge' and politically useful knowledge could not be used as a rhetorical weapon against the balance of power, *until* that concept was connected to *international law*, where debate about the abstract versus the practical was *already* ongoing. Increasingly, critical arguments concerning the balance of power were heard throughout Europe. The inflection point in this section, chapters 4 and 5, is when this culminated in an all-out attack on the very concept of the balance of power itself, and not only on its implications as had been debated at Utrecht. In this chapter, I explore how such criticism of one of the most basic concepts of European politics became possible, and the unintended consequences of the deployment of such critical arguments. This foreshadows important debates concerning different academic fields, and their relationship to 'practice' or politics (see the last section: chapters 8 and 9).

As Koselleck has stressed,[1] the mid-18th century was a dynamic period in terms of conceptual developments, with many concepts and rhetorical strands intermingling and flowing together. Therefore, it is important to explore the conceptual linkages that were being forged with the balance of power, because these underlie the contentions over and changing uses of the concept, and particularly as regards rhetorical attacks on it. The main conceptual linkages facilitating such a critical position were those forged between the balance of power, international law, empirical measurements and 'statistics', and a new-found 'science of states'. Despite this variety of conceptual linkages, I will also identify one overarching rhetorical trajectory in this chapter: the increasing distinction between what historical actors considered to be abstract knowledge on the one hand, and practically useful knowledge of political handicraft on the other.

Not only do abstract and concrete knowledge come in different combinations, but the very distinction between what is abstract and what is practical and 'real' appears at some point in time. This is not a natural, given separation. Also this distinction, as used by participants in balance of power politics, needs to be unpacked historically. With reference to the balance of power, this happened in the mid-18th century, with consequences for the use of the concept and for policy. Actors respond not only to events or 'practical politics', but also *to the theories used to describe or explain them.[2]* This is a further reason why it is so important to shed light on the possible relationships between theorising and political practice, as well as how that distinction itself is used in practice to score political points in struggles over legitimation.

The distinction between abstractions and practical realities also impacted on how it was possible to argue concerning the balance of power. The inflection point here came around the years 1750-60, when it became possible to reject the whole balance-of-power concept as an abstract 'chimera' of little relevance for political problems. The new conceptual links, and the distinction between 'academic' and 'useful' knowledge, were the conditions of possibility for such attacks on the balance of power.[3] That such a critical rhetorical position became available in turn affected what could be done in European

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[1] Koselleck, Reinhart . 1972. 'Einleitung', pp. xiii–xxvii in Reinhart Koselleck, Werner Conze, Otto Brunner (eds) *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe. Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland. Bd. 1.* Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta; Id. 1985. *Futures Past. On the Semantics of Historical Time.* New York: Columbia University Press.

[2] Hampsher-Monk, 'Political Languages', pp. 104–106.

[3] In 1826, the liberal Lord Brougham even founded *The Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge.*

international politics. Again, my point here is not to categorise different types of knowledge, but that the historical actors, seeking to score political points, themselves increasingly started to use such distinctions as a new rhetorical resource in their arguments.

As noted in Chapter 1, my presupposition is that the balance of power concept did not 'do' anything in this account – the action came from historically situated actors who seized the concept and deployed it in policy debates relevant to political events in Europe at the time. In seeking to make sense of their surroundings and their situation, actors resorted to the concepts already available to them. The balance of power was central to debates over the European order, and had become a commonplace reference. The relationship between concepts and action is not dependent on logical links between ideas and practice, but on contingent sequences of historical action. Here the most important political events of this period are the War of the Austrian Succession (1740–1748), the Seven Years' War (1756–1763), and the Ochakov Crisis (1791–1792), which I address in the next chapter. The protagonists were Britain, France, Austria, Prussia, and Russia.

This chapter consists of three parts. The chapter starts with an introduction to the political landscape after Utrecht, in what was a relatively quiet period. After Utrecht, Austria was as seen excluded, but Britain and France joined in an alliance that remained until 1738. I will examine how the balance of power had become relatively stabilised in this period, particularly as a tool for stratifying Europe. This quiet period would be partially broken with the War of the Polish Succession, and then totally shattered with the War of the Austrian Succession.

In the second part of the chapter, I then set the latter war in connexion with some central debates happening at the University of Göttingen in Hanover, Britain's territorial foothold on the continent after the Hanoverian succession. This was the central institutional hub for discussions on the balance of power, and it was here that many of the rhetorical innovations concerning the balance of power evolved. I show how developments in international law, statistics, and the sciences of state contingently linked with the balance of power concept through debates emanating from this university. The resultant configuration of concepts was an important precondition that made possible a fundamental critique of the balance of power, further examined in the third part of the chapter.

There I take a closer look at the critical arguments themselves in debates during the second major political event of the century – the Seven Years' War. This criticism was the first attempt to challenge the epistemic underpinnings of the balance of power. Central in this was Johann Heinrich Gottlob von Justi, and how he turned the concept of 'interest' *against* the balance of power concept. Justi's advocacy for self-interest and individual rights of states involved *delinking* what was the 'true interests' from the public, and thereby also from the balance of power. This is pivotal to understanding how criticism of the balance of power could become an accepted position and a place from which to argue. This line of critical argumentation, this kind of position on knowledge, could not be used against the balance of power until the concept had become connected to international law, where such discussions about the abstract versus the practical were already ongoing. That such a rhetorical position became possible would have consequences for the use of the balance of power in the Ochakov debates in 1791–92, which are the topic of the next chapter in this section.

The 'quiet years' after Utrecht, 1713–1740

The War of the Spanish Succession (1701–1714) had finally resulted in the partition of the Spanish Monarchy. The Austrian Habsburg pretender to the Spanish throne – Charles VI – was by many seen as a possible new Charles V. Through the rhetorical deployment of the balance of power, as described in the previous chapter, Austria had become isolated and excluded. This marginalisation also led to the possibility of greater, and unprecedented, French–British cooperation in supervising the Utrecht system. France and Britain were the 'winners', Austria and Spain the 'losers'. Still, Austria and its status were to become the centre of attention in international politics in the years after Utrecht, and for much of the 18th century. Austria returned to the British fold in 1731, in an alliance that would last until 1756.

The years from the Utrecht Settlements until the War of the Austrian Succession in 1740 were relatively quiet and peaceful in Europe, despite some comparatively minor wars and the shifting constellation of the principal powers. During this period, there were four major players in European international politics: Austria, Prussia, France and Britain. The influence of the Dutch had receded, and they never again came to play a central position

in European international politics. Habsburg Austria held the throne of the Holy Roman Empire. Besides being increasingly involved in the core of the European system, Austria also was in conflict with the Ottoman Empire during much of this period. In the northern parts of the German territories, the small state of Prussia was more homogeneous and centralised than Austria – a fact which Frederick II ('Fredrick the Great') would come to exploit. Then there were the traditional antagonists, Bourbon France and Great Britain. The most notable feature immediately after Utrecht was how these two adversaries allied, primarily against Spain.

With Utrecht, France's putative ambitions of establishing a Universal Monarchy in Europe had been blocked. The Bourbon Philip V had indeed been placed on the Spanish throne, but the territories of the Spanish empire had been partitioned. Now, the focus for most states was on rebuilding and consolidating after the devastations of the War of the Spanish Succession. The French influence in Spain now instigated administrative and military reforms, which permitted a renewal of Spanish influence in the Mediterranean and in the Caribbean. Spanish assertiveness led to increasing tensions with Britain, and to a reassessment of the Utrecht system, which had been designed to restrain France. It was no longer regarded as adequate for a new situation where Spain, and also Russia, were increasingly seen as threats.[4]

As viewed from Britain, the connexions between what was considered a Northern and a Central balance of power became tighter – events in Europe from the Baltic to the Italian provinces were seen to be interconnected. Another circumstance made these connexions even more salient for Britain: the Hanover Succession, which provided a foothold on the continent.

Queen Anne died in 1714, and was succeeded by the Elector of Hanover, George I, who was the closest Protestant relative of the Stuarts. Britain had imported a German monarch, and Hanover was now all but a British province on the continent. Both the succession and the corresponding anglophilia in Hanover were largely based on balance-of-power arguments[5] – also because this was generally a Whig project, and the Whigs were the main champions of continental involvement and the balance of power. George I was

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[4] Simms, Brendan. 2008. *Three Victories and a Defeat: The Rise and Fall of the First British Empire, 1714–1783*. London: Penguin, p. 135.
[5] Harding, Nick. 2007. *Hanover and the British Empire, 1700–1837*. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press.

succeeded by George II in 1727. They both spoke German as their everyday language and maintained fairly close contact with Hanover.

The Hanoverian succession made British debates over the balance of power even more complex, as Britain was now practically a part of continental Europe, also as regards territory. Hanover was seen to have a pivotal role in protecting the balance of power,[6] and it was here the University of Göttingen was to be founded. Still, much of the debate in Parliament during this period concerned the question of military or economic support to Hanover. Should British resources and the military be used for Hanoverian purposes? The support to Hanover also provided a good opportunity for the opposition to criticise the Whig ministries of Stanhope and later Walpole.[7] In short, the Hanover succession again accentuated the debate between a policy of continental engagement versus isolation based on naval supremacy.

In addition to a resurgent Spain, Russia was increasingly considered to be a threat, and relevant to the balance of power in Europe. After Peter the Great's victory over Sweden at Poltava in 1709, Britain feared an increasing Russian influence within 'the Baltic Balance', in an area of crucial importance to British trade. It was rumoured that the Russians wanted to establish a naval base in Mecklenburg, a province just north of Hanover on the Baltic littoral.[8] Such an outpost would be a danger not only to trade, but also to the integrity of Hanover. Developments in Spain and Russia, then, prompted France and Britain to coordinate, eventually forming an alliance in 1716, negotiated in Hanover.

What about isolated Austria from the previous chapter? Since the succession of the Hanover king George I, British politicians had increasingly sought to mend relations with Austria.[9] Meanwhile, the renascent Spain aimed at retaking Italian territories granted to Austria at Utrecht, and invaded Sardinia in 1717 while Austria was engaged in war with the Ottomans (1716–1718). In 1718, after making peace with the Ottomans, Austria joined France and Britain (and the Dutch, who had joined in 1717) in what became known as the Quadruple Alliance to supress Spain.

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[6] Simms, *Three Victories,* p. 90
[7] *Ibid.,* p. 123
[8] Thompson, Andrew C. 2006. *Britain, Hanover and the Protestant Interest, 1688–1756.* Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, p. 150.
[9] Simms, *Three Victories,* p. 115.

Spain was defeated by this Quadruple Alliance in 1720, and renounced its claims to Sardinia, and a peace was concluded with the Treaty of The Hague. The alliance also concluded treaties that pacified the Baltics. That Britain and France were fighting on the same side was a historically curious situation. The Quadruple Alliance was to remain an important factor in Europe until the Treaty of Vienna in 1731, when an Anglo-Austrian alliance was established. As concerns Russia, the Great Northern War between Russia and Sweden ended in 1721 with the Treaty of Nystadt, and Europe was seen to be stable.

Even if Great Britain had been an ally of Austria in the Quadruple Alliance, fears of a renewed Austrian Universal Monarchy lingered. As noted, the Austro-Spanish Empire of Charles V was seen as the pre-eminent historical example of a European Universal Monarchy. During the 1720s, therefore, Austria was once again seen as a threat, particularly in Britain – even more so than France or Russia.[10] Debates in Parliament concerned whether the growing opposition to Austria was good or bad for the balance of power.[11]

All these fears were confirmed with the 1725 Treaty of Vienna, when Austria and Spain concluded an alliance that could easily be interpreted as the reconstitution of Charles V's Empire: it had been composed exactly of the Holy Roman Empire and the Spanish Empire. Austria pursued such an alliance with Spain to obtain guarantees for the 'Pragmatic Sanction' – an edict to secure the Austrian succession, to which I return below. In exchange for Spain's acceptance of the Pragmatic Sanction, Austria finally relinquished its claims to the Spanish throne, so vigorously pursued during and after the Utrecht negotiations. In addition, Austria would now help Spain to reclaim Gibraltar, which had been ceded to Britain at Utrecht.

For Britain, this new Austro-Spanish alliance complicated the European situation even further. The balance of power in Europe, or what was by now seen as various European balanc*es* in the plural, would have to be re-conceptualised. Also in 1725, as a direct response to the Austro-Spanish alliance, Britain formed its own alliance with France and the newcomer Prussia in the Treaty of Hanover.

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[10] *Ibid*., p. 159–171.
[11] *Ibid.,* p. 192.

These shifting alliances and conflicts may seem confusing. As the 1730s approached, the situation in Europe was as follows: Britain-Hanover, France, and Prussia (as well as Denmark, Sweden, the Ottoman Empire, and some smaller German states) stood together against Austria, Spain, and Russia. However, that was to change in 1731.

In 1727 Spain attacked Gibraltar with the help of Austria, but the campaign did not succeed, and Spain and Britain reached a peace agreement in 1728. This rapidly-concluded peace with Spain can be seen as a preparation for the 1731 Treaty of Vienna (yes, there are many of them) which formally established an Austro-British alliance, because the peace with Spain also implied that Spain broke its ties with Austria. Only three years after the Spanish-Austrian aggression, then, Britain joined Austria in an alliance that would remain for decades. It was Philipp Ludwig Wenzel von Sinzendorf who signed the treaty on behalf of Austria – the very same statesman who had been so effectively excluded at Utrecht by using the balance of power concept. Austria was now back in the fold.

The British turn to Austria, the feared Universal Monarchy, had to do with shifting opinions in Britain, where France now was seen to be on the rise again. The anti-Austrian politician Lord Townsend resigned as senior Secretary of State, and the austrophile Duke of Newcastle now aimed to re-establish relations with Austria. In the early 1730s, therefore, Britain and Austria stood against France and Spain.

Despite these shifting alliances and minor wars, the period from Utrecht until 1740 was generally stable and peaceful, except perhaps for the War of the Polish Succession (1733–1739), in which Britain chose not to take part. France and Austria fought over the right of their claimants to succeed to the Polish throne after the death of Poland's Augustus II. The War of the Polish Succession was the final nail in the coffin of British–French rapprochement after Utrecht. Britain saw this as yet another Bourbon attack on the Habsburgs[12] and as definite confirmation of the resurgent French threat, reaffirming the importance of strong links with Austria. During this war, Britain founded the University of Göttingen in Hanover, which would play a crucial role in the changing balance of power rhetoric in Europe. We return to this below, but let us first examine the general use of balance of power rhetoric in this 'quiet period' after Utrecht.

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[12] *Ibid.*, p. 228.

The balance of power and stratification

After Utrecht the balance of power was well-established as a concept, and stood stronger than ever. As will be shown in connection with debates at the University of Göttingen, new rhetorical configurations between concepts changed the conditions of possibility for what could be argued over and debated. Still, the balance of power had largely 'settled down' and stabilised after Utrecht. Even popular satirical plays made fun of the concept as the embodiment of politicising and the excessive interest in international politics.[13] How was this 'commonplace' of the balance of power used in the years after Utrecht and until 1740?

As indicated in the previous chapter, the balance of power in this period was used to stratify Europe. With increasing complexity and shifting alliances, various regional balances or 'inferior' balance were seen to exist, all somehow linked to the overall European balance of power. The balance of power distinguished between and stratified the different polities that made up the European order, and was also used to distinguish between the inside and outside of Europe.

The system from Utrecht was based on four principal powers: Britain, France, Spain and Austria. The balance of power could now be invoked to protect Europe from *any* predominant power, and not only France. However, after Utrecht, political debates increasingly came to revolve around the complexity of the system, with changing alliances and new actors like Prussia and Russia entering the scene. The shape of the international order in the mid-1700s, it seemed, was becoming more and more ambiguous and unclear.

In this period – which Pocock calls the 'Utrecht Enlightenment'[14]– Europe was often treated as a kind of federation, which in turn was integral to the *jus publicum Europaeum.* What was seen as the common European sociability was based on politeness, manners,

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[13] Murphy, Arthur. 1758. *The Upholsterer: or what News? A Farce, in Two Acts.* London: P. Vaillant. See Headland, Garry. 2007. 'Arthur Murphy and Eighteenth-Century Stage Business', *Studies in Theatre and Performance* (28)1: 23–37.
[14] Devetak, Richard (2015) 'Historiographical Foundations of Modern International Thought: Histories of the European States-System from Florence to Göttingen', *History of European Ideas* (41)1: 62–77, p. 75.

science, liberty and protection against arbitrary rule through the *jus gentium* in Europe.[15] The balance of power was, in Richard Little's term, on the whole considered an 'associational' one.[16] This conception of Europe would be shared by many throughout the century. For example, in 1763 it was argued that

> those who have ever heard of the balance of power will consider the states of Europe, as an eminent writer somewhere expresses it, as forming one great republic, which interests itself in the concerns of every individual state […] If on this view of things the question is started, *of what benefit it is to make conquests by arms, if we are liable to lose them by treaties?* The reply may be, they are seized as pledges to reduce an unreasonable state to submit to the arbitration of a congress: and should success incline to the unjust side, the same end is still effected of *bringing private disputes to a public discussion.*[17]

As the expression of the public interest of such a 'republic', the balance of power also helped to distinguish the inside of a European 'system' from its outside. Even before it had emerged as a commonplace concept to be used in political debates, reference to a 'balance' implicitly relied on a distinction between what was inside and outside of Christianity, or of Europe. The 'Turks' in particular, were the domain of Oriental Despots, with no *civitas*. Such arguments reflect the centrality of Universal Monarchy as that which the balance aimed to prevent, as discussed in Chapter 2. As the balance of power helped to fix the border between Europe and its outside, it was, in a sense, the operationalization of a specific kind of political rationality.

The balance of power could serve these purposes also because of its, particularly British, *republican* origins, valuing the freedom from dominance above all else, domestically and in Europe. As also shown in Chapter 2, the concept emerged on the basis of opposition to dominance, in the form of Universal Monarchy and Oriental Despotism, which was seen as a discredited and 'arbitrary' system of rule, and on the basis of support of the public interest – the public interest of Europe, that is. Europe stood in a tradition of reason and law, as opposed to the Orient and other actors outside of the system. There could be a systemic balance of power because European 'reason' could find its expression in the

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[15] Pocock, J.G.A. 1999. Enlightenment and Counter-Enlightenment, Revolution and Counter-Revolution; a Eurosceptical Enquiry, History of Political Thought (20)1: 125–139, p 128; Devetak, *Historiographical Foundations*.

[16] Little, Richard . 2007. *The Balance of Power in International Relations: Metaphors, Myths and Models*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[17] Noorthouck, John (1773) *A New History of London Including Westminster and Southwark* (London: R. Baldwin), pp. 403–419. Emphasis added.

'natural interests' and natural law fundamental to a range of states that occupied various positions and had different interests.

However, the balance of power progressively became a tool for stratification also internally within Europe. Back in 1699, France and Austria had agreed that Austrian expansion eastward in Europe was of little consequence for their standing in the balance of power, as this was something that took place in 'distant countries, whose interests were not considered as a part of this system'.[18] What mattered were the 'principal nations of the West', like Britain, France and Austria. It was from these principal powers that the idea of a balance of power in Europe had arisen.[19]

There are numerous examples of how the balance of power was used to rank states internally in Europe, and how different regional balances were important, in varying degrees, to the overall balance of power. How these different parts of the overall balance of power stood, and how they should be ranked relative to each other, was also a major topic of debate and contention. What Britain saw as a Baltic problem, or a German problem, for example, did not fit into preconceived notions of the balance of power as used for protection against France. These were new and complex problems, but they still needed to be framed in balance-of-power terms to have weight. Increasingly, the 'Northern' and the 'Southern' balances were seen to be interconnected; in addition came other regional or 'inferior' balances, such as the 'Baltic balance'. Thus emerged a more fragmented view of the various balances within the European balance of power, and the relationship of this with its outside. The balance came to serve as a hierarchically based notion as regards both the inside and the outside of 'Europe'. Just how to assess and measure such complex balances – to ascertain where oneself and others stood in this hierarchy – was to become a new problem during the 1740s.

The Pragmatic Sanction and the War of the Austrian Succession (1740–1748)

Such was the situation in the 'quiet period' between Utrecht and 1740. The balance of power was seen to be 'fragmented' into various sub-balances, all of which were accorded

[18] Bolingbroke. [1735] 1932. *Defence of the Treaty of Utrecht. Letters VI–VIII of The Study and Use of History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 56.
[19] *Ibid.,* p. 18.

a certain priority within the European balance of power. This fragmentation would remain a constant feature throughout the 18th century, but what changed from the 1740s was that a completely new rhetorical position became available: all-out criticism of the very concept and existence of a balance of power. This would have important consequences for international politics.

Before turning to the reconfiguration of balance of power arguments, it is necessary to recap the developments from the 1740s, when the relatively calm period in Europe ended. What happened in 1740? This is when the War of the Austrian Succession (1740–48) started, with Prussia invading the province of Silesia, eventually becoming the Seven Years' War (1754–1763) which can reasonably be termed a world war. Above, I promised to come back to the Pragmatic Sanction, which was one of the main reasons for the (in Britain unpopular) alliance between Austria and Spain in 1725, and now is the time.

The Pragmatic Sanction had been promoted by Charles VI of Austria since the Utrecht Treaties in 1713. The aim was to avoid another succession crisis in Europe by ensuring that a woman could legally take over the Habsburg hereditary possessions. Charles VI's only heir was his daughter Maria Theresa; through this edict, Charles sought legitimacy for her succession both internally from the estates of his dominions, and externally with other European powers. The debate over this unheard-of proposal raged in Europe, but eventually most European powers ratified the Pragmatic Sanction, granting Maria Theresa the right of succession. As noted, Spain accepted the Pragmatic Sanction in 1725. Britain accepted it in 1731, having entered into the alliance with Austria. All the major European powers had signed and accepted the Pragmatic Sanction, but when push came to shove in 1740, it was disregarded, and war broke out.

In 1740, Charles VI died, and Maria Theresa succeeded him. At that moment, both France and Prussia (and Bavaria and Saxony) retracted their support of the Pragmatic Sanction and disputed the succession. Europe again faced a succession crisis, just as before the War of the Spanish Succession. This was, however, also an internal struggle in the Holy Roman Empire, and it was Prussia that triggered the war. Frederick II of Prussia, also known as Fredrick the Great, disregarded the Pragmatic Sanction and invaded the Austrian province of Silesia in 1740, only months after Maria Theresa had succeeded to the throne.

Frederick II had himself just ascended to the Prussian throne in 1740. While he had few opportunities to make Prussia a wealthy state, he could, however, work on its resources. Through internal economising and organisation, Prussia began to grow under Frederick II, showcasing the importance not only of extractive but also of regulatory capacity.[20] The Prussian infantry had become, in Frederick's own words, like 'the best made watch' through disciplinary innovations.[21] And this capable fighting force now took aim at the Habsburg territories.

In addition to the controversies surrounding the succession issue, Austria was weak, still recovering after yet another war with the Ottomans. In this moment of Austrian weakness, with an 'unentitled' female successor at the helm, the 28-year-old Frederick invaded Silesia in December 1740 in an attack that took everyone by surprise. Like vultures following a predator, Spain, France, Sweden, Bavaria and Saxony joined Prussia.

The spectacular surge of Prussia was a reason for grave concern, particularly as Prussia had grown strong through *domestic* developments and prudent administration, and not big armies and territorial expansion. This surge fomented debate about the regional 'German balance of power' and, as we will see, the role of domestic or 'secondary' effects on a state's power – the domestic constitution of states increasingly became a problem. This focus on the domestic, combined with the incorporation of the balance of power into international law, triggered debates about the legitimacy of 'interventions' into other states in the name of the balance of power. In the face of increasing complexity, the balance of power did not become more 'elusive' – rather, the extent of what could possibly fall under its scope increased.

Britain was in alliance with Austria. However, Britain was still engaged in trade conflicts with Spain in the Caribbean, and chose to support Austria with payments rather than with soldiers. The main legitimising device for such massive expenditures was the balance of power.

In official treasury books, among dry accounting numbers, we can find this entry from 29 July 1741:

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[20] Gorski, Philip S. 2003. *The Disciplinary Revolution*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 76–77
[21] *Ibid.,* p. 96.

> Order for the issue out of the 1,000,000/. from the Sinking Fund for the service of 1741, of 75,000/. to the Paymaster of the Forces on the unsatisfied order in his name for 200,000/. part of 300,000/. granted by Parliament for supporting the liberties and balance of power in Europe.[22]

The following year, a similar entry is made for 2 July:

> Henry Pelham to the Treasury, dated Pay Office, Horse Guards; for the issue of 150,000/., to answer His Majesty's warrant of the 1st July, payable to the minister of the Queen of Hungary[23], in further part of 500,000/. for the support of the House of Austria and restoring the balance of power in Europe.[24]

Again, in 1743, under the field 'The Account on which the Order or Warrant is made', it is written 'for support of the House of Austria and restoring the balance of power'.

The difference between justifications of purpose in various of these entries – between mundane 'buying new boots', as it were, and 'restoring the balance of power in Europe' – might seem almost comical, but it attests to the power of the concept in legitimising such expensive continental involvements. And the balance of power was here hypostatised as a tangible thing indeed.

While Britain supported Austria, it also needed to keep a watchful eye on its 'own' province of Hanover – conceivably under threat from Frederick II and Prussia. Debates erupted in the British Parliament over whether to support Austria with money or with soldiers, whether to support Austria at all, and whether to concentrate on defending Hanover instead.

Maria Theresa rose to the occasion and defended Silesia well. The war went on, with varying intensity, for eight years, until the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748. France had declared war on Britain in 1744, and now a return to the *status quo ante bellum* was agreed between the two. It was also agreed that Frederick could keep Silesia. Prussia had

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[22] 1901. 'Treasury Books and Papers: July 1741', pp. 476–488 in William A. Shaw (ed.) *Calendar of Treasury Books and Papers, Volume 4, 1739–1741*. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, Treasury Minute Book XXVIII. pp. 356–7.

[23] Hungary had disputed the Pragmatic Sanction, but was appeased, and Maria Theresa became Queen of Hungary.

[24] 1903. 'Treasury Books and Papers: July 1742', pp.51–62 in William A. Shaw (ed.) *Calendar of Treasury Books and Papers, Volume 5, 1742–1745*. London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, Treasury Board Papers CCCVIII. No. 22.

doubled its population and resources by gaining it, increasingly moving Prussia towards being regarded as one of the principal powers of Europe. Austria had long been the main force in the Holy Roman Empire, and Vienna was the centre of the German lands and principalities. Silesia had been the jewel in the crown – and Maria Theresa was set on getting the province back. Later, in what has been called 'the diplomatic revolution', she would unexpectedly ally with France to attain this goal – and so Britain came to ally with Prussia, turning the whole European system on its head.

Broadly speaking, the 1740–1748 War of the Austrian Succession was seen to concern the local 'German Balance'. Should the German territories be separated, or should they be unified under the leadership of either Prussia or Austria? From the 1740s, this dualism (*Deutscher Dualismus*) between Austria and Prussia would be a constant in Europe, culminating in the Seven Years' War between 1754 and 1763, which was in many respects a continuation of the War of the Austrian Succession.

During the 1740s, despite the fairly clear status hierarchy based on the balance of power, it was increasingly uncertain what the implications of this were. Objective assessments of the different states and sub-balances sought to stabilise the terms of the balance of power in what was now a more differentiated European order, where the picture was more blurred than during the War of the Spanish Succession. Even if the balance of power was accepted, how a more general and abstract balance could be converted into a concrete policy became a new problem.

How did the stratified order, with different polities and different regional balances, relate to the overall European balance? This was a matter of great contention, and coincides with an increasing interest in how to concretely assess and measure the balance. Publications concerning the measurements of the different states flourished – what was called 'Statistik' in German from the 1740s (earlier 'political arithmetic' in England). True, the implications of the balance had been discussed, as shown in the previous chapter on the Utrecht negotiations. Still, in the face of increasing disorder and war in the 1740s, it seemed imperative to measure more concretely where the balance of power stood, and the disposition of the various states, both in isolation and in their relationships. Classifications also led to a more objective, accepted conception of differences between

powers, based not only on status, but also on internal resources and capabilities.[25] Gradually, a distinction was made between the balance-of-power principle *itself*, and its empirical and concrete *expressions*, and a more 'theory-like' use of the concept emerged.

Some saw problems in applying the balance of power to their current situation, something that was accentuated with assessments of the value of such measurements. People started questioning the whole idea of a balance of power – where does it come from? And what can the balance of power do for us?

It was in the political debates during the Austrian War of Succession, concerning the fate of Europe facing a new succession crisis, that arguments about the nature of the balance of power, its connexions to international law, and the possibilities of its measurement, were to emerge – specifically in British Hanover, at the University of Göttingen.

Against tradition: Balance, law, and statistics at the University of Göttingen

The inflection point I address in this section came in the 1740s and 1750s, with a principled attack on the balance of power. Here, I examine the preconditions that made criticism possible, before moving on to the criticism itself. It is important to understand *how criticism of the balance of power became possible as an accepted position and a place to argue from*. That such a position became possible was to have consequences on the use of the balance of power in the Ochakov controversy in 1791–92, to be explored in the next chapter.

Interlinked developments during the War of the Austrian Succession in arguments over history, law, science and measuring, led to a new configuration of positions and arguments, and also new rhetorical tools for deploying the balance of power. As mentioned, in the case of the balance of power, the site where these developments came together was at the University of Göttingen (Georg-August-Universität Göttingen) in Hanover. Göttingen intellectuals from Martens to Hereen, many of whom had immigrated to Hanover, made a significant imprint on political discussions in 18th and 19th century Europe.

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[25] Keene, Edward. 2013. 'International Hierarchy and the Origins of the Modern Practice of Intervention', *Review of International Studies* 39(5):1077–1090.

The University of Göttingen was founded in 1737, just two years before the War of the Austrian Succession, by Gerlach Adolph von Münchhausen, who was King George II's chief minister in Hanover and a confidant of the Duke of Newcastle.[26] In many respects, the university was a British one, created with the aim of strengthening the British connexion with the continent, and producing 'diplomatic' knowledge concerning states.[27] The balance of power had been the rationale for the union between Hanover and Britain, and became an important element in the widespread Hanoverian 'anglophilia',[28] and scholars at Göttingen focused on the concept. That this knowledge-producing centre should be 'British' is no coincidence, as Britain used the balance of power as an outer frontier defence. The university was *the* central institution for development and discussions of the balance of power in Europe, and it would continue to serve this function well into the 20th century. In particular, Göttingen was a hub for the links increasingly made between the balance of power concept and international law, and the emerging field of 'statistics' of states. This would become the model for later German balance of power arguments, which eventually impacted IR theory in the USA, which I address in the last section (Chapter 8 and 9).

During these discussions over the nature of the balance of power and international law, a crucial methodological shift took place, concerning the role of science, history, tradition, and the standing of the European system of states. Both criticism of and support for the balance of power increasingly came from universities, justified explicitly by reference to academia and science. In the debates emanating from Göttingen, in the throes of the European situation concerning the Pragmatic Sanction and Maria Theresa, there emerged a tendency to separate what was seen as political and practical, from what was seen as purely abstract and analytical.

I have noted the emerging importance of the 'public interest' of Europe, as opposed to particular or private interest. In the 18th century, science became linked with the political quest for order and stability within the 'republic of Europe', concomitant with the public interest,[29] and intellectual and practical affairs became increasingly indistinguishable as

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[26] Prime Minister during the Seven Years' War.
[27] Goetting, Hans, 1969, 'Geschichte des Diplomatischen Apparats der Universität Göttingen', *Archivalische Zeitschrift,* 65(1): 11–46.
[28] Harding, *Hanover.*
[29] *Ibid.,* p. 92. See also Leira, Halvard. 2008. 'Justus Lipsius, Political Humanism and the Disciplining of 17th Century Statecraft', *Review of International Studies* 34: 669–692.

the *utility* of science was emphasised in practices of codification, assessments, categorisations, and statistics. Things did not simply 'happen': by using abstract knowledge, human intervention could set up social systems to establish order. It was not enough for theory to be the expression and perfection of reason. Theory and abstract knowledge should also work for the public interest, and be put to reasonable and correct practical uses to establish stability and order. This we can see in how science was defined as the opposite of passions and particular interests – it was public.

Academic dissent and disputes became an evil that would have to be removed to secure order. The universities were held to blame for such disputes. It was necessary to find the correct procedures, the right method, to cure knowledge of its ills. Connecting knowledge to concrete, practical knowledge was seen as the cure that could make knowledge and science efficient in the service of the state. Abstract knowledge that could not be witnessed or experienced was divisive, and undermined the collective labour for the state in which it should be deployed and used.[30] What was embedded in the public was *common sense* (quite literally), as opposed to 'metaphysics' and myths – abstract, disconnected, and useless knowledge from universities. Oft-cited oppositional conceptual pairs were empirical/metaphysical, natural/unnatural, and reasonable/unreasonable.[31]

Whereas 'real' science and practical politics were part of the same endeavour, purely intellectual uses of knowledge were increasingly discredited. Enlightenment science, commonly known as 'natural philosophy', was largely based on empirical experimentation, not speculation.[32] Scholars and academics had long been criticised for being too abstract, and for not speaking to the practical needs of the state. From Bacon to Boyle to Descartes, much innovative argumentation was based precisely on critical assessment of traditional 'university knowledge'– which resulted, *inter alia,* in the foundation of alternative, private scientific societies like the Royal Society. 'Men of speculation' or 'men of letters' – as opposed to practical politicians – was a recurrent

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[30] Shapin, Steven. 1996. *The Scientific Revolution.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

[31] Hundert, E.J. 1986. 'A Cognitive Ideal and its Myth: Knowledge as Power in the Lexicon of the Enlightenment', *Social Research* 53(1): 133–157.

[32] See Shapin, Steven and Simon Schaffer. 1985. *Leviathan and the Air-Pump.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

demeaning rhetorical device during the Enlightenment, employed by politicians like Bolingbroke and Burke, among others.[33]

Importantly, however, such a position on knowledge could not be used against the balance of power *until* that concept had become connected to international law, where such discussions about the abstract versus the practical were already ongoing. Previously, such critical arguments against the balance would have been irrelevant, because the balance of power was seen as an expression of a practical, historical tradition of a state or statesmen in the first place, based on 'the ancient constitution' and the like. If the balance of power is taken for granted in this way, with its authority rooted in tradition, and that tradition by default explains the present, then no such abstract theory is applicable and the question of theory vs. practice never arises – it is simply the expression of political practice and its transmission.[34] However, once the balance of power had become linked with international law, particularly at the University of Göttingen, and conceptualised as a part of or a precondition for law, then it could be queried how the balance of power could be seen as compatible with an increasingly complex state practice. The balance of power as an abstraction and as state practice was not necessarily synonymous anymore.

This link inaugurated a new kind of debate – between abstract knowledge on the one hand, and what would become a practical science of statecraft on the other. Only when these links had been forged, combined with a greater focus on precise and empirical measurements, could such criticisms concerning the status of knowledge 'contaminate' the balance-of-power concept. So let me have a look at how the balance of power became a preoccupation of jurists, and the emergence of the science of states, or 'statistics'.

'International law'

A central concern was to construct a science that was relevant and useful for political practice. In other words, societal interests were at stake in intellectual disputes.

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[33] Maurice Crosland. 1987. 'The Image of Science as a Threat: Burke versus Priestley and the "Philosophic Revolution"', *The British Journal for the History of Science* (20)3: 277–307. Only in the 19th century would we find a differentiation between 'scientists' and other groups. Here, it was more a question of individuals and their mentality

[34] This point returns forcefully in the writings of early IR scholars, like Morgenthau, discussed in Chapter 9.

Considerations of use were central to intellectuals and philosophers.[35] The goal was to make state practices, politics as actually practiced, consistent with the laws of the European 'republic'. In Chapter 2, I mentioned how a *koinos nomos*, a universal law code, linked the increasingly differentiated domains of secular politics and the Christian religion. Now, the goal was not to unify mankind in Christ, in a Universal Monarchy, but the converse: to establish the legal basis of the balance of power because what was called 'natural rights' were seen to have *concrete and practical implications*. Theory was to be subjected to practice, and positive law distilled the sociability and communal aspects of Europe in the balance of power.

Throughout the 1740s and 1750s, more and more juridical dissertations focused on the balance of power. Natural law theory was originally a tradition distinct from writers like Rohan, who focused on interests and reason of state, as seen in Chapter 3.[36] Such arguments did not become linked with the law tradition until the 1740s, at Göttingen. Lawyers began employing historical frameworks, including diplomatic practical traditions, for reasoning about natural law.[37] At Göttingen, legal arguments converged with arguments from tradition and the history and recording of the practice of states and statesmen, in 'positive' international law. Much of the discussion emerging from Göttingen drew on the work of Emer de Vattel, which had an enormous impact in this period.[38] Vattel had been writing on the balance of power and the nature of great powerhood, stressing how 'Europe forms a political system in which the nations […] are bound together by their relations and various interests into a single body […] a sort of Republic' which is 'what has given rise to the well-known principle of the balance of power'.[39]

As seen, the balance of power was an expression of the public interest or public good. Now also international law was mustered to support this image of European sociability. Substantially, such legal discussion often revolved around Maria Theresa and the Pragmatic Sanction, seen as an issue of the balance of power. As the jurist and publicist

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[35] Shapin, Steven (1981) 'Of Gods and Kings: Natural Philosophy and Politics in the Leibniz–Clarke Disputes', *Isis* (72)2: 187–215, p. 215.

[36] Bull, Hedley. 2002[1977]. *The Anarchical Society*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, p. 31.

[37] Keene, Edward. 2005. *International Political Thought*. Cambridge: Polity Press, pp. 99–100.

[38] Koskenniemi, Martti. 1999. 'The Advantage of Treaties: International Law in the Enlightenment', *Edinburgh Law Review* 13:27–67; Devetak, 'Historiographical Foundations', p. 14; Armitage, *Foundations*, p. 224.

[39] Vattel, Emmerich de. 1916[1758]. *The Law of Nations*. Washington DC: Carnegie Institution, pp. 251–252.

Jean Rousset de Missy stated in his influential pamphlet from 1743 on the Pragmatic Sanction, 'Histoire de la grande Crise de l'Europe',[40] conserving the balance of power is

> a matter of the PUBLIC INTEREST of all Europe to which, according to all the laws of man and nature the INDIVIDUAL INTEREST of any State or Potentate whatever should be sacrificed'.[41]

Europe therefore had to stand up for Maria Theresa's rights, he argued, because Europe's liberty and the balance of power were in the common interest, and promoted the 'public good'. That pamphlet was probably the first instance where a widely circulated argument employed the balance of power for a political purpose by linking and legitimising it with natural rights and the right of peoples.[42] For the first time, the balance was linked to international law. What then happened was that the discussions and debates already underway in the field of legal discussion and international law became connected to the (epistemic) standing of the balance of power.

The foremost exponent of linking the balance of power to international law was Ludwig Martin Kahle,[43] professor at the University of Göttingen and a central intellectual figure in Europe. He had studied metaphysics, and even discussed such 'metaphysical questions' with Voltaire[44] Still, Kahle's dissertation from 1744 was on the relationship between the politics between states, law, and the balance of power.[45]

Kahle's text was translated into French the same year,[46] and provoked intense debate about method and matter, particularly because of Frederick's surprise invasion of Silesia

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[40] De Missy, Jean Rousset, 1743, *Histoire de la grande Crise de l'Europe. Ou des suites de la Pragmatique Sanction, Et de la Morte de l'Empereur Charles VI*, Jean Nurse: London.

[41] De Missy, *Histoire*, pp.2–3: 'Il s'agit ici de L'INERET PUBLIC de toute l'Europe auquel, suivant toutes les Loix de la Nature & des Gens, doit être sacrifié L'INTERET PARTICULIER de quelque Etat ou Potentat que ce soit…C'est un principe dicté par la Loi naturelle & qui à été reçu dans le *droit public*, comme dans le *droit civil*'; Kaeber, Ernst. 1907. *Die Idee des europäischen Gleichgewichts in der publizistischen Literatur vom 16. bis zur Mitte des 18. Jahrhunderts*. Berlin: Alexander Duncker, p. 93.

[42] Kaeber, *Die Idee*, p. 93.

[43] *Ibid*., p. 94; Maurseth, Per (1964) 'Balance-of-Power Thinking from the Renaissance to the French Revolution', *Journal of Peace Research* 1(2): 120–136.

[44] 1740. *Vergleichung der Leibnitzischen und Newtonischen Metaphysik* (*Comparaison de la Métaphysique de Leibnitz avec celle de Newton*). Gœttingue: s.n.; Voltaire. mdcclxii. 'Answer to Mr. Martin Kahle, Professor and Dean of the Philosophers of Gottingen, in relation to the above metaphysical Questions', pp. 228–230 in Smollett, T. (ed.) *The Works of M. de Voltaire*. London: printed for J. Newbery et al.

[45] Kahle, Ludwig Martin. 1744. *Commentario iuris publici de trutina Europae, quae vulgo appellatur 'Die Ballance von Europa'*. Göttingen.

[46] Kahle, Ludwig Martin, 1744 'La Balance de L'Europe considérée comme la règle de la paix et de la guerre', 1744, Les Freres Schmid: Berlin et Gottingen. It was dedicated to the Duke of Gotter, Prussian

in 1740, construed by some as a breach of the balance of power.[47] Kahle was attacking Frederick II, seen as the friend of France. Recall that Göttingen was a university patronised by Britain: Kahle was attacking France and Spain, while defending England's George II by means of linking the balance with natural right. It was a defence of the 'old system' with Britain at the helm – but now this 'old system' was defended not only with reference to tradition, but *also with support in law*. The balance was linked with law to allow Kahle to argue that the communication between Fredrick II and France in search of an alliance is a violation of the rights of peoples, whereas the saviour is George II, maintaining the balance.[48] The balance of power, Kahle argued, could put a stop to European infighting, halt Universal Monarchy, and promote trade.

Like de Missy in his pamphlet the year before, Kahle argued that just as states might have to sacrifice their individual interests to the public interest, states might have to sacrifice territory to preserve the balance of power in Europe. This he justified this with reference to international law – the law of peoples: the balance of power is a valid and legal justification for interfering with the rights of individual states.[49] These republican arguments in support of Britain emphasised resistance to dominance as more important than any individual state's liberty to act. Kahle basically accepted the legitimacy of preventive wars to forestall any disturbance to the balance of power, which was an integral principle of international law.[50] All European states were under a moral *obligation* to preserve the balance of power. It was not only a right, as Wolff had argued, but a positive *duty*.

One of the most widespread criticisms of the thesis was that it pretended to be science, while really being a political argument. Christian Frederick Stisser, from Prussia, argued that Kahle's argumentation was too political in what was presented as an academic dissertation.[51] Kahle was directly attacking France as a Universal Monarchy, while ignoring the earlier excesses of the Habsburgs.[52] One of Stisser's main contentions

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Grand Marshall and minister (d'etat), and curator of the royal academy of sciences. I have used this French translation as reference.

[47] Kleinenschmidt, Harald. 2000. *The Nemesis of Power*. London: Reaktion Books, p. 127.

[48] Kaeber, *Die Idee,* pp. 95–96.

[49] Adam, Ulrich. 2006. *The Political Economy of J.H.G. Justi.* Bern: Peter Lang.

[50] Maurseth, 'Balance-of-Power Thinking', p. 131.

[51] Stisser, Christian Frederick. 1745/6. *Fortsetzung der freimütigen und bescheidenen Erinnerungen wider des berühmten Göttingischen Professors, Herrn Doctor Kahle, Abhandlung von der Balance Europens, als der vornehmsten Richtschnur des Krieges und des Friedens.* Leipzig: s.n.

[52] Ibid., 117, 172, referred to in Kaeber, *Die Idee*, p. 97.

concerned the balance of power as a concept, denying it any role as an academic term. Even if the balance of power was not eliminated from the vocabulary of international law before the late 1880s,[53] this further supports the point that the distinction between practical political handiwork and science was becoming more relevant in the mid-18th century.

The debate between Kahle and Stisser[54] is important, as it is, as far as I can establish, *the first instance where an alleged division between science and politics was employed in a discussion of the standing of the balance of power.* However, it was not to be the last: using this distinction as a rhetorical tool became commonplace in discussions of the balance of power. As I show in chapters 8 and 9, practice became ever more separated from abstractions, and a 'pure' political practice was used to establish a theory of IR in the 20th century.

During this period, the Renaissance ideal of *Uomo Universale* still prevailed – gentlemen-scholars with a general knowledge base, often also serving in important political positions at European courts or governments. Therefore it makes little sense to speak of politicians and diplomats as acting in complete isolation from scholars, philosophers, and lawyers.[55] Still, in the mid- to late 18th century, a beginning specialisation in international law, eventually fusing with the balance of power, became a *science of states* – a relatively confined area of inquiry, with a proper name and a label. The Göttingen movement played an important role in linking the balance of power and natural law in tandem, simultaneously inspiring the transformation of natural law into the new sciences of the state – 'statistics', 'diplomacy', and 'police'.[56]

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[53] See Chapter 9.
[54] See discussions of the Kahle–Stisser debate in Weidlich, Christoph. 1748. *Geschichte der jetzlebenden Rechts-Gelehrten in Deutschland und zum Theil auch ausser demselben, als ein Rechts-Gelehrten Lexicon.* Merseburg: Johan Gottlob Schubarth, pp. 442–455.
[55] Keene, *International Political Thought*, p. 145.
[56] Nokkala, Ere. 2010. 'Passion as the foundation of natural law in the German enlightenment: Johann Jacob Schmauss and J.H.G. von Justi', *European Review of History/ Revue européenne d'histoire* 17(1): 113–123, p. 114.

Statistics as a new empirical science

Parallel to these discussions in international law, there came an increasing focus on measuring, exactly and empirically, the balance of power, and the polities that comprise it – including their domestic aspects. What became known as 'statistics' led to a major change in how the balance of power was used. With statistics, politics became less about deducing ideal forms of government, in what was termed 'moral philosophy', and politics was increasingly distinguished as a particular practice, different from 'science'. In consequence, the distinction between such politics and what it was not also became clearer. And what it was not, was abstract theory.

In general, the problem of order in a given society or field is inherently tied to the problem of knowledge and its warrants and backing.[57] One such problem of knowledge that could emerge only after the establishment of relatively stable polities was the assessment of the powers and capabilities of others. When politicians and 'gentlemen scholars' alike discussed the surprising rise of Prussia, the role of Russia, and the impact of this for the European order, a question that featured prominently was precisely that of how to measure power.

As seen in previous chapters, 'the concept of interest provides the point from which the detection of differences in a plurality of states can proceed'.[58] In the mid-1600s, authors such as Marchamont Needham (see Chapter 2) had argued that 'true interests' could be known and registered, implying that what he called 'public business' and behaviour in the balance of power were predictable. The alleged ability to predict the behaviour of others was of major value for diplomacy. On the other hand, such conceptualisations of the balance of power would also prepare for the more 'analytical' use of the concept.

That so much attention was paid the issue of measuring on the level of individual polities further indicates the growing distinction between the balance of power as an abstract theory and the practice of politics. Once something is seen as a 'theory' or otherwise more abstract than everyday political practice, and universalist arguments require its own particular mode of argumentation and are not taken for granted, there must be some way

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[57] Toulmin, Stephen E. 2003[1958]. *The Uses of Argument.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Shapin and Schaffer, *Leviathan*.

[58] Bartelson, Jens. 1995. *A Genealogy of Sovereignty*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 161–162.

of determining what the balance of power actually refers to, in empirical terms.[59] By the mid-18th century, these lines of argumentation were followed by explicit attempts at empirically measuring and quantifying the properties of various parts of the system.

The need for precise measurements of difference and the concern with status and stratification triggered massive amounts of what was called 'statistical' literature. The term did not refer to the use of quantitative techniques and measurements as it did from about the mid-19th century, but dealt with knowledge about the general conditions of different states and governments, and what that meant for practical politics.[60] One writer later described it as 'the branch of political knowledge which has for its object the actual and relative power of the several modern States'.[61] Typically, the Göttingen scholars combined traditional histories of the various states with an assessment of their 'natural' or 'political' interests, based on geographical, constitutional, and legal characteristics. However, little time was spent on quantifying armies or economies − making early statistical assessments of states 'virtually useless as a way of determining their relative strength'.[62] However, in the 19th century, linked with the emergence of a bourgeoisie public sphere, the interest in quantifying populations, territories, national economies, and military force, allowed for measuring 'the distribution of capabilities, in order to place individual states within the international system' (see Chapter 8).[63]

The word 'statistics' is also related to the word 'static', which from about 1630 was used to denote the scale of weights, and placing something in balance. And statistics was indeed connected to the balance of power in Europe. Statistics linked to the balance of power a preoccupation with quantification and supposedly precise measurement of states' capabilities and dispositions, also in the *domestic* realm.

This made the gradation of states easier.[64] De Missy, mentioned above as one of the first to link the balance of power to law, was also concerned with the 'ceremonial' – the practices of diplomatic rankings, conventions and customs, which he developed into 'une

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[59] Guzzini, Stefano. 2004. 'The Enduring Dilemmas of Realism in International Relations', *European Journal of International Relations* 10(4): 533-568, p. 537.

[60] See Bödeker, Hans Erich. 2003. '"Europe" in the Discourse of the Sciences of State in 18th Century Germany', *Cromohs* 8:1–14.

[61] Von Zimmerman, E.A.W. 1787. *A Political Survey of the Present State of Europe.* London, quoted in Keene, 'International Hierarchy', p. 1088.

[62] Keene, 'International Hierarchy', p. 1088.

[63] Ibid., p. 1088-89.

[64] *Ibid*.

Loy positive pour le réglement de leurs rangs'.[65] Within and between polities, more precise rankings could be established, based on natural interests and facts. Measuring and ranking was important, also because the *internal* government of states was seen to be of crucial significance, particularly after the surprising rise of Prussia and the domestic differentness of the new actor, Russia.

A state could be assessed according to the relationships it maintained with other states, but it could also be 'regarded for itself'.[66] The statistical literature catalogued commonalities and differences between states, and the 'interests' of the various states could be deduced from the 'particular nature of the individual situation' on the one hand, and from the 'connection to other countries' on the other, as another Göttingen scholar maintained.[67]

The 'internal' and 'external' measuring of states was also linked to the developments in international law detailed above. The statistical literature, although highlighting the plurality of states, saw Europe as forming one entity through its public law, an '*ius publicum Europaeum*'. There was, or should be, synchronisation between domestic laws and international law. The latter was increasingly linked with the balance of power as positive law, emphasising the convergence between private and public interest. Such arguments invoked a common and 'public' European interest, as well as the natural interests of particular states. In this period, this picture was refined, as Armitage argues:

> [O]ut of these discussions on the scope and nature of international law emerged conventional and abiding distinctions between internal and external forms of law which in turn mirrored differences between domestic and international histories and rendered them mutually incomprehensible.[68]

Later in the century, Jeremy Bentham would coin the term 'international'. The law of nations, he maintained, had to be distinguished from natural law.[69] International law was therefore identified more with customary or positive law, the practices of different kinds

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[65] Quoted in *ibid.* p. 1083.

[66] Darjes, Johan Georg. 1764. *Einleitung in des Freyherrn von Bielfeld Lehrbegriff der Staatklugheit zum Gebrauch seiner Zuhörer verfertig.* Jena: s.n., p. 304, quoted in Bödeker, '"Europe" in the Discourse', p. 6.

[67] Achenwall, Gottfried. 1748. *Die Staatverfassung der heutigen vornehmsten Europäischen Reiche und Völker.* Göttingen: s.n., p. 35, quoted in Bödeker, '"Europe" in the Discourse', p. 7.

[68] Armitage, *Foundations*, p. 146.

[69] See Conway, Stephen. 1987. 'Bentham versus Pitt: Jeremy Bentham and British Foreign Policy 1789', *The Historical Journal* 30(4):791–809.

of states.[70] In other words, Europe was under a common law, but arguments in international law also emphasised the value of *diversity*. The stratification within Europe presented earlier in this chapter – between different states and sub-balances – was linked to international law, as it brought to the fore the assumption that, in contrast to a Universal Monarchy, diversity between different independent states was of value. As Rousseau wrote, as opposed to 'Asia and Africa, which are a random collection of peoples who have nothing more in common than names', Europe was united through historical connexions, 'the constant mingling of interests' and the 'large number of small size states that […] leaves one always relying upon the other'.[71] Combined with the balance of power, such arguments further promoted the use of statistics to categorise the different interests within this diversity, as well as the various regional balances in Europe and how they related to the overall European balance.

Measuring power implied stratification – as did the idea of various balances sustaining the European, overall balance, which was the direct concern of the great powers (England 'holding the balance of Europe' etc).

There was thus a general balance of power in Europe, as well as various regional sub-balances. Within such sub-balances, states were ranked in the attempt to establish objective and necessary measurements to establish where any balance stood at any time, and its relationship to the overall European balance. The statistical literature dealt with what was seen to be the core part of Europe, including Spain, France, Britain, Austria and increasingly also Prussia.

Europe after Utrecht was being stratified and categorised, with the balance of power being used as a tool. When law and the balance became linked in the science of statistics, a subtle shift occurred, as Keene has pointed out, from a *ranking* of powers, as in diplomatic orders of precedence, to a *gradation* of powers based on measurement.[72] Now, ranking states according to status did not necessarily correspond with the authority of those states. Vattel had maintained that the size of states and their rights were different issues, and that the former did not affect the latter. With statistics and grading, however, the rights and duties of the diversity of states were increasingly distinguished according to

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[70] Armitage, *Foundations*, p. 151.
[71] Rousseau, Jean Jacques.1756/61. *Auszug aus dem Plan des Ewige Friedens des Herrn Abbé de Saint Pierre*, quoted in Bödeker, '"Europe" in the Discourse', p. 11.
[72] Keene, 'International Hierarchy', p. 1084.

their differences in measured power.[73] This development was to be crucial for the later nationalisation of the balance of power during the late 19th century.

This measured power certainly had to include what was going on within states. Balance is not a physical equality of strength, Antoine Pequet averred, but the 'balance can be estimated exactly only by the more or less judicious and intelligent use' states make of their 'forces'.[74] The balance of power 'depends almost as much upon secondary as upon primary causes'. The balance of power is therefore shifting all the time, because 'a Power better governed than others' can 'shift the real balance and that of opinion in its favour'.[75] In these discussions over the balance of power and how to measure it, a crucial question arose: what if a country grew not by territorial conquest, but by exploiting its internal resources, *domestically*? Statistics on state capabilities and dispositions were applied also to within states, to the domestic realm.

The question particularly concerned the centrality of the separate, German balance of power. Prussia had emerged as a great power due to its domestic developments. This is when the internal constitution of states gained importance – the 'secondary causes' of state power on the balance of power. It was not territory alone, but also the internal disposition of forces and, not least, a state's 'passion' that counted. This was dangerous to Europe. Also Kahle had argued that a sudden growth in wealth, domestically, could justify interference. It was not freedom from interference – the classical liberal conception – that was important for Kahle, but the traditional republican justification of preventing dominance and arbitrary rule. Here the balance of power was the main tool, and internal domestic factors were important in preventing Universal Monarchy.

These developments, however, also inadvertently served as a condition enabling a fundamental critical assessment of the balance of power and its existence. Kahle's arguments would be turned upside down by his fellow Göttingen academic, Johann Gottlob von Justi.

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[73] *Ibid.* 1086

[74] Pequet, Antoine. 1757. *L'Esprit des Maximes politiques pour server de suite à L'Esprit des loix, du Président de Montesquieu.* Paris, pp. 191–206.

[75] *Ibid.* Pequet had, as a response to Montesquieu's *L'Esprit de Lois,* titled his book *L'Esprit des Maximes politiques.* Although defending the maxim of a balance of power, he argued that it does not depend upon 'geometrical principles' and that the balance of power rests on the practices of statesmen, not on jurists who 'find nothing but difficulties, and sow nothing but thorns'.

Challenging the balance of power

The debate that would ensue between Kahle and Justi is crucial, as it marks a shift in the conditions of possibility for using the balance of power in arguments. Here I should point out that increasing criticism does not imply the demise of the concept. The defence of the concept relied on historical precedents and tradition, and the balance of power stood stronger than ever throughout the 18th century. The interesting thing here is the possibility of fundamental critical assessment of the balance of power, which would have repercussions. The increasing criticism as such must also be kept separate from what I investigate here, which is the *use* of the concept. Using the concept does not imply that the concept as such must be valued. Criticism can also be applied in political projects and legitimating strategies.

Criticism of the balance of power concerned precisely the question of what could be considered real and verifiable, as opposed to speculations employed for partisan purposes. The charge was levelled against the balance that it was a 'chimera' – a theoretical invention of jurists and theorists, that it was not concerned with practical realities and was therefore not properly scientific, but political and moral. Critics pointed to problems of measurement, and problems of fit with both the historical and contemporary records. This foreshadows important debates concerning different academic fields, and their relationship to 'practice' or politics (see the last section: chapters 8 and 9). I will show just how this happened, by taking a closer look at the first challenges to the balance of power on its own merits. This happened as the War of the Austrian Succession transitioned into the Seven Years' War.

The Seven Years' War

Prussia, poor and fragmented, with its core area on the coast of the Baltic Sea and various enclaves throughout Rhineland, had risen to become a European power to be reckoned with. Reforms had incorporated the aristocratic elite into the ruling strata of the kingdom, and emphasised the Army and education. Frederick II's attack on Silesia in 1740 had inaugurated the War of the Austrian Succession, and he retained Silesia in the peace treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748.

After the War of the Austrian Succession, Maria Theresa, like Fredrick II, emphasised internal reforms in government, finances and the military. She renewed an alliance with Russia, which put pressure on Frederick's Prussia, already threatened by France and Britain. Prussia's answer to a potential threat from the British-Hanoverian connexion was a secret alliance with Britain, which would also abort Britain's existing scheme to pay for Russian troops. Also Münchhausen, the founder of the University of Göttingen, had argued for such an alliance with Prussia. To protect Hanover, the most important thing was to support 'the balance of Europe and […] German liberty' together with Prussia.[76]

France was furious at being left out of this plan. France then allied with Austria and Maria Theresa, and started financing the Russian armies in Britain's place. This rearrangement in Europe in 1756 has been called 'The Diplomatic Revolution' because the traditional enemies of France and Austria allied, and Britain − surprisingly − allied with Prussia.

The traditional alliances in Europe had now become completely reordered. With tensions rising, Prussia acted pre-emptively and attacked Saxony with its now greatly increased army. This attack started the Seven Years' War (1756–63), which involved a three-front Prussian war of defence against Austria, Russia and France, as well as a war in the colonial theatre between Britain and France.

Relying on superior military tactics and recruitment patterns, Prussia gained ground thanks to Frederick's many tactical victories. Britain sent troops and money to protect Hanover and to support Prussia against France. Through his efforts in rationalising the military and in war, Frederick II gained an unprecedented status in Prussia, as 'Frederick the Great', for his efforts against France.

This was a more global war than ever seen before. It even included a side-event in America (where it was called 'the French and Indian War'), where France and Britain fought over territories in the Ohio Valley, which was ultimately a fight also over the disposition of resources in Europe.

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[76] Quoted in Simms, *Three Victories,* p. 441.

Eventually, however, the tide turned when Tsarina Elisabeth died, and Russia under the prussophile Peter III pulled out of the war.[77] However, Austria and Prussia kept fighting, and Britain continued to support Hanover to strain France's resources, thus gaining an advantage in the colonial wars and its trade. In yet another turn of events, Spain sided with France in 1762, but was crushed by Britain. The year after, in 1763, the Treaty of Paris was signed, ending the war. Prussia retained Silesia, and Britain gained territories from France in both India and Canada. Prussia and Russia had by now irrefutably established their position as principal powers in Europe.

The Seven Years' War is also when the balance of power was used for the first time to attack and defend the new arrival Prussia − a polity previously seen as lying on the periphery of the system − indicating its increased status in Europe's stratified order. The pamphlet *Staatsbetrachtungen über den gegenwärtigen Preussischen Krieg in Teutschland* (1762) represents perhaps the first instance of the balance of power being rhetorically deployed against Prussia.[78] If one used the 'true principles' of states in an unpartisan way, one should understand that Prussia could not be allowed to grow too powerful.

During the Seven Years' War, the domestic sources of state power began to figure prominently in mainstream political debates. The distinction between state power and a European sociability became clearer:[79] The balance of power is no longer applicable to the relations between the European peoples, it was argued, but it is now 'ein jeder für sich, Gott für uns alle entgegen setzen'.[80] Prussia had become pivotal to the European balance of power, it became a great power (*grosse Macht* or *principal power*) and the cause of this was seen to be domestic. Debates over Prussia concerned whether the balance of power should be invoked to support or resist it, or whether the concept was in fact useless. It was not difficult to argue that Prussia threatened Europe with a Universal Monarchy, as 'Universal Monarchy' had also had connexions to the internal rule of states,

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[77] What Frederick II called 'the Miracle of the House of Brandenburg'.

[78] Anon. 1762. *Verteidigte Staats-Betrachtungen über den gegenwärtigen Preussischen Krieg in Teutschland gegen die grundlose Anfechtungen der zu Berlin in Druck ausgegangenen groben Lästerschrift von dem sogenannten wahren Interesse des Teutschen Reichs bey dem gegenwärtigen Kriege zwischen den Häusern Preußen und Oesterreich*. Wien: Leopold Johann Kalliwoda.

[79] Kaeber, *Die Idee*, p. 109.

[80] *Ibid.,* p.113.

as described in Chapter 2.[81] Furthermore, just as at Utrecht, invoking the Empire of Charles V was a powerful warning, and much used.

However, arguments to defend Prussia were also made. But how could a defence of Prussia deploy the balance of power? This is a crucially important issue, because, as shown in the case of Austria, one can find oneself locked into an unfavourable position, given the social power of the concept. One alternative was to deny the very existence of the balance of power. However, this was difficult, as it had become so ingrained, allegedly based on decades if not centuries of European tradition. How could one oppose such a position? By arguing that the balance was only an idea covering the *real* interest of states. The way in which critics of the balance of power established an image of the past that at the same time denied the authority of that past on the present was ingenious.[82] It was argued that the balance of power had been a self-serving tool to deceive people about the *real* nature of state practice. Now, with advances in international law and statistics, this had become apparent. The balance of power was not a universal principle of European sociability at all, but an expression of will and self-preservation. The status of knowledge-claims was central to the arguments increasingly levelled against the principle of the balance of power. The increasing importance of measurements and statistics was used as a resource for arguing against the balance on this basis – criticism of the balance of power was directed precisely at the impossibility of measuring this balance, particularly when domestic factors were to be included.

A principled critique against the concept itself had first appeared at the start of the Seven Years' War, although the balance of power carried positive connotations throughout the 18th century. My point here is that, even if the attack on the balance of power was a minority position, the principled critique indicates an inflection point – that the conditions of possibility had changed. The power of a concept is not necessarily confined to its being used to convince or persuade people. A new rhetorical resource had become available, and was indeed used in policy debates over intervention at the turn of the century, as I will show.

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[81] Arbitrary power, the hallmark of Oriental Despotism, is to be 'detested, dreaded, and abhorred' also within European states. Shapin, 'Of Gods and Kings', p. 213.

[82] Pocock, John Greville Agard. 2009. *Political Thought and History: Essays on Theory and Methodology.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 207.

Whereas politicians, lawyers and pamphleteers had questioned the applications and implications of the balance of power, some of them now began attacking the balance of power as such. From parliaments to universities, the balance of power could be denounced as a fictitious entity, a chimera, even a charade. Amazingly, in the course of only a few decades, it became possible to pronounce fundamental criticisms concerning the very existence of the balance of power. After all, this concept had been *the* foundation for making sense of European politics. And it is easy to underestimate the powerful rhetorical combinations that had to be mustered to *question* a concept so essential for the political elites. For instance, in politics today, one can imagine the massive difficulties entailed in constructing a socially sustainable criticism of the existence of 'democracy' or 'freedom'.

The balance is questioned: Early rhetoric

Prussia, even if it had been growing in importance, was not attacked by means of the balance of power concept before the 1760s. But even from the 1740s, and solidifying in the 1750s and 1760s, another movement at the University of Göttingen prepared the way for devastating criticism of the principle itself – also serving to defend Prussia.

The balance had for some time been criticised for being used as a pretext for partisan political actions. For instance, in 1726 William Wyndham declared in Parliament that Britain

> Penelope-like […] were continually weaving and unravelling the same web; at one time raising up to the Emperor to depress France, and now we were for depressing the Emperor, which could not be done without aggrandizing France, which, in the end, may make the latter too powerful : so that at this rate, under the pretence of holding the Balance of Europe, we should be engaged in continual wars.[83]

Still, he was not criticising the principle itself, only how it was used. The 'original principles' espoused by Bolingbroke and his allies were rejected by many. What had to be challenged in such arguments was that the past and the 'traditional' had authority over the

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[83] Great Britain, Parliament. 1811. *Cobbett's Parliamentary History of England from the Norman Conquest, in 1066, to the Year 1803. From which Last-Mentioned Epoch it is Continued Downwards in the Work Entitled, "Cobbet's Parliamentary Debates", Vol VIII. A.D. 1722–1733*. London: T.C. Hansard, col. 530.

present. One questioned the assumption of continuity and automatic transmissions from past times to the present.[84] The past was seen as 'barbaric' and no longer relevant.

In the early 1740s, the main political debate in Britain concerned whether to support Austria − and, if so, by sending troops or by sending money. In parliamentary debates in 1742, it was argued that Germany, not Austria, was the central issue. The balance of power could no longer be justified by tradition – restoring Austria was 'chimerical', and it was 'evident, that the Balance of Power cannot be established upon its antient basis', so Austria should be of no particular concern.[85] Others criticised Britain's role as the holder of the balance of power – a criticism unconceivable some decades earlier. The tone used against the concept is sharper:

> The Advocates for the Ministry have on this Occasion affected to speak of the Balance of Power, the Pragmatic Sanction, and the Preservation of the Queen of Hungary, not only as if they were to be the chief care of Great Britain […] but as if they were to be the Care of Great Britain alone.[86]

This kind of argument was countered by reference to tradition: abandoning the balance of power on the continent would be 'inconsistent with all Sense and Reason, contrary as it is to the universal Principles of Policy by which this nation hath been governed from the Conquest to this hour'.[87] Lord Strange again emphasised that one cannot adhere to such maxims without considering the differences of time and circumstances, that one should not be 'swayed in their Opinion by those Sounds they have been long accustomed to, or those Maxims they have long adopted'.[88] When Austria equalled the Empire, the balance of power in Europe and the power of the House of Austria were synonymous terms. But now, with the Elector of Bavaria chosen Emperor, the two terms had become distinct − and the balance of Power in Europe had nothing to do with Austria.

Criticism of the balance of power became even fiercer. For half a century, 'we have given ourselves too much Concern about preserving the balance of power' and have committed

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[84] Pocock, *Political Thought*, pp. 198–99.
[85] *Cobbett's Parliamentary History of England, Volume 12,* col. 961.
[86] *Ibid.*, col. 1034.
[87] *Ibid.*, col. 1044.
[88] *Ibid.*, col. 999.

too many troops to the continent. Britain was being ruined by undertaking alone the support of what 'some Gentlemen are pleased to call the Balance of Power'.[89]

In 1744 a pamphlet written by Lord Chesterfield, at the time ambassador to The Hague, had declared that Frederick II's gains in Silesia had nothing to do with the balance of power – 'in what respect is the immediate Interest of England or Balance of Power concern'd […] how can the Balance of Power be affected by the King of Prussia's having the small Part of Silesia […]?'. Chesterfield went even further: 'The Balance of Power is an Ideal Chimera, introduce'd among us by corrupt and designing Ministers, to subject and fleece their deluded Countryment. But supposing the thing of real Existence; France is the only Power to be apprehended'. [90] However, he wavers between dismissing the concept, and dismissing its use. Later in the pamphlet, he himself invokes the Balance of Power as a reason for avoiding divisions in the Empire.

What was debated was if and how historical transmission happened, and whether the concepts of the past were applicable to new circumstances – a debate concerning the balance that was quite different from the debates surrounding Utrecht. Still, this played out as debates over British isolation versus intervention and not over the balance of power principle as such. The existence of the balance was still accepted but new rhetorical resources were being deployed, challenging the contemporary applicability, if not the existence, of the concept itself. We can note some examples of how a central concept was questioned by calling into doubt the authority of tradition, in the process separating an abstract concept from its execution. This may be essential for understanding how it became possible to reject the balance of power itself.

In 1743 Jean François de Spon, who was close to Charles VI, had discussed the balance of power through a duality of *rights* versus *opportunism*.[91] The balance of power, he declared, relied on opportunism and not on rights. England, for one, used the balance in political opportunism. The attack on the balance of power, particularly in Britain, had

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[89] *Cobbett's Parliamentary History of England, Volume 12,* col. 1005.

[90] Anon. 1744. *Natural Reflexions on the Present Conduct of His Prussian Majesty: The Concern which* England *has, and Part she ought to take in the present Broils of the Empire ; the Balance of Power, and Politics of English-H----ns.* London: M. Cooper, pp. 32-40. The resonance of this pamphlet is indicated by the fact that Frederick II himself was notified of its publication and further translations by M. Jordan in Berlin. Holcroft, Thomas (transl.). 1789. *Correspondence. Letters Between Frederic II and M. Jordan.* London: G.G.J. and John Robinson, p. 315.

[91] De Spon, Seymor. 1743. *Reflexions touchant l'Equilibre de l'Europe, traduites à la lettre d'un ecrit allemand, en 1743.*

been initiated. Again, links between the balance of power and concepts of law were central in making criticism possible – there had to be another publically accepted universalist basis from which to criticise.

Also at Göttingen, the basis underlying legal theories incorporating the balance of power, including Martin Kahle's text, was to become contentious. One rather radical movement at the university was a group of scholars who developed natural law theories based not on reason or a European sociability, but on *passion*. Inspired by Pufendorf and Christian Thomasius, Johan Jacob Schmauss was one of the initiators of this movement,[92] in which the balance of power was a central topic of discussion; Schmauss had written a book on the theme in 1741, *Historie der Balance von Europa*. Schmauss' circle at Göttingen employed a new vocabulary to discuss rights, distinguishing between the subjective and the objective: between law as objective, and rights as the subjective capacity to act morally. A distinction was made between what really existed, what *is*, and what we are able to *do*.[93] Schmauss argued that our human instincts are in accordance with nature and are the basis of natural rights, as separate from positive law based on convention. There is a difference between human-made systems and laws, and individual rights or subjective *ius*, which should be understood as natural – *ius naturae subiective sumtum*.[94] This separation between abstract theoretical knowledge and how things *really* are, in nature, was used to depict rights as being held individually.

The argument was that previous theories were artificial, intellectualist and based on false premises, such as the idea of a 'European republic' or a 'common public interest'. Natural law, precisely because it was natural, should be simple and immediately comprehensible, based on how things are and not how they could be.[95] Natural rights should therefore not be grounded in contemplative reason or abstract arguments. The basis of the interaction between polities was *self-preservation,* not intangible notions of European commonalities – and law and rights must take this into account. The movement emphasised rights over duties, passion over reason.[96]

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[92] Nokkala, 'Passion', p. 114.
[93] Mautner, Thomas, 'How Rights became "Subjective"', *Ratio Juris* (26)1: 111–132.
[94] *Ibid.*
[95] Nokkala, 'Passion', p. 116.
[96] *Ibid.*

This was a radical argument indeed. The implication was also that natural law, since it was ultimately not based on common reason and sociability, would apply to *everyone*, even heathens and atheists outside of Europe. Everyone had rights – a capacity to act and, in principle, to act rationally. Even if a *civitas* based on reason might be constructed within Europe or within individual states, this would not change human will and human nature.[97] In the context of political relations in Europe, this was a new universal principle, based on neither tradition nor reason but on 'human nature'.

This emphasis on the inviolability of the individual also indicates the coming episteme shift, away from the republican tradition, prominent in Britain, which served as the traditional basis for defending the balance of power. It was no longer a question of the duty to defend Europe against dominance and arbitrary rule, but of attending to the 'singuli' and the inherent rights of any state or individual. Private interest and self-love were not amoral, even in the absence of a common public interest. Rights were more important than obligations, *freedom to act* more important than *freedom from* a Universal Monarchy. In Part II, in chapter 6 and 7, I shall explain how such more liberal arguments became a dominant component of balance-of-power rhetoric with and after the Congress of Vienna.

The balance is challenged: Justi's arguments

One of Schmauss' pupils, Johann Heinrich Gottlob von Justi, opposed his colleague Kahle's work on the balance of power. In 1758, Justi denounced the concept by devoting an entire book to attacking Kahle's thesis on the balance of power and international law.[98] Instead of trying to turn the concept to Prussia's advantage, Justi, in a radical move, defended Frederick II by rejecting the balance of power altogether.

Justi in his *Die Chimäre des Gleichgewichts von Europa* (1758) successfully and creatively *linked* his criticism with international law, the domestic governance of states

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[97] Nokkala, 'Passion', p. 117.
[98] Justi, Johan Heinrich Gottlob von. 1758. *Die Chimäre des Gleichgewichts von Europa : eine Abhandlung, worinnen die Richtigkeit und Ungerechtigkeit dieses zeitherigen Lehrgebäudes der Staatskunst deutlich vor Augen geleget und dabey allenthalben neue und rührende Betrachtungen über die Ursachen der Kriege und dem wesentlichen Grunde, worauf die Macht eines Staats ankommt, beygebracht warden*. Altona: David Iversen.

and the issue of measurements, and the separation between abstract and practical knowledge. By creative use of existing rhetorical resources, he employed the same terms from the *Staatsklugheit* and *Staatswirtschaft* to attack the balance of power itself. They were combined in new ways of *attacking England and defending Prussia*. The balance of power has nothing to do with the nature of the European powers, Justi declared; no power has ever acted on the balance of power principle, 'but […] they have only used this theoretical system to gain allies, and to hide their particular interest and their passions that lead them to war'.[99] Never in history has there been a war that has had the balance of power as its true and main reason. Wars have been fought because of the 'particular interest of the state or the passion of the rulers'.[100] The very application of the balance of power has been driven by envy and fear, Justi argued, not by altruism or a concern for the public interest. It has been a cause of war, not the remedy. The balance of power has camouflaged self-interests and the 'real motives' of states and statesmen.[101]

Justi argued that the particular interests of states should be taken more seriously, and not be dependent on some European sociability. Also, Britain could not be seen as the disinterested 'holder of the balance'. That was merely a cloak for self-interest − which was not unique to Britain, but to the principle *itself*, as it had no ethical underpinnings. This argument was also used to emphasise and legitimise Hanover's own, particular interest. Justi attacked the dynastic union between Britain and Hanover which had been justified by reference to the balance of power.

Ingeniously, Justi here turned the concept of 'interest' *against* the balance of power concept. His advocacy of self-interest and individual rights of states *delinked* what were the 'true interests' from the public, and thereby also from the balance of power. As part of his argument, Justi also explicitly denounced the counter-concept so often invoked to legitimise the balance of power, 'Universal Monarchy', as a convenient but false fiction.

Justi's attack on the balance also concerned the impossibility of measuring power. As seen, science should serve practical ends, and clear standards of measurement would have to be a requirement for this. Otherwise, Justi argued, the balance of power is just an

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[99] 'Sondern dass sie sich dieses Lehrgebäudes nur bedient haben, um sich Bundesgenossen zu verschaffen, und ihr besonders Interesse und ihre Leidenschaften, wodurch sie zum Kriege bewogen warden, darunter zu verbergen', Justi, *Die Chimäre*, p. 116.

[100] 'Besondern interesse des Staats oder aus Leidenschaften des Regenten', Justi, *Die Chimäre*, p. 116.

[101] Adam, *The Political Economy*.

empty vessel to make wars appear as just. As shown by the case of the rise of Prussia, real power came from the internal organisation of states and their governments. The balance of power would hamper the advantageous development of states by not permitting states to be successful, as that would be a cause for just interference. States, Justi explained, are guided by 'private interests', not by a 'chimerical balance of power' which only caused 'mutual slavery'.[102] Again, the traditional link between state interests and the public interest was dissolved in Justi's arguments. It was all about the sovereign choices of individual states, and there was no 'common republic of powers'. Justi's claims undermined the naturalness of European sociability, leaving it to politicians to organise their states properly. This focus on the internal organisation and administration of states came from Justi's concern with the 'police sciences'.

In addition to theories of *raison d'état*, there also existed theories of police, part of the 'tendency during the second half of the century to give increasing weight to the wealth of a state, to the quality of its government'.[103] Whilst state reason provided tools for distinguishing the activities of states from other spheres of life, and defined the 'art of governing' according to a state's strength, 'police' defined the objects for the states' activities – it defined where the state intervenes. This is what enables the state to make full use of its potential, at the same time as the newly emerged entity, the 'population', can be kept happy. It is a matter of the internal, not external, relations of a state.

At Göttingen from 1755, Justi studied 'cameral sciences' and 'police sciences'. As opposed to in the international realm, he maintained, the domestic was the sphere of sociability and reason. Justi, as professor of police sciences, emphasised the benefits of the correct disposition of things internally, and effective public administration to get the most out of a country's resources – as regards everything from crimes, to finance and agricultural practices, and politeness and how to treat the citizenry.[104] Justi argued for the need of government intervention, but not intervention in relations *between* states. What he objected to was the idea that there existed a similar authority in Europe, a sociability that would call for interventions in state-to-state relations.

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[102] Justi, *Die Chimäre.*

[103] Anderson, Matthew Smith. 1970. 'Eighteenth-Century Theories of the Balance of Power', pp. 183-198 in Matthew Smith Anderson and Ragnhild Hatton (eds.), *Studies in Diplomatic History*. Hamden, CT: Archon Books, p. 186.

[104] Justi, Johann Heinrich Gottlob von. 1759. *Grundsätze der Policey-Wissenschaft in einem vernünftigen, auf den Endzweck der Policey gegründeten, Zusammenhange und zum Gebrauch academischer Vorlesungen abgefasset.* Göttingen: Vandenhoek.

The perfectly ruled state was Justi's aspiration – the machine-state.[105] The balance of power has never served the people. This 'construction of knowledge', as he termed it, has only served allies to hide their passions and particular interests.[106] And terrible consequences will follow when bad theories are transformed into practice. Justi's arguments made an impact. Even Martens eventually wondered whether it was still permitted to speak of the balance of power.[107]

However, as noted in Chapter 1, concepts or arguments do not *do* anything on their own. It was not Justi's arguments that numinously produced an effect, but how they were deployed as part of a concrete, political debate. Neither did such arguments evolve naturally from the progress of the intellectual milieu, or from some inherent tensions in the concept. That such arguments and links should be made was not self-evident: it was connected to specific policy debates, particularly in England, concerning relations with Hanover and Austria. Justi's rhetorical position in his texts was a response to this. Why is the balance of power not used against Prussia's ally Britain, when it is used against Prussia? What resources could be used to attack the pre-eminent political concept of the time?

What made such criticism possible in the mid- to late 1700s was a particular configuration of crisis narratives, the importance accorded to practical knowledge (particularly in international law), making it possible to tap into a repertoire of critique of abstract knowledge, and the difficulties of measuring an increasingly stratified order. It was a battle between specificity and images of a unified order – in differing proportions and combinations. One main tension is the paradox between analytical versus practical knowledge, between formalisation and specificity, 'of being able and not being able to formalise the empirical'.[108] Criticism of the balance of power as a 'chimera', not corresponding to state practice, is the first attempt to challenge the epistemic backing for the balance of power. In 1758, the same year as Justi published his attack on the balance, one British pamphleteer had written, quite typically,

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[105] See Nokkala, Ere .2009. 'The Machine of State in Germany–The Case of Johann Heinrich Gottlob von Justi (1717–1771)', *Contributions to the History of Concepts* 5(1): 71–93.
[106] Justi, *Die Chimäre*
[107] Harding, Nick. 2005. 'Hanoverian Rulership and Dynastic Union With Britain, 1700–1760', pp. 389–416 in Rex Rexheuser (ed.) *Die Personalunionen von Sachsen-Polen 1697–1763 und Hannover-England 1714–1837. Ein Vergleich*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, p. 403.
[108] Foucault, Michel. 1989 [1966]. *The Order of Things*. London: Routledge, pp. 267–268.

> What gravity or attraction, we are told, is to the system of the universe, that the ballance of power is to Europe: a thing we cannot just point out to ocular inspection, and see or handle; but which is as real in its existence, and as sensible in its effects, as the weight is in scales.[109]

Justi asked: why should the balance of power, and not passions and natural law, be seen as the originating cause of this? What is this 'balance of power'? How have we come to know what it is, and what are really its purpose and consequences?

That such questions could be asked *at all* indicates how the authority of tradition was changing, particularly in view of the increasing complexity of political relations. The balance of power, as it had originated in England, was seen as the re-establishment (in 1688) of an old tradition, based on the 'ancient constitution'. But why should one assume a continuation from the past to the present? How did the past become the present? When the authority of tradition is accepted as a universal principle, these questions will receive the same answer. When tradition is challenged, they receive different answers; and if the present is different from the past, we should ask how it came to be so.[110] If the balance of power is accepted as a universal principle, at least we should explain how we ended up in this mess, and must question the transmission from past to present. Indeed, such arguments began to emerge in the debates in the British Parliament from the 1740s. The other alternative, however, is to reject the principle itself. First came attempts at specifying what the balance of power is, based on law, measurements and statistics. Hence, the new argument that old concepts, based on tradition, could be revealed as deceitful and a chimera became possible. History could be used for the wrong purposes.

If the balance of power is simply taken for granted with its authority rooted in tradition, and that tradition by default explains the present, then no theory is needed – it is simply the expression of political practice and its transmission. Those wishing to criticise the traditional, then, need to refer to some principle of action outside of tradition, other than transmission. Such questioning of the past, traditions, continuities, and the present can centre on historical interpretation, which in turn can be based on some (new) universal principles, or on actual state practice. The point is not necessarily to change the received

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[109] Quoted in Anderson, 'Eighteenth-Century Theories', p. 189.
[110] Pocock, *Political Thought,* p. 183.

facts, but to question what authority they have over the present.[111] One condition of possibility for such critical questions was the increasing importance of positive law and jurisprudence, which became a new means of answering the above questions. Systematising the principles of law made it possible to describe and compare historical societies as different from the present, because law articulated their formal organisation.[112] This practical systematisation of law was one of the origins of the science of states; it also made it possible to distinguish Europe more clearly from the rest, and different polities within Europe, with different ways of arranging their states domestically, in a stratified order.

Whereas criticising abstract knowledge was nothing new, the explicit links made between international law concepts and the concept of the balance of power allowed for new rhetorical innovations, of which Justi was the main exponent. The links with statistics and empirical measurements provided new rhetorical possibilities for defending the balance of power, but also enabled a radical re-assessment of the concept itself, which had previously been impossible.

Justi's arguments rejected politics as an expression of the 'common good', and re-articulated it as a more manipulative concept, as 'the art of the possible',[113] also in the domestic sphere. This was also a critique of republican arguments based on tradition, and signals a changing in views as to the status of historical transmission as well.

The conceptual links between science, international law and statistics had provided a space for Justi to launch a trenchant rhetorical attack on the balance of power. This new rhetorical reconfiguration would in turn provide the opposition with a legitimate space for criticisms in the Ochakov controversy late in the century, to which I now turn.

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[111] *Ibid.*, pp. 202–204.
[112] *Ibid.,* p.183.
[113] Guzzini, Stefano. 2005. 'The Concept of Power: a Constructivist Analysis', *Millennium – Journal of International Studies* 33(3):495–521, p. 519.

CHAPTER 5

Abstractions and Reality in the Ochakov Controversy

A general point in this project is that ideas and concept do not operate 'on their own', as some independent causal force. Concepts are used, change and are forged in concrete debates over policy. To showcase how the concept was deployed and affected policy, in this chapter I focus on the relatively unknown, but for me crucial case, which is the Ochakov controversy. In these debates, the balance of power was attacked by distinguishing between abstraction and practice, and how it was countered by arguments from tradition. A fundamental criticism of the balance of power was here used to bring about the British Prime Minister William Pitt's first foreign policy defeat. The rhetorical repertoire connected to the balance of power had expanded; in these debates the balance of power concept linked with a new problem: that of intervention into independent states, particularly as regards an emerging new class of powers – the 'principal' or 'great' ones. Had it not been for the interlinked but contingent developments in focus in the previous chapter, these political debates and their outcomes would have looked different, and would have happened in different ways. Moreover, British discussions over intervention and the balance of power in the 'Ochakov case' were to have an impact also in the first half of the 19th century, during the Congress of Europe.

Britain in decline

Prussia had held on to Silesia, even when faced with the combined might of Austria, Britain, France and Russia. After the war, Austria continued in alliance with France as the Prusso–Russian alliance was still seen as a threat to Austria.

In the Russo–Turkish War (1768–1774), Russia gained parts of southern Ukraine and Crimea from Turkey. Both Austria and Prussia then sought compensation for Russia's

gains, in the form of territories in Poland. After the Seven Years' War ended in 1763, both Russia and Prussia had set their sights on Poland; and in 1772, Poland was partitioned for the first time. This partition, initiated by Frederick II, was justified with explicit reference to securing the balance of power in light of Russia's recent gains.

No one intervened to protect Poland. That Poland could be divided at the whim of the great powers would by some be used to argue that the balance of power was indeed a chimera – should not the balance serve to protect the independence of its component states? This debate over intervention and independence would be a hallmark of balance-of-power debates also during the Congress of Europe (see chapters 6 and 7).

Conflicts between Austria and Prussia continued throughout the 1770s and 1780s, even if Austrian relations with Russia improved. When Maria Theresa died in 1780, Joseph II ascended to the throne of the Habsburg Empire, and challenged Prussia over the province of Bavaria. This failed, and Austria turned its attention to the Balkans.

As for Britain, in the American War of Independence, or the American Revolutionary War (1775–1783), it was confronted by France, Spain and Holland, who had been financing the independence movement in the thirteen colonies. In parallel, Britain had to fight the French in India, when war broke out between the East India Company and the French-supported Kingdom of Mysore. The war ended with the treaties of Paris and Versailles in 1783. Britain was left weakened and humiliated, France was left bankrupt, and America was left with a fledgling democratic republic. While the republican idea of a domestic balance of power to protect against despotism of people and ruler alike was adopted by the American 'Founding Fathers', the balance of power between states was rejected, as one of the points of seeking independence had been to remove America from the scales of Britain in the balance of power.[1] This would eventually inspire the French Revolution.

In the British Parliament, the persistent battle between Tories and Whigs over a strategy of intervention versus naval-based isolation intensified. Even internally, the uses of the balance of power concept waned. There is a notable difference between the exaltation of

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[1] See Deudney, Daniel H. 1995. 'The Philadelphian System: Sovereignty, Arms Control, and Balance of Power in the American States-Union, circa 1787–1861', *International Organization* 49(2):191–228.

the balance in the British Parliament before mid-century, and the more resigned complacency in which foreign policy debates were conducted from the 1770s.

For Britain, Russia had been considered a natural ally for many decades, but this was to change under William Pitt.[2] Catherine II of Russia organised the First League of Armed Neutrality, threatening England with cutting supply chains to prevent the British Navy from interfering in neutral trade and shipping. Britain, however, was searching ships for French contraband. According to the 'rule of the Seven Years' War',[3] neutral shipping was to be free from interference by other countries. Prussia, Austria, the Dutch, and Ottomans had all agreed to this. France and the newly independent United States of America also adhered to the principle. Britain did not, but sought to avoid interfering so as not to upset Russia – most British supplies came through the Baltic.

The balance of power was increasingly turned against Britain. After the Seven Years' War, Britain's colonial policy became closely connected to its standing in Europe and the fight against France.[4] The French took advantage of this by linking the balance of power to the balance of trade, and the British superiority at sea became a concern.[5]

The French publicist Maubert de Gouvest argued that the balance of power exists not to fight a Universal Monarchy, but to defy England, to avoid a monopoly of trade. There must be a balance on the seas. It is in the interest of all to resist England, he declared. England planned to break Europe. The only balance that exists is an 'Equilibre du commerce', and the 'rule of the Seven Years' War' – that only the motherland could trade with its colonies – was working to Britain's advantage.[6] A 'universal monarchy' could become a possibility only by unbalanced naval strength, and the French minister Duc de Choiseul argued that 'the English, while pretending to protect the balance on land which no one threatens, are entirely destroying the balance at sea which no-one defends'.[7]

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[2] Anderson, Matthew Smith. 1958. *Britain's Discovery of Russia 1553–1815*. New York: St. Martin's Press, p. 143.

[3] Huskisson, William. 1825. *Substance of Two Speeches, delivered in the House of Commons.* London: J. Hatchard, p. 7.

[4] See Simms, Brendan. 2008. *Three Victories and a Defeat: The Rise and Fall of the First British Empire, 1714–1783*. London: Penguin.

[5] *Ibid.,* p. 455

[6] Kaeber, Ernst. 1907. *Die Idee des europäischen Gleichgewichts in der publizistischen Literatur vom 16. Bis zur Mitte des 18. Jahrhunderts*. Berlin: Alexander Duncker, pp. 127–129.

[7] de Choiseul, quoted in Rudé, George F. E. 1972. *Europe in the Eighteenth Century: Aristocracy and the Bourgeois Challenge*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, p. 214.

In addition, Britain had lost its American colonies, and was at low ebb when William Pitt the Younger assumed office in 1783. Britain was seen as being in decline, perhaps even as regards its position as a principal power in Europe. In line with the Tory tradition, Pitt emphasised a rebuilding and revitalising of the navy[8] to end this isolation, and again assert British interests on the continent.

This would require alliances. In 1788 Britain joined with the Dutch and Prussia in a Triple Alliance to exert influence in Europe: securing the status quo of the Dutch barrier against any French incursions based on local support, defending Prussia, and also defending Sweden from Denmark. The Triple Alliance of 1788 also attempted to appease Russia by reining in Prussia − Prussian ambitions could drag Austria into a war that would certainly involve Russia as well.[9]

Britain had again become an important player in Europe – but this came to an abrupt halt with the Ochakov crisis.

The Ochakov crisis[10]

The year before this Triple Alliance was established, in 1787, the Ottoman Empire had declared war on Russia, seeking to regain the parts of Ukraine and Crimea annexed by Russia in 1783. Austria had declared war on the Ottoman Empire in support of Russia, whereas Gustav III of Sweden supported the Turks. In 1788, during these two parallel Russo–Ottoman (1787–92) and Austro–Ottoman (1787–1791) wars, Russia's capture of the Ottoman seaside garrison town of Ochakov on the Black Sea and the estuary of the Dniepr River had passed almost unnoticed. However, three years later Pitt and his government would argue that to help regain the fortress of Ochakov to Turkey was of the utmost importance to protect the balance of power.

During these Ottoman wars, Britain's relationship with Russia changed. Britain expressed fears that the Russians would direct their attention towards the eastern Mediterranean,

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[8] Webb, Paul L.C. 1980. 'Sea Power in the Ochakov Affair of 1791', *The International History Review* 2(1): 13–33, p. 12.

[9] Webb, 'Sea Power'; Cunningham, Allan. 1965. 'The Oczakov Debate', *Middle Eastern Studies* 1(3):209-237.

[10] The narrative below builds largely on Webb, 'Sea Power' and Cunningham, 'The Oczakov Debate'.

perhaps finding it convenient to ally with Bourbon France in their projects. Settling affairs in the East was therefore considered pivotal, and this was achieved in 1790 in the Treaty of Reichenbach. Prussia and Austria worked out their differences in light of recent Austrian and Russian gains in the war against the Ottomans. Austria retained Ottoman territory, whilst Prussia had to dampen its expansionist ambitions. The treaty put a halt to further territorial swaps, by being based on the *status quo ante bellum*.[11]

However, this was not seen as affecting the Russian threat. Catherine of Russia may have accepted the futility of conquering territory from the Ottomans, but she insisted on retaining the coastal town of Ochakov as compensation for the Ottomans having initiated the war. It was Ochakov and its fate that became the focus of the conflict between Russia and the Triple Alliance.[12]

The origin of this 'Eastern Question' is disputed, but some date it to 1791, when the Tory government proposed expanding the British Navy to confront Russia.[13] Some see this as the first consistent Parliamentary debate on the Eastern Question. In any case, the debates of 1791 are recognised as a 'new and significant enlargement of Britain's diplomatic horizons'.[14] And here I have found that the balance of power figured more prominently than perhaps ever before in the British Parliament.

The tendency in British politics during the final decades of the 18th century had been towards more foreign involvement on the part of the navy, as also promoted by Pitt. The Ochakov crisis would put a definitive halt to this. In the historical literature, the crisis has been largely overshadowed by the French Revolution, but the debates had important repercussions.[15] Also throughout the 19th century, Ochakov was a historical reference point invoked in debates and contentions over Russian expansion and the possibilities of intervention.[16]

The Ochakov crisis also had linkages with Poland. The largest river in Poland, the Vistula, runs from the Baltic Sea. With relations with Russia deteriorating, Britain

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[11] Webb, 'Sea Power', p 17.
[12] *Ibid.*
[13] Cunningham, 'The Oczakov Debate', p. 209.
[14] *Ibid.*
[15] Webb, 'Sea Power', p. 32.
[16] Anderson, Olive. 1967. 'The Political Uses of History in Mid Nineteenth-Century England', *Past & Present* 36: 87–105, p. 93.

proposed to rely on Poland and the Vistula for naval supplies, rather than on Russia. However, it was Prussia that controlled the Vistula, and would have to be courted. As a counter-demand, Prussia wanted the Polish territories closest to the Baltic Sea – Danzig (Gdánsk) and Thorn (Toruń). Poland, however, refused this territorial deal.

Prussia instead began to focus on preventing Russian and Austrian gains in Turkey to maintain the balance of power. Britain, relying on Prussia, bought into Prussia's plan to dam up the Russo-Austrian influence in Turkey. Pitt demanded that Russia agree to end its war with the Ottoman Empire on the basis of *status quo ante bellum*, surrendering Ochakov. Catherine refused, and Britain agreed with Prussia to enforce the demand by war, if necessary. Pitt threatened Russia with a British naval intervention − a strategy of intimidation previously proven successful in deterring France and Spain, and the Russians in the Baltic.

Pitt's main argument during the debates over whether to defend Ochakov by armed force was that Russia represented a danger to the balance of power and was a new candidate for Universal Monarchy. All the same, Pitt insisted that the alliance was defensive in nature. Prussia, however, was pressuring the British to make a showing with their Navy to deter Russia. Britain kept insisting that it should take no part in an offensive alliance, and that the Ottoman Empire had nothing to do with British security or with the 'public utility'. Catherine herself had maintained, through her ambassador Vorontsov, that Russia had 'no intention of destroying the balance of Europe' or conquering the Ottomans.[17]

However, this changed when Catherine refused the Triple Alliance proposal for negotiations between Russia and the Ottoman Selim II, condemning this as an attempt to 'dictate in so arbitrary a manner to a sovereign perfectly independent and in want of no assistance'.[18] Pitt requested expansion of its naval force until Turkey and Russia had made peace. When this proposal was presented to the Commons, the ensuing debate and opposition took the government by surprise.

Pitt's main opponent Charles James Fox, and what can only loosely be termed 'Whigs', feared British entanglement in Prussia's plans of expansion. Fox was an admirer of Catherine, and both he and his entourage were good friends with the Russian ambassador

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[17] Quoted in Cunningham, 'The Oczakov Debate', p. 220.
[18] *Ibid.,* p. 223.

to London, Prince Semyon Vorontsov.[19] Fox denounced Pitt's policy regarding Ochakov as a plan for war against a friendly power, involving no British interests. Fox had, as foreign secretary, declared in 1783 that the Northern Powers like Russia and Prussia 'ever have been, and ever will be, the system of every enlightened Englishman'.[20] Also Lord Grenville, another influential critic in the cabinet, held that Britain would never maintain the balance of power with Prussia alone, but would need Russia's help.

With the help of Vorontsov, Fox's group engineered a public outcry against the plan in Parliament and in the British press, raising doubts about Pitt's leadership. Public opinion was crucial. Support for an anti-French policy had been strong in 1787; likewise in 1790 as regards confrontation with Catholic Spain. In 1791, however, with Parliament back in session, the dislike of Russia had disappeared. Opposition to war was strong, and spread throughout the country. Russia was a 'natural ally, a Christian country' opposing the uncivilised Turks. Defending the Whigs, Edmund Burke stated that 'the considering the Turkish Empire any part of the Balance of Power was new' and condemned the 'Turkish savages'.[21]

Public and Parliamentary opinion firmly rejected Pitt's arguments. The prime minister suffered a humiliating defeat and even considered stepping down, while the opposition was considering impeachment. Russia retained Ochakov.

This controversy is crucial, because here, through political arguments, the various concerns and rhetorical positions mentioned in the previous chapter – abstract knowledge, international law, statistics and measurement – were all linked in debates over concrete policy. Furthermore, the controversy also influenced developments to come in the wake of the French Revolution, during the Concert of Europe, which is the topic of the next Chapter 6. It concerned the role and standing of Russia and the Ottoman Empire as regards independence and the balance of power, the problem of interventions and the connexions to international law, and the relationship between political practice and abstract knowledge and principles. At times the debate approached a theoretical

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[19] Butterfield, Herbert. 1966. 'The Balance of Power', pp. 132–148, in Herbert Butterfield and Martin Wight (eds) *Diplomatic Investigations. Essays in the Theory of International Politics.* London: George Allen & Unwin, pp. 144–145.
[20] Quoted in Cunningham, 'The Oczakov Debate', p. 212.
[21] *Ibid.,* pp. 228–229. See also Neumann, Iver B. 1999. *Uses of the Other: "The East" in European Identity Formation.* Manchester: Manchester University Press, p. 53.

discussion of the standing of the balance of power and the nature of knowledge − all in the context of a debate over policy in the British Parliament.

The balance of power in the Ochakov controversy

Not only was the balance of power disputed as justification for the specific claims regarding Ochakov: the balance of power concept was itself rejected as a chimera incapable of serving to back any kind of argument. This new position to argue from was used to its fullest in the Ochakov controversy.

As otherwise throughout the century, the main debate in Parliament stood between a policy of continental engagement and relative isolation from European affairs. The distinction between Whigs and Tories was not as clear-cut as previously. Prime Minister William Pitt the Younger was not affiliated with any party, although he was often considered to be associated with the Tories. By contrast, his arch-rival, Charles James Fox, was clearly a Whig politician. The Foxite Whigs generally supported the French Revolution, opposed Pitt's interventionist policies, were pro-Russian, and advocated individual freedoms and legal rights. In this, they were in agreement with Jeremy Bentham, who had famously rejected the idea of natural law and natural rights as 'nonsense upon stilts'. Bentham was also pro-Russian, and, like many Whigs, argued that secrecy in foreign policy was associated with abstract theories and principles.[22] This opposition to secrecy in foreign affairs was an aspect of Bentham's project of 'demystifying the law'.[23] Whilst Pitt and the government considered Russia as a threat that had to be managed in order to uphold the balance of power, the Whigs and Bentham urged a policy of non-intervention.

In the Ochakov controversy, the balance of power was put to various uses to support or oppose British intervention and engagement. Pitt and the government argued for the traditional approach to the balance of power, and Pitt's only argument for intervention was the balance of power as a true concept based on tradition. Amongst his opponents,

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[22] 'Ministers take advantage of the general ignorance of foreign affairs – of the mystery that enwraps the subject', he wrote, and attacked lawyers. Conway, Stephen. 1987. 'Bentham versus Pitt: Jeremy Bentham and British Foreign Policy 1789', *The Historical Journal* 30(4):791–809, p. 802.
[23] *Ibid.*, p. 806.

some held that the balance of power was a real phenomenon, but that it did not apply in the specific case of Ochakov and Turkey: the balance of power could be taken too far and be misapplied. This was connected to another argument, namely that the balance of power, even if important, could not be the sole responsibility of Britain. These arguments tapped into the longstanding isolationist argument, recurrent in Parliamentary debates during the 1740s, that it could not be Britain's responsibility alone to protect the balance of power in Europe.

For me, however, the most interesting arguments now were those made by the Whig opposition in James Fox's circle, forcefully rejecting the concept altogether. Given the developments in the previous chapter, this was now an available position. Unlike Pitt, with his insistence on the balance of power as a true principle, embodying a European sociability and the public interest, Fox (like Justi), maintained that the balance of power was a useless abstraction that did not serve the interests of Britain. Opposition rhetoric saw the national interest of Britain as a concern separate from the balance of power. The link between the national interest and the public interest, as embodied in the balance of power, no longer holds, they said: the real interest of Britain is *delinked* from the balance of power, which was rejected as an abstraction. Being able to argue from a new position, situated *outside* of the balance-of-power discourse itself, made it possible to attack the concept as a matter of principle rather than of implementation.[24] The concept of 'interest' became delinked from the balance of power in the process.

The 'Ochakov crisis' as a historical occurrence is usually dated to 1791. In the early months of 1791, Britain was still hesitant to act on Prussia's wishes.[25] However, this gradually changed, and in March the Prussian pressure increased, leading to a harder line. Pitt prepared fleets for the Baltic and the Black Sea, to be dispatched by the end of March. To this, only Lord Grenville objected.[26] On 28 March Pitt requested Parliament for an increment of the naval forces, and debates over the proposal started the next day.

Here, Pitt's nemesis, Charles James Fox, maintained that arguing with a basis in the balance of power was nothing but 'enveloping oneself in mystery and importance'

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[24] Jackson, Patrick T. 2006. *Civilizing the Enemy*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, p. 88.
[25] Webb, 'Sea Power', p. 20.
[26] *Ibid.,* pp. 25–26.

without explaining anything.[27] The presentation of the case for invading Ochakov was made to be 'alarming', but it was alarming 'only in point of expence'. If the threat to the balance of power was supposed to be so worrying, then proponents of this 'ought to shew how it was endangered', and if it was because of Russia – which Fox saw as a completely new argument in the House – or Prussia, they should show 'who she meant to attack'.

The debates continued throughout April. Charles Grey, the Second Earl Grey[28] did not dismiss the balance as such, but emphasised the distinction between theory and practical political handicraft by arguing that the balance of power should be left in the hands of those skilful enough to manage it. That is, it was a matter of prudent political practice to manage the balance properly and not 'a romantic idea'. He considered the balance of power important, but did not see how it could possibly be endangered in the case of Ochakov.[29]

Fox proceeded to dismiss the balance of power, and 'charged the minister with insolence, arrogance, incapacity, and willful imposition on the House of Commons, in the conduct of foreign affairs, and dared him to the proof'.[30]

John Freeman Mitford, First Baron Redesdale, declared that the '*real interest and internal prosperity* of Great Britain' had nothing to do with meddling in the affairs of other countries to 'hold and preserve the balance of power in Europe'.[31] Quite the contrary, if this was how the balance was protected, it would be 'unsuccessful, useless, and even extremely dangerous to the *true interests* of this country'. Here the balance of power was not automatically associated with the interest of Britain, as it had previously been.

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[27] Commons debate, 29 March 1791. The British Parliament. 1791. *The Parliamentary Register, or History of the Proceedings and Debates of the House of Commons; containing an Account of the most interesting Speeches and Motions; accurate Copies of the most remarkable Letters and Papers; of the most material Evidence, Petitions, &c. laid before and offered to the House, during the First Session of the Seventeenth Parliament of Great Britain. Vol. XXIX.* London: J. Debrett, hereafter '*PR17/29*', p. 35.

[28] Of Earl Grey Tea fame: Charles Grey, 2nd Earl Grey, PM 1830–1834,Whig Party member, in Fox's circle.

[29] Commons debate, 12 April 1791, *PR17/29,* p. 106.

[30] Commons debate, 15 April 1791, *PR17/29,* p. 178.

[31] Commons debate, 25 May 1791, *PR17/29,* p. 523. Emphases added.

Pitt was advised to 'look out for some expedient to get out of the scrape'.[32] Pitt explained why Ochakov was of value to Turkey, but the balance of power did not offer grounds good enough for explaining the value of Ottoman relations to Britain.[33]

The strong opposition in Parliament caught the government off guard, and continued to spread throughout the country.[34] Parliament did not agree to provide Pitt with the supplies necessary for the Ochakov campaign, and Pitt suffered defeat. The crisis had passed, but the debate continued with even greater force the next year when Parliament was back in session. This debate has gone largely unnoticed in the literature, because of the focus on the crisis itself, and how it was resolved. Discovering 'the ministers in flight', the debate became even fiercer after Pitt's retreat.[35] Pitt, it was charged, was 'intriguing in all the courts of Europe […] the great posture master of the balance of power'.[36]

Earl Grey accepted the 'general propositions' on the balance of power, and did not feel the need to dispute these points 'most strenuously maintained'. However, in the specific case of Ochakov, he was not convinced. 'Much had been said with regard to the policy of preserving the general balance of power […] But […] he[37] had failed to produce conviction on his mind'.[38] Maintaining the balance of power was a 'laudable object', but only when not 'pursued to too great an extent'. In this case, invoking the balance of power was simply not justifiable. 'That Great Britain had pursued this object too far would not be denied, when it was considered that in her progress after it she had travelled as far as the banks of the Black Sea'.[39] Again, Grey did not attack the existence of the balance − only how it is managed or used. Implicit here is the argument that the balance exists to stabilise European international politics.

Then, Grey turned the balance-of-power concept against one of its proponents, pointing out and explaining the ambiguities:

> By his own evidence, the whole of Administration would appear to deserve censure. If the possession of Oczakow by the Empress was dangerous to the balance of power, which he

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[32] Quoted in Cunningham, 'The Oczakov Debate', p. 227.
[33] *Ibid.*
[34] Webb, 'Sea Power, p. 27.
[35] Cunningham, 'The Oczakov Debate', p. 230.
[36] Quoted in Cunningham, 'The Oczakov Debate', p. 231.
[37] Referring to Mr. Jenkinson, later Lord Liverpool, see Chapter 7.
[38] PR17/31, pp. 310–11.
[39] *Ibid.*

had insisted, there was a proof we had abandoned it to that danger; for Oczakow was, after all, ceded to the Empress![40]

MP Grant, being in favour of Pitt's interventionist stance and the balance of power, also argued for a right of intervention in the case of Russia:

> They had then heard it asserted that they had no right to interfere, that Russia was an independent power, and had a right to judge for herself and act accordingly. This position was surely pushed to a degree of extravagance, for it went to the length of maintaining that no consideration of the danger of the balance of power being exposed, should weigh with Parliament in this case, for agreeing to this armament.[41]

In short, the Whig insistence on independence and anti-intervention did not trump considerations of the balance of power.

Quite on the contrary, William Wyndham, a friend of Fox's, saw no danger in Russian possession of Ochakov. An intervention in the name of the balance of power 'was a pretext so extensive, that it applied to every thing. On the balance of power we were called on to interfere, for reasons, as it was said, that could not then be explained […] nothing appeared but the same remote cause, the same undefined balance of power'.[42]

Another member of Fox's circle, Sir Philip Francis, also used the language of intervention in arguing that 'Our government had interfered in the quarrel between Russia and the Porte [Ottomans]'[43] and that the documents presented to the House had, in his opinion, nothing to say on the reasons for why Britain had intervened. He noted how the eloquence of the defenders in their speeches overshadowed the fact that there was no 'substantial truth and reason' to what had been said. The taxpayers have a reason to know why so much money was being spent, and the benefits obtained from it.[44] The balance of power could now not legitimise these expenses.

Francis continued by calling on the Prime Minster 'to tell us, why these things have been done. What general concern had England, more than any other nation, in the question between Russia and the Turks? What specific interest of ours could, by any possibility, be

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[40] PR17/31, p. 313.
[41] *Ibid.*, p. 320.
[42] *Ibid.*, p. 326.
[43] *Ibid.*, p. 340.
[44] PR17/31, p. 341.

affected by the cessation or restitution of Oczakow?'[45] This was a recurrent argument, tapping into the isolationist streak in British debates. Now, however, it was strengthened by the possibility of actually rejecting the entire concept of the balance of power.

None of the articles in the treaty with Prussia justified this meddling, Francis declared. The contempt for the balance of power as the *opposite* of the true interest of Britain shines through. He argued that the case was so weak, that

> *Gentlemen have been reduced to call in the balance of power* in Europe to their assistance. In this place, Sir, I wish I had the ability to attract the attention of the House…on some considerations connected with the subject in debate […] essential […] to the future peace and security of the Kingdom.[46]

Neither is Britain the 'holder of the balance of power', as traditionalist argument went: 'I desire to know why it was *our* particular concern, how it came to be *our* specific interest, rather than that of the continental states of Europe, to support this imaginary balance!'[47] He continued, 'If the cause be common, why should *we* take the lead in it? Why is this island for ever to be the victim of continental politics? The position, that separates, ought to secure us […] we are insulated in vain'.[48]

And the balance was defunct, as universal principles must be common to all – 'unless the rule be made general, we have no right to the instant use of it'.[49] As a result, the '*real substantial interests of the kingdom* have been utterly neglected and forgotten'[50] at the expense of this imaginary balance of power.

The 'real interest' of Britain could now be used compellingly *against* the balance of power. This marks a radical change from the traditional use of the balance of power from the late 17th century, as embodying the public interest. The national interest has become separated from the public interest of Europe, as embodied in the balance of power. This would open up for a defence of *private* interests, as I show in chapter 8.

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[45] *Ibid.*
[46] *Ibid.*, p. 342, emphasis added.
[47] *Ibid.*, p. 344.
[48] *Ibid.*
[49] PR17/31, p. 345.
[50] *Ibid.*, p. 351, emphasis added.

Thus far, Fox himself had remained quiet during the debates. Now came his long-awaited speech. The parliamentary records note how he was met with cheers and exaltations. Fox started by asserting that the balance of power was not relevant to the issue at hand:

> Much argument has been used on topics, not unfit, indeed, to be mixed with this question, but not necessarily; topics, which undoubtedly may be incidentally taken up, but which are not essential to the discussion. In this class I rank what has been said upon the balance of Europe.[51]

Fox then turned to what he considered the main debate, between isolation or intervention on the continent. If he had to choose, he said, complete isolation would be better than entanglement in continental affairs. But, he went on to say, these extremes are not necessary. This is a false choice, due to the balance of power concept. And now began the attack on the principle itself.

He proceeded to dismiss the whole concept of the balance of power as an inconsequential principle; moreover, following its logic and supporting allies and the allies of allies, it would in fact not result in a balance favourable to Britain.[52] As Justi, he claimed that the balance of power − if such existed − would obstruct prosperity for Britain and would not be in Britain's interest. Then he played his strongest card: that the balance of power, as opposed to *real* practical politics, is a mere *abstraction*:

> What then are we to conclude from this intricate system of balances and counterbalances, and these *dangerous theories with which the honourable gentleman seemed to amuse himself*? Why, that *these are speculations too remote from our policy*; that in some parts, even according to the honourable gentleman's argument, they may be defective, after all, and consequently, that if the system he builds upon it fails in one of its possibilities, it fails in the whole of them. *Such must ever be the fate of systems so nicely constructed*.[53]

Fox went on to link it to the Whig isolationist rhetoric:

> But it is not true, that the system necessary to enable this country to derive the true benefit from the Dutch alliance, ought to be founded upon those *involved and mysterious politics* which make it incumbent upon us, nay, which prove its perfection, by compelling us to

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[51] *Ibid.*, p. 358.
[52] PR17/31, p. 359.
[53] *Ibid.*, p. 359, emphases added.

> stand forward the principals in every quarrel, *the Quixotes of every enterprise, the agitators in every plot, intrigue, and disturbance, which are every day arising in Europe.*[54]

The central bone of contention regarding intervention was the standing of the principle of the balance of power and, consequently, the relative isolation or not of Britain, and all of this in terms of Britain's 'interests'. The balance of power, maintained Fox, was just a fancy theory, invented with no relevance for the real interests of Britain and how politics really work. The important point was how to deal with any immediate need that should arise, and how to protect Britain.

'It was explicitly stated', Fox observed, 'as the only argument for our interference at all, that the balance of Europe was threatened with great danger, if Oczakow was suffered to remain in the hands of Russia'.[55] Invoking the balance of power could not suffice. The balance of power no longer had the rhetorical power necessary for legitimating expensive foreign policies or interventions. Pitt's rhetoric had failed in this, and Fox went on to criticise the balance of power, this time *immanently*:

> In order to shew that His Majesty's Ministers merit the censure which is proposed, I will admit that the preservation of the Turks is necessary for the security of a balance of power. I trust, at the same time that this admission, which I make merely for the sake of argument, will not be disingenuously quoted upon me, as hypothetical statements too commonly are, for admissions of fact.[56]

He attacked the historical event of Utrecht, using history in a different way from those who defended the balance on the basis of tradition.[57] Utrecht was an error that showed how the balance of power was merely used as a cloak for partisan politics. Regarding Louis XIV,

> he persisted in the war, until the folly and wickedness of Queen Anne's [Tory] Ministers enabled him to conclude the peace of Utrecht, on terms considerably less disadvantageous

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[54] *Ibid.*, p. 360, emphases added.
[55] *Ibid.*
[56] PR17/31, p. 362.
[57] As Bolingbroke: 'the terms to which they agreed at last were the same with those they before rejected' 7/2 1792: 379. See previous chapter.

even than those he had himself proposed. And shall *we*, Sir, the pride of our age, the terror of Europe, submit to this humiliating sacrifice of our honour?[58]

In addition to rhetorical attacks, the *responses* to them are of equal importance. Is the balance of power defended, and with resort to what? The balance of power was essential to Pitt's defence. Now came the moment for Pitt to defend himself, and his rhetoric is interesting in underscoring the points made above. Pitt defended himself precisely by *attempting to hold abstractions and practice together*, rejecting the distinction between theory and politics in a revealing assertion:

> the general question of system is one part necessarily connected with the merits of the exercise of that system, and because *it is impossible to separate the conduct of Ministers from the principle on which they acted* […] then he should proceed to state the grounds on which this subject was taken up on that system.[59]

In short, it is impossible to make a distinction between an abstract system, and the conduct of policy. And therefore, *there is no need to enter into discussions of it either!* The balance cannot be criticised, because it is by definition the instantiation of a wise political practice. 'The wisdom or folly of the whole system will, in a great measure, depend on what is called the balance of power in Europe'.[60] This was an explicit defence of the balance of power as both theory and practice combined – that is, the 'traditional' rhetoric. It was employed to oppose what Fox was doing – like Justi, Fox sought to distinguish clearly between useless abstractions and real policy.

Pitt then turned to the second argument of Fox, disputing the presumed disconnexion between Britain's interest and the balance of power, and *tried to link the two together again*. This is worth quoting at length:

> Many gentlemen seemed to think that the question of the balance of power has been improperly introduced into this subject, and that it has nothing to do with the discussion of this case, but was totally inapplicable […] The general balance of power, as applicable in this case to the arguments on the whole of the subject, has by some been the object of argumentative attack, and decried, and by others treated with affected ridicule; but on the regular discussion of this, much, in his opinion, depended. He had heard it allowed that

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[58] PR17/31, p. 376.
[59] *Ibid.*, p. 386, emphases added.
[60] *Ibid.*

> the balance of power was a question in which both sides of the House agreed in principle […] when gentlemen admit that there is such a thing as the balance of power, what is it but saying, that if we are ourselves, or if our ally is, in a situation of danger from the overgrowth of another power, we should, from due regard to the tranquillity of Europe, use our endeavours to check the growth of that power; *and indeed we may be engaged ourselves immediately in the calamity of war by neglecting this principle, when applied to one ally only. [...] we ourselves might become the objects of attack, in consequence of inattention to the principle of the balance of power [...] the point [...] was, that the principle of the balance of power was such as we ought to regard with vigilance and attention, because we are so deeply interested in its consequences*.[61]

No nation in Europe, including Britain, would be safe if the balance of power were disregarded.[62] In the quote above, Pitt also assumes the general agreement on the balance of power principle as backing for concrete claims, even if disputed, and tries to direct attention back to the *implications* of the balance of power.[63] The balance of power as a principle was indeed disputed, as we have seen. Pitt, however, disregards this. 'The balance of power is a thing', he declared, 'on which depends much of the happiness of the world, because, though in some particular instances it led nations to war, it contributed on the whole to promote general tranquillity, and to render wars of ambition less frequent and less destructive'.[64]

The principle of the balance of power 'cannot reasonably be denied'. Thus, the important question was its *implications* in the present situation: 'whether the situation of the Turkish empire was such as to be affected in any great degree by the projects of the Imperial Court; and if so, whether this would, in fact, or probably might, have any effect on the balance of power in Europe?'[65] That the relevance of Ochakov for the balance of power was contended in Parliament

> made it necessary for him to trouble the House so much upon the subject, that the balance of power, as applied to the Turkish Empire, was a wild and chimerical idea. Indeed, it was

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[61] PR17/31, p. 387, emphasis added.
[62] *Ibid.*
[63] See Toulmin, Stephen E. 2003[1958]. *The Uses of Argument.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
[64] PR17/31, p. 388.
[65] *Ibid.*

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contended last year specifically, that the whole of the question of the balance of power was irrelevant.[66]

Now Pitt invoked the full authority of history and tradition against the balance of power as a 'chimera':

> from the earliest periods of the Turkish empire, down to the present, it had been held essential to the balance of power […] France, ever since the reign of Francis I., had been considered as forming a very material part of the balance of power of Europe […] *in this country, since the reign of King William, in every memorable æra, down to the present period, it had been regarded in the same light. The principal powers of Europe had entertained the same opinion of it.*[67]

Further, he noted, not only is it based on tradition − Turkey's importance to the balance of power had been argued

> by the best authors who have written upon the subject. It is remarked by Montesquieu; *nor has it ever been denied by any author of any authority whatever.* If this be true in general, how much more so must it be of the Turkish empire, when considered as threatened by the ascendancy of so great a maritime power as that of Russia.[68]

The link between a national interest and the general public interest as expressed in the balance of power had been weakened. Even if Pitt had tried to reconnect the two, and recapture the notion of interests, as a final countermove he admits to their separation, but then tries to link the balance of power with self-preservation, as championed by Justi: 'not only as an ally of Prussia, *but also for the sake of the general principle of self-preservation,* our interference was dictated'.[69] If this was the case, then

> the point of offensive or defensive war was not the question to be considered by those who were to interfere for the sake of preserving the balance of power […] this, he believed, was the origin of the dispute between the parties, and if so, it is not very material even on the point of justice, much less on the system of the balance of power.[70]

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[66] *Ibid.*
[67] PR17/31, p. 389.
[68] *Ibid.*, emphasis added.
[69] PR17/31, pp. 389–90, emphasis added.
[70] *Ibid.* p. 390.

The balance of power concept cannot be studied apart from its uses, and studying controversies such as this allows me to catch a glimpse of the rhetorical processes constituting inflection points. This controversy clearly shows how some British politicians were attacking the balance of power by distinguishing between abstraction and practice, while others countered such attacks with arguments from tradition. In Pitt's rhetoric, the balance of power is not about internal political party interests only, but based on historical precedents and generally valid maxims. The balance is given a 'quality of out-there-ness by appealing to tradition, and authorities on the subject agreeing', including the 'principal powers of Europe', as well as equalling the abstract principle to the empirical practice of ministers.[71] It is a debate between universalist principles based on tradition, and the exigencies of practical politics.

Pitt escaped charges of misconduct[72] but left the debate further wounded and humiliated, and with his government seriously weakened. He had failed to legitimise his policy by deploying the balance of power concept. The balance of power no longer carried the same rhetorical force – it could be countered with accusations of its being an abstraction, as opposed to the reality of political practice and the 'real interests' of Britain.

For those who still considered the balance of power a valuable principle, Pitt might have invoked Prussia and the need to uphold its position in Europe for the balance of power, but arguments about Turkey and against Russia could find no support in balance-of-power arguments. These were, as explained above, founded on a European tabulated order of states.

As a consequence of Pitt's failure in these debates, the prestige of Britain plummeted on the continent. The Triple Alliance was dissolved, but by then the allies could gather around the French Revolutionary Wars.[73] The Ochakov controversy was also an element in a wider contest between Britain and Russia over influence in Europe.[74] It was a contest over the meaning and, not least, over the extension and applicability of the balance of power, as well as being a contest for leadership in Europe – for control over the balance

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[71] Potter, Jonathan. 1996. *Representing Reality: Discourse, Rhetoric and Social Construction*. London: Sage, p. 15.
[72] 'has been guilty of gross misconduct […] Ayes, 116; Noes, 244', PR17/31, p. 398.
[73] Webb, 'Sea Power', p. 32.
[74] Schroeder, Paul W. 1994. *The Transformation of European Politics 1763–1848*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 80.

of power, between Britain and Russia. It concerned hierarchical relations both within and outside the system, couched in balance of power terms.[75]

Conclusions: The European Commonwealth and the problem of intervention

The case of Ochakov was one of the first formulations of the problem of intervention. In the 1790s, interventions were not yet seen as distinct from war, as a problem *sui generis,* but later interpretations of the Ochakov debates would reconstruct it as such. Ochakov became a reference point for intervention debates – an exemplary dilemma. In many respects, the most important actors during the Congress and the Congress system were Russia and Britain. In British debates, the experience of Ochakov was frequently adduced in policy debates concerning Russia and interventions during the first decades of the 19th century.[76]

Edmund Burke (1729-1797) was also struggling with the repercussions of the Ochakov controversy. Today Burke is known primarily for formulating a conservative view of the European order. Less familiar is how his arguments shifted over the years. Burke changed his rhetoric according to the political circumstances.[77]

Before Burke succeeded in triggering the British Revolution Controversy with his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*,[78] he had for some time sought to convince the political establishment of the necessity of military intervention in France. Vattel and Grotius alike had argued that there was a right of non-interference, irrespective of the form of domestic government; and, as the 18th century drew to a close, few disputed the internal integrity of states in international law. The principle of non-intervention was, in John Vincent's words, 'a protector of state sovereignty'.[79] Nevertheless, Burke's early

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[75] Schroeder, *The Transformation*, p. 81.
[76] Anderson, 'The Political Uses', p. 93. See Chapter 7.
[77] See Hampsher-Monk, Iain. 2005. 'Edmund Burke's Changing Justification for Intervention', *The Historical Journal* (48)1: 65–100; Armitage, David. 2000. 'Edmund Burke and Reason of State', *Journal of the History of Ideas* (61)4:617–634, p. 630.
[78] Burke, Edmund. 1790. *Reflections on the Revolution in France and on the Proceedings in Certain Societies in London relative to that Event. In a Letter intended to have been sent to a Gentleman in Paris.* London: J. Dodsley.
[79] Vincent, R. John. 1974. *Nonintervention and International Order*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 15.

argumentation creatively used Vattel and the kind of international law that was emerging to argue *for* intervention in France.

Burke had begun by arguing that France was divided, so the revolutionary government did not represent its own nation, as it were. He had defended the French aristocracy against the revolutionaries who were threatening France with arbitrary rule. This argument had not concerned the preponderance of France as a European power, but France's form of domestic government – it was an argument for *regime change* to protect the *real* French nation.[80] However, even if states regularly *did* intervene in the domestic affairs of other states, publicly legitimising and arguing for intervention was another matter entirely. That was supremely difficult, and Burke struggled with this rhetorical task.[81]

After the balance-of-power concept had failed to deliver the rhetorical goods during the Ochakov debate, the British government and its ministers were extremely cautious about arguing for anything resembling interventions and foreign escapades.[82] In 1791, during the Ochakov controversy, Pitt wrote 'that we wish wholly to avoid committing ourselves in any degree to any thing, which can show any disposition to encourage any sort of interference in the internal affairs of France'.[83]

Despite Burke's forceful arguments and the general hostility to the French Revolution, few calls to intervene were heard in Parliament or in public. Even when the Revolutionary Wars turned into a coalition war against the potential universal monarchy of France, intervention was a difficult case to argue.

However, during the Ochakov debates, in a dramatic public display, Edmund Burke had broken with his friend and ally Charles Fox. After Ochakov, Burke stood free to argue his own policies as regarding France. His problem was how to convince the 'extremely neutral' Britain, as he called it, to intervene.[84] Some developments helped Burke's cause:

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[80] Hampsher-Monk, 'Edmund Burke's Changing Justification', p. 77.
[81] *Ibid.*, p. 68.
[82] *Ibid.*, p. 73.
[83] Private note, Pitt to Lord Elgin, 23 May 1791, quoted in Black, Jeremy. *British Foreign Policy in an Age of Revolutions, 1783–1793.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 328.
[84] *Ibid.*, p. 79.

French military success threatened the Dutch republic – the traditional barrier against France – and France now explicitly aimed to export the revolution abroad.[85]

From emphasising the internal harmony of France as a nation, based on principles of law, Edmund Burke now maintained that the fight against the revolutionary movement in France was a fight not only against a stronger power, *but also against abstract knowledge and principles, which were not only useless, but now also dangerous*. 'We are at war with a principle', he reiterated, whilst emphasising political practice against metaphysics.[86] What was needed was a return to 'the idea of considering Europe as a vast commonwealth, of the several parts being distinct and separate, though politically and commercially united, of keeping them independent, though unequal in power'.[87]

France, Burke now argued, was a threat to the European Commonwealth as a whole. It was a threat to all European monarchs – but it was also a threat domestically, since liberal sympathisers in Europe as well as in America were lending their support to an increasingly universalist revolutionary project.[88] Thus, any talk of protecting the independence of France by refusing an intervention to stop the revolution did not make sense: revolution in France was not an exclusively French concern, but equivalent to a *domestic* concern for Europe as a whole.[89] Europe was not in a Vattellian state of nature, but a '"diplomatick republic" with a right to decide whom to admit',[90] and where no member had the right 'to revolutionise itself'.[91] As Britain's political circumstances shifted, Burke relied on political-practical precedence to argue for a commonwealth as being a prerequisite for international order, and the occasional 'publick necessity' of intervention.[92] Here his arguments are noticeably different from contemporary views of 'international anarchy'. Burke argued the complete opposite: international politics in

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[85] *Ibid.*, p. 80.

[86] *Ibid.*, p. 84; Burke, *Reflections*, pp. 90–91.

[87] Burke, Edmund. 1795 [1772]. 'The History of Europe', *The Annual Register, or a View of the History, Politics, and Literature, For the Year 1772*. London: J. Dodsley, p. 2.

[88] Jarrett, Mark. 2014. *The Congress of Vienna and its Legacy. War and Great Power Diplomacy after Napoleon*. London: I.B. Tauris, pp. 18–20.

[89] Hampsher-Monk, 'Edmund Burke's Changing Justification'; Welsh, Jennifer Mary. 1996. 'Edmund Burke and the Commonwealth of Europe: The Cultural Bases of International Order', pp. 173–192 in Ian Clark and Iver B. Neumann (eds) *Classical Theories of International Relations*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, pp. 179–182, p. 176; Clark, Ian. 2005. *Legitimacy in International Society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 91.

[90] Hampsher-Monk, 'Edmund Burke's Changing Justification', p. 86.

[91] Wight, Martin. 1972. 'International Legitimacy', *International Relations* 4(1):1–28, p. 3, quoted in Clark, *Legitimacy*, p. 91.

[92] See Armitage, 'Edmund Burke and Reason of State'.

Europe was – by custom, not by law – the equivalent of domestic politics. The domestic order in Europe, the 'neighbourhood', could be policed by means of intervention.[93]

Only when Burke connected his concerns about the French Revolution to the protection of a European Commonwealth as a *practical-political concern*[94] (and not with legalistic arguments over the status of domestic government) did his arguments gain resonance. Burke did indeed influence the British government, but only after changing his original rhetoric and linking it to political practice.[95] Other politicians soon came to support Burke's position, which now combined the traditional concern with the public interest of Europe and the individuality of states and the importance of orderly, domestic governance. The emphasis was on the Commonwealth of Europe, and the value of an orderly international society. Whig MP James Mackintosh initially objected that this emphasis on order 'violated the sacred principle of national independence' and 'public morality', but even Mackintosh eventually argued that the close connexions in Europe 'approached the condition of provinces of the same empire'.[96] Castlereagh was later to describe the Congress system as 'giving to the counsels of the Great Powers the efficiency and almost the simplicity of a single State'.[97]

Burke, as both philosopher and politician, linked a problem of intervention to the classical idea of order and the public interest, while emphasising the dangers not only of a state too powerful, but also of a state too weak to support the European order. This is a concern with the domestic order of states, and is important because of a clear trajectory from Burke, to Prime Minister Pitt, and later to Castlereagh's arguments during the Congress: getting rid of small powers is necessary, as they cannot carry the weight of the European order.

As I go on to show in the next chapter, during the Congress period, the actors spoke of 'equilibrium', not a 'balance of power'. Henry Kissinger has pointed out how Metternich's view of the European social order influenced Castlereagh and the concept of European equilibrium.[98] However, also Burke was an important influence on this use of

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[93] Welsh, 'Edmund Burke and the Commonwealth of Europe'.
[94] Burke, *Reflections,* p. 90.
[95] Hampsher-Monk, 'Edmund Burke's Changing Justification', p. 82.
[96] Quoted in Hampsher-Monk, 'Edmund Burke's Changing Justification', p. 99.
[97] Quoted in Pollard, Alfred Frederick. 1923. 'The balance of power', *Journal of the British Institute of International Affairs* 2(2): 51–64, p. 55.
[98] Kissinger, Henry A. 1957. *A World Restored*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

'equilibrium' rather than 'balance of power', and the implication that small states could be sacrificed. Castlereagh quoted and summarised Burke's writings in his letters to his step-grandfather, and Friedrich von Gentz, aide to Metternich and secretary of the 'group of eight' at the Congress, translated Burke's works into German.[99] Edmund Burke helped make interventions a central problem in international politics. Burke emphasised orderly international affairs, but at the same time argued for intervention and the use of force against France, as well as against other states that might destabilise the moral, social-systemic and cultural underpinnings of the European system.[100] The Congress view of the 'equilibrium' would in turn be a precondition for the later re-emergence of the balance of power as a concept – it would then be used to *oppose* the Congress diplomacy and to maintain an anti-interventionist position.

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[99] Jarrett, *The Congress of Vienna*, p. 21.
[100] Welsh, Jennifer Mary. 1995. *Edmund Burke and International Relations: The Commonwealth of Europe and the Crusade against the French Revolution*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

PART II

CHAPTER 6

The Balance of Power and the Congress of Europe

In a genealogy, identifying breaks and inflection points in the historical development is central. This is the first chapter in my Part II where, according to the episteme shift, I will chart the break from a republican focus on the public interest of Europe, to a liberal focus on various national interests, and therefore also the premises for the problem of anarchy in international politics. A liberal focus on independent nation-states and national passions, combined with a focus on measuring capacities, led to the predominance of national positions over the public interest. Increasingly, the focus on interest – which 'could not lie' – and on the singularity and commonality of a European community or commonwealth composed of different interests shifted, and state interests and state survival became nationalised power politics, with heavy reliance on the military and on material capability. Both were new elements in the concept of the balance of power. Once capacities are to be calculated, the balance of power becomes tied to national positions and, importantly, the prediction of state behaviour and national trajectories. The balance of power had previously been oriented towards the past and tradition. Now it became oriented towards the future as well.[1] This is the twisting trajectory of the balance of power in the 19th century – characterised by vacillations in the balance-of-power concept and the rhetorical positions it is used to defend.

However, this episteme shift I identify is just that – a shift – and not a clear break. Therefore, the argument in this section is that the Congress indicates the gradually increasing 'liberal' focus on atomistic, independent states and the associated intervention problem. As we shall see, the balance of power started as a positive promise for the future peace of Europe, but then became a criticism of the 'Congress system'. I show how the central debate during the Congress of Europe period involved the independence of states versus the European, international order, or the public interest. The public interest becomes associated with the Congress 'equilibrium', as opposed to the balance of power.

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[1] This fits Koselleck's point about the new relation of past and future that emerged in this period. Tradition was rejected, and statistical measurement was the new thing, *Historie* was out, *Geschichte* in, etc.: see Koselleck, Reinhart. 1985. *Futures Past. On the Semantics of Historical Time.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

In a turn from the previous century, the balance of power was now used to oppose the Congress 'equilibrium', and to protect the independence of individuated nation states. When the Congress failed, actors picked up the old version of the balance of power concept to argue against interventions. Again, radical, liberal critics went on to denounce it. In this process, the balance of power increasingly emphasised national positions, as the concept was itself eventually nationalised.

By 'liberal' here and in the next chapters, I do not mean to invoke some coherent 'tradition of thought', but merely that a new type of argumentation implies a new canvas of possibilities.[2] There were many liberalisms, and not just one tradition of thought with clear and stable boundaries. As I address in the next section, increasingly, *self-proclaimed* 'liberal' arguments were associated with the emergent middle classes.[3] The focus is still on argumentation and contestation – not only in the sense of 'who says what', but also the changing conditions 'under which saying this or that can have a truth value, and therefore be effectively deployed, or capable of being uttered at all'.[4] In this case, one changing condition concerned states as objects – during the 18th century, there was an atomisation and individuation of the states of Europe.

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In the previous chapters on the 18th century, the balance-of-power concept concerned European order on the systemic level. As seen in Chapter 2, after the balance of power had become a counter-concept to Universal Monarchy, hegemony was rejected in theory, so other orders than a European empire or *respublica christiana* had to be devised. The problem was therefore in many ways one of imperial reconstitution. It addressed European order and governance in the positive sense as the promotion of a European public interest or 'commonwealth' and negatively as the opposition to universal

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[2] Hacking, Ian. 2002. *Historical Ontology*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, p. 97.
[3] Bell, Duncan. 2014. 'What is Liberalism?', *Political Theory* 42(6): 682-715, p. 693; Leonhard, Jörn. 2004. 'From European Liberalism to the Language of Liberalisms', *Redescriptions* 8: 17-51.
[4] Hacking, *Historical* Ontology, p. 79.

monarchy.[5] 'Order' here did not imply anarchy, as is often assumed in discussing the balance of power. Rather, my empirical study of the balance of power rhetoric shows it as a means through which to establish *hierarchies* by means of authoritative justification. This hierarchy is visible already in the Utrecht Treaties; Austria tried to appeal to the dynastic order, but this failed as the balance of power was increasingly seen as a system to prevent *any* power from growing too big, and some polities gained a stronger claim to represent the 'public interest' than others.[6] As detailed below, the Congress of Vienna was largely also a hierarchical affair – the Congress system of 1815–22 had its origins in the systemic and hierarchical understanding of the balance of power, which gained momentum from Utrecht onwards. The hierarchical 'great power principle' was not a new invention, but had been evolving from previous balance of power theorising about the European order.

The hierarchical order of the Congress of Vienna is an important context for how political leaders could link the balance of power to liberal arguments about anti-intervention and the independence of nation-states. The Congress of Vienna was important, not as an instance of the frequent use of the balance of power – indeed, that concept was conspicuous by its absence during much of the Congress – but because the balance of power was first used to *oppose* the Congress in a manner that seems different from its 18th-century uses. I look for contentions and debates, and the central debate during the Congress period involved the independence of states versus the European, international order, or the public interest.

In this scheme of things, the Congress of Vienna is important, not so much for being an instantiation of balance of power politics as for being a crucial step in the *transition from a concern with a communal European order to the individuation and atomisation of European states*. The trend, seen in Justi, of emphasising the *domestic* aspects of political order (or 'police', as it was then called) continues here.[7] When the protection of the public order of Europe was the overriding priority, the dominance of a too-strong state was the concern. In the early 19th century, the problem often concerned the presence of

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[5] See Chapter 2, Chapter 3.
[6] See Chapter 3.
[7] See Bukovansky, Mlada. 2002. *Legitimacy and Power Politics: The American and French Revolutions in International Political Culture.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 163.

states that were too weak. The issue was now not whether a dominant power should be confronted, but whether too-weak powers should be extinguished.

This is how I will proceed: First, I will briefly show the development in arguments over the European Commonwealth, embodying the public interest, from the Ochakov crisis to the Congress of Vienna. I have shown the role of Edmund Burke's arguments in linking the European Commonwealth, the public interest, and what was becoming a new, central problem – that of interventions in the domestic government of another state. Interventions became a *prerequisite* for a new order, and not its violation. One of the central documents for the Congress period, William Pitt's plan from 1804, in turn reflects Burke's argument, as it promotes the necessity of sacrificing small powers on the altar of a European order.

I argue that the Congress system was a pre-eminently hierarchical order, led by the great powers. The hierarchical tendencies identified in the previous chapter came to fruition in the Congress, where categories of greater and lesser powers were institutionalised. In light of this trajectory from the early intervention debates to the institutionalisation of the rights of the great powers, I discuss the puzzling absence of balance-of-power rhetoric. Neither the political commentators of the day nor the delegates to the Congress of Vienna saw it as an issue of the balance of power. It was rather retrospectively constructed as such later in the century.

The entire political project during the Congress period came to focus on aligning and synchronising domestic and international goals, as defined by the political leaders of the great powers, to protect the European Commonwealth and order.[8] However, this synchronisation was nothing new, considering the emphasis put on the compatibility of the public and private interests in the 18th and 17th centuries. This trend had been underway since Utrecht, emphasising the systemic and pragmatic understanding of the balance of power, and rejecting Austria's claims to dynastic legitimacy. What *was* new, however, was that domestic governance and international order were no longer assumed

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[8] See Kissinger, Henry A. 1957. *A World Restored*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.; also: Simms, Brendan. 2011. 'A False Principle in the Law of Nations: Burke, State Sovereignty, (German) Liberty and Intervention in the Age of Westphalia', pp. 89–110 in Brendan Simms and David J. B. Trim (eds), *Humanitarian Intervention: A History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Lawson, George and Luca Tardelli. 2013. 'The Past, Present, and Future of Intervention, *Review of International Studies* 39(5): 1233–1253, p. 1238.

to be the *same thing*. As the Göttingen academic Arnold Heeren noted, 'the history of the European state system is not the history of the individual states'.[9]

The Congress was conservative, emphasising the *ancien regime*, great powers, and European public interest and order in the face of revolutionary ideas. Metternich wrote that the welfare of Europe depended upon 'the understanding between the great powers, based on the conservative foundation of their happy and grand alliance'.[10] Still, the internal, domestic forms of government, or securing 'police' in all the European states, were important at the Congress[11] – there should be 'internal tranquillity in individual states'.[12] Conversely, this focus on the domestic can be seen also in the institutionalisation of a group of 'great powers', differing not only in their capabilities and in size, but also how they were governed or policed internally.[13] And yet, from the early 19th century, a process of individuation of states, underscoring their independence and individual characteristics, gained momentum – what can, in retrospective, be called a classical liberal argumentation. The paradoxical change in the Congress period, then, is that in defining the commonwealth, or the public interest of Europe, one also emphasised the individuality of states, and the importance of domestic governance. The European order was treated as separate from the issue of national independence – and with this separation, the new problem of intervention came to the fore.

Intervention was now seen as something different from war – as an act of assistance, not of aggression – and derived from the assumptions that the great powers of the Congress were the guardians of Europe's interest.[14] The Congress statesmen considered interventions as necessary to protect the European order, as a form of police assistance.

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[9] 'Die Geschichte des Europäischen Staaten-Systems ist keineswegs die Geschichte der einzelnen Staaten', Heeren, Arnold Hermann Ludwig. 1822 [1809]. *Handbuch der Geschichte des Europäischen Staatensystems und seiner Colonieen, von seiner Bildung seit der Entdeckung beider Indien bis zu seiner Wiederherstellung nach dem Fall des Französischen Kaiserthrons, und der Freiwerdung von Amerika.* Göttingen: Johan Friedrich Röwer, p. 6.

[10] Quoted in Haas, Ernst B. 1952. *Belgium and the Balance of* Power, Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, p 157, in Haslam, Jonathan. 2002. *No Virtue like Necessity: Realist Thought in International Relations since Machiavelli*. New Haven: Yale University Press, p. 115.

[11] See Foucault, Michel. 2007. *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France 1977–1978*. Houndmills: Palgrave, pp. 314–315.

[12] Talleyrand, quoted and translated in Osiander, Andreas. 1994. *The States System of Europe 1640–1990. Peacemaking and the Conditions of International Stability.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 227.

[13] See Neumann, Iver B. 2008. 'Russia as a Great Power, 1815–2007', *Journal of International Relations and Development* 11(2): 128–151.

[14] See Keene, Edward. 2013. 'International Hierarchy and the Origins of the Modern Practice of Intervention', *Review of International Studies* 39(5):1077–1090; Bullen, Roger. 1979. 'The Great Powers and the Iberian Peninsula, 1815–48', pp. 54–78 in Sked, Alan (ed.) *Europe's Balance of Power 1815–1848*. London: Macmillan, pp. 54–55.

Interventions were now not a violation of the order, but a *prerequisite* for the new order.[15] The liberal anti-interventionists, by contrast, privileged the independence of states and argued that interventions violated essential civic liberties like the right to protest against arbitrary government.[16] Still, both ways of arguing increasingly emphasised the domestic aspect of states – be it the internal form of government, or the protection of particularities through a focus on national independence.

For example, Burke had argued that national independence and liberty were important, also in the case of France. Still, this liberty was nothing to celebrate until one could see how it was combined with 'government; with public force; with the discipline and obedience of armies; with the collection of an effective and well-distributed revenue; with morality and religion; with the solidity of property; with peace and order; with civil and social manners'. And, Burke added, 'liberty, when men act in bodies, is *power*'.[17]

This development becomes even more interesting when I find that balance of power as a concept all but disappears during the Congress period, only to return when the Congress breaks down over precisely the issue of intervention. The Congress' pro-interventionist arguments were connected to an emphasis on the public interest of Europe. The balance of power, however, was soon deployed to support *anti*-interventionism. This use of the concept is one important step in the conversion of the balance of power to a concept concerning national positions rather than protecting the public interest of Europe, and the increasing focus on national state capabilities over any notion of an international society. It is an important prerequisite and forerunner of 'Realpolitik' and, eventually, what we now recognise as classical realist arguments.

The balance of power returned to official discourse in the 1820s and 1830s as a way of defending the individuality and independence of states from the universalist peace project associated with the Congress. The first step in explaining how this change could come about is to examine a central document that preceded the Congress, drafted by one of Burke's most intimate interlocutors: by this, I mean William Pitt's plan from 1804.

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[15] Bullen, 'The Great Powers', p. 55; Clark, Ian. 2005. *Legitimacy in International Society.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 92.
[16] Bullen, 'The Great Powers', p. 56.
[17] Burke, Edmund. 1790. *Reflections on the Revolution in France and on the Proceedings in Certain Societies in London relative to that Event. In a Letter intended to have been sent to a Gentleman in Paris.* London: J. Dodsley, p. 9.

Pitt's 1804 plan

In 1804, as Napoleon was advancing through Europe, the Russian Foreign Minister, Prince Adam Jerzy Czartoryski, presented Pitt with a scheme for a new Europe – a high-flying, philanthropic proposal for a new and liberal European order.[18] The old order was to be replaced by new, liberal governments throughout Europe, supported by a joint guarantee issued by Great Britain and Russia.[19] Pitt did not agree that other countries such as Prussia and Austria should be ignored, but given the importance of Russia, he had to respond to Czartoryski's proposal. He haphazardly wrote down a response, a 'draft', which would inadvertently become one of the crucial statements of British Congress diplomacy.[20] In this document, officially from 1805, Pitt sets out the principles that would be upheld by and guide British Foreign Secretary Lord Castlereagh at the Congress,[21] amongst them that some of the small states and 'petty' territories of Europe should not be restored to their former status after being liberated from France. They were too weak to fend for themselves, Pitt argued in this letter, and thereby also too weak to play a role in a future European order.

Pitt's proposal was not for a European federation, as the more liberal Czartoryski had imagined, but for a union of great powers who would mutually guarantee their *own* rights, thereby 're-establishing a general and comprehensive system of public law in Europe […] for repressing future attempts to disturb the general tranquillity'.[22] In contrast to the Ochakov debate, there was no mention whatsoever of the balance of power. Pitt's main substantial point concerned the importance of defeating and restraining France, and erecting barriers around it by strengthening Holland, Austria and Prussia as strong, central European powers.[23]

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[18] Frederic-Cesar de la Harpe, a Swiss follower of Rousseau, was tutor to Alexander I and had schooled him in liberal principles, which he took to heart. Herold, J. Christopher. 2002. *The Age of Napoleon.* New York: First Mariner Books, p. 342.

[19] Nicolson, Harold. 1961 [1946]. *The Congress of Vienna. A Study in Allied Unity: 1812–1822.* London: Methuen & Co., p. 52.

[20] Pitt's *Official Communication made to the Russian Ambassador at London, on the 19th January, 1805, explanatory of the views which His Majesty and the Emperor of Russia formed for the deliverance and security of Europe,* reproduced in Webster, Charles K. 1921. *British Diplomacy 1813–1815.* London: G. Bell and Sons Ltd., pp. 389–394.

[21] Nicolson, *The Congress of Vienna*, p. 9, 53.

[22] Webster, *British Diplomacy*, p. 393.

[23] Gulick, Edward Vose. 1955. *Europe's Classical Balance of Power.* New York: W.W. Norton, p. 143.

The war against Napoleon continued, and the allies eventually occupied Paris. The Fourth Coalition had defeated Napoleon and France, and the question was how to reorganise Europe after nearly 20 years of war and revolution. Britain, Prussia, Russia, and Austria were explicitly set on reconstructing a European order, and here the 1814 Treaty of Chaumont was the most important element. This was explicitly a 'plan for the future rearrangement of Europe' – and this treaty was based largely on Pitt's rashly penned plan from 1804. The Chaumont Treaty bound the allies together, also in peacetime after the Congress,

> to concert together on the conclusion of a peace with France, as to the means best adapted to guarantee to Europe, and to themselves reciprocally, the continuance of the peace […] to maintain the equilibrium of Europe, to secure the repose and independence of it States, and to prevent the invasions which during so many years has desolated the world.[24]

Castlereagh managed to incorporate clauses to ensure that the alliance would last for 20 years after the peace, and barriers against France. He stated that it should also be a refuge for all the minor states.[25] Less than a year later, he would disprove his own assertion.

Castlereagh's general foreign policy drew heavily on Pitt's legacy, as did his extremely unpopular rhetoric and policy during the Congress. Facing heavy attack in Parliament over the issue of Genoa, Castlereagh produced Pitt's 1804 original document as 'a kind of scriptural justification for his own policy and action'.[26]

The new problem of interventions was closely linked to the debate between liberals and conservatives, and to the view of the Congress, the leadership of the great powers – and the ends this was intended to achieve.[27]

The Congress of Vienna and hierarchy

The Congress of Vienna is a significant inflection point in the genealogy of the balance of power. However, it is not important because the balance-of-power concept was frequently

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[24] *Ibid.*, p. 227; Jarrett, Mark. 2014. *The Congress of Vienna and its Legacy. War and Great Power Diplomacy after Napoleon.* London: I.B. Tauris, p. 57.
[25] Castlereagh to Liverpool, 10 March 1814, in Webster, *British Diplomacy*, p. 165.
[26] Gulick, *Europe's Classical Balance*, p. 145.
[27] Bullen, 'The Great Powers', p. 56, 58.

used – in fact, the importance of the Congress of Vienna for the balance of power lay not so much in what happened in the negotiations or at the Congress itself, but in what was going on 'around' it: shifting, contextual rhetorical coordinates that would impact the balance-of-power concept on its 'return' when the Congress broke down. One of the important things that happened around the Congress was the preventive incorporation of liberal elements in a conservative political order – most representatives at the Congress were conservative royalists, but they were not blind to the changing political environment.

The Congress of Vienna was held from September 1814 until June 1815. Initially, the chief aim was to regulate and restore the European order after the Napoleonic Wars, by sorting out the territorial redistribution in Europe, and restoring the integrity of the monarchies that had been overthrown by Napoleon.[28]

With time, however, the goal of preventing European radical and liberal revolutions came to dominate. After France was added to the four powers in 1818, the five great powers 'considered themselves as "Europe"; speaking in the name of Europe, they asserted successfully the ascendancy of the great Powers. France ceased to champion the cause of the minor Powers',[29] and the Congress turned its attention to fighting revolutionary tendencies throughout Europe, seeking to defend the traditional monarchical order.

Austrian Foreign Minister Prince Metternich is often considered the main architect of the Congress. He advocated a conservative political order, rejecting most aspects of liberalism and national ideas. This task required a stable system of equilibrium that relied on solidly constituted states, also domestically. Now, it seemed, the problem was now not whether too-strong powers should be allowed to exist, but whether too weak-powers should − the problem was not universal monarchy, but useless and destabilising small states.

Promises of extensive consultations with the smaller powers at the Congress were smoke and mirrors. The great powers snuffed out the independence of states at whim; this was, particularly after the vivisection of Poland, soon constructed as the opposite of everything

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[28] Even after the borders of France had been settled, there were still about 32 million 'souls' in territories to be settled. Jarret, *The Congress of Vienna*, p. 69.
[29] Peterson, Genevieve. 1945. 'II. Political Inequality at the Congress of Vienna', *Political Science Quarterly* (60)4: 532–554, p. 550.

the classical balance of power stood for. Those opposing the hierarchical Congress' *modus operandi* would formulate their criticism in terms of the balance-of-power concept.

The main issue at the Congress, and what triggered the cooperation of the four great powers in the first place, was the Polish–Saxon crisis. It is noteworthy that the Congress did not discuss this issue in a formal committee, but only informally with representatives of the four powers.[30] In essence, Russia and Prussia together planned to divide the territories of Poland and Saxony between them. Britain and Austria feared this plan. France exploited this fear, and offered to stand on the side of Britain and Austria – if they would admit France to the 'inner circle' of the Congress. In the end, Russia received most of the Duchy of Warsaw, which was to become a new Kingdom of Poland, ruled independently of Russia. Prussia received about forty percent of Saxony.

The issue of a division of Poland was once again a central problem of European international politics, and dominated the negotiations at Vienna.[31] For my purposes, this is interesting for three reasons. First, the issue of Poland once again foregrounded debates over the independence of nations. Second, it illustrates how the great powers singled out states for incorporation based on their domestic, internal properties. These were measurable, and the Statistical Committee provided the Congress with complete population statistics – the number of 'souls' – for the territories conquered by Napoleon, to aid the powers in territorial redistributions.[32] Third, it illustrates how the great powers were holding the reins of the European, hierarchical system.

For some time, attacking the balance of power by invoking the cases of Poland and Ochakov had been a commonplace of radical rhetoric. For instance, in 1795, John Gale Jones, an English radical and supporter of the French Revolution, who was imprisoned several times for provocative actions against the government, argued that the balance of power had

> served with the present minister, as a favourite watchword to propagate delusion and
> excite alarm. When Oczakow fell into the hands of the Russian Empress, its vast

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[30] Webster, Charles K. 1963. *The Congress of Vienna 1814–1815*. London: Thames and Hudson, p. 91.
[31] Jarrett, *The Congress of Vienna*, pp. 10–11.
[32] Nicolson, *The Congress of Vienna*, pp. 146–47; Satow, Ernest Mason. 1922. *A Guide to Diplomatic Practice, Volume II*. London: Longmans, Green and Co., p. 80; Peterson, 'Political Inequality', p. 548.

importance was instantly held forth, and all Europe was said to be in danger: but when ill-fated Poland was laid low, and her fruitful fields made desolate: when her liberties were invaded by lawless despots […] it was treated as a light and trivial occurrence.[33]

Others, like Gentz in 1806, argued that the destruction of Poland was an abuse of the balance-of-power principle, and a terrible breach of it.

In contrast, others argued that Poland was destined to be extinguished because it was too weak. It could not survive, given its capacities as a state and its rank in the civilisational order. Carl von Clausewitz' opinions on Poland – the case 'always on the lips of those who ridicule the idea of the balance of power' – were representative. Rather than disproving the balance of power, he writes in *On War*, the division of Poland made sense because it was not a European state, but a 'tartar state' with a 'disorganised political life' and a population of 'immeasurable frivolity'. In consequence, 'it was impossible for it to last long' because the 'conception of an independent, separate state had disappeared […] Poland was little more than an uninhabited steppe […] a so-called state'.[34] This line of argumentation is not unlike Pitt's arguments: some small states are simply not strong enough to play a functional role in the European system. They create disorder, like a fifth wheel on a wagon.[35] What is needed is the establishment of stronger, new states by integrating old ones – again an indication of the growing importance of national positions and individuation of states, also based on domestic capacity.

The Congress of Vienna formally recognised the independence of states, but the great powers also had to protect the public order of Europe. In the conscious effort to reorganise Europe, the hierarchical organisation of Europe became more pronounced, and all but formalised into 'great powers', middle powers, and small powers. Great-power status depended on resources, but also on prestige and the way the domestic sphere was governed or its 'police'.[36] During the Congress, the five great powers were Britain, France, Russia, Austria and Prussia. Portugal, Spain and Sweden were secondary, middle

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[33] Jones, John Gale. 1795. *Substance of a Speech, Delivered at the Ciceronian School, Globe Tavern, Fleet-street, Monday, 2 Mar. 1795, on the Following Question: "At this Awful Moment of Difficulty and Danger, which Best Deserves the Public Confidence, Mr. Pitt Or Mr. Fox?"*. London: Allen and West, pp. 12–13.

[34] von Clausewitz, Carl. 1952 [1832]. *Vom Kriege. Hinterlassenes Werk des Generals Carl von Clausewitz.* Bonn: s.n., pp. 104–108 in Wright, Moorhead (ed.) *Theory and Practice of the Balance of Power 1486–1914.* London: J. M. Dent & Sons.

[35] Leckie, Gould Francis. 1817. *A Historical Research into the Nature of the Balance of Power in Europe.* London: Taylor and Hessey, p. 352; Gulick, *Europe's Classical Balance*, p. 37.

[36] Neumann, 'Russia as a Great Power'.

powers, and could do little but to ratify the decisions of the great powers. Small states, such as Genoa, did not matter much at all, and could readily be sacrificed.

The Congress of Europe was one of the most explicitly hierarchical collective arrangements that have existed in Europe – the European states were equal in name only. It has been called a collective hegemony[37] or, in its own time, a collective universal monarchy. The hierarchical structure of the Congress is also reflected in the fact that it was not really a 'congress' at all: it was never formally opened, credentials were never verified, and it never convened in plenary session. The methodology of the Congress was not, and was not seen as, any different from previous diplomatic practices, except for the permanent geographic proximity of the representatives. Metternich himself declared that the Congress of Europe 'was not a Congress; that its opening was not, properly speaking, an opening at all; that the commissions were not commissions; that in the assembly of the powers the only advantage they had to note was that of a Europe without distances: that they could agree, or they could not'.[38]

Acting in the name of 'Europe' was nothing new. Still, it can be argued that including consultations also with the minor powers marked the institution of a new practice, even if the Congress itself was not particularly new or innovative, and did not lead to much (the important negotiations took place outside of the conferences themselves). But what did such consultation really imply? Castlereagh's scheme was to organise a preliminary meeting before the Congress, to convince the smaller powers to let the great powers be in charge of business – a business that would include the extinction of some of those same small states. Here are Castlereagh's own words, about his plan and how it should be presented to the smaller powers:

> the advantage of this mode of proceeding is that you treat the plenipotentiaries as a body with early and becoming respect. You keep the power by concert and management in your own hands, but without openly assuming authority to their exclusion. You obtain a sort of sanction from them for what you are determined at all events to do, which they cannot well withhold and which cannot, in the mode it is taken, embarrass your march; and you entitle yourselves, without disrespect to them, to meet together for dispatch of business for an indefinite time to their exclusion having at the same time the option to

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[37] Watson, Adam. 1992. *The Evolution of International Society*. London: Routledge.
[38] Talleyrand-Périgord, Charles Maurice de. 1891. *Memoirs of the Prince de Talleyrand, Vol II*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, p. 295, translated in Peterson, 'Political Inequality', p. 552.

confer with any of the plenipotentiaries separately upon the points in which they are more immediately interested […] The Further advantage is that, as you meet informally in the first instance as plenipotentiaries and not as a Congress, nothing is prejudged and nothing admitted till the leading Powers have had full time to weigh all questions well and to understand each other.[39]

Castlereagh organised a congress in name only – the dominance of great powers was part of the plan from the beginning. However, that had to be concealed from the secondary powers – it must not be 'offensively announced', Castlereagh warned.

Concurrently, Metternich's project was to impose the *ancien regime* by force.[40] It was made perfectly clear that it was the great powers – above all, England, Austria and Russia – that made the decisions. It was also specified that the Congress should *not* be based on the Treaty of Paris, but on the distinction between great and small powers.[41] Portugal and Sweden had signed the Treaty of Paris, but were immediately excluded from participating in the central work of the Congress. Two of the other signatories, Spain and France, was allocated a humble role. All the other powers were excluded.

The order in Europe was to be decided by the allied powers – 'the effective cabinet should not be carried beyond the six powers of the first order', Castlereagh asserted. As if this was not enough, there was to be another, even more exclusive, informal but real, inner committee of only four powers – England, Russia, Prussia and Austria – until France was accepted after 1818, and it became the committee of five. The ministers of the five powers made the real decisions in private, behind closed doors.

The Congress never convened in full, but was composed of various less formal commissions and groups. The great powers brought the smaller ones along to be appeased, and then placed them in committees without any real power.[42] Consider this: a committee of eight was supposed to address issues that affected the general interest of Europe as a whole: but it met only nine times during the Congress period, whereas the committee of five met 41 times. The committee of five, initially set up to deal with the

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[39] Peterson, 'Political Inequality', pp. 536–537; *Peace Handbooks No 153,* Appendix III, 'Two Projects of Castlereagh on the Method of Opening Congress', Vienna, September 1814.
[40] Zamoyski, Adam. 2008. *Rites of Peace: The Fall of Napoleon & The Congress of Vienna.* London: Harper, p. 560.
[41] Peterson, 'Political Inequality', p. 534.
[42] One of the few committees that actually did substantial work was the statistical committee.

Polish–Saxon question, evolved into the real directing committee of the Congress.[43] The committee of eight, which was supposed to be the most important one, only appeased the middle powers.

As shown in the previous chapter, the balance of power served to stratify the European order, and increasingly so from the mid-1700s. This stratification reached its zenith during the Congress period. Therefore, the hierarchical 'great power principle' was in fact not a new invention of the 19th century – as argued by, *inter alia,* Webster, Nicolson and Osiander[44] – but had been evolving from earlier balance of power theorising about the European order, and the different balances of which it was composed. This in turn means that the Congress does not mark an abrupt shift away from the 'public interest' of Europe to a new principle of 'legitimacy', based on, e.g., 'consensus' or 'hierarchy'.[45] Rather, the great powers had simply decided to run Europe by themselves – without involving the smaller powers, the public, liberals, revolutionaries, or indeed the intellectual élites of Europe in general.[46]

One change in the legitimating *practices*, however, was that the commonplace of the balance of power was now not so much invoked as was the vaguer, more abstract notion of a 'just equilibrium'. An 'equilibrium' and not the balance of power, was presented as the public interest of Europe. This would allow the balance of power to come back and be used as a *criticism* of the Congress, and to protect the independence of states.

The Congress of Vienna and the myth of its balance of power

The relationship between the balance of power concept and the Congress of Vienna is complicated, not because of what happened at the Congress, but because of subsequent interpretations of it. Political leaders or diplomats scarcely used the balance-of-power concept at all during the Congress period. It is only when the Congress broke down in the 1820s that the balance of power was rhetorically mobilised in its classical sense, as prudent statecraft.

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[43] Peterson, 'Political Inequality', p. 542.
[44] Webster, *The Congress of Vienna*, p. 61; Nicolson, *The Congress of Vienna*, p. 137; Osiander, *The States System*, p. 234; Clark, *Legitimacy*, p. 97.
[45] Osiander, *The States System*, p. 204, 209; Clarck, *Legitimacy*.
[46] Zamoyski, *Rites of Peace*, p. 558.

It is during this period, in the context of renewed criticism of the concept both *in* Britain and *against* Britain, that the Congress became reinterpreted as an instance of the balance of power. In its time, however, the Congress was never associated with the balance of power. Metternich referred to the balance of power as one of his principles but, again, only retrospectively in his memoires.[47] Ranke (1795–1886) later argued that the Congress had *really* been an instance of the Balance of Power,[48] and later, the balance of power was even equated with the European Concert system in general. In 19th and 20th-century Whig interpretations of the Congress, it was seen as violating liberal values and nationalism and consequently connected with the by then notorious, realist, and repressive balance of power.[49] In the mid-1920s, in Strupp's *Dictionary of International Law and Diplomacy,* for 'balance of power' we find the entry: 'See European concert'.[50] The interpretation of the Concert of Europe, instituted by the Congress of Vienna, as being a relatively peaceful period in European history thanks to a functioning balance of power has held sway until our times. The 1814–1815 peace settlement is therefore often quoted as a prime example of the balance of power in operation, or it is held that that the Concert facilitated or promoted a balance of power.

However, the claim that statesmen designed a 'concert system […] with the explicit and publicly announced objective of creating and sustaining an effective balance of power system',[51] that contemporaries discussed the Congress in balance-of-power terms,[52] or that the 'balance of power concept enjoyed pride of place' in the Congress[53] finds no support in the historical empirics. The one instance in which the balance of power is mentioned in a Congress treaty is in a *secret* article, not a public one.[54] In

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[47] Haas, Ernst B. 1953. 'The Balance of Power: Prescription, Concept, or Propaganda', *World* Politics 5(4): 442–477, p. 469–470.

[48] See Holbraad, Karsten. 1970. *The Concert of Europe: A Study in German and British International Theory 1815–1914*. London: Longmans, p. 82.

[49] Clark, *Legitimacy*, p. 89.

[50] Krüger, Peter. 1998. 'Balance of Power, European Concert and Integration: The Myth of a Changing International System', pp. 3-14 in Cyril Buffet and Beatrice Heuser (eds) *Haunted by History. Myths in International Relations.* Oxford: Berghahn Books, p. 6.

[51] Sheehan, Michael. 1996. *The Balance of Power: History & Theory*. London: Routledge, p. 122; Gulick, *Europe's Classical Balance*, p. 157.

[52] Dakin, Douglas. 1979. 'The Congress of Vienna, 1814–15, and its Antecedents', pp. 14–33 in Sked, Alan (ed.) *Europe's Balance of Power 1815–1848*. London: Macmillan, p. 32.

[53] Osiander, *The States System*, p. 223.

[54] The first of the secret articles of the Peace of Paris stated that the guiding principle in the reconstruction of Europe was 'un systeme d'equilibre reel et durable en Europe'. This was translated as 'balance of power' in the English version. Foreign Office. 1841. *British and Foreign State Papers 1812–1814. Vol. I.- Part I.* London: James Ridgway and Sons, p. 170. The same occurs in other treaty texts, *ibid.*, pp. 170–171, whereas in other instances, it is translated as 'equilibrium', *ibid.*, pp. 128, 180.

correspondence, treaties, or debates, the balance of power is barely mentioned and, although rate of use can tell us only so much, there is a decline in its use relative to the periods before and after the Congress.

It is often pointed out that Friedrich von Gentz, the Congress secretary, wrote extensively about the balance of power. However, he wrote his *Fragments on the Balance of Power* in 1806, and later changed his views, rejecting the applicability of the balance-of-power concept during the Congress, preferring the conservative theory of the 'new' Congress system and great-power hegemony.[55]

Paul Schroeder is therefore correct in maintaining that 'any balance of power interpretation of the Vienna settlement is misleading and wrong'[56] – although his reasons for rejecting this are altogether different, based on a study of 'the actual distribution of power' and whether this corresponded to a contemporary and analytical notion of 'a working balance of power'.[57]

My goal is different. It is not to construct a unifying narrative by trying to identify what was the real, motivating and all-encompassing concept in use or implicit at Vienna. As in the other chapters, to get at the meaning of the concept, I examine how the concept of balance of power was actually used by historical practitioners during this period.

Equilibrium versus the balance of power

One of my goals is to amend certain historical arguments prevalent in the discipline by looking at the balance of power in different ways. I hold that the balance was not central to the European congress, other than as a means by which to oppose it.

Recall that one of the assumptions here is that many problems of interpretation arise from the ways in which a space of possible ideas has been formed – with Wittgenstein: our fly bottles are formed by prehistory.[58] This applies to us, the analysts, as well as to the

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[55] Holbraad, *The Concert of Europe*, p. 81; Sheehan, *The Balance of Power*, p. 124.
[56] Schroeder, Paul. 1992. 'Did the Vienna Settlement Rest on a Balance of Power?', *The American Historical Review* 97(3):683–706, pp. 684.
[57] *Ibid.*, p. 686.
[58] Hacking, *Historical Ontology*, p. 26; Wittgenstein, Ludwig. 1953. *Philosophical Investigations.* New York: The Macmillan Company, no. 309.

historical actors we investigate. Therefore, it is important to take seriously yet another thesis: that the concept of 'equilibrium', frequently used by the historical actors and in treaties, is somehow equivalent to the balance of power.

Is there a difference between 'balance of power' and 'equilibrium'? How can we know, and what would it mean? Whereas both concepts concern the European system, broadly speaking, they are often assumed to be identical – that is, they are seen as expressing the same underlying but not specifically pronounced idea.[59]

However, in line with the general precepts of this project, I will assume that if what historical actors meant was the balance of power, they would have said so, and not something else.[60] Empirically speaking, references to the 'balance of power' are largely absent in this period (with a comeback after the Congress system), whereas 'equilibrium' is in fairly frequent use.

Rhetorical practices and the uses of concepts are part of sense-making. Understanding involves classification, and the unfamiliar must be classified in terms of the familiar.[61] Actors seize on concepts that, with their publically established, commonsensical meaning, can help in making sense of the (political) environment. It follows, then, that 'equilibrium' and 'balance of power' are necessarily different ways of doing this. They are not 'the same', simply because I note an abrupt transition in what was said.

This is the crucial point: we have exhausted the concept of the balance of power not when we have identified all the other concepts that might correspond to it – but, strictly speaking, 'when we have considered all the actual specific utterances of the corresponding words'.[62] To use concepts as a frame is to explain why these words, and not others, were *actually uttered*.[63] It appears that historical actors could do without the concept of the balance of power, as opposed to the central sense-making practices from previous decades, when the concept was all but indispensable for arguing about international politics.

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[59] See e.g. Osiander, *The States System*, pp. 223–232.
[60] See Skinner, Quentin. 1969. 'Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas', *History and Theory* 8(1):3–53.
[61] *Ibid.,* p. 6.
[62] Hacking, *Historical Ontology*, p. 35.
[63] *Ibid.*, p. 93.

The ways of framing and justifying an issue are also a part of producing a policy.[64] If we accept that *the balance* and *an equilibrium* are indeed different, then framing European order as an 'equilibrium' instead of a 'balance of power' had consequences for the Congress period – just as the 'return' of the balance of power had consequences for the post-Congress period. Consider how Austria had been excluded at Utrecht, and now received poetic justice: Metternich successfully identified the 'domestic legitimizing principle of Austria with that of the international order'[65] in his use of the social 'equilibrium' – a parallel, however imperfect, to what Britain had managed to achieve with the balance of power during the Utrecht negotiations.

It is worth considering some possible reasons why equilibrium became the preferred concept for talking about European order. One answer could be that new problems had emerged, making the balance of power (which pertained to the 'old system') less relevant. If so, when the balance of power returned to the stage, it would have to be creatively reinvented, not least through liberal arguments. A related reason might be that the concept appeared less useful in an era of relative peace and stability. The war against France was not a war within the states-system against a dominant state, but 'against an armed doctrine dedicated to the overthrow of the states-system as such'.[66] That was indeed how Metternich conceptualised the forces and counterforces operating in Europe.[67]

This points to equilibrium as a relation between social forces, and not an expression of the states-system only. Revolutionary principles were a threat to the system as such: and the balance-of-power concept was 'internal' to the system and could not conceptualise an external threat to its own existence. Another concept was needed to fill the rhetorical vacuum when the balance of power could not be used. Reference to some sort of abstract, unspecified 'equilibrium' in Europe between the social forces of revolution and reaction might then be seen as preferable. Furthermore, dynastic legitimacy was promoted, and as

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[64] Gourevitch, Peter. 1978. 'The Second Image Reversed: The International Sources of Domestic Politics', *International Organization* 32(4): 881–912, p. 904.

[65] Kissinger, *A World Restored*, p. 83.

[66] Forsyth, Murray. 1980. 'The Old European States-System: Gentz versus Hauterive', *The Historical Journal* 23(3):521–538, p. 525.

[67] On Metternich's and others' use of 'equilibrium', see Schroeder, 'The Nineteenth Century System'; Osiander, *The States System*, pp. 184–186.

such, the balance of power might not carry the right associations, particularly not for Austria's Metternich.[68]

Yet another argument is that the balance of power was implicitly present in the strategies of politicians and diplomats, but that they somehow found it unnecessary actually to invoke the concept, at least in public. Such arguments find support in some of the foundational documents *preceding* the Congress of Vienna,[69] as well as the treaties made during the Congress period, which to some may seem instances of 'balance-of-power thinking', or the like. However, that line of argumentation would rely on an analytical *a priori* definition of the balance of power, and not empirical use of the concept. As mentioned, the balance of power does appears once in a treaty text – but then in one of the secret articles. The balance of power was not a public legitimising device during the Congress of Vienna. When used, it was tucked away in the secret, not public, clauses.

In any case, one *consequence* of using 'equilibrium' instead of the classical balance of power was a shift for Britain away from the 'balancer' as a role, and helping to enforce an 'equilibrium' in concert. As I show in the next chapter in the case of the Congress of Verona, when the Congress broke down, the British debate again started to revolve around the balance of power linked to the problem of intervention and involvement on the continent, in line with their classical role as 'balancer'.

There may be various reasons why the balance of power was no longer seen as necessary or efficient in political debates. Still, the precept of this project is to look for contentions, debates, and instabilities when the balance of power *has been* invoked. I have found three instances in documents of the time – one immediately before the Congress in 1813, as I addressed below. This is little more than a case of failed optimism on its behalf, and not really a contentious moment of debate, but it can serve to indicate the contentions and problems to come in the conflict between great-power order and small-state independence which I will show in the next chapter. There I will look at how the balance of power was invoked during the Congress negotiations in 1814, and in 1822 as the Congress system broke down in the period around the Congress of Verona.

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[68] See Chapter 3.
[69] For example the Declaration of Pillnitz of June 25 1792, which the allied made before attacking France, stating that 'there was no power interested in maintaining the European balance which could be indifferent when the Kingdom of France, which formed such a considerable weight in that great balance, was delivered for long periods of time to internal agitation'. Haas, 'The Balance of Power', p. 462.

The promise of a balance of power

In 1813, the British Parliament debated the balance-of-power concept for the first time since the Ochakov crisis. With the promise of peace tangible, Lord Grenville was the one to re-introduce the concept in the Commons:

> The time, my lords, is now arrived (and I rejoice that I have lived to see the hour) when the walls of a British parliament may again re-echo a sound formerly held sacred in this country, and upon the observance of which, I will venture to assert, depends the hope of the restoration of peace to Europe: *I allude to the old-fashioned term now almost forgotten, of a Balance of Power in Europe.*[70]

Britain was now yet again able to 'pursue that which ought to be the only legitimate object of foreign policy; I mean the establishment and preservation of a balance of power in Europe'. Representatives shouted 'hear, hear, hear!', as Grenville went on to argue that Britain should 'resume her ancient policy' of maintaining the balance of power. The balance of power, and not 'perpetual peace […] the visionary dream of visionary men', was the only way to secure 'the independence of the great commonwealth of Europe' and the protection of the weak. Grenville was again interrupted by cheers, before he ended his speech with the now-familiar assertion that

> this country alone has no concern in such particular interests; she is the fit arbiter of all; and by whatever particular arrangements the balance of power is secured; her only care need be, that so beneficial an objects should be ultimately accomplished […] the balance of power should be the polar star that is to guide us in all our movements.[71]

Prime Minister Liverpool agreed with Grenville 'that we had reached a period when the balance of power might, *without fear of ridicule*, be talked of as the foundation on which might be erected a just and lasting peace'.[72] These statements indicate the long absence of the concept, from after Ochakov.

A few months later, the liberal Whig MP, philosopher, and professor of law, Sir James Mackintosh, indicated how the balance of power was now used, when he argued that the

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[70] Lords Sitting of Thursday, November 4, 1813. Hansard, Thomas Curson. 1814. *The Parliamentary Debates from the Year 1803 to the Present Time, Vol. XXVII.* London: Longman et al., col. 15. Emphasis added.

[71] *Ibid.*, cols. 15–17

[72] *Ibid.*, col. 20. Emphasis added.

main point of the wars had been for continental states to regain their *independence*. England should support this project, composed of the holy trinity the balance of power, the public liberty, and national independence. Britain was to 'secure the permanent independence of those friendly states, by depriving others of the power of oppressing them'.[73]

Seen from this position on the balance of power, the worst thing that had happened to it was the partition of Poland. Gentz had held that the partition was merely the pretence of a balance of power employed to achieve a criminal act: Mackintosh now argued that 'had it not been for the criminal and disgraceful desertion of that system by the French and British governments, a great part of the calamities which have so long agitated Europe would have been avoided'.

In contrast to Grenville's optimistic cheers, Mackintosh continued,

> what security the allied powers may now seek in order to restore and maintain it [the balance of power], I know not. It is for his Majesty's ministers, and for those of the allied sovereigns, to view all the circumstances of Europe, with a reference to that most desirable object.[74]

Lord Holland supported Grenville, and made a point of opposing any kind of intervention in the name of the balance of power. While emphasising the restoration of the balance, he warned that

> the re-establishment and maintenance of that balance can never consist in, depend upon, particular divisions of territory, so much upon the existence of a general feeling among the European states, that it is the interest of each to preserve the independence of each and all.[75]

The balance of power, it seemed, was back. However, when invoked, the concept was now used to argue against interventions and for the independence of any state, however small. Still, the reason for the increasing criticism of the Congress was not the issue of Poland and Saxony. Poland had actually been granted independence under the Tsar – an advance from the previous division of the country; and only small parts of Saxony had

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[73] Commons Sitting of Monday, December 20, 1813. *Ibid.*, col. 316
[74] *Ibid.*
[75] Lords Sitting, of Monday, December 20, 1813. *Ibid.*, col. 295.

been ceded to Prussia. When it came to Genoa, however, its independence had been completely destroyed. Castlereagh, although not formally a Tory, was a strong personal supporter of Pitt. And Castlereagh's Whig opponents, in presenting their case in Parliament, relied for their criticism – for the first time in over a decade – on the balance-of-power concept – Pitt's 'own' concept from Ochakov, as it were. The independence of nations and the balance of power became linked – a rhetorical configuration that hardly fit well with the great-power hegemony of the Congress system.

Conclusions

The Göttingen University attack on the balance inadvertently had led to a more liberal focus on individual states and their interaction. In the episteme shift, the balance of power shifted from being a republican concern with *protecting* the public interest, to being seen as a liberal expression of the independence of atomistic nation-states.

In this, the Congress of Vienna is significant because of the shifting, contextual rhetorical coordinates that would affect the balance-of-power concept on its 'return' when the Congress broke down. The Congress of Vienna is not important because the balance-of-power concept was frequently used, but because a different concept, 'equilibrium', appeared on the scene. For the Congress politicians, the public interest of Europe was now seen as being the *equilibrium of Europe*, to be managed by an exclusive group of 'great powers'.

As the episteme shifted, the problem was not whether powers deemed too strong should be allowed to exist, but whether powers deemed to be *too weak* should. The problem was how to get rid of the small states now seen as useless, destabilising and lacking proper internal governance.

In continuation, I will look at how these problems triggered a renewed use of the balance of power, used to *oppose* the Congress' 'equilibrium', in the debates over the status of Genoa in 1814, and in the Congress of Verona of 1822, when the Congress system broke down as balance-of-power rhetoric was gradually invoked anew amongst politicians, to serve as a hitherto antiquated script.

CHAPTER 7

The end of the Congress and the Return of the Balance: Interventions and the Public Interest from Genoa to Verona

 'Well, Prince, so Genoa and Lucca are now just family estates of the Bounapartes'. This, the opening sentence of Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, addresses the concern of the Russian aristocracy (the westernised *Dvoryanstvo)* with the independence of nations. Napoleon incorporated Genoa in his Empire in 1805, and Anna Pavlovna Scherer complained that the world had gone crazy when Genoa had to lay its petitions before Napoleon, 'sitting on a throne and granting the petitions of the nations'.[1] During the Congress system a decade later, the situation was paradoxically similar. The great powers, the vanquishers of Napoleon, the 'Staatenaristokratie oder Oligarchie', now 'want to form a kind of tribunal, before which the small [states] must come so seek their rights, all political transactions must be registered and sanctioned, and the European international law has to await its authentic interpretation'.[2] And Genoa had indeed come to approach Britain. In 1814, at the end of the war, Britain promised that if Genoa supported the allies against Napoleon, its independence would be restored.

France wanted to negotiate bilaterally with England; Russia wanted a separate Russo–British dual collaboration, whereas Britain itself wanted to include also Austria and Prussia, because the whole purpose of Britain's policy was, once again, the opposition to France. In Castlereagh's dispatches, no mention of troublemakers other than France can be found.[3] The expressed goal of Castlereagh was to keep France out of the Italian provinces by using an extended Sardinia as a barrier, and to subdue any nationalist aspirations amongst the Italian states. Metternich also insisted that Genoa should be incorporated,[4] whereas France and Spain protested. So did, naturally, the plenipotentiary

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[1] *War and Peace,* Chapter I.
[2] Frantz, Gustav Adolph Constantin. 1859. *Untersuchungen über das Europäische Gleichgewicht*. Berlin: Ferdinand Schneider, pp. 24–25.
[3] Kissinger, Henry A. 1957. *A World Restored*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., p. 91.
[4] He also had hopes to prove that Sardinia was an Austrian inheritance.

of the provisional government of Genoa, Marquis de Rignole.[5] Crucially for Britain, both Austria and Prussia were to be a part of the settlement, and they would need some kind of compensation. What could be better compensation than European territory in the form of small states? One of the states that Britain deemed suitable as territorial compensation was Genoa.

Lord William Bentinck was the British Minister in Sicily, and Castlereagh had instructed him to 'take possession of Genoa in the name of his Sardinian majesty'.[6] Bentinck replied that the Genoese were certain to resist fiercely such incorporation into Piedmont and the dominions of his Sardinian Majesty. Contrary to Castlereagh's wishes, on 26 April 1814, he went ahead and promised the Genoese their liberty and independence in any case.[7]

During the Congress period, Castlereagh was almost solely responsible for Britain's foreign policy. Among his declared goals was the restoration for the independence of nations. Even so, as noted, he considered some nations too weak to be allowed to participate in the European community.[8] Some small states, should independence be restored to them, 'would be merely nominal and alike inconsistent with the security for the country itself, or for Europe'. These states should simply cease to exist: that was 'most conducive to the general interest' as 'there is evidently no other mode of accomplishing the great and beneficial object of re-establishing […] the safety and repose of Europe on a solid and permanent basis'.[9] To Genoa's dismay, Pitt and Castlereagh alike had placed it in this category. In April, Castlereagh agreed to the incorporation of Genoa into Piedmont because any other resolution would lead to a 'weakness and therefore the insecurity of Italy'.[10] A secret clause in the Treaty of Paris stipulated this, as an element in strengthening the barrier to be constructed around France.

The Genoese delegation to the Congress, led by the Marquise de Brignole-Sale, was stunned to hear Britain argue that Bentinck had not been authorised to make his promises of liberty, and that Genoa was instead scheduled for incorporation into the Kingdom of

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[5] Ward, A. W. 1906. 'Chapter XIX, The Congress of Vienna, I. 1814–15', pp. 576–615 in A. W. Ward, G. W. Prothero, and Stanley Leathes (eds) *The Cambridge Modern History. Volume IX. Napoleon.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 599–600.
[6] Nicolson, Harold. 1961 [1946]. *The Congress of Vienna. A Study in Allied Unity: 1812–1822.* London: Methuen & Co., p. 185.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 186.
[8] Kissinger, *A World Restored*, p. 38.
[9] Webster, Charles K. 1921. *British Diplomacy 1813–1815.* London: G. Bell and Sons Ltd., p. 391.
[10] Nicolson, *The Congress of Vienna*, p. 186.

Sardinia. As Castlereagh noted, Bentinck had been 'inconsiderate' in 'making a declaration in favour of the *old system'*.[11] Castlereagh wrote to Bentinck that he did not wish that 'the too extensive experiment already in operation throughout Europe, in the science of Government' should be augmented; further, that 'it is impossible not to perceive a great moral change coming on in Europe, and that the principles of freedom are in full operation […] we have new constitutions launched […] it is better to retard than accelerate the operation of this most hazardous principle which is abroad'.[12]

Incorporating Genoa into the kingdom of Sardinia was the first decision taken on behalf of the Congress.[13] This very first decision was also the moment when the balance of power was again mustered in support of the independence of states, and against the dealings of the Congress. The more salient issues, like the Polish–Saxon question, were not discussed in balance-of-power terms, even though they were seen as the core of the whole settlement.[14]

In this chapter I investigate two concrete debates – one of them over Genoa – which will also help to make it even clearer why the Congress of Vienna was an inflection point, and show the shift in episteme away from a republican focus on the public interest of Europe, towards a liberal focus on state independence: The public interest of Europe had now become associated with the 'European equilibrium'. That was the order advocated by the great powers at the Congress, who were willing to sacrifice independent, small states. This public interest of Europe now came to be *opposed* by invoking the balance of power as a means to protect the independence of states from intervention, not the 'public interest'.

The conflict between the need for interventions to protect the order of Europe, and the independence and protection of even the smallest states, was at the core of the few debates where the balance of power was invoked in the first years of the 19th century. The only major controversy involving the balance-of-power concept during the Congress period occurred in the debate over Genoa, on the central problem of how to treat the independence of the smaller states. The debate over Genoa is an early instance in which

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[11] Castlereagh to Liverpool, in Webster, *British Diplomacy*, p. 180. Emphasis added.
[12] Castlereagh to Bentinck, in Webster, *British Diplomacy*, p. 181.
[13] On November 13th and 17th 1814.
[14] Webster, *The Congress of Vienna*, p. 91.

the balance of power was invoked to support national positions, if not yet at the expense of a purported 'public interest'.

Not only were states increasingly individuated, and their independence and sovereignty formally asserted, but also arguments concerning nations and the national spirit inherent to diverse peoples began to make an impact. Europe was not seen solely as a mechanical system, but as an organic and natural one. Such arguments were initially linked to the equilibrium concept, used to defend the Concert system. Statesmen of the time were obviously aware of desires for nation-states across Europe[15] – but these were largely ignored by the Congress.

Some urged the Congress politicians to respond to the national 'passions', and questioned the legitimacy of the Congress itself.[16] And some started questioning the appropriateness of 'this kind of directory of four powers who are arrogating to themselves the right to decide the affairs […] of the rest of Europe without its participation'.[17]

The balance of power did not figure centrally in political debates during the Congress period. However, as mentioned earlier, frequency of use as such is not a main point in this project. Therefore, in this chapter I will focus on the two exceptions to this notable absence of balance-of-power rhetoric – and exceptions are always interesting. These exceptions can tell us much about the new ways in which the concept was (to be) used after the shift in episteme – perhaps even more so than if it had been frequently deployed throughout the Congress. In both, the concept was deployed in arguments and rhetorically mobilised *against* the Concert and British concert diplomacy.

In the first exception, the balance of power was now used to demean the politics of the Congress system for sacrificing small states, like the Republic of Genoa, for the interest of the great powers, or the 'collective Universal Monarchy' as one commentator labelled the pentarchy of great powers. Castlereagh's Congress policies died with him in 1822, and the Congress system faltered. As a consequence of substituting 'equilibrium' for balance of power, the role of Britain shifted from that of the 'balancer', to a lukewarm

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[15] See Castlereagh to Bentinck above.
[16] Kleinschmidt, Harald. 2000. *The Nemesis of Power*. London: Reaktion Books, p. 167.
[17] Russian Foreign Minister Capodistraias in 1818, quoted in Bridge, Roy. 1979. 'Allied Diplomacy in Peacetime: the Failure of the Congress "System", 1815–23', pp. 34–53 in Sked, Alan (ed.) *Europe's Balance of Power 1815–1848*. London: Macmillan, p. 37.

contribution to the Concert equilibrium. In the second exception, the balance of power returned with élan: It was rhetorically mobilised – also in official discourse – in opposition to the Congress, now as prudent foreign policy in the British tradition, restoring Britain's traditional role as 'balancer', which had been impossible to claim in the Congress system of 'equilibrium'.

Sacrificing Genoa

No other Congress decision so infuriated the Whigs[18] as the Tory Prime Minister Castlereagh's abandonment of Genoa. In 1815, both the Commons and the Lords heatedly debated this transfer of Genoa at the hands of Britain, particularly given Bentick's broken promise to the Genoese. This debate had its precursor in Burke's arguments on the French Revolution. James Mackintosh was a liberal defender of the rights of man and the French Revolution. His main book *Vindiciae Gallicae* had been a response to Burke's attack on the French Revolution, featuring a strong, Whig defence of the Revolution, even if he later withdrew his support for France.[19] Now, he led the charge against Castlereagh in Parliament, seeking to save Genoa from being usurped, by using 'national independence', 'national spirit' and, not least, the balance of power as his rhetorical tools. Sheehan argues that Mackintosh 'misrepresented the reality of the pre-1792 system'[20] and the balance of power. However, my concern here is not so much to judge whether historical actors were right or wrong in their use of the balance-of-power concept, as it is to show how the concept was used and deployed in concrete arguments and for concrete political purposes, regardless of historical 'correctness'.

The debate began with the accusation that the allies had made the Congress of Vienna 'unholy' by their actions towards Genoa. Castlereagh, for his complicity in this act, should be 'arraigned before the tribunal of the world'.[21]

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[18] Jarrett, Mark. 2014. *The Congress of Vienna and its Legacy. War and Great Power Diplomacy after Napoleon.* London: I.B. Tauris, p. 136.

[19] Phillips, Mark Salber. 2000. *Society and Sentiment: Genres of Historical Writing in Britain, 1740–1820.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 193.

[20] Sheehan, Michael. 1996. *The Balance of Power: History & Theory.* London: Routledge, p. 125.

[21] Commons Sitting of Monday, 13 February, 1815. Hansard, Thomas Curson. 1815. *The Parliamentary Debates from the Year 1803 to the Present Time, Vol. XXIX.* London: Longman et al., col. 737.

It was argued that the 'unfortunate Genoese had not only been delivered over, like droves of cattle,[22] to the king of Sardinia, but they had been so delivered over by England; England had been the instrument of this oppression'. Such incorporation could not possibly be justified by a balance of power, which, it was now argued, 'would always be found, by sovereigns, in the steady affections of the people to their government'.[23]

In the debates, Macintosh started by referring to 'the work of my celebrated friend Mr. Gentz', who, he maintained, 'would have found the incorporation of Genoa justly reprobated as one of the most unprincipled acts of French tyranny'.[24] Far from being in accordance with the balance of power, the treatment of Genoa was 'not the policy of the preservers or restorers of the European commonwealth. It is not the principle of the balance of power', which should instead be defensive, and 'a system which provides for the security of all states, by balancing the force and opposing the interests of great states'.[25]

Mackintosh went on to invoke the balance of power. In a comment I find instructive, he argued, 'the independence of nations is the end: the balance of power is only the means. To destroy independent nations in order to strengthen the balance of power, is the most extravagant sacrifice of the end to the means'.[26] The independence of nations is what the balance of power is meant to promote – not the 'liberties of Europe', the 'public interest', or any other formulation familiar from the preceding century.

This clearly shows the shift in episteme – the balance of power moves away from a concern with protecting the public interest, to being considered increasingly as a liberal expression of independent nation states, emphasising the freedom from interference and interventions. Furthermore, it foreshadows how the *state* would come to replace the balance of power as the first principle of international politics, as addressed in the next chapter.

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[22] This rural metaphor was recurrent in arguments for the independence of small states, and against the policies of the Congress. See Hemstad, Ruth (ed). 2014. *Like a Herd of Cattle. Parliamentary and Public Debates Regarding the Cession of Norway, 1813-1814.* Oslo: Dreyers Forlag.
[23] Commons Sitting of Tuesday, 21 February, 1815. *Ibid.*, col. 930.
[24] Commons Sitting of Thursday, 27 April, 1815. Hansard, Thomas Curson. 1815. *The Parliamentary Debates from the Year 1803 to the Present Time, Vol. XXX.* London: Longman et al., col. 909.
[25] *Ibid.,* col. 924.
[26] *Ibid.*

Castlereagh had inverted 'all the principles of the ancient and beautiful system of Europe' by inventing his own 'maxime of what the noble lord, enriching our language with foreign phrases as well as doctrines, calls "a repartition of power"'.[27] When Castlereagh argued that small states were incapable of existence, Mackintosh continued, he was avowing 'that he is returned in triumph from the destruction of that system of the balance of power of which indeed great empires were the guardians, but of which the perfect action was indicated by the security of feebler commonwealths'.[28] The interventions of the great powers had been made 'into the sole title of dominion and universal tenure of sovereignty. Vienna […] made the treaty of Westphalia appear no more than an adjustment of parish boundaries'.[29] The new order imposed after Vienna overrode 'the ancient system of national independence and balanced power which gradually raised the nations of Europe to the first rank of the human race'.[30]

The real balance of power, the argument went, had always been concerned with the protection of small-state independence; and 'under this system, no great violation of national independence had occurred, from the first civilisation of the European states, till the partition of Poland'.[31]

This was a debate over the meaning of the 'public' interest of Europe, or the European Commonwealth. Clearly, according to Mackintosh, it did not compose the interest of the great powers of the Concert. He employed a domestic analogy in talking of 'principles, which stood in the stead of laws and magistrates', to argue that the public interest of Europe should provide for the security of 'defenceless communities', in the same way 'as the safety of the humblest individual is maintained in a well-ordered commonwealth'. This, he argued, was what permitted 'calling such a society the commonwealth of Europe'. Now, however, 'Europe can no longer be called a commonwealth', because 'her members have no safety but in strength'.[32] In other words, the balance of power, as embodying the public interest, is something different from states relying on 'strength'.

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[27] *Ibid*.
[28] *Ibid.*
[29] *Ibid.*, col. 900.
[30] *Ibid.*, col. 901; see also Hampsher-Monk, Iain. 2005. 'Edmund Burke's Changing Justification for Intervention', *The Historical Journal* (48)1: 65–100, p. 99.
[31] Hansard, *Vol. XXX,* col. 924.
[32] Commons Sitting of Thursday, April 27, 1815. Hansard, *Vol. XXX*, col. 925.

The new links between liberal argumentation and the balance of power concept, evidencing the episteme shift, become even clearer when he argues that the balance of power is 'only a secondary guard of national independence', and that

> the paramount principle, the moving power, without which all such machinery would be perfectly inert, is national spirit. To sacrifice a people actuated by this spirit, to overrule that repugnance to the yoke of a neighbour, which is one of the chief bulwarks of nations, is in the effect, and much more in the example, to erect a pretended balance of power by the destruction of that spirit, and of those sentiments, which alone render that balance effectual for its only useful purpose – the protection of independence. The Congress of Vienna seems, indeed, to have adopted every part of the French system, except that they have transferred the dictatorship of Europe from an individual to a triumvirate.[33]

It is indeed difficult to find a clearer declaration of the burgeoning nationalisation of the balance of power than this. The balance of power is again presented as a true alternative to what we would now call 'international anarchy' as representing the public interest of a Commonwealth of Europe. Now, however, after the episteme shift, this public interest is based on 'national spirit', as contrasted with what is presented as the equivalent of a dictatorship. For Mackintosh, these principles of self-determination were not grounded in popular or abstract rights, but in the same considerations Burke had used in arguing for intervention in France: as part of an inherited and custom-based international system. This was crucial to the 'existence of social order', in which everyone had joined against France for 'the re-establishment of that system, and these principles under which it had become great and prosperous'.[34] Although a liberal, Mackintosh relied more on what Karl von Rotteck called 'historisches Recht', positive law, than on the 'Vernuftrecht', or natural law, on which liberals were often seen to rely.[35] These were not the universalist abstractions associated with the French Revolution.[36]

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[33] *Ibid.*
[34] *Ibid.*, col. 921.
[35] Holbraad, Carsten. 1970. *The Concert of Europe: A Study in German and British International Theory 1815–1914*. London: Longmans, p. 49.
[36] See Hampsher-Monk, 'Edmund Burke's Changing Justification'.

Castlereagh became extremely unpopular in Britain, seen as a suppressor of nationalism and the architect of the counter-revolution. When he committed suicide in 1822, he was not widely mourned.[37]

This debate showcases one of the main conflicts of the first part of the century – between the European Commonwealth and 'public interest' as guaranteed by the great powers on the one hand, and the concern for another kind of 'public interest' – the independence of states and, increasingly, their national aspirations – on the other. This conflict dominated the Congress system and the debates in the wake of its demise, and in this, the uses of the balance of power are very different from the previous century, before the shift in episteme.

It should be borne in mind that this debate is an exception – a rather isolated incidence of balance-of-power rhetoric. Perhaps not surprisingly, the concept did not return as a commonplace amongst élites and public officials until the death of Castlereagh and the demise of the Congress system some eight years later – when Mackintosh once again, and this time in concert with Castlereagh's successor George Canning, breathed life into the concept. This revival triggered liberal criticism, with the radical Cobdenites attacking the balance of power, now by insisting on private interests and trade as being the road to peace and order.

The balance of power and the rhetorical positions supporting it did indeed change. The balance of power had started as a promise of peace, but had turned into a means for attacking the Congress policies. In the next section, we will see how the Congress failed, and actors took up that classical concept to argue against interventions conducted in the name of the Congress equilibrium. These are steps in the trajectory towards emphasising national position following the episteme shift.

Tolstoy started his *War and Peace* with the aristocracy blaming Napoleon for the submission of the independent nation of Genoa. Tolstoy notes:

> if we assume as the historians do that great men lead humanity to the attainment of certain ends – the greatness of Russia or of France, the balance of power in Europe, the diffusion

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[37] In fact, his poor reputation as a political leader can be said to have lasted until Kissinger's PhD and book, *A World Restored.*

of the ideas of the Revolution, general progress or anything else – then it is impossible to explain the facts of history without introducing the conceptions of chance and genius.[38]

Despite focusing on individuals saying things in public, I hope to avoid the same mistake of attributing every and any change in the concept to the designs of individuals, be they geniuses or not. The complex process of doing things with words in contexts often leads to unintended outcomes. One such outcome was the upswing in balance-of-power rhetoric just as the Congress was disintegrating during the Congress of Verona in 1822.

Verona and the return of the balance of power as a liberal concept

In the uproar against Genoa, the balance of power was used against the government, and for protecting state independence. The balance of power concept returned in this version, as Castlereagh died, and the Congress faltered.

Politicians seeking to rehabilitate the balance of power in a new context, addressed Justi's concerns and criticisms of the balance of power, as seen in the previous chapter, but managed to incorporate these into a new, liberal way of arguing with the balance-of-power concept. The 'passions of nations' so feared by Metternich was now not used to argue against a mechanistic balance of power theory, as Justi had done, but was incorporated within it. The episteme shift identified implies precisely this: It was now less about protecting something, like the public interest, and more about dampening disruptive dynamics between nations in the European body[39] – balance-of-power arguments now worked when they could mediate between conflicting national passions and national positions. Now, the balance of power did not express a common European interest, but participated in its demise**.**

At the time of the Congress of Verona, a Greek revolt was brewing, and there was little disagreement that this was a European problem, to be dealt with jointly by the Congress powers (exactly *what* to do was disputed). The Greek question was the initial reason why Britain bothered to show up at all. Britain wanted recognition of the belligerent rights of

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[38] Chapter II.

[39] Kleinschmidt, *The Nemesis of Power*, pp. 158–159.

the Greeks, but without committing Britain to any intervention, and indeed, Greece was not found important or threatening enough to warrant intervention.

Jennifer Mitzen cites the Greek question at Verona as an instance of a European public power, working to keep the competition between great powers at bay.[40] Another side to the Verona story is how the allies approached the ongoing Spanish Revolution – an issue primarily concerning the central European powers of France and Spain, 'in the midst of the system', as Bolingbroke had said during the War of the Spanish Succession.[41] Whereas the topic of all the previous congresses, and now the Greek revolt, concerned 'the Eastern Question', Spain held a different importance than eastern European powers further away from France and Britain,[42] and was another matter entirely. Contrary to the standard arguments[43] it was Spain, not Greece and the 'Eastern Question', that was the central issue at Verona as far as the balance-of-power concept is concerned, and the only issue discussed at the Congress of Verona itself. The balance of power was now involved not in constructing a common European interest, but in unravelling it.

After Napoleon, the Congress powers had restored King Ferdinand VII to the Spanish throne. The reactionary monarch refused to adopt the Spanish Constitution of 1812, one of the most liberal of its time, and in 1820 faced a rebellion in favour of a constitutional monarchy. This was led by Spanish General and liberal conspirator Rafael del Riego, who captured and detained the king at Cádiz, the location of the Cortes, the Spanish national assembly. To the Congress powers, this revealed the conspiratorial and infectious nature of European revolutions.[44]

Therefore, in October 1822, alarmed by these events, the European five great powers (Russia, Austria, Prussia, France and the United Kingdom) convened in Verona in northern Italy. As before, business was conducted between the ministers of the five great powers, this time in Metternich's apartment in the Cappellari Palace in Verona: he had

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[40] Mitzen, Jennifer. 2013. *Power in Concert. The Nineteenth-Century Origins of Global Governance.* University of Chicago Press, pp. 143–44.
[41] See Chapter 3.
[42] Jarrett, *The Congress of Vienna*, p. 323
[43] Mitzen, *Power in Concert*, p. 143; Kagan, Korina. 1997. 'The Myth of the European Concert: The Realist–Institutionalist Debate and Great Power Behaviour in the Eastern Question 1821–41', *Security Studies* 7(2):1–57; Rendall, Matthew. 2000. 'Russia, the Concert of Europe, and Greece, 1821–29: A Test of Hypotheses about the Vienna System', *Security Studies* 9(4):52–90.
[44] Bullen, Roger. 1979. 'The Great Powers and the Iberian Peninsula, 1815–48', pp. 54–78 in Sked, Alan (ed.) *Europe's Balance of Power 1815–1848*. London: Macmillan, p. 61.

proposed to 'reduce the negotiations to simple conversations between the heads of the five cabinets'.[45]

Only a month earlier, the death of Castlereagh had opened the Foreign Office to the Tory George Canning. Canning's policy was to avoid too close cooperation with other European powers. He informed the Congress that, 'come what may', Britain would never support any intervention in Spanish internal affairs, and would take no part in the discussions at Verona.[46] Canning saw the whole Congress system as a 'very questionable policy' and the alliance as superfluous after the defeat of France. He promoted the liberty of nations to make their own choices without the interference of the 'despotic' continental states.[47]

The question of intervention was therefore the main issue at the Congress of Verona – how were decisions on interventions to be made? What was required? When should the great powers intervene, and who should participate? These discussions were made more complex because any perceived political profligacy on part of the continental allies – with Russia foremost in mind – could mean a British withdrawal from the Congress. The big question was how to mediate between Russia's assertiveness, and Britain's anti-interventionist policy.[48]

France had proposed to intervene in Spain to halt the insurrection; 'dangers could be foreseen […] War was possible, perhaps even likely. Such a war could only be considered as defensive', the French minister Montmorency argued.[49] He posed three formal, and quite leading, questions concerning allied solidarity. If France acted, would the Allies withdraw their ministers from Madrid? Would they give France their moral support and 'inspire a salutary fear in the revolutionaries of all countries'? And what kind of material aid would the allies provide?[50] France clearly wanted to keep the intervention French.

The allies eventually resolved to send a communiqué to Spain, informing the Spanish government of the Congress deliberation, as well as recalling their ambassadors. This

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[45] Nichols, Irby C. 1971. *The European Pentarchy and the Congress of Verona, 1822.* The Hague: Martinius Nijhoff, p. 85; Jarrett, *The Congress of Vienna*, p. 322.

[46] Nicolson, *The Congress of Vienna*, p. 275; Bullen, 'The Great Powers', p. 63.

[47] Jarrett, *The Congress of Vienna*, p. 318.

[48] *Ibid.*, p. 326.

[49] Jarrett, *The Congress of Vienna*, pp. 323–24.

[50] Temperley, Harold. 1925. *The Foreign Policy of Canning 1822–1827: England, The Neo-Holy Alliance, and the New World.* London: G. Bell and Sons, Ltd., pp. 65–66.

would be a clear threat of intervention. The Duke of Wellington, now British representative at the Congress, maintained that Britain would have nothing to do with any sending of declarations to Spain in support of France, arguing that the only power for improving domestic affairs in Spain was Spain itself. That Spain should be seen as a threat to France, he argued, was ludicrous.[51] Wellington did not respond to any of Montmorency's questions, and left the negotiations. The four other allies went ahead without Britain, and sent their instructions to Madrid.[52] Eventually, the Congress authorised France to intervene in the conflict and restore the *Antiguo Régimen* of Ferdinand, with Britain abstaining from that decision. On 7 April 1823, some 100,000 French soldiers crossed into Spain, and Ferdinand VII was successfully restored as King.

Canning was furious. He objected to foreign interference in the domestic affairs of a sovereign country, but also to the evidently reasserted dynastic policies between Spain and France – a less than welcome historical trend. Also the British public protested this intervention, and it became one of the most contentious events of international politics of the day.[53]

What Canning did not lament was the disintegration of the Congress. 'The issue of Verona', he declared, 'has split the one and indivisible alliance into three parts as distinct as the Constitutions of England, France, and Muscovy […] so things are getting back to a wholesome state for us all. Every nation for itself, and God for us all'.[54] The French envoy to Naples alleged that 'the politics of the interest, of the ambitions of one power versus the other, the old politics, if you wish, will resume all its right'.[55] Verona is 'the last of the European congresses', another Frenchman argued, as the sovereigns were now looking after 'their personal interests and individual defense'.[56]

The position of England, Canning later observed, was now 'one of neutrality, not only between contending nations, but between contending principles; and it was by neutrality alone that we could maintain that balance […] essential to the peace and safety of the

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[51] Jarrett, *The Congress of Vienna*, p. 330.
[52] *Ibid.*, p. 336.
[53] *Ibid.*, p. 340.
[54] In Phillips, W. Alison. 1907. 'The Congress, 1815–22.', pp. 1–39 in A. W. Ward, G. W. Prothero, and Stanley Leathes (eds) *The Cambridge Modern History. Volume X. The Restoration.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 37.
[55] In Jarrett, *The Congress of Vienna*, p. 344.
[56] *Ibid.*

world'.[57] Britain returned to its classical role as 'balancer' – a role that had been impossible in the 'just equilibrium' guaranteed by a great-power concert.

Again, my different perspective on the balance of power allows me to consider new empirical material connected to its practice. The literature generally considers the British break with the alliance to be the fact that lends the otherwise uninteresting Congress of Verona some historical importance. Still, just as with the Ochakov crisis, there was a connected but less recognised political debate, in a domestic setting but with international repercussions, that centrally involved the balance of power. The balance of power was linked with other issues not normally considered a part of it, because of the restrictions of an analytical, scholarly definition.

'The Interest of England' and the 1823 controversy

In addition to criticising the continental allies, the parliamentary debates of 1823 were also critical to Britain's conduct at the Congress of Verona. At the Congress, Canning himself had hinted that Britain might intervene on the side of Spanish sovereignty,[58] and now some used the balance of power to argue that it should indeed have done so. Why had not Wellington defended the Spanish constitutionalists against the 'league of kings' and the royalist, dynastic policies? Why did not Britain threaten with war from the start, when it could have helped?[59]

Again, the balance-of-power concept, for so long the hallmark of British policy, emerged as a pertinent resource for unifying the various arguments and concerns that arose after the Congress broke down. Once again, actors used the ambiguity of the concept to gain support for their preferred course of action. No longer could the Congress framework, or equilibrium, be used to justify policy. This problem of legitimation was resolved by reintroducing the heritage of the balance-of-power concept, which was close at hand.

However, the balance of power was not taken for granted as before, and discursive work was needed to re-establish it. One indication that the concept had fallen out of use and

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[57] Wright, Thomas. N.d. *History of the Reigns of George IV. and William IV.* London: Jones & Company, p. 88.
[58] Jarrett, *The Congress of Vienna*, p. 340.
[59] *Ibid.*.

would now have to be reasserted in new directions, often with the help of arguments from tradition, can be seen in the words employed by Canning and Blake in introducing the balance of power in Parliament. Canning referred to 'respect for that established line of policy *known by the name of* "the balance of power" in Europe',[60] whilst Blake argued, 'if we are to be drawn into a war, let us be drawn into it on grounds clearly British'. It was 'the duty of Britain to protect *what is termed* the balance of power'.[61]

Here, the debate revolved around the issue of whether Britain should intervene on the side of Spain to protect national independence. Even if Canning had hinted at a British intervention, in debates in Parliament, he argued against such intervention. The balance of power concept was now reintroduced, and used to justify both policy positions.

Interestingly, Ochakov was invoked as a precedent to both support and oppose the prospect of a British intervention. During the Ochakov debate, Earl Grey had argued that the balance of power was important, but had no bearing on the case of Ochakov. Great Britain had pursued the object of a balance too far, he had argued, when 'she had travelled as far as the banks of the Black Sea […] Much had been said with regard to the policy of preserving the general balance of power' but Lord Liverpool, now Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from 1812, then called Mr. Jenkinson, 'had failed to produce conviction on his mind'.[62]

Now, in 1823, Earl Grey pointed out that Lord Liverpool had tried to establish that it was necessary to preserve 'at all events' the 'balance of power in Europe, which at that time he considered in danger from the possession of Oczakow by the Russians'. In light of Liverpool's declaration in the Ochakov debate, Grey wondered, 'with a degree of surprise', why he *now* insisted that 'at all events […] Oh! Laudable ambition! Oh! Praise-worthy determination […] "come what may" even though Spain should be subjugated to France […] his majesty's government would not interfere in any way to prevent it'.[63] As Grey exposed the contradictory applications of the balance of power concept with the help of the memory of Ochakov, that concept again became the centre of political contention.

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[60] Commons Sitting of Monday, April 14, 1823. Hansard, Thomas Curson. 1823. *The Parliamentary Debates. New Series. Vol. VIII*. London: T.C. Hansard, col. 873.
[61] Commons Sitting of Wednesday, April 16, 1823. Ibid, col. 1055.
[62] See Chapter 5.
[63] Lords Sitting of Thursday, April 24, 1823. Hansard, *Vol. VIII*, col. 1229.

Like Grey, also Mackintosh made reference to the Ochakov debates, bemoaning that the balance of power had disappeared from view since Ochakov, 'that memorable occasion'.[64] Liverpool had contended that the seizure of that 'little town' was a threat to the balance of power. Then, why did his colleagues now feel 'no solicitude, though 100,000 Frenchmen had taken military possession of Spain!'[65] 'We went to Verona without making a new protest', he complained. Why had Britain not conducted the negotiations in adherence to 'the independence of nations' and 'strictly maintaining the balance of power in Europe'? He could find no reference to the balance of power in the negotiations, as if the ministers 'had been afraid to alarm the delicate sensibilities of prince Metternich' by the bare mention of the balance of power. The negotiations, he assumed sarcastically, must have been so friendly that 'we did not wish to disturb them […] by any impertinent anxiety concerning the balance of power'. Mackintosh again linked the balance of power to the protection of the independence of nations, a balance of power that had 'been lost sight of' and 'seemed entirely forgotten'.[66] That the Congress had endangered the balance of power – the very means of protecting national independence – gave cause for preventive war against France, on the side of Spain.

Should Britain have issued a direct declaration of war, Canning then wondered. For the protection of the balance of power? Well, that depended on whether 'our honour or interest demanded it'. He answered in the negative. In his view, the French invasion of Spain would actually be a weakness, not strength, for France. To argue the justness of his own actions, he challenged the uses of the balance of power by his interlocutors. They misrepresented the balance of power, he argued. The balance of power is no longer the same thing as before. Mackintosh had referred to what Britain had done 'in former times', Canning continued, but 'nothing could be more inconclusive than these general references to history, in which all the peculiar circumstances of the case were not brought into consideration'. The balance of power was not a question of 'abstract principle' but one of 'the interest of England'.[67] The balance of power was a commonplace concept that was now rhetorically mobilised in its classical sense, as prudent statecraft, emphasising

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[64] Commons Sitting of Wednesday, April 30, 1823. *Ibid.*, col. 1542.
[65] *Ibid.*, col. 1543.
[66] Commons Sitting of Tuesday, April 29, 1823. *Ibid.*, cols. 1405–1406.
[67] *Ibid.*, cols. 1415–1417. The MP and Shakespearian scholar Horace Twiss appropriately enough added his own interpretation of the Verona drama, arguing that, should Britain have intervened preventively on the side of Spain, and have justified this with the balance of power, then the continental allies would have had a plausible argument for war against Britain.

England's interest. However, in a new episteme, its uses were to be very different from in the past century. As opposed to the Realist reading of the balance of power as a timeless principle of international politics, Canning himself admitted as much when he, a centrally placed actor, *in medias res*, asked,

> is the balance of power a fixed and unalterable standard? Or is it not a standard perpetually varying, as civilization advances, and *as new nations spring up, and take their place among established political communities?* […] while the balance of power continued in principle the same (over the centuries), the means of adjusting it became more varied and enlarged […] in proportion to the increased number of considerable states […] To look to *the policy of Europe*, in the times of William and Anne, for the purpose of regulating the balance of power in Europe at the present day, is to disregard the progress of events, and to confuse dates and facts which throw a reciprocal light upon each other.[68]

As Humboldt had noted in 1813, nature both united individuals in nations, and separated humankind into nations, and politics cannot 'act against the natural order of things'. Nations were natural and inalterable phenomena.[69] More than protecting a common, European public interest, or the systemic interests of princes, the balance of power served to mediate between nations and national positions. 'Nation' had come to signify the people as potentially standing against the rulers, with an identity of its own.[70] The new connexions were plainly drawn also in James Daly's argument in 1824, that 'England had never held the balance of power with a more even or steady hand' than now. Why was that? Because of the progress of freedom in South America, vindicating the dignity and independence of human nature, to make the South American states 'rank amongst the nations of the earth (hear, hear!)'.[71] The balance of power is here equated with the promotion of national independence. In other words, for the balance of power to have resonance, new rhetorical links had to be made, because the preconditions were different from those a century earlier.

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[68] Commons Sitting, December 12, 1826. Walsh, Robert. 1835. *Select Speeches of the Right Honourable George Canning*, Philadelphia: Key and Biddle, p. 466, emphases added.
[69] Kleinschmidt, *The Nemesis of Power*, p. 159.
[70] *Ibid.*, p. 162.
[71] Commons Sitting of Tuesday, February 3, 1824. Hansard, Thomas Curson. 1824. *The Parliamentary Debates. New Series. Vol. X.* London: T.C. Hansard, col. 50.

In 1823, there was unanimous agreement that a French intervention should be opposed, but the debate in which the balance of power returned concerned the issue of British intervention on the side of Spain, to support the independence of nations and the balance of power against the continental allies and France. In short, supporting Spain and national independence implied an intervention in the name of the balance of power. Supporting France and the continental great powers implied an intervention in the name of the Congress equilibrium.

Conclusions

After Verona, complaints about the high-handed treatment of lesser states continued. Liberals and radicals reversed Metternich's theories of revolution and counter-revolution, and saw the Concert as a conspiracy against the peoples of Europe, whereas more nationalist arguments considered the Congress as an obstacle to the revision of territorial boundaries.[72] Metternich refused to acknowledge any conflict between the Congress on the one hand, and state equality and independence on the other – Europe was an organism and Metternich was the physician tasked with curing its ills and preventing 'le germe révolutionnaire' from invading the body.[73] The organic metaphor would linger, but with a focus on state individuality. Eventually, this individuation of states carried over into the balance of power seen as a buffer cushion between national passions.

The debates investigated here, concretely shows the increasing shift in episteme – the balance of power was now less about the protection of a republican-inspired public interest against structures of dominance, and more about a liberal protection of the independence of relatively isolated states against interference *from* those seen to represent the public interest – the 'equilibrium'.

Throughout these debates, the rhetorical connexions between the concept of the balance of power and national independence grew stronger. Europe was atomised, and states individuated. The rhetorical work undertaken here involved separating the previously linked state interest and the public interest. Increasingly, now the main political

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[72] Holbraad, Carsten. 1971. 'The Concert of Europe', *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 25(1):29-44, p. 42.

[73] Holbraad, *The Concert of Europe*, pp. 26–29.

contenders were less a part of a common European élite, or a transnational court aristocracy of centrally placed actors, and became more 'foreigners' to each other. Instead of a European, natural community of which the balance of power was one product, or precondition, there were many natural, national communities, and the balance of power mediated between them.

However, against Canning's assertion that every nation was sufficient unto itself, some soon emphasised the increasing bonds of commerce, finance and industry, and that Britain's splendid isolation could no longer be a viable policy.[74] As Canning disassociated Britain from the Congress equilibrium, and reasserted the balance of power, British naval power was also reasserting itself across the Atlantic. Developments in Latin America, and the promulgation of the Monroe Doctrine in the USA, favoured Britain's interest. This led some to question why issues of commerce and trade were not incorporated into the balance of power. Why, Richard Cobden would ask, were Latin America and the United States of America not included in balance-of-power calculations, while less civilised countries like Turkey were?

The liberal individuation of states would later be linked to class, against the Congress politicians as an expression of the old system of court aristocracy. Eventually, a new type of argument would take hold. In the next chapter, I will show how the conflict between revolution and reaction increasingly became less important than power politics, national positions, and external relations. This was the argument of Ranke who also retrospectively presented the Congress as really having been all about the balance of power.[75]

The meandering trajectory of the balance of power concept, and the rhetorical positions that it was used to defend, moved from being a positive promise for the European public interest. In a twist of plot, the concept was now used to condemn the Congress of Vienna. When the Congress failed, actors rhetorically mobilised the balance of power in its classical sense to argue against interventions. In turn, and as the next chapter will show, radical, liberal critics again denounced the concept. Thus we see that this winding road

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[74] Pollard, Albert Frederick. 1923. 'The Balance of Power', *Journal of the British Institute of International Affairs* 2(2):51-64, p. 56.
[75] Holbraad, *The Concert of Europe,* 83.

leads to an increasingly familiar place, where the balance of power come to entail national position, and national positions entail the balance of power.

Contrary to conventional presentations of the Congress system, in this section I have shown that the balance of power was used to oppose the Congress and argue against interventions, and not as a central legitimating principle of the Congress. The rhetorical tables had been turned: the Congress system was associated with order based on European sociabilities and traditions, and plans for peace. By contrast, the balance of power was increasingly used for national purposes by more radical, liberal critics of the Congress. Paradoxically, Congress politicians used the concept of equilibrium, reflecting monarchical legitimacy, to argue for the protection of the public interest of Europe, traditionally the concern of the balance of power – whereas the balance of power was used only when their liberal opponents attacked the hierarchical and interventionist practices of the Congress, defending national independence.

The fight between intervention and independence also concerned an opposition between the old system of monarchical great powers in Europe, and the more individualist and liberal-oriented emphasis on the independence of all states, regardless of size or nationality. The Congress of Europe favoured the former, and has therefore been called 'conservative'. For the Concert system, 'international tutelage of individual states' had to be a principle, especially after the anti-revolutionary turn. Interventions were therefore not a violation of the order: they were in fact seen as a *prerequisite* for the new order.[76]

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[76] Clark, Ian. 2005. *Legitimacy in International Society.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 92.

CHAPTER 8

Power in the Balance:
Nationalisation of the Balance of Power

This section – Chapter 8 and Chapter 9 – follows the trajectory of balance-of- power rhetoric from Britain to Germany and to the emergence of the IR discipline in the USA. The balance of power became almost anti-European, in the sense of rejecting any abstract European public interest, and seeing state practice as an expression of the interaction between variously capable nation-states and national positions. This is the second inflection point in the 19th century, and a continuation of the episteme shift, as the whole notion of a European public interest itself became questioned.

The British-sponsored Göttingen University, presented in Chapter 4, laid the foundation for the later Prussian and German theories of the balance of power to be examined in this chapter. I chart how actors 'nationalised' the balance-of-power concept. The main development in this was *how the impersonal state replaced the balance of power as a first principle of international politics.* The state became the *a priori*. When a self-aware middle class emerged, the state took precedent – a precondition for 19th century changes in balance-of-power rhetoric. Seeing the state as the first principle led to a focus on *national positions* in balance-of-power rhetoric, not on protecting the public interest. The nation-state came before the balance of power, as a natural unit that could be *known* on both the transcendental and practical levels, thank not least to the use of modern *statistics and measurements* to predict trajectories.

Hegel used the balance of power to sharpen the contrast between the state as idea, and the practical realm of politics. The balance of power was *political,* as opposed to the 'natural' idea of the state. The state comes before and above the balance of power. In Prussia, when this was combined with state-centrism and nationalism, the adoption of the balance of power as practical maxim by the middle classes 'turned the relatively flexible postulate that the self-interest of a state is the last and decisive reference for action in

international relations into a "categorical imperative".[1] This state-centrism implied that the balance of power was not a first principle of international politics, but a management principle in the context of the progressive self-consciousness of nation-states.

What would be the result of the interaction between such independent, nation-states – what Hegel called the 'severalty'?[2] This problem, which only a few decades later would be presented as the 'anarchy problem',[3] emerged from liberal arguments concerning free competition between private interests – between individualised states.

Morgenthau later talked of an 'aristocratic international' as his main subject, as opposed to the liberal middle classes. The middle classes occur in clusters, whereas the aristocracy covers the whole system. Despite the surging middle classes, the aristocracy prevailed in many respects in Great Britain and Germany; and 'the middle classes ended up adopting the maxims of the previous ruling groups […] in this way the diplomatic culture reproduced not only itself, but also the international realm to which it supposedly was a practical answer'.[4] Thus, the 'aristocratic' balance-of-power concept resonated in both Britain and Prussia, seen as prudent *practice* – 'the special knowledge of this "Aristocratic International" […] was *explicitly* not reflexive or theoretical'.[5]

The special aristocratic knowledge of politics as a practice was emphasised, and embodied in the balance of power. The balance of power came to rely on national positions and define the international-political. It became political and engaged – stripped of theoretical content.

That vacuum would later be filled by political scientists and IR scholars focusing on the *state*.[6] German theories were to become an important influence on International Relations (IR) in the USA. In Chapter 9, a central point will be how the balance of power was *conserved* as a diplomatic, engaged practical knowledge, first among practitioners in European foreign ministries, and then among *IR scholars*. This is the story of the

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[1] Guzzini, Stefano. 2013. 'The Ends of International Relations Theory: Stages of Reflexivity and Modes of Theorizing', *European Journal of International Relations* 19(3):521–541, p. 526.
[2] Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich. 1861 [1837]. *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*. London: Henry G. Bohn, p. 449.
[3] See Donnelly, Jack. 2015. 'The Discourse of Anarchy in IR', *International Theory* 7(3): 393-425.
[4] Guzzini, 'The Ends', p. 526.
[5] *Ibid.*
[6] See Schmidt, Brian C. 1998. *The Political Discourse of Anarchy. A Disciplinary History of International Relations*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

genealogical developments from debates at a British university in Hanover, how these became the point of departure for a Prussian and German-inspired balance of power concept, which in turn, grounded on the German university model, became the basis for US balance-of-power theory.

The *first part* of the present chapter addresses the emergence of *national bourgeoisies*, or radical, liberal middle classes, in general terms. The important division, it was argued, was no longer between states, but between peoples and classes.[7] General calls for independence turned into nationalist aspirations; in response, the major European powers had to seek new sources for political legitimacy and new ways of administering the state. With the emergence of the middle classes, and less pressed by incessant wars, many European polities now developed fully funded civil services, based on university education and 'careers open to talent' rather than based on inherited privilege.[8] As a result, a completely new discussion on the nature of the state opened up. The emerging bourgeoisie fought over the nature of the state, conditioned by new, interrelated distinctions emerging between governments and individual freedoms, politics and society, the public and the private, war and peace – and the balance of power versus international law. The new configuration that emerged had the public and political associated with war and conflict on the one hand, and the private and societal associated with peace on the other. What the two had in common was a focus on the *state* – seen principally either as government or as civil society, respectively.

Middle-class liberalism increasingly emphasised private interest, and how it could lead to peace, as opposed to the *aristocratic* balance of power. However, what started out as a trans-national project of bourgeois solidarity against princes and aristocracy would itself emerge as numerous bourgeois national projects. Particularly in Prussia, these national middle-class projects were hijacked by the aristocracy, and transmuted into a new, hybrid élite

The *second part* of this chapter deals with *developments in Prussia*. In Prussia, there were two strands of middle-class politics: one idealistic-liberal, and one conservative-

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[7] See Cobden, Richard. 1867[1836]. 'Russia', pp. 155–354 in Cobden, Richard, *The Political Writings of Richard Cobden. Vol. I.* London: William Ridgway, pp. 282–283; see also Anderson, Matthew Smith. 1993. *The Rise of Modern Diplomacy 1450–1919.* Harlow: Longman, p. 191.

[8] Friedeburg, Robert von. 2010. 'State Forms and State Systems in Modern Europe', in *European History Online*. Mainz: Institute of European History. Available at <www.ieg-ego.eu/friedeburgr-2010-en> [2015-11-20].

nationalistic. Both of these strands aimed for German unification, but only the latter achieved it, and then not by peaceful means. Particularly after 1871, then, the German middle classes adjusted to and adopted the military state. The German bourgeoisie adopted the ways of the court aristocracy, their military focus not least.[9] The German middle classes turned away from the universalist and idealist peace movement, and embraced the realism of the 'power state' and the balance of power. A nationalist rhetoric that placed the country and the nation above all else replaced the more abstract focus on peoples and independence in general.[10] This rhetoric was linked to a nationalised version of the balance of power, part of a German conceptual array that rested on the assumption that societies and rulers would always act on the 'hard realities' of international political competition.[11] These factors combined to make a new kind of state-focused and military-oriented composite middle class, who soon developed their own, nationalised balance-of-power theories. In Prussia, middle-class liberalism was put to the service of power politics of the nation-state. The influence of the aristocracy led to the balance of power being defined as political practice.

In the *third part*, I show how the *institutionalisation of statistics*, now in its more modern meaning, further helped to establish the predominance of national positions and the balance of power as an exclusively political-applied concept. Statistics made nations more concrete and tangible. The widespread use of numerical measurement transformed what was seen as the reality of politics − national positions could be assessed by means of measurable state capacities. Relative power as capacities became a prevalent measure − and once something can be measured, also the trajectories of other states can be predicted. Furthermore, once you can predict, you can prevent. Measurable national positions strengthened arguments for the primordial task of the balance of power being the state's self-defence. This emphasis on measurable national positions coheres with how engaged, practical politics became separated from other kinds of knowledge.

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[9] Elias, Norbert. 1996. *The Germans*. Cambridge: Polity Press, pp. 14−15.
[10] *Ibid.*, p. 134.
[11] *Ibid.*, p. 313.

The emergence of the bourgeoisie and the centrality of private interests

When we hear the word 'Biedermeier', stuffed chairs and fitted carpets come to mind, but this style of design can also denote the entire period in German history of which it was characteristic, ca. 1815–1848, which saw the assertion of a growing bourgeoisie or middle class. Biedermeier represents a general emphasis on domestic and private space as opposed to the public and political. Biedermeier interior design, architecture, and even (in-home) music aimed to display the newly-won economic and cultural capital of the middle classes in private settings. In classical liberal fashion, the private and the public had become separate activities, and one could move back and forth from one to the other.

The key thing to note is how this increasingly separate bourgeois realm of the private and self-interest could affect the public – the private gained public importance.[12] As de Tocqueville wrote in this period,

> The principle of interest rightly understood is not a lofty one, but it is clear and sure. It does not aim at mighty objects, but it attains without excessive exertion all those at which it aims […It] produces no great acts of self-sacrifice, but it suggests daily small acts of self-denial. By itself it cannot suffice to make a man virtuous, but it disciplines a number of citizens in habits or regularity, temperance, moderation, foresight, self-command.[13]

And indeed, the 'number of citizens' that were the middle classes emerged from 'private' activities, and would eventually become the new power élite in Europe. When such a self-aware middle class with a focus on private rather than public interests emerged, the state and national positions took precedence, effecting 19th-century changes in balance-of-power rhetoric.

Recall that in the first year of the 18th century, Charles Davenant had deplored the private interest of the 'monied men' and traders, who were concerned not about the balance of power but about their own, private interest, because they could 'buy their own peace'.[14] Precisely these 'private interests' were to become the staple of the new and powerful

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[12] See Owens, Patricia. 2015. 'Method or Madness? Sociolatry in International Thought', *Review of International Studies* 41(4):655 − 674, p. 660.

[13] de Tocqueville, Alexis. 1840. *Democracy in America. Part the Second*. London: Saunders and Otley, pp. 253− 254.

[14] See Chapter 2.

middle classes – Bolingbroke and his 18th-century Tories would have turned in their graves.

As Albert O. Hirschman asked, 'how did commercial, banking, and similar money-making pursuits become honourable at some point in the modern age after having stood condemned or despised as greed, love of lucre, and avarice for centuries past'?[15] The answer is the rise of the middle classes. In Bolingbroke's time, the 18th century, one could talk of 'groups of interests', be they public or private; but in the period prior to 1848, the year of revolution, the division between classes was emphasised, and the 'middle classes' had become an established political concept. The self-proclaimed middle classes were also ready to assert their leadership. As Richard Cobden wrote in 1846, the middle classes were the real governing group in a community.[16]

Hirschman argues that the new arose out of the old: bourgeoisie liberalism was not an independent ideology that arose from scratch, but a 'sequence of concatenated ideas and propositions'.[17] It is important to consider how actors themselves came to talk about and construct this middle class or association.

By 'middle classes', or 'bourgeoisie', I mean a group or network of people who self-identify as such. One would be hard-pressed to find mention of 'middle classes' before or during the French Revolution, for example. Even if many held what today might be termed 'middle-class values', by 1789 there was probably not yet much of a self-aware *class* standing against the rulers, 'representing the new realities of economic power, ready to take into its own hands the destinies of the state, eliminating the declining feudal aristocracy'.[18] What is certain is that the Revolution was used to construct a separate 'middle class', retrospectively.

For instance, in 1824, the French historian François Mignet held that the Old Regime had been divided into rival classes, where the nobles stood against 'the people', who were 'the middle class'.[19] The balance-of-power writer and politician Lord Brougham also turned to

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[15] Hirschman, Albert O. 1997. *The Passions and the Interests.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 9.
[16] See Briggs, Asa. 1956. 'Middle-Class Consciousness in English Politics, 1780–1846', *Past & Present* (9):65−74, pp. 65−67.
[17] Hirschman, *The Passions*, p. 4.
[18] Hobsbawm, Eric J. 1989. 'The Making of a "Bourgeois Revolution"', *Social Research* 56(1): 5−31, p. 18.
[19] Mignet, François. 1898. *Histoire de la Révolution française.* Paris: Firmin Didot, in Hobsbawm, 'The Making', p. 21.

'the middle ranks of society' for support for his policy programmes. By 1831, Brougham could specify that 'by the People, I mean the middle classes, the wealth and intelligence of the country, the glory of the British name'. Even the aristocratic Lord Grey, noted in the previous chapter, appealed to 'the middle classes […] without whom the power of the gentry is nothing'.[20] In 1839, the Göttingen-educated scholar Wilhelm Friedrich Volger declared that the new ideas of the revolution had affected 'all the relations of the ranks of society (*Stände*) in human society, and 'that the "bourgeois rank" (*Bürgerstand*) became every day more important, by virtue of the visibly growing mass of intellect and education (*geistige Bildung*) it represented'.[21]

By the 1830s, there was an emerging stratum of the urban population 'situated by status and income between the nobility above and the (manually) labouring classes below'.[22] Calling themselves the 'middle rank', 'middle class', or (*Bildungs)bürgertum*, they were now depicted as a new power in society, narrated as the result of the French Revolution, collectively having fought and destroyed the remnants of aristocratic society.

This is important for the balance of power because middle-class liberalism increasingly emphasised *private* interest, and how it could lead to peace.

Private interests, the economy, and world peace

The middle-class focus on the private was a reaction to a repressive political environment, but was also closely linked with political-economic arguments. The revolutionary principle had held 'the right of every individual to rise, by his own ability, to the highest position in civil society and state'. What this principle necessarily implied in post-Congress 'despotic' societies of the day, the German scholar Lorenz von Stein held, was the right to accumulate property, as other forms of competition for public distinction were unavailable. France, 'falling under the despotism of the Empire', entered a period where 'wealth constitutes power for each individual'.[23] These arguments hark back to the 18th-century Physiocrats or *économistes* who maintained that obstacles would have to be

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[20] Briggs, 'Middle-Class Consciousness', pp. 69–70.
[21] Volger, Wilhelm Friedrich. 1839. *Handbuch der allgemeinen Weltgeschichte.* Hannover: Hahn, in Hobsbawm 'The Making', p. 12.
[22] Hobsbawm, 'The Making', p. 23.
[23] Quoted in Hobsbawm, 'The Making', p. 27.

removed for the natural harmony of interests to come to full expression in the free, unimpeded interchange between states and peoples.[24] This was a theory of 'the economy'. The government should step back and *laissez-nous faire* – 'let us be'. As Adam Smith asserted, economic progress was best served by an economy of private enterprise,[25] and his *Wealth of Nations* established an economic justification for the pursuit of individual self-interests. The economic system is the basis for order – no more is needed. It takes care of itself.[26] Economic progress, through the pursuit of private interest, became a goal of society.

Thus, it is not the visible hand constructing the European public interest from above, but the hidden hand of *private interests* that produces the common good. Private interest equalled economic interest, which was an advantageous kind of passion. This free-trade movement based in the emerging middle classes laid the foundations for the liberal peace movements and societies that spread across Europe and the USA in the early 19th century.[27] Economic theory was expanded to include a broad vision of society and peaceful interchange. Free movement, flows, competition, passions, private interest, were good things in general.

Such peace movements were a product of class confidence, a triumphalism that inspired the middle classes to believe that war could be abolished,[28] as well as being a product of the emphasis on free trade, eventually capitalism – on the benefits of 'private interests'. These were combined in the argument that free trade led to peace.

Commercial life in the private sphere was deemed harmless, as opposed to the aristocratic ideal of the balance of power as the expression of prudent state practice and the old 'public' passions of princes. Formerly held to be vices, greed and self-interest now belonged to the new, capitalist world – whereas honour and power belonged to the aristocratic societies of the past. Pursuing self-interest and private interests in a free competition could restrain the passions of the old system. Many also constructed images

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[24] See Anderson, Matthew Smith. 1993. *The Rise of Modern Diplomacy 1450–1919.* New York: Longman, p. 229 *et passim.*
[25] Hobsbawm, 'The Making', p. 28.
[26] Hirschman, *The Passions.*
[27] See Anderson, *The Rise*, p. 236 *et passim.*
[28] Nicholls, David. 1991. 'Richard Cobden and the International Peace Congress Movement, 1848–1853', *Journal of British Studies* 30(4):351–376, p. 351.

of traders as peaceful and inoffensive, as opposed to armies and looting soldiers.[29] Traders looked to their private interest, without embarking on passionate pursuits of glory, as did the aristocracy. In short, the public was more war-prone than the private.

It followed that promoting the private interest rather than protecting the 'old' public interest is what could sustain international peace. And who would promote the private interest? The middle classes. In consequence, the specific attributes of a state, and what kind of people (or class) rule it, became more decisive as regards questions of war and peace, than any abstract theory about the system or, indeed, the balance of power.

Richard Cobden attacks the balance of power

Inspired by these theories exalting economic over political factors,[30] it was Richard Cobden who in the 1840s linked the middle-class emphasis on free trade and liberalism to the issue of the balance of power, peace and war, and the international system.[31] The initial effort here was Cobden's Anti-Corn Law League, which sought to turn public opinion and influence the government, based on liberal middle-class arguments concerning free trade and poor relief. Cobden succeeded in his campaign, and the Corn Laws were repealed in 1846. The campaign depended upon class organisation for its efficiency, so Cobden can be considered a middle-class pioneer, as this campaign and the ensuing political victory were key elements in the establishment of a British self-aware middle class.[32]

Basically, Cobden, in his radical bourgeois project to link the promotion of free trade to world peace, *used* the balance-of-power concept. He was the one to revive Johann Heinrich Gottlob Justi's arguments against the balance of power, as presented in Chapter 4, in an almost verbatim manner, and he employed the concept of the balance of power to distance himself and the middle class from the 'old system' of aristocratic Europe.

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[29] Hirschman, *The Passions*, p. 63, 113.
[30] Anderson, *The Rise*, p. 230.
[31] Buzan, Barry. 1984. 'Economic Structure and International Security: The Limits of the Liberal Case', *International Organization* 38(4):597–624, p. 599.
[32] Briggs, 'Middle-Class Consciousness', p. 68.

Cobden wrote the pamphlet titled 'Russia' [33] in the midst of generalised fears of a Russian invasion with a consequent strengthening of the British Navy. He warned against hysteria and russophobia based on 'absurd ideas of Russian power', as one subheading put it. The pamphlet is not exclusively about Russia: it is also about the necessity of revising the maxims of foreign policy to bring them into conformity with global changes.

Cobden attacks what he calls the warlike aristocracy in government[34] and their typical use and abuse of the balance of power. The balance of power was employed so extensively simply because statesmen, 'instead of thinking themselves and using reason, were held hostages by tradition'.[35] These arguments are a copy of Justi's, but now, *the context is different, and that makes a difference*: after the *episteme shift,* the new, liberal problem of interference and interventions is added; The British have a 'passion for meddling with the affairs of foreigners' under the pretence of the balance of power.[36]

Cobden's concern is the discrepancies in the use of balance of power theory – 'theory – for it has never yet been applied to practice', as he specifies. One hundred years earlier, Justi had opposed the 'abstract knowledge' of the balance of power; and Cobden complements his argument by now directly dismissing 'balance of power theory', which is 'less understood now than ever' although many 'intelligent and practical-minded politicians have thrown the question [of the balance of power] overboard'.[37] He echoes Justi's arguments: the balance of power, this long-standing tradition, the 'burden of kings' speeches [...] is a chimera!', and continues:

> It is not a fallacy, a mistake, an imposture – it is an undescribed, indescribable, incomprehensible nothing; mere words, conveying to the mind not ideas, but sounds like those equally barren syllables which our ancestors put together for the purpose of puzzling themselves about words, in the shape of *Prester John* or the *philosopher's stone*![38]

For Cobden, the social relations *between peoples*, in their states, were far more important than any balance of power, which was the treacherous dealings of princes, or 'between

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[33] Cobden, 'Russia'.
[34] *Ibid.*, p. 163.
[35] *Ibid.*, p. 264.
[36] *Ibid.*, pp. 256–257.
[37] *Ibid.*, p. 257.
[38] *Ibid.*, pp. 257–258.

governments'. Cobden's version of liberalism was an internationalist one, based on the promotion of interrelations between nations through, above all, free trade, and defined by an opposition to the balance of power. For Cobden, it was no longer a question of independence only, as during the Congress, but also of the freedom of peoples. In this, the balance of power was dated.

But even though Cobden's arguments had internationalist implications, they were not *universalist*. Like Justi, but counter to Edmund Burke's arguments, Cobden attacks the idea of a European commonwealth or sociability. There is said to be in Europe a union, constitution, or a disposition of things, that make Europe into a whole, but

> we should like to know at what period of history such a compact amongst the nations of the Continent was entered into? Was it previously to the peace of Utrecht? Was it antecedent to the Austrian war of succession? Was it prior to the seven years' war, or to the American war? Or did it exist during the French revolutionary wars?[39]

No, he concludes, there is no confederation of 'European powers, obeying certain laws, and actuated in general by a common principle'. In lieu of such a system, the 'theory of the balance of power' had been used 'parrot-like' by those who desired to do as Britain had done, namely to 'hold' the balance of power based on the lust for aggrandisement and conquest.[40]

Earlier in the century, the liberal critique of the Concert relied on the balance of power to argue the case for the independence of nations and anti-intervention. Cobden attacked the balance of power from the same liberal vantage-point, but now in the context of a new governing élite in Europe – a middle class who stood against the 'old system' of an aristocratic Europe. The old type of aristocratic states that emerged in the 18th century emphasised intervention, power-seeking, and mercantilism – which promoted war. The balance of power was a result of states being held hostage by the old, aristocratic class and their secret diplomacy. By contrast, the liberal goal was states run by the new middle classes.

This critique relied on the same arguments concerning independence and anti-intervention, but now opposed any notion of a sociability or community of common

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[39] *Ibid.*, p. 260.
[40] *Ibid.*, p. 262.

interests. The agenda was peace though the free, commercial interaction and competition of atomistic, independent states. Such states would be less inclined to war. The argument was therefore that international politics was determined primarily by the *character of states* and what kind of people – which class – ruled it.[41]

This is what the later nationalistic and militaristic arguments, and *Realpolitik*, have in common with liberal rhetoric: they reject the notion of a European unity or sociability that is larger than the sum of its individuals, or individual states. The answers may be different, but the question is the same: what is the result of this free interaction among what Hegel called the 'severalty'[42] – the various independent nation-states? This problem, which only a few decades later would be presented as the 'anarchy problem', emerged from *liberal* arguments concerning free competition between private interests – between individualised states.

The focus was squarely on the state. And the existence of many such independent, smaller states was not seen as being due to the system of a balance of power, as liberal arguments during the Congress period would have it, but because of what Cobden called 'natural limits' like unities of language, laws, customs and traditions.[43]

Parallel with middle-class liberalism there was a movement from patriotism to nationalism,[44] and with it, a state-centric movement that took the liberal arguments on private interest one step further and nationalised them: National spirit is another kind of beneficial passion, in the competition between nation-states. This, however, was less germane to the peace movement. The demise of this peace movement was due to the contradiction between 'on the one hand, British liberalism and the belief in peace through free trade and non-intervention and, on the other, European liberalism and its attachment to nationalism, republicanism, and, as a prior necessity for peace, wars of liberation'.[45]

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[41] Buzan, 'Economic Structure', p. 600.

[42] Hegel, *Lectures,* p. 449.

[43] Cobden, 'Russia', p. 263.

[44] This is another contentious concept, on which there have been written many shelf-metres of books. Here let me simply note that I subscribe to Benedict Anderson's view of any community as a constructed one, and that nationalism means any border-producing practices that make the 'nation' into a privileged, self-contained and stable object. This includes historical actors' self-description as 'nationalists' or as promoting 'nationalism'.

[45] Nicholls, 'Richard Cobden', p. 360.

Nationalisation of the balance of power: Prussia's particularities

Cobden's universal, irenic middle-class project had rejected the balance of power. However, what started out as a trans-national project of bourgeois solidarity against princes and aristocracy would itself transmute into numerous bourgeois *national* projects. The liberal middle classes were themselves nationalised. The most visible development in this direction took place in Prussia and Germany, where the middle classes embraced rather than rejected the balance of power. The way this developed in Prussia was so remarkable that it has led some to ask whether there is something unique about Germany's transition from aristocratic to middle-class dominance and processes of nation-building. Did Germany for idiosyncratic reasons follow a 'special path', a *Sonderweg*, as compared with other European countries?[46]

Wolfgang Mommsen has argued that middle-class liberalism changed into a conservative movement in the 1880s.[47] James Sheehan holds that the liberal movement became class-based and gradually declined by the 1870s with the establishment of the German Empire, when liberals started supporting Bismarck's foreign policy and political programmes.[48] David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley[49] have challenged the idea of a German *Sonderweg* after 1848, showing that there was no abrupt break and that liberalism, despite the 1848 defeat, continued to make an impact in Germany.[50]

In any case, if timings are debatable, at some point in the middle to late 19th century, German liberalism lost its universalist, progressive character, and became connected to a nationalised bourgeoisie (*Bürgertum),* with the liberals squeezed between the conservative militaristic aristocracy and the emerging working class. Sometime in mid-century there came a transition from early liberal arguments envisioning a peaceful society of citizens to a more clearly class-based and nationalised liberalism.[51] Eventually,

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[46] See e.g. Kocka, Jürgen. 1988. 'German history before Hitler: The debate about the German Sonderweg', *Journal of Contemporary History* 23(1):3–16.

[47] Mommsen, Wolfgang J. 1978. 'Der deutsche Liberalismus zwischen "klassenloser Bürgergesellschaft" und "Organisiertem Kapitalismus"', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 4(1):77–90.

[48] Sheehan, James. 1995. *German Liberalism in the Nineteenth Century*. New York: Humanity Books.

[49] Blackbourn, David and Geoff Eley. 1984. *The Peculiarities of German History: Bourgeois Society and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Germany*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

[50] See also the parallel argument of Brian E. Vick, who maintains that, despite the conservative order espoused at Vienna and after, liberal elements were still present. Vick, Brian E. 2014. *The Congress of Vienna: Power and Politics after Napoleon*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

[51] Gross, Michael B. *The War against Catholicism: Liberalism and the Anti-Catholic Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Germany*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, pp. 13–14.

in Bismarck's Germany, the nationally oriented middle-class movement would ally with the military 'court aristocracy', adopting the practical maxims of the aristocratic ruling groups in society, reproducing the balance of power concept.[52]

King or Country? From patriotism to nationalism

The wars of liberation had been led by princes and monarchs, later reflected in the conservative equilibrium order at Vienna. However, in the case of Prussia, the wars had also involved various groups of volunteers who swore loyalty 'not to the King of Prussia, but to the German fatherland'. Prussia was a fairly heterogeneous assembly of groups and peoples, and the hybrid nature of the fighters involved had triggered conflicts over how best to narrate the wars.[53] A central Prussian controversy after the Congress of Vienna had concerned whether the Prussians had joined the Wars of Liberation out of enthusiasm for the liberal cause of freedom, or out of duty to their nation-state.

The controversy had culminated in the Wartburg Festival in 1817, where radical students got together to commemorate not a War of Liberation fought by armies but a War of *Liberty* fought by the people and volunteers. The people, not the princes, had defeated Napoleon.[54] The student movement, 'the Gymnasts', had spread after the Wartburg Festival. They did not represent the King, but the community of individual citizens, and they managed to incorporate the memory of the struggle against Napoleon into a broader German, more national memory and narrative. Importantly, this new narrative also allowed for a new kind of politics where the romanticism of Weimar classicism was translated into a quest for a new kind of bourgeois political community, based on a particular memory of the wars.[55] The 'popularisation' of the wars was also an indication of a nascent nationalism. The romantic liberalism was itself to be nationalised: 'Purged of its political ambiguities, the Prussian war against Napoleon would ultimately be refashioned – however incongruously – as a mythical war of German national

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[52] Guzzini, 'The Ends', p. 526.

[53] Clark, Christopher. 2006. *Iron Kingdom: The Rise and Downfall of Prussia 1600–1947.* London: Penguin, p. 379.

[54] *Ibid.*, pp. 378–379.

[55] *Ibid.*, p. 385.

liberation'.[56] With this radical movement, Prussian liberalism developed in an increasingly nationalist direction.

Prussian state centrism

Another factor was Prussian state-centrism. Even if it is difficult to identify a decisive moment where Germany embarked on a *Sonderweg*, one way in which Prussia was indeed distinct was its long tradition, from the Enlightenment onward, of convergence between civil society and the state.[57] This state centrism was expressed also, as we have seen, in the administrative sciences of the state, or the 'police' sciences that also addressed broad aspects of society, as developed first at the University of Göttingen in parallel with balance-of-power theories. Prussia was a heterogeneous assembly of peoples, classes, and traditions – but 'the one institution that all Prussians had in common was the state'; and in the early to mid-1800s, during the transition from liberal middle classes to German nationalism, by way of Prussian patriotism, there was 'an unprecedented discursive escalation around the idea of the state',[58] with Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel as its origo.

Hegel attempted to fuse universal reason and the importance of politics as a practical endeavour. In this, the middle classes were fundamental. For Hegel, the middle classes were an expression of the state, and helped make the state 'conscious of itself' and to secure stability and order.[59] Hegel argued that the civil servants, the bureaucracy, are a particular class, whose aims are identical with those of the state.[60] For Hegel, the state bureaucracy equalled the middle classes, and the middle classes were the very pillar of the state.

This was Hegel's solution to the problem of reconciling the divisions between what were increasingly seen as two separate spheres: civil and political life. Hegel united governments and civil society in his focus on the natural State which was 'no longer just

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[56] *Ibid.*, pp. 386–387.
[57] *Ibid.*, p. 251.
[58] *Ibid.*, p. 431.
[59] Hegel, *Lectures*, pp. 461–462.
[60] Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich. 1991 [1820]. *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, §288–§294.

the site of sovereignty and power, it was the engine that makes history, or even the embodiment of history itself'.[61] The state is everything: For Hegel, 'logic does not provide a proof of the state but the state provides a proof of logic'[62] – the state is the subject-matter of logic. It is the state not only as it manifested itself in the world, but the state as *intellectual* principle.[63] Hegel thus helped to establish the state as a privileged object also of enquiry and reflection.[64] Still, Hegel's owl of Minerva did indeed fly before dusk: in practice, Hegel provided support for the nationalist project, and state-centrism, where history's *Geist* would transcend the Prussian state and lead to the unity of the German *Volk*.

Most interesting here, however, is Hegel's use of the balance of power to make his point. The state was an intellectual principle, and Hegel connects the balance of power to the state by arguing that the balance of power was a *practical and therefore political* issue.[65] He first employed the traditional rhetoric associated with the balance of power: it was an antidote to universal monarchy or Oriental despotism. The balance of power, as an expression of the public interest, had emerged from wars between the powers, according to Hegel. But what exactly was the alternative to a Universal Monarchy? It was *not* a European Commonwealth, but 'separate states […] animated by free individuality'.[66] The object, he argued, was not to create a 'community of interest', but a community that could maintain 'severalty, – the preservation to the several States of their independence, – in fact the *"balance of power"*.'[67]

Hegel used the balance of power to sharpen the contrast between the state as idea and the practical realm of politics. The balance of power was *political,* as opposed to the natural idea of the state. The state comes *before and above* the balance of power. This state-centrism implies that the balance of power is not a first principle of international politics, but a management principle in the context of the progressive self-consciousness of nation-states.

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[61] Clark, *Iron Kingdom*, p. 434.
[62] Marx, Karl. 1975. *Early Writings.* London: Penguin, p. 73.
[63] Hegel, *Lectures*, p. 465.
[64] Clark, *Iron Kingdom*, p. 434.
[65] Hegel, *Lectures*, p. 453.
[66] *Ibid.* p. 268.
[67] *Ibid.*, p. 449.

In Hegel's influential arguments, and indeed in Prussian state-centrism in general, we see how the distinction between and duality of practical politics on the one hand, and disengaged, philosophical or scientific knowledge on the other, is a result of the unprecedented Prussian state-centrism. As I will show in Chapter 9, invoking the balance of power in this way as a practical tradition would become the basis for later German-inspired IR theory in the USA.

Prussian militarism

Philosophising about the state was not the only typical Prussian activity. Heinrich Treitschke talked of the 'Janus-headedness' of the Prussian state, borrowing from Madame de Staël's observation that 'the image of Prussia offers a double face, like that of Janus, one of which is military, the other philosophical'.[68]

Hegel had emphasised a professional civil service for a reason – administrative reform was a favoured Prussian preoccupation. Carl von Clausewitz joined the discussion and broadened it beyond a focus on administrative reform, arguing that military theory should express the organic and flexible qualities of an army, possessing its own 'genius'.[69] An army was not merely a war machine, but also and always a political instrument. Making war should not be considered a goal in itself. War was political, so what initially started as an administrative 'rationalisation' of the military ended up in a project that constructed the military as the foremost exponent of Prussian patriotism. The objective of reforms became, in Scharnhorst's words, 'to raise and inspire the spirit of the army, to bring the army and the nation into a more intimate union.'[70] To middle-class values, nationalism, and state-centrism was added the military as the branch of state power exemplifying these new values. One characteristic of Prussian statistics, to which I turn below, was the weight given the military. In fact, Prussia considered the distinction between military and civilian as 'a first principle of all labelling of citizens'.[71]

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[68] In Clark, *Iron Kingdom*, p. 283.
[69] Clausewitz, Carl von. 1853 [1832]. *Vom Kriege.* Berlin: Ferd. Dümmler.
[70] In Clark, *Iron Kingdom,* p. 326.
[71] Hacking, Ian. 1990. *The Taming of Chance.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 23.

Whereas Clausewitz did see the balance of power as maintaining the *status quo*, he emphasised the *military* aspects of the balance of power. The military was an extension of politics, and therefore an integral part of the balance. Clausewitz extended the balance of power to include theories of war as well.[72] Increasingly, therefore, the power in the balance of power came to mean *military* power.[73] The focus was on war-fighting capabilities, while earlier notions of protection of the European public interest receded into the background.

The weight given to the military was fuelled by the fact that Prussia, a minor power in Europe until mid-century, was now becoming a great power. How had this happened? For contemporaries, the answer was clearly the string of Prussian military victories over Austria, Denmark and France in the 1860s and 1870s. This unprecedented change, from a revered memory of a nationalist struggle against the great power of France, to Prussia itself becoming a great power, was seen as being based on military success and strength. It was Bismarck, not the liberals, who had finally achieved the goal of uniting Germany and making it a great power in Europe. To this was added the role accorded to the military, and to the state.[74]

In Chapter 6, I argued that balance-of-power rhetoric was not used to support the Congress system but rather, eventually, to oppose it. However, the Congress was later and retrospectively constructed as having been all about the balance of power and, as briefly mentioned, Leopold von Ranke (fl. 1824–1886) was one of the first who can be said to have framed the Congress system in balance-of-power terms. Ranke did not consider the Congress as having been something unique or extraordinary: he saw it as having been yet another instance of the balance of power. In fact, most of the arguments from Prussia concerning the balance of power attacked what had been Metternich's Concert Equilibrium. Such attacks were parallel to the British arguments noted in the previous chapter, emphasising the independence of states. However, whereas typical British arguments linked the balance to independence, Prussian arguments linked it to the state

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[72] Kleinschmidt, Harald. 2000. *The Nemesis of Power*. London: Reaktion Books, p. 169.
[73] Sheehan, Michael. 1996. *The Balance of Power: History & Theory*. London: Routledge, pp. 137, 142.
[74] Elias, *The Germans,* p. 117.

and power politics – in the Prussian version, a return to the balance of power would mean a system *better suited to the needs of Prussia and Germany as nation-states.*[75]

Ranke held that the internal tension in states between revolution and conservation – the main issue in Metternich's view of Europe – was in fact subordinate to power politics between states and their external relations.[76] Although far from being a Hegelian, Ranke was influenced by Hegel's combination of the state and history. The state was the most important actor. Like Hegel, Ranke maintained that 'the history of mankind appears in the nations themselves'.[77] Whereas the British fell back on the traditional balance of power concept, in Germany, it was reinvented in their own state-centric, nationalist, and militarist tradition.

In his *Historisch-politische Zeitschrift* Ranke set out to defend Prussia against 'democratic propaganda'. The preponderance of Napoleon, he argued, had been a consequence of the weakness and defeat of the Prussian state. The statesmen of the Congress period had ignored this problem, or failed to recognise it. Prussia should have been strengthened, to strengthen the balance of power.[78]

Ranke did not see the balance as preserving a *status quo*, but as an engine of development in a system of unique and individualistic states.[79] Again, we note how the balance was no longer a first principle, but was now premised upon the state. Still, even if Ranke's system of states was composed of individualistic states, they were linked in a European international community. However, Ranke did not emphasise order and 'equilibrium' as in the Congress system, but historical progress through tensions.[80] Within the community, there was a continual *struggle* between the states: 'the true harmony will spring from separation and unadulterated development'.[81]

The balance of power therefore implied war, and war was what drove history forward. The balance of power was linked to war and conflict between individualised states, not to the protection of the 'public interest'. The balance of power regulated the tensions

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[75] Holbraad, Carsten. 1970. *The Concert of Europe: A Study in German and British International Theory 1815–1914.* London: Longman, p. 81.
[76] *Ibid.*, p. 83
[77] *Ibid.*, p. 85–86n25
[78] *Ibid.*, p. 88.
[79] Sheehan, *The Balance of Power*, p. 137.
[80] Holbraad, *The Concert*, p. 87.
[81] In *ibid.*, p. 85.

between nation-states, like a cushion, sustaining both state individuality and a systemic unity in Europe.[82]

Ranke linked the balance squarely to national 'spirit' or 'consciousness' in emphasising national positions and state individuality. His arguments did not concern the protection of state independence in general: they were state-centrism, emphasising the particularities of national positions. Ranke adapted the balance-of-power concept to liberalism and nationalism; and, together with his disciples, he retrospectively 'turned it into the principal German tradition of thought about the Concert of Europe.'[83] Ranke's arguments received support from all camps opposed to the Congress system – from the Prussian national liberals as well as the Hegelians.

Such Prussian balance-of-power arguments stemmed from the early days of the University of Göttingen, but were now combined with Prussian state-centrism and militarism. Consider two of the foremost Prussian liberal reformers: Baron vom Stein and Karl August Fürst von Hardenberg. Stein had attended the University of Göttingen, and was steeped in the British, aristocratic, Whig balance-of-power tradition that emphasised the nobility. Hardenberg, on his side, came from the autonomous German Enlightenment, and was more concerned with the concentration of power and authority within the state.[84] The combination of these two strands in a new, German version of the middle classes was what changed the role of the balance of power. What emerged in Prussia and Germany was a new kind of composite middle class, with liberal, nationalistic, and aristocratic-militaristic elements, emphasising the military over the liberal and humanist values of *Kultur* that had traditionally been the core of the liberal middle classes. In a later paradox, English scholars in the 20th century were keen on distancing themselves from Ranke's balance-of-power theories, without realising that these theories came from the Göttingen tradition, which itself was a direct result of links with England.[85] British balance-of-power arguments were hybridised, and German politicians and academics made their own in hybridised form. This would in turn influence developments in the USA through the impact of the German university model.

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[82] *Ibid.*, p. 88; see Kleinschmidt, *Nemesis,* pp. 156–158.
[83] Holbraad, *The Concert,* p. 89.
[84] Clark, *Iron Kingdom*, p. 320.
[85] Butterfield, Herbert. 1966. 'The Balance of Power', pp. 132–148 in Herbert Butterfield and Martin Wight (eds) *Diplomatic Investigations.* London: George Allen & Unwin, p. 147.

The German composite middle class

No sooner had Ranke finished his *magnum opus* on Prussian history[86] than a new tome was required of him, as an unprecedented wave of revolutions swept the continent. In 1848, nationalist aspiration spread across Europe; and, like the liberals and radicals before them, the nationalists claimed to speak for 'the people' rather than the crown. The nationalist version of 'the people' was somewhat 'more inclusive than liberalism, whose horizons were confined to a wealthy, educated and largely urban elite',[87] so with the events of 1848, more and more German liberal radicals became nationalists. The dual influences of liberalism and nationalism were what moved the balance of power closer to national positions. National governments increasingly recognised the force of nationalist arguments, and incorporated these into their own rhetoric. The new debates after 1848 resulted in a fusion, where the post-revolutionary government wold have to take care of and respond to the interests of both 'the more statist and moderate elements of liberalism and of the more innovative and entrepreneurial elements among the old conservative elites'– a new, composite élite came to control the middle ground of politics, marginalising both the radical left and right.[88]

To this new élite was added the militarism of the aristocratic elements of society: 'large parts of the middle class – those in fact who had been integrated into the *satisfaktionsfähige Gesellschaft*, or who sought to be accepted by it – *adopted the upper-class code of honour as their own'*.[89] The traditional, liberal-nationalistic middle class fused with the military models of the traditional court aristocracy. The conflict between the middle classes and the court aristocracy[90] was resolved in favour of the latter, but took the shape of the former.

In Prussia, the liberal middle class fused with the traditionalist, militaristic aristocracy to form a new configuration, based on German nationalism and militaristic values. Whereas the British rhetoric continued to link the balance of power to tradition and anti-interventionism, a specifically Prussian rhetoric on the balance of power emerged. This powerful concept in European history was given a new content, emphasising national

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[86] Ranke, Leopold von. 1847–1848. *Neun Bücher Preussischer Geschichte*. Berlin: Veit.
[87] Clark, *Iron Kingdom*, p. 487.
[88] *Ibid.*, pp. 502–503.
[89] Elias, *The Germans,* p. 114, last emphasis added.
[90] See Elias, Norbert. 1994. *The Civilizing Process*. Oxford: Blackwell.

positions and power politics to suit the needs of the Prussian – and eventually the German – state. The point here is not the demise of liberal-type arguments: elements of the various liberal arguments remained all along, but were combined with a focus that was nationalist as well as state-centric and militarist. The processes of contingently linking the balance of power concept to other concerns, so crucial for this project, led to a *hybrid way of arguing*, between liberal individuation of states in international competition and a focus on the power politics that drives history forward, in part by war and the military, as the expression of the nation.

Here we see how the liberal middle class was nationalised, always geared towards the state. Worth noticing, in contrast to Britain, is the absence of arguments for the private interest and free trade; this focus on the private and individualised interest was in Prussia turned into patriotism and nationalism. Given this state centrism, it should come as no surprise that *statistics* increasingly became an integral part of administration in Prussia, and a central tool for nation-building and for concretising the territorial entity that would eventually become Germany.[91] I now turn to this institutionalised statistics and how it would in turn contribute to linking the balance of power to a focus on national positions, self-defence, and the prediction of trajectories.

Statistics, measurements, and prediction

In his work on mid-19th-century nation-building, Eric Hobsbawm calls attention to a rarely recognised dilemma: the assumption of nation-state builders was not only that a nation-state must be national, but also that it must be *capable* and developing progressively, economically as well as militarily. In other words, there is a difference between 'nationalism' and the political projects of 'nation-state building'.[92] New nation-states were not intended to be small states, but moderately large ones. The question was not only one of independence, as previously, but also of viable unification. This type of functioning unit, defined in part by its 'capacities', was the 'natural unit of the development of the modern, liberal, progressive and d*e facto* bourgeois society'.[93] This

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[91] See Hansen, Jason D. *Mapping the Germans: Statistical Science, Cartography, and the Visualization of the German Nation, 1848–1914*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

[92] Hobsbawm, Eric. 1975. *The Age of Capital*. London: Abacus, pp. 107, 110.

[93] *Ibid.*, p. 107.

focus on progress and capacities helped to uphold the hierarchical patterns established during the past century – now in an even more measurable and definite way, with the focus on the 'private interest' also of states, embodied in the bureaucracy of the middle classes. A crucial aspect of making the nation-state visible as a concrete and self-contained thing was the development and institutionalisation of statistics, the early beginnings of which were noted in Chapter 4.

How to measure interest and power, and therefore how to calculate the balance, had long been a central question. During the Napoleonic Wars, one dictionary definition of the balance of power stated that the French Revolution and subsequent 'overturnings and changes' on the continent had 'effectually destroyed all the principles upon which any calculation of that balance were made'.[94] Cobden, as Justi in Chapter 4, had argued that the balance of power could not be objectively measured, and that even the selection of countries to be included in the definition of the balance of power was based on political opportunity, or was random at best. But the criticism against the balance of power, that it could not be quantified, was partially muted with the spread of statistics, measurements, and new forms of numerical classifications. Seeing the balance of power as tangible and measurable would overshadow Justi's and Cobden's critique. In the 19th century, statistics took off, becoming 'the grammar of science'[95] – at least in the applied, practical, or 'useful' variety now expressed in the balance of power.

The increasing statistical comparison of states, based on objective criteria, also indicates that states were considered more as *equal* – it would not make sense to compare them statistically if they did not have at their core a stable, common essence. Previously, states were not individual and atomistic: they were seen as members of a family of nations, or members of a European Commonwealth. States were too differentiated. Now, however, states were individuated, seen as different but also equal as functional entities.[96]

The police sciences and early statistics emerging from Göttingen in the 18th century had focused on traditional histories of the various states, assessing their 'natural' or 'political' interests, based on geographical, constitutional, and legal characteristics. Little time was

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[94] Aitchison, Alexander (ed.). 1816. *Encyclopædia Perthensis; or Universal Dictionary of the Arts, Sciences, Literature, &c., Volume III*, second edition. Edinburgh: John Brown, p. 201.
[95] Pearson, Karl. 1892. *The Grammar of Science.* London: Black.
[96] See Porter, Theodore M. 1986. *The Rise of Statistical Thinking 1820–1900.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

spent on quantifying armies or economies. Early statistical assessments of states were thus 'virtually useless as a way of determining their relative strength'.[97] By the 19th century, however, linked with the emergence of a bourgeoisie public sphere, the interest in quantifying populations, territories, national economies, and military force, allowed measurement of 'the distribution of capabilities, in order to place individual states within the international system'.[98]

This rise in numerical measuring and statistics was also connected to the growth of the middle classes, based, as they were, on commercial society and professions: the physician, the engineer, the scientist, the lawyer – this was the bourgeoisie.

With Cameralism and the police sciences in the 18th century, trade and the general economy were increasingly seen as new expressions of a government's national power capabilities.[99] As free trade and commerce grew in the 19th century, there came a need for standardised and universal measures, as such measures were considered a precondition for free trade, markets, and rational economic action – in short, for a liberal order.[100]

Ian Hacking has charted this transformation from an enthusiasm for public, numerical data amongst the middle classes, to the incorporation of technologies for classifying and enumerating within the bureaucratic state apparatus.[101] In Prussia, in particular, with its state-centric tradition, both the measurement of capacities and the capacities for measurement increased radically in the 19th century, and Hacking notes the contrast in how statistics were developed and used between Prussia and Western Europe, including Britain and France.[102] Sir John Sinclair, in his *Statistical Account of Scotland*, observed how 'in Germany they were engaged in a species of political inquiry to which they had given the name of *Statistics*. *By statistical is meant in Germany an inquiry for the purpose of ascertaining the political strength of a country, or questions concerning matters of state*'.[103] Chapter 4 presented the developments in statistics and the police sciences at the

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[97] Keene, Edward. 2013. 'International Hierarchy and the Origins of the Modern Practice of Intervention', *Review of International Studies* 39(5):1077–1090, p. 1088.

[98] *Ibid.*

[99] Scott, Hamish M. 2006. *The Birth of a Great Power System 1740–1815*. Abingdon: Routledge, p. 117 *et passim*.

[100] *Ibid.*, p. 31.

[101] Hacking, *Taming*, p. 3.

[102] *Ibid.*, p. 4 *et passim*.

[103] Sinclair, John. 1799. *Statistical Account of Scotland, vol XX*. Edinburgh: William Creech, p. xiii, cited in Hacking, *Taming,* p. 16. Last emphasis added.

University of Göttingen. Indeed, although political arithmetic had developed in England in the 17th century, 'it was German thinkers and statesmen who brought to full consciousness the idea that the nation-state is essentially characterised by its statistics, and therefore demands a statistical office in order to define itself and its powers'.[104] Professional statistical bureaus were founded in Prussia (1805), Bavaria (1808), Württemberg (1820) and Saxony (1831), also with the goal of releasing centralised information to the middle-class public.[105]

And it was the head of Bavaria's statistical office, Georg von Mayr (1841–1925), who in 1871 was asked to give a speech on the occasion of the foundation of the German Empire.[106] On the 19 January 1871, the day after Wilhelm I had been crowned German Emperor at the Palace of Versailles in France, von Mayr set about the task of describing to a popular audience what exactly it was that had come into being. What was this new nation-state called 'Germany'? 'The digit', von Mayr started,

> has an exceptional meaning in the spiritual life of men. It is the main means for the precise recognition of conditions and events. In particular this is the case for all social phenomena, which can only be correctly identified through quantitative mass observations. He who approaches social phenomena without the sure measure of the digit is deceived by the random groupings that initially seem to him to be facts.[107]

Finishing his speech, he quoted figures on the numbers of Germans within and outside the national boundaries: in the Netherlands, in Switzerland, in Austria-Hungary, and in Russia. This fact, he asserted, was a promise of great things for the German *Reich*. It was a promise because numbers are objective: they cannot tell us about the nature of religion, he said, but only about the number of religious people. And that is an *advantage*, because numbers speak for themselves. Numbers afford certainty, without touching on dubious interpretations of the 'nature' of phenomena.[108]

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[104] Hacking, *Taming*, p. 18.
[105] Hansen, *Mapping*, p. 40.
[106] An account of this episode is rendered in Hansen, *Mapping,* pp. 16–18.
[107] von Mayr, Georg. 1871. *Zahl und Sprachgebiet der Deutschen. Volksthümlicher Vortrag gehalten am 19. January 1871.* Munich: J. Gotteswinter & Mößl, p. 3, translated in Hansen, *Mapping*, p. 16.
[108] von Mayr, *Zahl und Sprachgebiet,* p. 13.

Georg von Mayr's whole speech was a quantification of the new *Reich*, painting a pointillist portrait of the standing and position of the nation in all its details as it existed as of 19 January 1871.

Such institutionalised statistics was what pushed the balance of power squarely into the domain of the practically discoverable, numerically certain, and politically manageable, facilitating political decisions about how to use the state's resources.[109] Justi's and Cobden's critical remarks were proven wrong, as the balance of power and the diverse nation-states of which it was composed could now be depicted as having tangible and measurable capabilities, suitable for instant comparison expressed in a common language understandable also for the public – von Mayr's 'digit'. One did not have to be a philosopher or lawyer (or state official for that matter) to understand what '1000 Prussians' or '10 dreadnoughts' meant.[110]

As noted in Chapter 1, my goal with this project is not to bridge a presumed gap between the perception and the reality of the balance of power, but to examine such exercises amongst historical actors themselves. Thus, I do not assume that the prevalence of such measurements and statistics made an actually existing balance of power more accessible, more clearly visible. Measures are not their own interpretation. Comparing the standing of polities and various 'interests' is not new – but something happens once this turns into a quantifiable, 'certain' measurement of the relative distribution of capabilities, placing individual nation-states within the international system relying on a balance of power seen as the expression of power competition, and even the very march of history and progress itself.[111]

The hammer-and-nail saying applies here – the statistical tools at your disposal predispose both the problem and its solutions. When your neighbour is a number, and that number is in the process of surpassing your own, securing 'the liberties of Europe' is not the first thing that comes to mind. Thus, the practice of measuring capacities transformed that which was linked to the balance of power, which transformed what was the gist of the political. Statistics and measurement helped to associate the balance of power with *national positions* of a kind that had not existed in the same way before statistics and

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[109] Hansen, *Mapping,* p. 6.
[110] *Ibid.*, p. 4.
[111] See Keene, 'International Hierarchy', pp. 1088–89.

categorisations became the pre-eminent practical art of what we now would call 'policy-relevant knowledge'.

Increasingly, the nation itself could be made tangible, for example through maps and censuses, as could the resources (including the military capacities) of nations in a comparative perspective. Relative power as capacities became a prevalent measure. Once you can measure exactly, you can predict; and once you can predict, you can prevent.

Making something appear as an objective assessment of a threat, the obsessions with threat itself, and with 'treatments for changing the odds', stems from these developments in statistics, quantifying capacities, numerical designations, categorisations, and the practical purposes which grounded these new categories, intimately connected to the state and the balance of power as an expression of power politics.[112] In a world of atomistic nation-states, the balance of power became increasingly associated with 'self-defence'.

National positions, self-defence, and the prediction of trajectories

This is what I mean by 'national positions'. A state-focused balance of power came to define the international-political. The balance of power was no longer the antidote to universal monarchy and domination, as a way of defending the public interest of Europe. Rather, it expressed the violent interaction of atomistic nation-states, with their particular interests and measurable capabilities. A central advantage of this way of conceptualising order, based on a science of individuals and private interests, was *predictability*.[113] By calculation and measurements, one could observe *trends*, rather than the mercantilist and static absolute 'balances of trade' associated with the old order. One started worrying about the future trajectory of states, the relative rates of population growth and industry, for example, and what this meant for one's own security and capacity for self-defence. This focus on the state, initially mainly philosophical (Hegel), assumed a more exclusively engaged and practical dimension when the military tradition became linked to nationalism and state-centrism.

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[112] Hacking, *Taming*, pp. 5–7.
[113] Hirschman, *The Passions*, pp. 48–56.

These developments in Prussia are crucial in explaining how the balance of power became increasingly nationalised. With the growth of Prussia and the unification of Germany, other states had to respond in kind. In both Britain and Germany, the aristocracy still prevailed while the middle classes were nationalised. This was above all a development in Prussia, then Germany, but also in Britain. By 1848, the middle classes had become nationalised and 'the frank class terminology and analysis of the 1840s became attenuated, and "moderate" critics of society and politics were beginning to use terms like "interest" again'.[114] In the 1840s, therefore, came a return to speaking about 'interests' that were now 'national' ones.

Take Palmerston's new use of balance-of-power rhetoric when in 1854, against Cobden's associate John Bright, he maintained that the balance of power concerned *individual states*. It was, he declared, '*the doctrine of self-defence,* with the simple qualification that it is combined with sagacity and *forethought,* and an *endeavour to prevent imminent danger before it comes thundering at your doors*'.[115]

Furthermore, in the 1860s, with war brewing between Prussia and Denmark over the Schleswig-Holstein question, Mr. Alexander W. Kinglake, speaking in Parliament, argued that so much of the troubles this particular issue had occasioned had resulted from what he called 'political foresight', and 'that he would entreat Her Majesty's Government to be very careful how they drew us into anything like war or dangerous engagements, *from a mere fear that the balance of power in Europe might be disturbed*'. It would have been wiser, he said, 'to have had *less foresight*' in what concerns the balance of power, and to wait until 'the danger had actually occurred'.[116]

As noted in the introduction, a shift in episteme implied moving away from republican-infused arguments concerning the 'protection against dominance' as a structural concern, and towards individual states' freedom from interventions. In this respect, Kinglake's argument was a precise verdict on the balance-of-power concept in the early years of Bismarck's Germany. There was no more talk of the 'liberties of Europe' or a European 'republic' or 'commonwealth' – 'Europe' for Bismarck was nothing but a *notion*

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[114] Briggs, 'Middle-Class Consciousness', p. 72.

[115] Hansard, Thomas Curson. 1854. *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, Vol CXXXII*. London: Cornelius Buck, col. 279, emphases added.

[116] Hansard, Thomas Curson. 1864. *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, Vol CLXXIII*. London: Cornelius Buck, col. 153, emphases added.

géographique. The balance of power had come to rely more on national positions than on protecting something like the 'public interest'. This movement had to do with the growing concern with calculations and measurements. Once capacities can be calculated, the balance of power becomes tied to national positions and, importantly, the prediction of state behaviour and national trajectories. In turn, this objectification of national positions gives a hitherto unavailable illusion of certainty.

In the analytical literature on international order, 'Power Transition Theory' is conceptualised as the opposite of balance-of-power theory, because an equal balance between major states is seen to trigger revisionist state action.[117] Here, by contrast, we end up with a balance-of-power rhetoric used to legitimise preventive wars, ultimately *helping to permit power transitions rather than being the opposite of it.* In the case of Utrecht, in Chapter 3, we saw how the way in which the concept of the balance of power had become settled and accepted served to coerce Austria, leading to a new post-war order and conception of the 'system'. The *deployment* of the balance-of-power *concept* was the fundamental element in the construction of a post-war international order. Now, by the same token, deployment of the concept facilitated a power transition, eventually leading to the First World War.

During the latter part of the 19th century, the very assessment of power had changed.[118] With the prevalence of statistics and measurements of capabilities, and because of technological developments, population and infantry were not the only factors for counting, but an array of different capabilities and tactics (ships, submarines, trains). It was about calculation, not necessarily about the *intentions* of e.g. a French king 'set on universal dominion' or whatever. It concerned national positions, national capabilities, supposedly irrespective of precedents or ploys or plans, and about trajectories and foresight, the dream of the early interest-theoreticians, now made reality (literally speaking) with the advances in statistical sciences – the most 'useful' and publically understandable of knowledges. This is linked to the well-known arms race in the run-up to the First World War, and influenced what Steven van Evera called 'the cult of the

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[117] Organski, A.F.K. 1958. *World Politics*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
[118] See Buzan, Barry and George Lawson. 2015. *The Global Transformation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

offensive':[119] One could, it was felt, foresee dangers in a much more precise way and act preventively. This marked the culmination of the developments in the balance of power in the 19th century, now seen as a zero-sum struggle between national positions. When the balance of power relies on national positions, the idea of intervening preventively to stop the trajectory of other states can take the upper hand, which was what happened in the run-up to the First World War. The balance of power implied an assessment not in terms of system stability as such, but in terms of relative national positions. The balance of power did not stabilise the international system: it acted to make European politics more unstable. As Morgenthau notes, it was the *calculations* of the balance that made preventive war a possibility, and that triggered the First World War.[120]

Conclusions

If in the previous section, the inflection point was how the balance of power was linked to the public interest by opposition to the Congress equilibrium, and the protection of state independence, here the triumph of the state pushed the European public interest completely out of the way. There was now a debate between private interests, embodied in the exaltation of economic factors, on the one hand, and the balance of power on the other. The rise and development of the middle classes and their relationship to the aristocracy were central conditions of possibility for development of a new balance-of-power rhetoric in Germany.

The middle classes, focusing on the benefits of passions and private interests, had become nationalised. The strand of liberal rhetoric that won the day was the one that focused on the nation-state, and not on civil society. Further, the balance of power became linked to practical politics and war-making capabilities. Whereas the British fell back on the traditional balance of power concept, the Germans reinvented it in their own state-centric, nationalist and militarist tradition.

Balance-of-power theory now assessed the national positions of the great powers. There was less focus on the European public interest. The balance of power was linked with

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[119] See Van Evera, Stephen. 1984. 'The Cult of the Offensive and the Origins of the First World War', *International Security* 9(1):58–107.

[120] Morgenthau, Hans J. 1975. *Politics Among Nations*, fifth edition. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, p. 209.

Hegelian state-centrism, liberal nationalism and Rankean philosophy of power politics, converted into politically engaged knowledge-practices, including statistics and the measurable capabilities of various national positions.[121] From being a pro-European concept intended to protect the public interest of Europe, the balance of power was now turned against the idea of a European Commonwealth.

As these developments came together in the course of the 19th century, the balance of power took on the more familiar 'realist' form, nationalised and used in defence of the 'national interest' and survival. What was emerging in the period covered in this chapter is what Morgenthau called the 'concept of interest defined in terms of power'.[122] Within the balance-of-power concept, the focus was now more on (measurable) power and capacity than on the 'balance' part of the equation, more on the national interest than the protection of the public. This view of state interaction, or competition, is also what defines the international-political as a separate sphere, distinct from detached reflections on the same.[123] This was Meinecke's definition, too: a 'reason of state' that 'consists in realizing itself and its environment and to derive from this understanding *maxims for action'*, not themes for abstract speculation. The balance of power then becomes the one and only rational course of policy for any actor seeking success. It is, again in Morgenthau's words, 'a universal instrument of foreign policy used in all times by all nations who wanted to preserve their independence'– that is, their survival through self-defence,[124] also against eminently calculable future threats.

That balances emerge because each and every nation is bent on maximising its own potential was a fairly new element, especially in so far as this is considered a universal assumption, and not dependent on the particular properties or 'natural interests' of a certain polity. The problem of a (European) order was not empire, not the public interest of Europe, but managing a delimited number of states and their interaction. A multitude of states, competing with each other, without any hierarchical principle or leader, *archon*, where the balance of power is now not seen as a principle guiding and leading a hierarchical, European order, but as an expression of the tensions between states, at best a

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[121] Holbraad, *The Concert,* p. 105.
[122] Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, p. 5.
[123] See Guzzini, Stefano. 1998. *Realism in International Relations and International Political Economy*. London: Routledge, p. 38.
[124] Morgenthau, Hans J. and Kenneth W. Thompson (eds.) 1950. *Principles and Problems of International Politics.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, p. 104; *Ibid.*, p. 39.

cushion between national states – this situation, and what to do about it, is the anarchy problem. It does not emerge before the combination of liberalism (freely competing, atomistic states), nationalist militarism (a state's self-defence is the goal), and the renewed Prussian balance of power tradition (the balance is what defines the international-political, in short, the theory of international politics).

During the 19th century, therefore, the balance of power for many becomes associated with international anarchy, power politics, self-defence and survival, and war. This is also the condition of possibility for political science and International Relations to include the balance as a core principle based on political practice and maxims. The balance-of-power concept thus links developments in the latter part of the 19th century to the emergence of the IR discipline, which I address in Chapter 9.

CHAPTER 9

Conserving the Balance of Power in Practice and Theory

In this chapter, I trace how the concept of the balance of power, as developed in the 19th century, was deployed in the 20th, where it was linked to a crucial new development: the establishment of *academic disciplines.* The distinction between abstraction and reality, already present in international-political debates, gained an increasing prominence with the emergence of academic disciplines, as they sought to establish their own jurisdiction and define authoritative knowledge.

Abstractions are crucial to professionalization.[1] Academic disciplines needed to specify and define abstract concepts further, and in this, they reacted to and interacted with their constitutive outside: other disciplines, and international politics. Professional actors now sought to 'academicize' knowledge[2] by establishing relative autonomy and distance from political practice. I show how the balance of power has been a central tool in this for International Relations as a US social science.[3] First international lawyers, later political scientists and IR scholars, claimed the authority to define what the central concept of the balance of power really was, and what it was not. International law and International Relations were the scientific fields that produced knowledge on the balance of power, a part of the practical world of 'politics'. Both claimed authoritative knowledge of the world – one by excluding, the other by including the balance of power and international anarchy.

The history of the 20th-century in this chapter therefore follows the narrative concerning the distinction between abstractions and reality from the 18th century, and the episteme shift from about the 19th. The abstraction/reality distinction, in view of German state-centrism, is the leitmotif in the arguments of both politicians and academics over the balance of power that I examine in the following – traceable from Justi's rejection of the

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[1] Abbott, Andrew. 1988. *The System of Professions.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, p. 9.
[2] Fourcade, Marion. 2009. *Economists and Societies. Discipline and Profession in the United States, Britain, and France, 1890s to 1990s.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 2.
[3] Hoffmann, Stanley. 1977. 'An American Social Science: International Relations', *Daedalus* 106(3):41-60.

balance as an abstract 'chimera', to the episteme shift away from a common public interest, and towards a liberal focus on the free interaction of individuated nation states and national positions, now to be called 'international anarchy'. The developments addressed in the previous chapters had a tangible and crucial impact on the concept of the balance of power in the IR discipline, although the historical tensions were not resolved in any way. By linking the concept as we know it from International Relations (IR) to previous developments, in Germany in particular, this chapter therefore places the balance of power as a key concept of IR on empirical ground by directing attention to its history in and effects on the constitution of the discipline, which has not been fully appreciated.[4]

Classical maxims and concepts like the balance of power has remained in IR, but have been devoid of the practical component, and turned into structural imperatives[5] – 'what once moved is enclosed and eternalized […] like an insect in amber'.[6] This makes it more difficult to study the histories and problems linked with the concept, than to study those who claim to have already provided answers to them.[7] Still, as I have done in the previous chapters, I attempt to do precisely this by tracing the deployment of the balance of power. Once again, the balance of power should be understood relative to context – in this case, including academic disciplines seeking relative autonomy and distance from political practice. For me, the uses of the balance-of-power concept in IR theory, in debates within the field, are not on a different analytical level than the uses of the concept in, say, diplomatic negotiations between Britain and Austria in the early 18th century. It makes little sense to treat IR theories as distinct from the many other forms of knowledge or political arguments that historical actors have engaged in and that I have taken as my object of investigation. The IR discipline is a historical site like any other I have examined, in which the uses and consequences of balance of power rhetoric can be investigated.

Further, what enabled such disciplines to prevail, were their links to the practical and social organisation of universities. Disciplines concern the establishment and organisation

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[4] Gilbert, Felix. 1951. 'The "New Diplomacy" of the Eighteenth Century', *World Politics* 4(1): 1-38, p. 2.
[5] Guzzini, Stefano. 2004. 'The Enduring Dilemmas of Realism in International Relations', *European Journal of International Relations* 10(4):533–568, p. 548.
[6] Nietzsche, Friedrich. 1986 [1878]. *Human, All Too Human*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 97.
[7] Hampsher-Monk, Iain. 1984. 'Political Languages in Time – The Work of J.G.A. Pocock', *British Journal of Political Science* 14(1):89–116, p. 111.

of authoritative knowledge, but also the organisation of scholars themselves in universities and associations.[8] The German university model, specifying the relationship between the state, politics, and research, was also a central influence. This in turn means that academic disciplines are not self-contained spaces, and academia and politics, 'theory' and 'practice', do not constitute different worlds. Therefore, I also address how the debates within academic disciplines, concerning the central distinction between abstraction and practice now in a world of 'international anarchy', parallels policy debates in the USA and Europe. In fact, the intimate links between communities of practical politicians and communities of academic scholars are reflected in how the IR discipline appropriated the concept of the balance of power to define its (porous) borders.

The balance-of-power concept, however, does not respect the boundaries of the IR discipline. The fact that the balance of power became a central concept of IR actually *precludes* drawing any *a priori* analytical boundaries between the inside and outside of the discipline. The participants invoked the concept itself in the negotiating of such boundaries, so an *analytical* distinction between the inside and outside of IR cannot hold. The concept of the balance of power simultaneously influenced the discipline *and* the world it was meant to represent and explain.[9]

In Chapter 1, I emphasised the methodological importance of conceptualising the relations between the historical communities under investigation on the one hand, and a contemporary community of researchers or scientists on the other. This, however, is also a substantive point: the distinctions between such communities emerge at certain points in time, and how knowledge claims and theories are assessed and used within different communities makes a difference regarding the balance of power, as actors respond not only to events or 'practical politics', but also to the theories used to describe or explain it.[10] One historiographer of the discipline, Brian Schmidt, makes the valid point that the tendency to view an analytical tradition as an actual historical one is problematic. Scholars should not reify an analytical construct.[11] However, what if the *practitioners* in question are the ones who 'confuse' an analytical tradition with a historical one? Further, what if, empirically speaking, parts of the analytical tradition *are* indeed constructed upon

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[8] Abott, Andrew. 2001. *Chaos of Disciplines*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
[9] Bell, Duncan. 2009. 'Writing the World: Disciplinary History and Beyond', *International Affairs* 85(1): 3-22, p. 16.
[10] Hampsher-Monk, 'Political Languages' pp. 104–106.
[11] Schmidt, Brian. 1997. *The Political Discourse of Anarchy*. New York: SUNY Press.

a purported historical tradition as well? What happens when the cards are mixed – not by me or by us, but by *them*? That is what I investigate.

The history and subject matter in this chapter is already well known in and beyond the discipline, so it will be shorter on realia than previous chapters. For instance, several recent texts dealing with the history of IR and political science overlap with the topic and account in this chapter – in particular the work of Brian Schmidt, Stefano Guzzini and Nicolas Guilhot.[12] This is fortunate, as they make it unnecessary for me to explore many issues related to the history of IR. The level of detail is relative to the task at hand, which is to show the reversal whereby the balance of power has been appropriated in IR to account for the practices that are grouped together to form the concept itself.[13]

This makes for the following procedure: To connect the developments seen in the previous chapter to the role of academic disciplines, which are important in this chapter, I will start by tracing the use of the concept of the balance of power in *international law* on the eve of the 20th century. To define their own authoritative knowledge, international lawyers rejected the balance of power concept, framing it as being too close to engaged politics. In the burgeoning academic discipline of international law, what was to be resisted was *international anarchy*. However, international anarchy would in turn be *appropriated* by scholars focussing on the state, as realistic description of the condition and system in which nation states found themselves. Political science adopted the concept *as* an expression of political practice.

The opposition to and defence of the balance now played out in the context of academic disciplines, but also in international politics throughout the two World Wars. I go on to chart the use of the balance of power amongst state leaders and diplomats of the period. Whilst political leaders repudiated the balance, it was conserved amongst diplomatic practitioners in European foreign ministries. Following both wars, perhaps more than at any time before, the balance of power was up in the air, because many considered the international political scene as being a fundamentally new one. The First World War

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[12] Schmidt, *The Political Discourse*; Guzzini, Stefano, 'The Enduring Dilemmas'; id. 2013. 'The Ends of International Relations Theory: Stages of Reflexivity and Modes of Theorizing', *European Journal of International Relations* 19(3): 521–541; Guilhot, Nicolas. 2010. 'American Katechon: When Political Theology Became International Relations Theory', *Constellations* 17(2):224-253; id. 2011. *The Invention of International Relations Theory. Realism, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the 1954 Conference on Theory*. New York: Columbia University Press.
[13] Culler, Jonathan.1997. *Literary Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 5.

inaugurated a new decade of criticism against the balance of power. Just as international lawyers did, US President Woodrow Wilson rejected the old balance of power to promote his 'new diplomacy'. On the other hand, the concept was defended and conserved by traditionalist diplomatic practitioners – what Hans Morgenthau called the 'aristocratic international' – who would serve as Morgenthau's ultimate 'reality check'[14] and whose practice was precisely the basis for IR theorising. After the First World War, *practitioners* of the 'old school' of diplomacy conserved the balance, which was facing rejection by liberal political leaders.

After the Second World War, and as the Cold War set on, the concept of the balance of power became more widely accepted, also in the USA. The nuclear arms race, the 'cold war rationality' and its associated calculations, was the apogee of the statistical arguments, the emphasis on measurements and pre-emption that emerged in the 19th century. However, this Cold War scientific rationality was opposed by early IR scholars, focusing on the traditional practical maxims of European international politics, such as the balance of power. Early IR theorists sought to establish their own jurisdiction by rejecting both behaviourism and liberal internationalism, rather focusing on traditional state practice in educating US policymakers. After the Second World War, then, IR *scholars* defended and conserved the balance of power as a concept. Paradoxically, it was now these scholars of international politics who would refer to a practical tradition, eventually converting it into a theory of international relations and feeding it back to policymakers. The political figures known for using the concept most frequently were also those most firmly enmeshed in the scholarly world of IR: George F. Kennan and Henry Kissinger are cases in point.

Therefore, lastly, I turn to the development of the IR discipline in the USA, which, contrary to the discipline of international law, defined their authoritative knowledge by appropriating precisely political practice. As seen, making the state the a priori, and rejecting the public interest of Europe, was elements in the Prussian and German views of the balance of power, and this was a central influence on the gradual establishment of the academic discipline of IR, particularly the development of a theory of international politics in the 1950s and 60s. Echoing Justi's arguments, the early realists' opposition to liberalism was an opposition to *abstractions* to the detriment of politics as practice. For

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[14] Guzzini, 'The Enduring Dilemmas', p. 546.

IR scholars, 'theory' had a practical value – it was a praxeology that could guide policy and define the purposes of political leadership.[15]

As noted in the introduction, a traditional goal of the discipline of international relations (IR) has been to approximate the concepts in use by academics and practitioners, in order to conserve established categories of political maxims and diplomatic practice. The balance of power was the bridge between traditional European state practice and the new hegemonic role of the USA, and between the notions of 'practice' and 'theory'. In the formative years of the discipline, this aimed to help new policy elites to understand and manage international politics efficiently – particularly in the 'new' great power, the USA.[16] However, as IR became an academic discipline, the need for some sort of objective detachment and scientific authority to theorise international politics became apparent (also this particularly in the USA).[17] Abstractions *had* to be included if IR were to become a legitimate science. Most pronounced in the works of Morgenthau and Waltz, such practical knowledge and traditional concepts gradually became more attuned to a 'scientific' approach. The balance of power became a principal theory of international relations – not because the balance of power was particularly efficient as an explanatory tool in analyses, but because it could be presented as simultaneously being both practice *and* theory. The traditional state practice of the balance of power became its own theory. The balance of power was a way of debating and formalising the scope of tolerable international anarchy, thereby carving out a disciplinary space for IR between the formalism of behaviourist political science and legal internationalism.

This chapter therefore in important respects concerns the effects of the developments in Germany/Prussia I investigated in the previous chapter. The concept changed hands, in a manner of speaking: whilst politicians occasionally referred to it, the disputes, contentions, and debates involving the balance of power moved into the emergent academic field of IR, which sustained and reproduced the concept. The balance of power concept, imported from Germany, made the discipline of IR a possibility in the first place, as it was conceptualised as a pure form of political 'practice'. This also made things difficult for a 'Weberian moment' in IR that would have accorded priority to disengaged

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[15] Guilhot, *The Invention,* pp. 21–23.
[16] Guzzini, 'The Enduring Dilemmas' p. 547.
[17] Guzzini, 'The Ends' p. 522; Hampsher-Monk, Iain. 1984. 'Political Languages in Time – The Work of JGA Pocock', *British Journal of Political Science* 14(1): 89–116, p. 110.

science; the central move to constitute the IR discipline was to *blur* the distinction between politics and academic analysis by means of the balance of power concept.

Law and anarchy

As in Chapter 4, it is important to keep in mind that 'politics' and 'science' are not exclusive domains – but that the construction of such borders is consequential. Creating and maintaining an academic discipline requires policing its boundaries to other disciplines, and it is therefore appropriate to start with a short section on how a 'competing' discipline invoked the balance of power concept – that of international law. This will illustrate both how the distinction between abstraction and reality, and the noted episteme shift, affected also academic disciplines in the transition to the 20th century.

As the discipline of international law gained an increasing professional self-awareness in the 1860s and 1870s,[18] the balance of power concept was excluded from it.[19] International lawyers increasingly argued that the balance of power was not a source of international law, and that it belonged to *Staats-Klugheit* ('state wisdom'), or the like. As a legal principle, the balance was dismissed, now viewed instead as a 'principle of general policy', and termed the '*political* balance of power', 'practical politics', or a 'political norm'.[20] It was a political maxim, not a legal concept. The criticism is familiar – what is new is that the balance of power is clearly distinguished from the science of law, as being useful solely for *politics*.

The definition of the 'political' and practical versus the abstract is used in attempts at defining authoritative knowledge. Both in international law and in International Relations, the character of the interrelations between an academic community and its surroundings, including the state, conditioned what kind of knowledge was considered suitably abstract, and therefore relevant.[21]

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[18] Kosenniemi, Martti. 2004. *The Gentle Civilizer of Nations: The Rise and Fall of International Law 1870–1960.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 3.
[19] Vec, Miloš. 2011. 'De-Juridifying "Balance of Power" – A Principle in 19th Century International Legal Doctrine', *ESIL Conference Paper* No. 5/2011, p. 13.
[20] *Ibid.*, p. 14.
[21] See Fourcade, *Economists and Societies.*

Before the noted episteme shift, the 18th-century concept of the balance of power emphasising the public good had worked well in combination with international law, but when the balance of power became linked with the state and national power politics, international lawyers increasingly presupposed a distance from political practice as a way of defining authoritative knowledge.[22] As Martti Kosenniemi has shown, International lawyers aimed to defend their position by making other positions seem political or subjective - International Law attempted to remove the *political* from international relations, in turn inadvertently redefining what the political was all about:[23]

The way in which international lawyers rejected the balance of power was also a reaction to the national state: After the episteme shift identified, this practical-political balance of power was no longer about a European public interest, but a multitude of independent, atomistic, national states competing, as in a market, in power-political struggles. Many international lawyers linked this view of international politics with the balance of power, thus defining their own sphere of authoritative knowledge by maintaining a relative distance to political practice. This view of international politics was also linked to what these international lawyers increasingly started calling 'international anarchy'.

From about the 1860s onwards, European international lawyers were increasingly invoking international anarchy to dismiss the balance of power. The balance of power in anarchy could now specify the precarious situation of independent nation-states with no central authority. In 1867, the British Lawyer Lord Vere Henry Hobart wrote a piece on Richard Cobden in *Macmillan's Magazine*.[24] Like Cobden in the previous chapter, he argued for the 'intercourse between nations', and dismissed any view of 'patriotism' that would imply a defence of the balance of power. Such views 'tolerate and approve the anarchy of nations'; further, 'the natural and necessary result of *international anarchy* is war, just as the natural and necessary result of national anarchy is personal violence. But war is not, because international anarchy is not, an inevitable condition of human affairs'.[25] The lawyer Frederic Seebohm maintained that 'the overruling cause why most nations entered the self-subsistent stage of national life may be said to have been, the

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[22] Kosenniemi, Martti. 2006. *From Apology to Utopia. The Structure of International Legal Argument.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
[23] *Ibid.*
[24] Hobart, Lord Vere Henry. 1867. 'The Mission of Richard Cobden', *Macmillan's Magazine*, 15, pp. 177–186.
[25] *Ibid.*, pp. 179–181.

prevalence of *international anarchy'*;[26] and Thomas Joseph Lawrence in his *Handbook of Public International Law* mentioned 'the great danger of *international anarchy'*.[27] James Lorimer, one of the founders of the *Institut de Droit International*, linked the balance explicitly to international anarchy, by dismissing the role of the balance as protecting order. In the 1880s, he argued that the balance of power could not be a 'guarantee against international anarchy'.[28] Quite the contrary, Lorimer maintained, 'the doctrine of the balance of power from first to last has been a mere proclamation of international anarchy.'[29] Similar references to international anarchy recur throughout the 1880s and 1890s, also in French and German publications, and the British scholar G. Lowes Dickinson's widely read 1916 book *The European Anarchy* came to define much of the subsequent discussion about the role of the balance of power in the 'new world' that was at hand after the First World War.[30]

Wilson's 'New Diplomacy' and the League of Nations

Dickinson's book implied that the German Kaiser and the Russian Czar were not to carry all blame for the war: there was something about the *system* of international relations that had gone awry. International lawyers had rejected the balance of power and 'international anarchy', and in a like manner, Dickinson maintained that this system of anarchy and the traditional practices of European diplomacy had led to the Great War, and the new great power, the USA, would now have to ensure a transition from anarchy and the balance of power to precisely *law*.[31]

This argument resonated well in the USA, where the balance of power was traditionally an object for many to despise. After President James Monroe had proclaimed his doctrine in 1823, establishing the American continent as the exclusive domain of US foreign policy and urging US withdrawal from European affairs, the country had defined its

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[26] Seebohm, Frederic. 1871. *On International Reform*. London: Longmans, Green and Co., p. 19, emphasis added

[27] Lawrence, Thomas Joseph. 1885. *A Handbook of Public International* Law. London: Macmillan and Co., p. 11.

[28] Lorimer, James. 1884. *The Institutes of the Law of Nations: A Treatise of the Jural Relations of Separate Political Communities.* Edinburgh: W. Blackwood and Sons, p. 195, emphasis added.

[29] *Ibid.*, p. 206, last emphasis added.

[30] Dickinson, Goldsworthy Lowes. 1926. *The International Anarchy, 1904–1914.* London: George Allen & Unwin.

[31] Schmidt, *The Political Discourse*, p. 100, 102.

moral purpose in opposition to the balance of power. Richard Cobden had considered the USA an ideal in this respect: 'America, with infinite wisdom, refuses to be a party to the "balance of power"'.[32]

The USA had been confident in its isolation, as the British had been in centuries past. In 1838 Abraham Lincoln had said that 'all the armies of Europe, Asia, and Africa combined […] could not by force take a drink from the Ohio [River…] At what point, then, is the approach of danger to be expected? I answer. If it ever reach us it must spring up amongst us; it cannot come from abroad.'[33]

Therefore, in the First World War, when the USA had involved itself in European power politics, it was not to mend the balance of power, but to get rid of it altogether. After the war, US opposition to the balance grew even stronger, and the US political scientist and president Woodrow Wilson hotly disputed the moral value and practical viability of the balance of power, associating it with the destructive power politics of the 'old world', in opposition to which the whole existence of the USA was an example. In 1917, Wilson argued that the balance of power must be replaced by a 'community of power' – a league of nations.[34] The following year, in a speech in London, he stated:

> the center and characteristic of the old order was that unstable thing which we used to call the 'balance of power' – a thing in which the balance was determined by the sword which was thrown in the one side or the other; a balance which was determined by the unstable equilibrium of competitive interests; a balance which was maintained by jealous watchfulness and an antagonism of interests which, though it was generally latent, was always deep-seated.[35]

The balance of power had no place in Wilson's 'new diplomacy', as it was considered to have had a part in bringing about the War. Rather, what was now needed, Wilson argued, were 'open covenants of peace, openly arrived at'.[36]

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[32] Cobden, Richard. 1867[1836]. 'Russia', pp. 155–354 in Cobden, Richard, *The Political Writings of Richard Cobden. Vol. I.* London: William Ridgway, p. 280.
[33] Lincoln, Abraham. 2013[1838]. '"The Perpetuation of Our Political Institutions": Address to the Springfield Young Men's Lyceum', pp. 11–19 in Abraham Lincoln, *Political Writings and Speeches.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 12.
[34] Jackson, Peter. 2013. *Beyond the Balance of Power: France and the Politics of National Security in the Era of the First World War.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 103.
[35] In Kissinger, Henry. 1994. *Diplomacy.* New York: Touchstone, p. 226.
[36] In Gilbert, 'The "New Diplomacy"', p. 1.

Still, the First World War did not kill the balance-of-power concept, as some would argue.[37] Even in the USA, there had been dissident voices. In 1913, one US diplomat, Lewis Einstein, had argued that the European balance of power, protected by Britain, was a central concern for the USA.[38] However, the balance had almost become too conventional: 'The European balance of power', he opens his essay, 'has been such a permanent factor since the birth of the republic that Americans have never realised how its absence would have affected their political status.' Britain's defence of the balance of power had 'contributed toward American development'.

Furthermore, US scholars had established political science as a 'realistic' alternative to the prevailing internationalism of international law, and the 'idealism' associated with President Wilson. As opposed to international lawyers defining their own professional jurisdiction in opposition to the 'political' balance of power, political scientists, for the same purposes, increasingly held that the closeness to practical politics was precisely what made the concept useful: a science of politics should be based on the practical lessons of history, not on abstractions. For instance, the Prussian scholar Francis Lieber had introduced the distinction between *the 'abstract' and 'the historical and practical'* study of the state in the US context.[39] Lieber had favoured the latter. He had thus established the state and its practical politics, not abstract transnational and normative law structures, as the central object of investigation. Also international anarchy, first negatively defined by international lawyers as something to be fought and avoided, soon became appropriated by those concerned with such engaged, political knowledge. For them, international anarchy emerged as the perhaps ideally unwanted, but unavoidably *realistic,* condition of international politics. Heinrich von Treitschke, the central exponent of *Realpolitik*, had written: '*all theory must be founded on practice*; only then does an understanding become genuinely reciprocal. That is a true balance of the Powers.'[40] *Realpolitik*, including the 'practical' balance of power, came to stand for the specifically

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[37] E.g. Craig, Campbell. 2003. *Glimmer of a New Leviathan: Total War in the Realism of Niebuhr, Morgenthau, and Waltz.* New York: Columbia University Press, p. 12, 18.

[38] Einstein, D. Lewis. 1965 [1913]. 'The United States and Anglo-German Rivalry', pp. 68–74 in Paul Seabury (ed.), *The Balance of Power*. San Francisco: Chandler.

[39] Lieber, Francis. 1838. *Manual of Political Ethics* (2 vols.). London: William Smith; Gunnell, John G. 1993. *The Descent of Political* Theory. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, pp. 25–32; Schmidt, *The Political Discourse*, pp. 44–52.

[40] Treitschke, Heinrich von. 1914[1899]. 'Die Politik', pp. 117–226 in Henry William Carless Davis (ed.), *The Political Thought of Heinrich von Treitschke*. London: Constable and Company, p. 176, emphasis added.

Prussian way of politics – a 'science of self-interest' as the English *The Fortnightly Review* called it.[41]

In 1914, Raymond Garfield Gettel used such German state-centric arguments to *defend* the balance of power in the USA.[42] Like Kenneth Waltz later, he distinguished between three levels: the individual, the state, and the 'collection of states that comprise the world as a whole'. The state was the perfection of national life; echoing Hegel, he argued that the state must become 'conscious of its own existence'. In this, the balance of power, at the 'third level', was central for safeguarding states' independence. In the same vein, Westel W. Willoughby's juristic theory held that states led 'an independent and isolated existence', like individuals in a state of nature;[43] and Walter Lippmann maintained that the balance of power was not to blame for the First World War. In an argument with historical precedents, Lippmann stated that the problem was that economic *private* interests had been turned into the national interests. What was needed was some sort of international organisation, based on the public interest.[44]

Still, it was above all European foreign ministries that conserved the balance of power. Even if a succession of British political leaders bought into Wilson's vision and critique, there was staunch opposition in Europe, in particular within the traditionalist echelons of diplomacy. President Wilson's new moral framework for the conduct of international affairs was not only against the balance of power – it contradicted the stated policy objectives of *all* the belligerents. As such, Wilson's idealist and interventionist policy also 'challenged the conceptual foundations of traditional European power politics'.[45]

In Britain, under the leadership of Sir Robert Vansittart, 'a staunch proponent of "old diplomacy" and the epitome of the generation of Foreign Office mandarins who apprenticed in the art of diplomacy in the immediate years before 1914',[46] Foreign Office officials continued to argue for the practical importance of the balance of power: Britain had no choice but to follow the traditional, practical recipe of the balance of power, as

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[41] *Ibid.*, p. 77.
[42] Schmidt, *The Political Discourse,* pp. 85–86.
[43] Schmidt, Brian C. 2002. 'On the History and Historiography of International Relations', pp. 3–22 in Walter Carlsnaes et al. (eds), *Handbook of International Relations.* London: Sage, p. 13.
[44] Schmidt, *The Political Discourse,* pp. 146–147.
[45] Jackson, *Beyond the Balance*, p. 103.
[46] Roi, M.L. and Brian J. C. McKercher, '"Ideal" and "Punch-bag": Conflicting Views of the Balance of Power and Their Influence on Interwar British Foreign Policy', *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 12(2):47-78, p. 63.

international politics had once again demonstrated the prevalence of the kind of *Machtpolitik* seen as characteristic of the late 19th century.[47]

Also in France, Wilson's proclamations were met with opposition. The practical logic at play amongst French diplomats and state leaders was one that looked back to the power-political tradition in the era of French predominance. From the late 19th century, teaching staff of the *École libre des sciences politiques*, which held a near-monopoly on training diplomats, were conservative liberals, including practicing diplomats, with an 'impatience with abstract principles'.[48] They considered the balance of power the most practical of tools, and it was a well-established concept within the French foreign ministry.[49] Clemenceau refused to accept Wilson's stance on the balance of power, declaring: 'there is an old system of alliances called the Balance of Power – this system of alliances, which I do not renounce, will be my guiding thought at the [Paris] Peace Conference',[50] the conference which set the terms of peace following the First World War. Clemenceau's speech was met with cheers in France, but was widely criticised on the other side of the Atlantic. The USA will isolate itself, US media argued, unless British and French leaders can succeed in establishing a *League of Nations*.[51]

The controversy involving the abstraction or reality of the balance thus continued in the 20th century. Wilson attacked the balance, and promoted the League of Nations as an alternative to it. All the same, balance-of-power rhetoric was *conserved within the aristocratic, diplomatic tradition*, and seen as the 'real' prudent practice of international affairs against the liberal dreams of political leaders. This is crucial, because international law, by upholding a distance to the balance of power, also had helped redefined what politics *was*: it was the practice of the balance of power – and that practice now rested squarely with diplomats and European foreign ministries, the 'aristocratic international' covering the system, not only single states. And it was precisely this echelon of society, this 'aristocratic international', expressing the real and traditional, prudent political

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[47] *Ibid.*, p. 69.
[48] Jackson, *Beyond the Balance*, p. 54.
[49] *Ibid.*, p. 49; Challener, Richard D. 1953. 'The French Foreign Office: The Era of Philippe Berthelot', pp. 49–85 in Gordon A. Craig and Felix Gilbert (eds) *The Diplomats 1919–1939*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, pp. 62–64.
[50] In MacMillan, Margaret. 2001. *Paris 1919: Six Months That Changed the World*. New York: Random House, p. 23.
[51] Ambrosius, Lloyd E. 1987. *Woodrow Wilson and the American Diplomatic Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p.54.

practice, that would be the basis for IR to theorise about international relations, converting precisely this practice into its own theory.

From the Second World War to the Cold War

As in the 1870s and 1920s, a 'balance of power anxiety' unfolded as the Cold War set in: Who would be the new guarantor of world order? Who would secure a new balance of power?[52] In the USA, numerous analysts and politicians asked what the 'new' world would look like. Moreover, 'will it be our kind of world? What *is* our kind of world?'[53] However, after the Second World War, US arguments on the balance had changed. The USA, one argument went, had 'converted' to the balance of power.[54]

In 1947 DeWitt Clinton Poole, a centrally placed US diplomat and presidential envoy, could credibly argue that the balance of power was an *American* idea. Freedom is to be had only in 'a world in which power is widely distributed and balanced; a world of complex balance of power'. Furthermore, a complex balance of power was for Poole a requirement for a working UN. The new invention, the atomic bomb, had not changed this, he maintained. A balance was needed also in the nuclear age.[55] Some agreed – even more disagreed.

Shortly after the first test of a nuclear weapon, the military strategist Bernard Brodie – 'American Clausewitz' and to-be RAND employee – had published *The Absolute Weapon.* [56] He argued that it was not the use itself, but the threat of use of this new weapon that could lead to peace and stability. This seemed to promise a revision of the workings of the international system. In the 1950s, therefore, some started arguing that the balance of power was irrelevant because of nuclear weapons technology.[57]

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[52] Guilhot, 'American Katechon', p. 236.
[53] Poole, DeWitt Clinton. 1947. 'Balance of Power', *Life Magazine* 23(12):76–94, p. 76.
[54] Ingrim, Robert. 1952. 'The Conversion to the Balance of Power', *The Review of Politics* 14(2):233–243.
[55] Poole, 'Balance of Power'.
[56] Brodie, Bernard (ed). 1946. *The Absolute Weapon: Atomic Power and World Order.* New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., p. 76; Sheehan, *The Balance of Power History & Theory,* p.171.
[57] Burns, Arthur Lee. 1957. 'From Balance to Deterrence: A Theoretical Analysis', *World Politics* 9(4):494–529.

With the onset of the nuclear age, there was a sense of 'unprecedented urgency'.[58] For some, 'analysis took precedence over synthesis';[59] 'the traditional forms of practical reason and statecraft, which emphasized prudence, experience, deliberation, and consultation, seemed inadequate to the challenge, as outmoded as conventional weapons in comparison with nuclear arsenals'.[60] Civilian scientists challenged the authority of the military establishment, arguing that the military's traditional ways of understanding war and conflict were irrelevant for the *tabula rasa* nuclear wars of the future – they were neither scientific nor based on rationality. The prospect of a completely new world, with nuclear weapons, and potentially without any balance of power at all, led many to focus on decisions and rationality, in tension with historical practice and tradition. The nuclear arms race, the 'balance of terror', the offense/defence duel, and how these scientists and policymakers treated it was in many respects the apogee of the intense debates about statistics, measurements and bean counting, calculations, and prediction of trajectories we saw emerge in the 1800s.[61]

However, now, those defending the balance of power increasingly argued that the new scientific rationality had gone *too far*. Whereas some held that the balance had become irrelevant because of nuclear weapons, others defended the old, practical lessons from European diplomacy, and the concept of the balance of power. In 1951, Herbert Butterfield, in a Chatham House address, defended the balance of power also in a nuclear age.[62] So did Robert Ingrim, arguing that the balance of power was still relevant, and that the concept could not be blamed for the world wars. The USA is not the holder of the balance, but a defender of it.[63] Glenn H. Snyder, in 1965, claimed that the 'balance of terror' was merely a sub-category of the most general theory of equilibrium, the balance of power. The presence of nuclear arsenals would only modify the balance.[64] Morgenthau argued that nuclear policy was not a foreign policy tool, but a means of ensuring that the national interest can be supported by traditional means. Nuclear policy is a background

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[58] Erickson, Paul et al. 2013. *How Reason Almost Lost Its Mind: The Strange Career of Cold War Rationality*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, p. 3.

[59] *Ibid.*, p. 4.

[60] *Ibid.*, p. 3.

[61] See Freedman, Lawrence. 1986. 'The First Two Generations of Nuclear Strategists', pp. 735-778 in Peter Paret, *Makers of Modern Strategy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

[62] Butterfield, Herbert. 1951. 'The Scientific versus the Moralistic Approach in International Affairs', *International Affairs* 27(4):411–422.

[63] Ingrim, 'The Conversion'.

[64] Snyder, Glenn H. 1965. 'The Balance of Power and the Balance of Terror', pp. 184–201 in Seabury, *Balance of Power*; Sheehan, *The Balance of Power: History & Theory*, p. 170.

condition which must be managed though cooperation, where peace and stability are the ultimate goal. Thus, the balance of power is not obsolete, he maintained: it operates, day to day, in the shadow of nuclear policy – which is a different matter entirely.[65]

As a reaction to the prominence of the 'Cold War rationality', more conservative IR scholars deployed the balance-of-power concept against attempts at a formal, quantitative, and depoliticised rationalisation of science, seeking to establish their own academic discipline. However, they had to cater to 'science' themselves to gain legitimacy for IR as a discipline.

International Relations, the practice of theory, and theory as practice

International lawyers used the balance of power to establish a contrast between their own disciplinary knowledge and the outside, defined by engaged political practice. The exact opposite happened in IR – the new discipline incorporated the balance of power as part of its professional identity. IR thus came to serve as a new position from which to argue about the balance of power. Here my point is not to present innovative 'important thinkers' or texts, but that balance-of-power rhetoric now featured also within the context of the academic discipline of IR. This was a new space where the work of IR scholars 'would not only find a consistent and dedicated readership but appear as intellectual pillars of a new discipline and be read within a self-contained space of reflection'.[66]

After the First World War, the idea of coordinating human affairs and of world unification 'passed rapidly from the sphere of the literary idealist into that of the methodical, practical man', H.G. Wells had maintained.[67] That was indeed a common argument. Already in 1922, William Dunning, President of the APSA, had held that theories of political science and the practice of international relations were 'hopelessly at variance'. Dunning favoured political practice, which theory failed to reflect.[68] In IR, *practice became its own theory.*

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[65] Morgenthau, Hans J. 1969. *A New Foreign Policy for the United States.* New York: Frederick A. Praeger, pp. 207–209; id. 1973[1948]. *Politics Among Nations.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
[66] *Ibid.*, p. 15.
[67] Wells, Herbert George. 1919. 'The Idea of a League of Nations', *The Atlantic Monthly* Vol 123, p.107.
[68] Schmidt, *The Political Discourse,* p. 175.

Many of the early IR scholars in the USA were émigrés from Germany, inspired by Prussian and German theories of the state and the balance of power. Such German perspectives on power politics and the centrality of national positions were crucial to the formation of IR as a discipline.[69] As Kenneth Thompson said of Morgenthau, he had 'translated certain European ideas to fit the American experience'−these émigré scholars criticised the prevailing US intellectual scene by continuing a conversation based on Weimarian premises.[70]

Once again, after the Second World War, a 'balance of power anxiety' prevailed. What if, in some unprecedented way, there was no balance, order, or structure to international politics at all? Did the Cold War world imply 'the end of an era and the descent into political anomie?'[71] The initial concerns of many IR scholars went parallel to these discussions: Who would be the new guarantor of world order, and how? Was there a balance of power? or who could secure a new one? The new discipline of International Relations aimed to contribute to resolving these questions by reintroducing the balance-of-power concept as central to the practice of statecraft, as opposed to abstractions and theoretical knowledge, including the detached Cold-War rationality.[72] For the émigré scholars in the USA, however, there was a problem: some kind of scientific legitimacy, some kind of *theory*, was required. They also had to cater to an audience of policymakers by emphasising the possibility of establishing some 'general laws' or regularities in historical experiences, even if politics could not be contained within the limits of strict reason.[73]

Of central importance to these debates and discussions in the field during the Cold War was the 1954 'Conference on International Politics' organised by the Rockefeller Association.[74] This conference, convened to discuss 'the possibility, nature and limits of theory in international relations', was according to Nicolas Guilhot, the first meeting that explicitly aimed to carve out a disciplinary jurisdiction for IR by 'grounding it in an underlying theory' to establish its definite autonomy from other fields of social inquiry,

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[69] Guzzini, 'The Ends'; Guilhot, 'American Katechon', p. 231; Schmidt, *The Political Discourse.*
[70] Guilhot, 'American Katechon', p. 244.
[71] *Ibid.,* p. 236.
[72] *Ibid.*
[73] *Ibid.*, p. 225.
[74] Guilhot, *The Invention.*

like international law, but also political science.[75] The purpose of a theory of international relations was to isolate the study of power in international politics from purely scientific rationality and behaviourism. Realist IR scholars *favoured reason over rationality*: they opposed rationalism by invoking the importance of politics and decisions – the contingent and at times irrational processes of international politics. The early realists aimed to distil an academic field of international relations from the German debates (presented in the previous chapter), emphasising political maxims, but adapted to a US context. To this end, they fashioned a theory distinct from both rational behaviourism and international law.

If the emerging IR discipline is a context for the balance of power rhetoric, so are the particularities of the USA. As noted, disciplines could prevail in part due to their institutionalisation in universities. The same scholars who faced the dilemma of historical practice and academic theory had championed the German university model in the USA, which in many respects was at the roots of the dilemma itself: it concerned the relationship between science and politics, as Max Weber had discussed in the Prussian/German context.[76]

The legitimacy of science is based on distinguishing it from non-scientific interests. As seen, international lawyers did this by constructing a separation between their own knowledge, and the world of subjective, engaged politics, seen to be embodied in the balance of power. However, the legitimacy of science *also* builds on demonstrating compatibility between science and the public interest. This came into the spotlight in the USA in the 1950s and 1960s, when a cycle of social protests questioned the traditional duality between science and politics. This triggered 'new ways to maintain credibility simultaneously as objective scientists and as political actors serving the public good'.[77] For example, various public-interest science organisations were formed in the USA, representing 'pure' science but with the responsibility to serve the public good.[78]

Scholars sought to demonstrate 'their commitment to serving the public without undermining the sources of their real political utility: the claim that scientific evidence is

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[75] *Ibid.* p. 7.
[76] Schmidt, *The Political Discourse,* p. 175.
[77] Moore, Kelly. 1996. 'Organizing Integrity: American Science and the Creation of Public Interest Organizations, 1955–1975', *American Journal of Sociology* 101(6): 1592–1627, p. 1593.
[78] *Ibid.*

untainted by political interests'.[79] This is the important boundary work that goes into the establishment of a scientific disciplinary jurisdiction,[80] which is not dependent on internal factors only – not even as regards 'purely scientific' contents. These dynamics were evident in the USA in general, but assumed particular urgency with the establishment of International Relations.

Speaking truth to power

One reason why early IR scholars insisted on a *scientific* justification for practical ends was the new situation of the USA after the world wars, having to cope with the 'necessity' of exercising global hegemony.[81] IR scholars set out to educate the USA about the *real* practice of world politics – as opposed to the abstractions of internationalism and international law, with Wilson's anti-balance of power stance and illusive moral 'crusades' being the prime example.[82] Morgenthau's *A New Foreign Policy for the United States* even offered an instructional to-do list of seven points for US foreign policy as its conclusion.[83] Arnold Toynbee warned that the USA was 'unprepared to assume its new hegemonic responsibilities' after the transfer of power that had taken place following two world wars. He urged the Rockefeller Foundation to prepare the USA for this.[84] The Foundation organised the 1954 Conference, intended to provide the necessary intellectual groundwork to educate US foreign policy practitioners. The central theme was the tension between the requirements of scholarly knowledge production on the one hand, while being relevant to international political practice and foreign policy on the other. From the start, the scholarly discipline of IR was linked to engaged political practice.[85]

Unlike the field of international law, which used the balance of power to construct and uphold a distance to political practice, IR scholars deliberately construed their view as being the purely 'practical' aspects of politics. Many pioneers in the field subscribed to

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[79] *Ibid.*, p. 1620.
[80] Gieryn, Tomas F. 1983. 'Boundary Work and the Demarcation of Science from Nonscience: Strains and Interests in Professional Ideologies of Scientists', *American Sociological Review* 48(6): 781–795; Abbott, Andrew. 1995. 'Things of Boundaries', *Social Research* 62(4):857–882.
[81] Guilhot, *The Invention*, p. 10; Morgenthau, Hans J. 1962. *The Purpose of American Politics*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
[82] Morgenthau, *Politics Among* Nations, pp. 253-254.
[83] Morgenthau, *A New Foreign Policy*, pp. 241–244.
[84] Guilhot, 'American Katechon', p. 236.
[85] Guilhot, *The Invention*.

some kind of Weberian or Nietzschean view of the human condition as clashing wills to power, between national positions, often resting on historical foundations. Early IR scholars were therefore troubled with the effects of the historical arguments addressed in previous chapters of this project, with a marked difference between practical-political and abstract-theoretical knowledge. Scientific reason and political action were not necessarily commensurable – but this gap now had to be bridged, or at least clarified. As Reinhold Niebuhr noted, all contributions to the Conference on International Politics dealt with 'the relationship of theory to practice'.[86]

The 'reality check' of early realist IR theories, then, ultimately referred to the world of political practice, not to scholarly knowledge.[87] However, realism also needed a scientific justification, not least because of the import of German university ideals to the USA. The problem is, if the balance of power is based on practical, engaged knowledge, acting as one is 'thrown' into the world as Heidegger put it, and this is the benchmark for assessment, why would realism need a theoretical justification at all? It needs one, because if 'tradition' is all there is, that would undermine the realist claim to 'realness', as opposed to idealism or normative liberalism.[88]

The balance of power in IR

Precisely because they were relatively isolated as *scientists,* scholars could legitimately give advice to policymakers. Confronted with an all-pervasive web of rationalisation, not only in academia but also throughout society, a scientific defence was needed – to establish IR as a discipline, and to be able to serve the public interest and be relevant to policymakers in the new 'American century'. Therefore, in order to communicate effectively with policymakers and boost their own scientific credibility, IR theory would have to be connected to the dominant and broadly accepted 'Cold War rationality'[89] that emphasised science as consisting of laws and regularities.

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[86] 'Minutes from the Conference on International Politics. May 7–8, 1954', in Guilhot, *The Invention*, p. 240.

[87] Guzzini, 'The Enduring Dilemmas', p. 546.

[88] *Ibid.*, p. 548.

[89] See Erickson et al., *How Reason Almost Lost Its Mind*.

The answer to practical problems like the above is often, as sociologists of science have shown, to make 'specific kinds of rhetorical claims and by organizing around objects as subjects of legitimate action'.[90] Abstractions are needed to legitimate a separate professional jurisdiction,[91] and in IR, given the dilemma between historical practical tradition and theory, the balance-of-power concept was well suited to cater for all these needs, as a foundation for authoritative knowledge about international politics.

The problem was that, because a scientific justification was needed, the distinction between theory and practice became less clear-cut. To have legitimacy, a theory of International Relations had to be constructed in the language of science – but how to add a theoretical justification onto the more 'practical wisdom' advocated by these scholars? As shown in the previous chapter, some Prussian and German authors had maintained that theory was unnecessary for theoreticians and practitioners alike, since practical knowledge was superior in any case. Now, however, needing a theoretical justification, the new rhetoric in IR was that 'the maxims of practical knowledge *are* a scientific theory' – practice was *already* a theory, so there was no need for a *new* one, or for any abstract models.[92] What IR scholars meant by 'theory', then, 'had a highly practical value'.[93] It was a praxeology for guiding policy and defining the purpose of political leadership.[94] The rhetorical strategy employed was *to make practice its own theory*. The historical practice of the balance of power became its own theory, as a conservative defence of the historical reservoir of practical human knowledge on how to conduct prudent and situation-aware foreign policy and international politics. In turn, this 'solution' to the distinction between theory and practice – that practice is its own theory – predisposed any theory of International Relations to be a theory of the *status quo*, privileging tradition.[95]

That being said, making the balance of power the principal theoretical element of IR was not only the result of a strategic decision to become more relevant to policymakers through establishing scientific authority – it was also what was genuinely seen to be closest to a theory when one searched for historical, empirical regularities. Morgenthau,

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[90] Moore, 'Organizing Integrity', p. 1621.

[91] Abbott, *The System of Professions,* p. 9.

[92] Guzzini, 'The Enduring Dilemmas', p. 528.

[93] Guilhot, *The Invention*, p. 21.

[94] Dean Rusk, in 'Minutes from the Conference on International Politics. May 7–8, 1954' in Guilhot, *The Invention*, p. 240; *ibid.*, pp. 22–23.

[95] Guilhot, *The Invention,* p. 23.

for example, wrote that it was 'this repetitive character of international politics, that is, the configurations of the balance of power, that lends itself to theoretical systematization'.[96] The practice of the balance was introduced into a new context: that of a legitimating move for a new disciplinary jurisdiction based on science, formalised as a practical 'maxim' – and, for precisely that reason, deemed as close to a theory of international relations as was possible.

If the balance of power is considered the defining practice of international relations and if a theory is needed to establish IR as a scientific discipline, then the balance of power concept is what allowed the IR discipline to exist and turn out the way it did. In this sense, then, IR is yet another effect of balance-of-power rhetoric.

Weber, Morgenthau, and the balance of power

Realists like Morgenthau were above all concerned with *politics.* Many feared that politics itself would succumb to the abstract reasoning and scientism of behavioural, experimental 'situations', with a right or wrong answer to the question of how to act within given parameters.[97] Politics defied science and reason by its very nature. However, if one were to understand politics scientifically, this should be done by distilling prudential maxims for action, not abstract scientific principles.[98]

Morgenthau wrote that 'politics must be understood through reason, yet it is not in reason that it finds its model' – that was rather in the acute awareness of the specificities of a given historical situation, and with reference to tradition. History was background knowledge of experiences, a laboratory of prudent policy from which to draw practical maxims.[99] Thus, for Morgenthau, concepts like the balance of power always referred to a specific political situation: they were not the legal abstractions of international law.

His criticism of liberalism concerned exactly this: liberal concepts were 'abstract generalities which may be applied to any political situation but which are not peculiar to

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[96] Morgenthau, Hans. 2000 [1970]. 'The Intellectual and Political Functions of Theory', pp. 43-54 in Andrew Linklater (ed), *International Relations. Critical Concepts in Political Science*. London: Routledge, p. 45.
[97] Erickson et al., *How Reason Almost Lost Its Mind.*
[98] Guilhot, *The Invention,* p. 2.
[99] *Ibid.*

any particular one'.[100] These lines from the poet Robert Bridges offer a concise summary of Morgenthau's position: 'Our stability is but balance; and wisdom lies / in masterful administration of the unforeseen'.[101]

Many publications have discussed Morgenthau and his work.[102] Most note the tensions in Morgenthau's writing: between an international society and Realpolitik,[103] between tradition and science,[104] between the normative and the descriptive,[105] and between the religious and 'worldly'.[106] In my view, all these tensions, which these authors have correctly identified, are instances of the negotiation between abstraction and reality, theory and practice. As Morgenthau's core concept is the balance of power, he is therefore part of a centuries-long debate over the reality of the concept.

Richard Little[107] argues that the main tension in Morgenthau's work is that between an associational view of the balance, seeing it as part of an international society, and an adversarial use of the balance, whose emergence I traced historically in the previous chapter. I hold that the tension in Morgenthau's treatment of the balance lies rather in his mixing of the balance of power as empirical and analytical claim. Morgenthau, throughout *Politics Among Nations*, for example, writes about the balance of power – 'it' – as doing things. But the book is also full of quotes from diplomats and political practitioners, 'thrown' into and facing the world at various different historical junctures, and using balance-of-power rhetoric. Morgenthau talks about the balance being used also as a pretext to cover for other interests. In turn, Morgenthau the scholar uses all quotes to support his project of establishing an analytic of international politics, based on the balance of power.

Not only did Morgenthau and IR reject the abstractions of international law. As opposed to the calculations and predictions associated with the nuclear arms race and the 'balance

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[100] In Guilhot, 'American Katechon', p. 240.
[101] As Morgenthau quotes in *Politics Among Nations*, p. 169.
[102] See *inter alia* Levine, Daniel J. 2012. *Recovering International Relations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; Guzzini, 'The Enduring Dilemmas'; Guilhot, 'American Katechon'; Little, Richard. 2007. *The Balance of Power in International Relations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Jervis, Robert. 1994. 'Hans Morgenthau, Realism, and the Scientific Study of International Politics' *Social Research* 61(4):853–876; Williams, Michael C. (ed). *Realism Reconsidered: The Legacy of Hans Morgenthau in International Relations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
[103] Little, *The Balance of Power*.
[104] Guzzini, 'The Enduring Dilemmas'.
[105] Levine, *Recovering IR*.
[106] Guilhot, 'American Katechon'.
[107] Little, *The Balance of Power*.

of terror', Morgenthau rejects the possibility of measuring and calculating the balance with any precision – 'the uncertainty of power calculations', he writes, 'is inherent in the nature of national power itself'.[108] Despite being 'uncertain, unreal, and inadequate',[109] the balance of power *still* remains the basis for a general theory of international politics. Morgenthau rejects the basis for a behaviourist theory, instead embracing historical regularities as its own theory, built into the world, so to speak. Since the balance cannot be calculated, it cannot be applied, and it is therefore 'unreal', he writes. However, this only means that a 'nation must try to have at least a margin of safety which will allow it to make erroneous calculations and *still maintain the balance of power*'.[110] The balance is both unreal and real: it is 'precise' because of its vagueness. Every state must aim for superiority, and not explicitly for a balance of power. However, the balance is still a result of this struggle for power. Here we have it, clear as day: the tension I started out with in the introduction and Chapter 1, in the balance being both analytical device and practical politics.

What is it, then – 'practice', or 'theory'? According to Morgenthau, the balance of power was at some point *discovered*. The balance had been operating for thousands of years; it was then discovered in the 16th century, and thereafter increasingly made into an object for theoretical reflection. Still, it is the *same* balance all along, defined as a stable, historical practice. What Morgenthau does not address is the reflection upon reflections, which is what he himself is doing. Morgenthau's own work remains unclearly positioned between practice and theory, with elements of both thrown into the mix. This is a result of the aim of making practice its own theory – of integrating a concern with practical maxims, with the requirements of a science of IR for public usefulness.

The scholarly distinction between theoretical and empirical claims concerning the balance of power, and between analysis and practice, became confounded as the scholarly field of IR was being formed. Although Morgenthau was influenced by Max Weber's *substantive* writings on power politics, because of his own opposition to 'liberal abstractions', he could not take the full Weberian route – the only sort of theory that was allowed concerned the historical regularities of the practice of state élites, which in turn is how things *really* are. There is theory, but it is limited by the real-world practices of state elites

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[108] Morgenthau, *Politics Among* Nations, p. 205.
[109] *Ibid.*, p. 203.
[110] *Ibid.*, p. 208.

and *their* theorisation. Morgenthau's methodology did not allow for the introduction of new theoretical concepts that were not rooted in practice. He was 'stuck' with the balance – a concept seen as being the reality of prudent and traditional diplomatic practice.[111]

In this, there is no space for the analyst, no space for a Weberian reflective distance to the world. Realists did not prioritise science, other than deferring to the scientific orthodoxy of the day because of concerns for legitimacy. The Weberian prioritisation of science or political judgement, as in sociology, was not possible because the emphasis on traditional practices, automatically limiting what the world really is. The scientific legitimation of the realist was the very limited one of making practice its own theory.[112]

Practice became its own theory when the early 'realists' in the USA intended to distil maxims from the 18th century into social scientific theory. Other rules of validity would then apply.[113] In contrast to the more positive sciences, like sociology or indeed international law, the IR discipline experienced no 'Weberian moment' in its early history emphasising social *science*, because of the conservative bias of relying on traditional *practice* as its own theory. There was no space for reflecting upon and making the constitutive differences between scholarly knowledge and that of practitioners into a foundation for scientific theory. This is reflected in the fact that much IR theory still operates with the ideal that scholarly language should imitate the language of practitioners, a suggestion not observed in practice, nor logically required on any level.[114]

Conclusions

As seen, the emphasis on the 'public interest' of Europe, or a European international society, had disappeared. The state was a first principle of international politics, and the balance of power implied national positions. To fashion their own professional jurisdiction, international law rejected the balance, also rejecting what international lawyers themselves started calling 'international anarchy' in the last three decades of the 19th century, as a way of describing the operation of what they considered the politically

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[111] See Levine, *Recovering IR*, pp. 115–134.
[112] Guzzini, 'The Ends'.
[113] *Ibid.*, p. 528.
[114] *Ibid.*, p. 556.

engaged balance of power, as opposed to the scientific search for principles of government.

The 19th and 20th century disputes, contentions, and debates involving the balance of power moved into the emergent academic field of IR, which sustained and reproduced the concept, creating a disciplinary jurisdiction for IR. The balance of power concept, imported from Germany, was appropriated in IR to account for the practices that were grouped together to form the concept itself.[115] IR scholars appropriated the concept of the balance of power to provide a theory of real, practical politics, as opposed to the abstractions of lawyers and liberal political leaders alike.

Not only was the balance of power imported to America from the German tradition. Also the view of education and the separation between politics and academia came from Germany. Thus, the balance of power concept came to America with *the need for a theory to justify its existence* as something separate from politics, something with a value of its own, which could consequently be *applied* to politics. A balance of power *theory* was also needed to construct the emerging discipline of IR.

The balance of power became a solution to the tension between 'theory' and 'practice' because of its vagueness. It is worth noting that at the 1954 Conference on International Politics, the details of the balance of power were not discussed at length. Nor in much of the most prominent work on the balance by early realists is there much detailed discussion of what the balance of power as theoretical concept really entails and means, except for references to historical cases as 'prototypes', and highly general formulations. And this, exactly, was the advantage: in its vagueness lies its specificity, as contingent political practice.

Practice was its own theory, and there was no attempt to turn practice into the basis for a social science. Building on Prussian and German influences, IR experienced no later 'Weberian moment' whereby a reflective distance to practical politics could be upheld. Without any reflexive distance, the result is a tautology – the analytical concept of the balance of power is justified *because* it reflects the practitioner's concept of a balance of power.

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[115] Culler, Jonathan. 1997. *Literary Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 5.

Conclusions

More goes into a concept than what can be formalised and made explicit in a definition: that has been one of my starting assumptions. Strictly bounded and formalised concepts will leave too much out of the account.[1] Still, there can be precision in vagueness, which does not prevent using words in a manner perfectly suited for their purposes – as Keynes said, 'you can think accurately and effectively long before you can, so to speak, photograph your thoughts'.[2] The concept of the balance of power is vague and indeterminate in this way, also because it emerged from a practical tradition of use and from practical maxims, and was only gradually imported into what came to be academia and science. This has resulted in the dilemma between the balance of power as a category of analysis, where its use is judged according to pre-established standards of what we call 'scientific research', and as a category of practice, where its use is judged according to whatever historical, contextual and intersubjective understandings and purposes might have been present at a particular time and place.

This study has traced the genealogy of the balance-of-power concept empirically and concretely – from its emergence in England in the mid-17th century based on a domestic republican tradition, to its elaboration at the British-founded University of Göttingen in Hanover, on to Prussia and Germany, before finally ending up in the USA with the emergence of the discipline of International Relations (IR). I have shown how the development of the balance of power is closely linked to the conceptions of polities and their relations. Therefore, the stability or instability of the international system or the international order has less to do with the balance of power 'itself', than with the deployment of that concept in practice.

As opposed to treating the concept as a 'law' or timeless principle of international politics, I identified four inflection points in the trajectory of the balance of power, and one episteme shift. The balance of power was not a stock-in trade 'realist' concept from the beginning: the episteme shift concerns how the balance of power shifted, from being a concept built on republican argumentation of protecting the common and public interest

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[1] Coates, John. 1996. *The Claims of Common Sense.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 55.
[2] John Maynard Keynes, lecture 6 November 1933, in *ibid.*, p. 117.

of Europe from threats of dominance and 'Universal Monarchy', and came to draw more on liberal arguments – not protecting anything, but concerned with atomistic nation-states in competition and with national positions.

I have examined how actors have used and invoked the concept in public settings. Here one paradox is that as IR appropriated the concept of the balance of power as a key theoretical term, the use of the concept seems to have waned amongst practising politicians and diplomats. I have not been able to identify many controversies that centrally involved the balance of power since the 1954 Rockefeller 'Conference on International Politics'. Indeed, science and academia, by heeding traditions of statecraft and practice, and incorporating these into structural theories, have been 'conservative' in the most literal sense – conserving and retaining a practical concept from the past in analytical garb.

That being said, however, today we may be witnessing a new foregrounding of the balance of power as a concept in the international politics of the early 21st century.

The Obama administration has recently argued for an 'East Asia-Pacific Rebalance', 'positioning the United States to better promote its interests as the center of global politics'.[3] China has reacted to the US balancing rhetoric, pointing out in a party/state-approved spring 2013 Defence White Paper that 'some country [the United States] has strengthened its Asia-Pacific military alliances, expanded its military presence in the region, and frequently makes the situation there tenser'.[4] According to Vice Minister in the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office, He Yafei, the 'rebalance' worries China 'in so far as it has many negative connotations.'[5]

In summing up the negative connotations, and countering the US balance rhetoric, China has invoked the supposed 'ancient roots' of the balance-of-power concept, arguing that the USA and China, 'the incumbent superpower and the biggest rising developing nation',

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[3] U.S. Department of State. 2013. *The East Asia-Pacific Rebalance: Expanding U.S. Engagement*. Washington, DC: Bureau of Public Affairs. Available at: http://go.usa.gov/3mhpB [28.12.2015].

[4] In Lampton, David M. 2013. 'A New Type of Major-Power Relationship: Seeking a Durable Foundation for U.S.–China Ties', *Asia Policy* 16.

[5] N.a. 2015. 'Important Questions Face China–U.S. Relations', *China–U.S. Focus,* 01 Sep 2015, Available at: http://www.chinausfocus.com/foreign-policy/important-questions-face-china-u-s-relations/ [28.12.2015].

'face the dilemma of falling into the "Thucydides Trap"'[6] – referring to the Melian Dialogue, where Thucydides stated that 'the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must' – taken to be an expression of the balance-of-power idea. However, China 'does not subscribe to the outdated logic that a country will inevitably seek hegemony when it grows strong […] China will never follow the path of big powers which seek hegemony once they grow strong.'[7]

In 2002, one year after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, President Bush's Assistant for National Security Affairs, Condoleezza Rice, delivered a lecture entitled 'A Balance of Power that Favors Freedom'.[8] President Bush's National Security strategy, she explained, 'calls on America to use our position of unparalleled strength and influence to create a balance of power that favors freedom' against 'tyrants' and 'terrorists'.

Further, 'today's threats come less from massing armies than from small, shadowy bands of terrorists', and just as the 19th century politicians at the Congress of Vienna had argued concerning the 'equilibrium' of Europe, Rice held that threats come 'less from strong states than from weak or failed states'. Further, as was the case during the Congress and beyond, the balance of power can justify preventive attacks: 'our Nation is properly focused as never before on preventing attacks against us before they happen […] as a matter of common sense, the United States must be prepared to take action when necessary, before threats have fully materialized'.

The influence of liberal arguments is evident in a statement that almost echoes Woodrow Wilson's 'new diplomacy' that aimed to replace the old practices of secret diplomacy and balance of power, but now linked to a new balance of power: 'We have an historic opportunity to break the destructive pattern of great power rivalry that has bedeviled the world since the rise of the nation state in the 17th century'.[9]

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[6] *Ibid*.

[7] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China. 2014. 'Xi Jinping Delivers Important Speech in Germany, Stressing China Will Unswervingly Adhere to the Path of Peaceful Development', Available at:
http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/topics_665678/xjpzxcxdsjhaqhfbfwhlfgdgblshlhgjkezzzbomzb_666590/t1143914.shtml [28.12.2015].

[8] Rice, Condoleezza. 2002. *A Balance of Power that Favors Freedom*. Wriston Lecture, 01 October 2002. New York: Manhattan Institute. Available at: https://www.manhattan-institute.org/html/2002-wriston-lecture-balance-power-favors-freedom-5566.html [28.12.2015].

[9] *Ibid.*

The possibilities of arguing for and against the balance of power in today's debates are conditioned by the historical arguments concerning the concept from 19th-century Germany, and how these were later introduced in a US context. The development from republicanist protection of the public interest to the individuation of states reached its full fruition in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, when the state became the first principle of international politics, and the balance was firmly associated with the practices of nation-states, emphasising the interaction of national positions in an 'international anarchy'. This had allowed Bismarck to dismiss Europe as a 'geographical notion'. And it was that Prussian/German state-centric conception of the balance that came to bear on the discipline of IR in the USA.

To understand how the conception of states as we know them in IR has emerged, it is crucial to realize how, earlier in the 19th century, the balance of power had been re-appropriated by liberally inclined politicians, and used to argue for the independence of all states and against the public interest, then embedded in the 'equilibrium' promoted by the interventionist great powers in the Congress of Vienna.

The way in which the public interest was conceptualised led to changes in the uses of the balance of power. Those who challenged the Congress of Vienna creatively re-invented the balance of power as the principal means of protecting state independence. The debate over the nature of the public interest thus stood between independent states versus the Congress diplomats' focus on intervening in the domestic affairs of smaller states in order to protect the social 'equilibrium'.

Those who challenged the Concert of Europe argued that the international order and national independence are clearly separated, and the latter cannot be sacrificed for the former. In these arguments the balance-of-power concept made a surprising return. One had to return to the 'classical' balance of power, but now *against* the Concert equilibrium as an expression of the public interest, against the great-power hegemony, or the 'collective Universal Monarchy', which was the Concert of Europe in the early decades of the 19th century.

Seen in retrospect, the rhetoric surrounding the Congress of Vienna is one source of international anarchy as a problem, because the Congress marks the first step on the way to individuating 'power states' and national positions. From Vienna on, the central

problem of international order increasingly turns on how to overcome anarchy between a certain number of measureable units with definable national positions – which originates in liberal styles of argumentation, against the republican focus on the orderly public interest as protection against arbitrary rule and dominance.

It was from here on that the balance of power increasingly emphasised national positions. The problem of a (European) order was not empire, not the public interest of Europe, but managing a delimited number of states and their interactions.

This, in turn, is indicative of an episteme shift: developments in the 19th century, after the Napoleonic Wars, reveal a major difference from the previous century. The rhetorical core of the concept of the balance of power shifts. The balance of power moves away from a general concern for the protection of the European public interest, and begins to centre on liberal freedoms and responsibility in the interplay between private interests, and concretely measurable and individuated states, which are to be protected from interference.

Whereas after the episteme shift, the 'liberty' to be protected was now more attuned to Hobbes' individualised definition of freedom as the 'absence of interference', it had previously been concerned with the systemic 'absence of arbitrary power'. The main concern in the 18th century had been to secure a communal liberty from systemic dominance and oppression – a republican defence of the public interest, or the commonwealth of Europe.

Those who reintroduced the balance in the 19th century harked back to this earlier period, citing the historical examples of the Ochakov controversy – where Prime Minister Pitt had been unsuccessful in using balance-of-power rhetoric to counter Russia's occupation – and the divisions of Poland in the name of a 'false' balance of power, to show what could happen if one neglected the balance of power, or used it in the wrong way. In the Ochakov controversy, interventions had emerged as a problem *sui generis*, based on precisely this distinction between the balance of power as useless abstraction, and the real interest of Britain. The episteme shift, and the decline and then the return of the balance in the 19th century, drew on late 18th-century debates concerning the status of the balance as abstraction or reality.

Also present-day balancing rhetoric concerns this central issue, the interaction between scholars and policymakers, and the distinction between abstractions and reality. Concerning China, Obama's National Security Adviser Tom Donilon argued against 'the premise put forward by some historians and theorists that a rising power and an established power are somehow destined for conflict. There is nothing preordained about such an outcome. It is not a law of physics, but a series of choices by leaders that lead to great power confrontation.'[10]

One commentator noted: 'trained in historical fatalism and the realist theory of international politics, American analysts are inclined to think that a rising China will inevitably challenge U.S. interests and a collision between Beijing and Washington is all but certain'.[11] If the U.S. believes it must prepare for this, it could have dangerous policy consequences. 'However, mindful of this narrative, China offered to construct a new model of relations with the U.S. If successful, this attempt can help both sides to avert "the tragedy of great-power politics", avoid the "Thucydides' trap" and prove historical fatalism wrong'.

In her speech, Condoleezza Rice favoured the practical-political reality over the abstractions of theory. She argued explicitly against the abstract debate between realists and idealists in International Relations, holding that they only 'obscure reality', whereas, in 'real life, power and values are married completely'. Thus, 'to build a balance of power that favors freedom, we must also extend the peace by extending the benefits of liberty and prosperity as broadly as possible'.

The paradox between theory and practice, abstraction and reality, became particularly evident with the emergence of IR as an academic discipline, with all the associated sociological dynamics inherent to academia and professional fields, and the explicit commitment to the (social) sciences. The 'conservative' function of academia comes into effect once such maxims and practical experiences cease to be commonsensical and taken

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[10] In Lampton, 'A New Type'.
[11] N.a. 2015. 'Thinking Beyond Conflict', *China–U.S. Focus*, June 01, 2015, Available at: http://www.chinausfocus.com/foreign-policy/managing-differences-key-to-new-model-of-china-us-relations/#sthash.Y3NEbL5d.dpuf [28.12.2015].

for granted, but – as Stefano Guzzini notes – still must gain authority by recourse to arguments based on 'how things really are'.[12]

In arguing this, Guzzini points to the IR theory of realism. Because of this dilemma between the focus on traditional practices of diplomats on the one hand, and the need to legitimate this through theory, he argues, realism has failed to translate such maxims into scientific laws. The dilemma consists in that scholars must either concentrate on improving practical knowledge, or on 'logical persuasiveness' – but the one would undermine and discredit the other.[13]

However, I have shown that this is a variant of the more *general* dilemma which emerged with Justi and others in the mid-1700s, as seen in Chapter 4, between reliance on tradition and objective, detached explanations of why this is relevant for our times, on the basis of efficiency and utility, and also on some universal principle – be it 'truth', 'natural law', 'natural philosophy', religion, or modern-day social science. Ultimately, it is a dilemma between abstract, universalist categories (however justified) and categories of 'real' practice (however defined). The universalist impulse must point to an unshakeable reality that cannot be overcome. To be relevant, the practical must counter such constructs. When these two come together, various forms of the same dilemma occur – between conservatism opposing abstract, ideal constructs, and the radical and critical, opposing the apparent. The conservative is oriented towards the *status quo*, whilst the radical questions the traditional and aims to look behind the scenes to question that same *status quo*.[14] This played out in the debates initiated by Justi in the mid-1700s, against the traditionalist defence of English, republican-inspired balance-of-power arguments. The distinction between abstraction and reality was triggered by debates at the British university in Hanover, Göttingen University, where the balance of power had become linked to international law, and the distinction made there between abstraction and reality.

The balance-of-power principle itself had come to be opposed by using this distinction between useless and abstract knowledge on the one hand, and the real, practical and useful on the other. Individual state interests had become increasingly separate from the 'public interest' of the system, through links to international law.

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[12] Guzzini, Stefano. 2004. 'The Enduring Dilemmas of Realism in International Relations', *European Journal of International Relations* 10(4): 533–568, p. 535.
[13] *Ibid.*, p. 546.
[14] *Ibid.*, p. 553.

What was at stake at Göttingen was the balance-of-power concept as it had emerged in the context of the Dutch Wars of the late 17th century, used to oppose France. The balance of power had been employed against threats of hegemonic dominance – Universal Monarchy – to protect the public interest of Europe. The monarchs of Europe had represented their own polities, but they had to represent the public interest as well, which had been the common interest of Europe. It was here that the balance of power became stabilised as a concept, first linked to a European system, synchronising the domestic and the international according to English republican principles.

After the balance of power had become a counter-concept to Universal Monarchy, hegemony was rejected in theory, so other orders than a European empire or *res publica christiana* had to be devised. The problem was in many ways one of imperial reconstitution. It addressed European order and governance in the positive sense as the promotion of a European public interest or 'commonwealth' (literally the 'common wealth', meaning 'public welfare, general good') and negatively as the opposition to universal monarchy (see Chapter 2). 'Order' did not then imply anarchy, as is so often assumed when discussing the balance of power. Rather, when studying the balance-of-power rhetoric empirically, I find that it first appears as a means through which to establish hierarchies by means of authoritative justification. This hierarchy is visible already in the Utrecht Treaties; Austria tried to appeal to the dynastic order – but failed, as the balance of power was increasingly seen as a system to prevent *any* power from growing too big, and some polities gained a stronger claim to represent the 'public interest' than others (see Chapter 3). If the Congress of Vienna was largely a hierarchical affair, the Congress system of 1815–1822 had its origins in the systemic and hierarchical understanding of the balance of power, which picked up pace already from Utrecht on.

We can now return to the Figure 1 from the introduction, which is a summary of what has been demonstrated in terms of the episteme shift:

Time	Style of argumentation	Interest	Abstract-theoretical knowledge	Practical-applied knowledge
18th century	Republican	Public (common good)	European order and commonwealth; opposition to Universal Monarchy, dominance, and arbitrary rule.	
19th century	Liberal	Private (freedom and passions)	Autonomy, independence, anti-intervention	Statistics, measuring dispositions, capacity, influence, trajectories

In light of this, in the relatively few present-day debates involving the balance of power, the same mechanism applies: the balance of power is contingently linked to other concerns, serving as a rhetorical resource or script that policymakers seize onto.

The balance of power is being linked to a new, broad array of developments. For instance, in the Obama administration's 'East Asia-Pacific Rebalance', the argument is that 'efforts and investments should be rebalanced towards Asia to develop and strengthen ties […] support effective regional institutions […] increase trade and investment […] promote democratic development […] addressing health and environmental problems […] expand people-to-people ties', in addition to ensure that 'our military presence in the region effectively supports the full range of our engagement'.[15] The rebalance involves 'positioning the United States to better promote its interests', but also to 'support peace and prosperity'. And as noted, the Bush administration linked the balance of power to universalist liberal freedoms, and to the fight against terrorism, as well as to protecting US preponderance in collaboration with 'all nations that favour freedom'.[16] In a hybrid way, the USA is linking the balance to values like peace and prosperity, as well as to

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[15] U.S. Department of State, *The Rebalance.*
[16] Rice, *A Balance of Power.*

classical arguments concerning preponderance and hegemony, whereas China is warning against balance-of-power rhetoric and its implications.

Albeit still sparsely used, this is a new potential inflection point: after the state-centrism of the 20th century, new links are made between the balance-of-power concept and an array of new concerns *beyond* the state (terrorism being a case in point) – but also expanding the sphere of validity for invoking the balance of power to include the promotion and protection of liberal values in domestic societies to defend a particular version of international order, or the 'public interest'. In some respects, the use of the concept seems to have moved away from the 20th-century preoccupation with individuated states, and once again back to a preoccupation with the public interest, but now in a different way: it is not used to protect the preponderance of the USA as a 'balancer' (as with Britain historically), but to protect the US-led liberal world order *itself*, and the values associated with it. We might be witnessing a return to something not unlike the earlier, republican-inspired episteme.

That would, however, not be the functionalist argument of the English School that the balance of power is an institution of international society – but rather that political actors today are contingently seizing on the rhetorical resource represented by the balance-of-power concept, to use this ingrained concept for new purposes, in turn being contested by China, amongst others. Once again, what the public interest is and is not is being contested by means of the concept of the balance of power.

And once again, the importance of the balance of power lies in its value as a consequential rhetorical tool rather than as a mechanism that exists 'out there' or something that can be actually achieved. This does not mean that it is not real, that it is some kind of 'chimera' – only that it cannot be reduced to an idea, or to an objective account of 'material interests'. This applies also to present-day international politics, including the community of IR researchers. Any conflict between China and the USA, for instance, would then not necessarily be a result of any objective shift in the balance of power. Rather, 'shifts' in the balance of power have been and are governed more by how the concept itself is deployed, domestically as well as across borders, than by any material or territorial assessment of power capabilities, or any refinement of ideas or concepts. Here Lebow and Valentino offer an appropriate assessment of today's debates:

Should war come between the United States and China in the future it will not be a result of a power transition. The greater risk is that conflict will result from the misperception that such a transition is imminent […] Security discourses in China and elsewhere in Asia – much more than in Europe – tend to take its fundamental propositions as verities. It would be ironic if US-China relations deteriorated because each power based its expectations on how the other will behave on theories that lack empirical validation. [17]

Reflexions

I started this project with a section on methodologies, ontologies and genealogies. Clarifying methodological differences has been important for what I do in this project, but also empirically, as a crucial point concerns how differences in what claims can legitimately be made depend on different communities and their standards of evaluation – which is also a historical phenomenon with consequences.

Being able to capture both these aspects, the agency of both myself as scholar and of those I study, is one benefit of my methodology. Focusing on the participants in historical phenomena, and on their accounts, is not sufficient in itself. Methodology inevitably comes into play, and a genealogy is explicit about the inevitability of a view from the present. As argued in Chapter 1, the researcher's 'stances' are the foundation for methodologies and, ultimately, for research itself. As Hanna Pitkin aptly put it,

a 'purely observational' social science independent of our existing conceptual system in the realm of action might or might not be possible, might or might not be interesting or useful; but it could not tell us the things we now want to know about society and politics. It could not answer the questions we now can formulate, for they are formulated in the concepts we have.[18]

My focus on the balance of power as a 'category of practice' on the one hand implies that my genealogy of the balance of power as a concept, emphasising contingency and controversies, rejects any moral definition of or value judgement about what kind of a 'balance of power' is politically desirable. On the other hand, and more importantly, what

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[17] Lebow, Richard Ned and Benjamin Valentino (2009) 'Lost in Transition: A Critical Analysis of Power Transition Theory', *International Relations* 23(3): 389–410, p. 408.

[18] In Coates, *The Claims*, p. 107.

is consequently *not* rejected is the practical competence of political action and political judgement. This genealogy is therefore 'value-free' in the sense that it has empirically assessed all such normative value-claims as facts – but it is certainly value-laden, because it appraises 'the activity of politics as a way of life'.[19]

Both 'theory' and 'practice' are political in this sense, and the common denominator for the conflict between the assumed 'practice' and 'theory' distinction is precisely the lack of a 'reflective distance to its own construction'.[20] In this study, I have sought not to commit similar errors.

The balance of power, I have argued, is most often used as an analytical and theoretical term, specified and confined by scholars within today's social science disciplines, but divorced from the very reason why the concept is relevant and interesting for us in the first place.[21] At the same time, many IR scholars are practically involved in two different, broad communities with different rules, procedures, methodological demands, and standards for evaluating knowledge: there is the research community, and there is the (past and present) community of diplomats and practitioners of politics. That as such is not a problem. The problem is that some approaches in IR seek to establish and maintain an affinity between the concepts used in both communities: the balance of power as a concept used in scholarship, and as used amongst those involved in political processes, is ultimately treated as one and the same thing.

I started this project and constructed my research puzzle by separating the balance of power as 'category of analysis' from the balance as 'category of practice' in order to get at a different way of investigating the balance of power. The IR discipline has treated the balance of power almost exclusively as a category of analysis. That is still true. However, in the course of this project, I have come to realise that this, my research problem, is *itself* a result of the historical uses of the balance of power – from the debate between abstractions and reality at Göttingen, to the conservation of the concept as category of analysis in the IR discipline, paradoxically as practice became its own theory. In investigating the balance of power empirically, I have also explained how that research

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[19] Palonen, Kari. 2002. 'The History of Concepts as Style of Political Theorizing', *European Journal of Political Theory* 1(1): 91–106, p. 103.
[20] Guzzini, Stefano. 2013. 'The Ends of International Relations Theory: Stages of Reflexivity and Modes of Theorizing', *European Journal of International Relations* 19(3): 521–541, p. 530.
[21] Guzzini, Stefano. 2013. 'In the Beginning was Conceptualisation', pp. 3–14 in Fredrik Bynander and Stefano Guzzini (eds), *Rethinking Foreign Policy*. Abingdon: Routledge, p. 6.

question became possible in the first place and how the problematic situation I identify at the root of the puzzle – how the balance of power as an empirical phenomenon has been exempt from investigation – itself is a result of that empirical history. I have now come full circle.

The point is not that this invalidates my puzzle or the points made in the introduction. Quite to the contrary: one result of this project is also an explanation of how I can pose the initial question. The empirical investigation has come to the point where it offers an explanation also of the conditions of possibility for my own initial question or puzzle. The investigation of the practical effects of the balance of power as a concept now includes this effect as well: the balance of power made IR as we know it possible – it is one of the foundational analytical concepts for the IR discipline, of which I am a part.

If 'great debates' and the various '-isms' are no longer the focus of IR theory, analysis of concepts should be, because that is what we have in common, and what connects communities across time and space. Scholars need to cast the net wider and deeper into the past in studying key concepts in practice and in theory. By taking up this challenge, scholars of IR will also rewrite their own history.[22]

It should by now be clear that this project, within the discipline of International Relations, is yet another effect of the long and winding trajectory of the balance-of-power concept. To be sure, I have had to climb my own methodological hill, as that is the only way to get an overview of and describe the landscape. However, that same hill is not isolated from the geography – even though it can be hard to look down at your feet when an exhilarating panorama is unfolding all around you.

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[22] See Guzzini, 'The Ends'.