IR*eflect* – Student Journal of International Relations

www.ireflect-journal.de

The *Other* in International Relations Theory – Trapped Between States and Non-State Actors

PHILIPP NEUBAUER

IR*eflect* – Student Journal of International Relations 2016, Vol. 3 (2), pp 155-172

Published by

IB an der Spree

Additional information can be found at:

Website: www.ireflect-journal.de

E-Mail: board@ireflect-journal.de

Website: www.ibanderspree.de

E-Mail: vorstand@ibanderspree.de

Berlin, September 2016

The *Other* in International Relations Theory – Trapped Between States and Non-State Actors

Philipp Neubauer

Abstract

For many states the security environment they find themselves in seems to have changed dramatically in recent years. By simply asking who is the (enemy) other this article explores how well mainstream theoretical approaches to international relations are equipped to make sense of current international security developments. By identifying the (enemy) other that informs Waltzian realism as well as approaches that have built upon Waltz' original formulation, the article contends that these approaches fail to grasp contemporary processes of othering. Adhering to the question of who is the (enemy) other, Hedley Bull's somewhat forgotten concept of an international society of states is proposed as a possible way forward to better reflect an increasingly diverse set of others in contemporary world politics. Identifying the (enemy) other in Bull's approach also bears the potential to account for the recent surge in international endeavours under the label of 'statebuilding'.

Keywords: othering, international relations theory, structural realism, Hedley Bull, international society.

Introduction

Conflict and cooperation between states have taken central stage in scholarship on international politics for a long time. In particular, structural realist accounts of international relations (IR) have continuously put an emphasis on why cooperation is so exceedingly difficult and conflict an ever-possible outcome of interaction between states. As discussed in more detail later on, realist approaches identify states as the main threats to other states. Howev-

er, these approaches are burdened by two central shortcomings. Especially since the end of the Cold War, there has been a significantly greater degree of cooperation between states than accounts embracing structural realism would predict. More importantly, IR scholarship has noted that war *between* states seems increasingly to be a concept of the past. Instead, conflict is more often carried out *within* states, or between states and non-state actors, such as terrorist organizations. Especially in the "west", inter-state conflict does not seem to represent the most pressing concern in terms of security challenges.[1] The German "White Paper 2006", for example, regards the need for territorial defence to be an "unlikely" scenario and identifies terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and regional conflict at the European periphery as the main threats to German security (German Federal Ministry of Defence 2006). Similarly, the United States (US) 2015 "National Security Strategy" contends that, along with challenges such as cyber security, the effect of climate change, infectious diseases, "[v]iolent extremism and an evolving terrorist threat" are the biggest challenges for US national security (White House 2015).

Interestingly, "failed" or "failing" states are also increasingly regarded as serious security problems.[2] However, in these cases it is not the respective states that pose a security challenge, rather the threat stems from terrorists and other non-state actors that operate from the vacuum a failing state has created. One response to this has been statebuilding – the attempt to enable a certain state to effectively control its monopoly on violence (Skeppström et al. 2015: 356-357). As later discussions will show, this is yet another development that mainstream (structural) realist accounts of IR are largely unable to account for.

Thus, the rise of new threats or enemies poses a significant challenge to mainstream realist accounts of international politics because they appear to have a significant blind-spot when it comes to accurately describing security-environments for many states in the 21st century. By deploying the concepts of (enemy) *other* and *otherness,* this article aims to highlight these shortcomings in mainstream structural realist accounts and instead offer Hedley Bull's (1995) concept of international (anarchical) society, originally formulated in 1969, as framework to better understand an increasingly complex international environment. In order to show this, the guiding research question for this article will be as follows:

> Who is the (enemy) other in mainstream international relations theory and how does this relate to current trends in international politics?

[1] For an extensive discussion see for example Kaldor 2012.

[2] See for example both, the 2006 German White Paper and the 2015 US National Security Strategy.

In order to conduct this investigation and subsequently to briefly reconnect the theoretical findings with an exemplary empirical discussion, it is first necessary to explore the concept of *otherness* and subsequently to delineate how this concept and the concept of the *other* have in turn been transferred into debates on international relations. In a next step the article will explore who the (enemy) *other* is in Waltz' (1979) realism, how this *other* has changed in subsequent structural realist accounts and how this change has in turn affected the self-other nexus inherent to these approaches to IR. Based on these findings, this article will then discuss Hedley Bull's (1995) concept of international (anarchical) society, investigate which (enemy) *others* are inherent to Bull's account and outline how this understanding might be of use when looking at (enemy) *others* in contemporary international politics. Important to note is that none of the discussed approaches themselves deploy the concepts of otherness or the *other.* An aim of this article will therefore be to conceptually uncover (enemy) *others* that are inherent to these accounts.

The Self and the Other

Bernstein (1992: 68) asserts that the guiding theme of this article, the relationship between the self and the other, 'has been at the heart of the work of every major twentieth-century Continental philosopher'. For Hegel (1977: 112)[3] for example "[e]ach is for the other the middle term through which each mediates itself; and each is for himself, and for the other, an immediate being on its own accord, which at the same time is such only through this mediation." Thus, self and other are mutually constitutive in the sense that without the opposite neither can construct its own identity – self and other stand in binary opposition. Accordingly, the relationship between self and other is irrevocably connected to questions of identity formation.[4]

For Heartfield (2005) "Simone De Beauvoir first transformed Hegel's categories of Self and Other into the modern concept of the Other." In her book "The Second Sex" De Beauvoir (1997 [1949]) essentially contends that the (non-biological) differentiation between men and women is an application of Hegel's understanding of self-other relations and that "men are regarded as the norm [thus the self] and women as the other" (Jensen 2011: 64). From this discussion arose the notion of *othering* as a mechanism through which groups or individuals differentiate themselves from "others". For Jensen (2011: 64) Spivak (1985) was the first to provide a systematic theoretical approach to the notion of othering. Deploying a post-colonial perspective to analyse archive material of British colonial involvement in India, Spivak (1985: 254-256) demonstrated how, through a process of othering, the local

[3] In Neumann (1996: 141).

[4] For an extended discussion see for example Tajfel and Turner's (1986) work on social identity theory.

population was (re-)presented in opposition to a British colonial self. In addition, in the writings of both De Beauvoir and Spivak as well as for a number of other scholars, the self-other nexus and the process of othering are closely connected to questions of dominance and oppression.[5]

An entire branch of political science focussing on the emergence, evolution, and maintenance of national identities is concerned with the self-other nexus and processes of othering.[6] Leaving aside academic considerations about what actually constitutes a "nation" or a "people", one obvious example for this aspect of othering is the on-going debate about whether or not migrants with non-Christian cultural backgrounds are, or can be, part of European national identities and thus part of European "nations".[7] Within this debate people rejecting this possibility often construct their "self" understanding based on common ethnic, linguistic, religious or cultural affiliations (Anderson 1991). In a sense, this is where Hegel's thoughts on the self and the other are reflected in contemporary discussions. "Self"-perception along these lines can only work as long as there is an *other* which serves as constitutive opposition – without the other there can be no self.

The Other in International Relations

While there are scholars who discuss the other in international relations from a Hegelian standpoint and understand the other simply as a necessary constitutive opposite many IR scholars, explicitly or implicitly, discuss their other as an antagonistic rather than simply a constitutive opponent. Here, IR scholars seem to be following Carl Schmitt for whom the state's defining purpose is to distinguish between who is friend, thus belonging to the *self*, and who is foe and therefore by necessity the (enemy) *other* (Neumann 1996: 147). When discussing structural realist IR approaches, this article will retain this Schmittian focus on the other not simply as a constitutive opposite in the Hegelian sense but rather as an antagonistic one – as the *enemy other*.

A particularly prominent contribution to IR that has sparked much controversy among academics and the public alike, and which can be easily connected to questions of otherness and the self-other nexus, is Samuel P. Huntington's famous "Clash of Civilizations" thesis, articulated in a 1993 *Foreign Affairs* essay. In many ways in response to Fukuyama's 1992 discussion about the "End of History", Huntington (1992: 22) suggests that after the end of the

[5] Lister (2004: 101) for example describes othering as "process of differentiation and demarcation, by which the line is drawn between 'us' and 'them' – between the more and the less powerful – and through which social distance is established and maintained".

[6] See for example Anderson's (1991) discussion of the "nation" as an 'imagined community' constituted through othering.

[7] In regard to Germany see for example an on-going debate to what extent Islam is considered to be a part of Germany (Nelles 2015).

Cold War, the major sources of international conflict would not be economic or ideological ones but rather that "[t]he great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural". In a section entitled "Implications for the West" Huntington (1992: 48-49) argues that the "paramount axis of world politics will be the relations between "the West and the Rest"", and from this derives the implication that "[i]n the short term it is clearly in the interest of the west to promote greater cooperation and unity within its own civilization". Huntington's account is in many ways illustrative of how categorizations of *self* (the west) and *other* (the rest) can have a tremendous influence on the relations between states or groups of states. Going beyond presenting a mere description of categories of self and other along cultural and religious lines, Huntington seems to suggest othering as what Neumann (1996: 168) calls "a piece of practical policy advice for how to glue a particular human collective together". In other words, Huntington appears to be offering the practice of *othering* to the "west" as a mechanism through which its members can consolidate their shared identity (in particular in opposition to others) and according to which these members can organize their relations to the "rest" through common policies.

In contrast to Huntington's approach, but also centrally concerned with the self-other nexus in IR and at least in part also informed by references to different cultures, Der Derian (1987) has cautioned against merely accepting or even embracing categories of self and other. Looking at diplomatic culture and basing his argument on Hegel's work, Der Derian essentially regards diplomacy as means for mediation of estrangement or alienation among states. Der Derian (1987: 209) encourages overcoming the notions of self and other, and warns that "until we learn to recognize ourselves as the Other, we shall be in danger and we shall be in need of diplomacy". In a way extending this argument, scholars within the field of Critical Security Studies have questioned the very legitimacy of concepts such as "national security". As with the "nation" itself, "national security" it is argued, by necessity excludes people who are not part of the nation/state from being legitimate subjects entitled to security.[8] By shifting the focus to "human security" or "cosmopolitan security" a discursive transformation is undertaken in order to eliminate the differentiation between self and other, and render all humans as part of the 'self' entitled to and worthy of security (Booth 2007: 136-140).

A major early contribution to the study of self and other within international relations is David Campbell's (1992) account of US-American foreign policy. In his book Campbell (1992: vii) explores in what ways a US-American "identity" was centrally informed and more importantly shaped by foreign policy practices and "how the very domains of inside/outside, self/other, and domestic/foreign […] are constituted through the writing of a threat". For Campbell (1992: 195-196), with the end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the USA lost its dominant *other* for a "discourse of dan-

[8] For an extended discussion see Burke 2013: 14-15.

ger" and was thus in need of a new primary (enemy) *other*. Campbell (1992: 196) already hinted at a number of possible candidates, including the one that today seems to have become dominant in US-American and European discourse – terrorism. Again, in line with other works discussed here, there is a normative dimension present in Campbell's (1992: 195) writing on otherness that propagates a need to overcome categories of self and other (see also: Neumann 1996: 158).

An instructive case in terms of the role otherness and othering can play in world politics, which moreover offers an interesting possibility for overcoming antagonistic categories of self and other between states, is that of temporal othering. Diez (2004: 325) argues that "the most common processes of othering in international society are geographic in nature". In contrast to this, the concept of temporal othering refers to processes of *othering* along a temporal dimension. Accordingly, the *other* can be situated in the past rather than the present and does not necessarily correspond to contemporary categories of geography or identity. Ole Wæver (1998) has argued for this temporal understanding of othering in regard to the European Union (EU) or Europe more broadly.

Wæver (1998: 90) argues that "Europe's "other", the enemy image, is today not to a very large extent "Islamic Fundamentalism", "the Russians" or anything similar - rather Europe's other is Europe's own past which should not be allowed to become its future". Accordingly, the biggest threat to Europe is not an *enemy other* situated in close geographic proximity but rather a "backsliding" to modes of European relations that have dominated the first half of the 20th century and resulted in two world wars. By identifying itself in contrast to its own past the European community thus seems to have successfully managed what has been propagated in order to avoid antagonistic and potentially harmful relations – to overcome divisions of *self* and *other* within Europe. Six years later and in response to Wæver, Diez (2004: 326) observes an erosion of this temporal othering in Europe and argues that the ""traditional kind" of othering is on the increase and […] closing the window for alternative, less exclusive forms of identity construction".

Should Diez' (2004) assessment be correct, and indeed many current trends like the re-emergence of a 'Russian threat' as the result of Russia's recent engagement in Ukraine seem to confirm it[9], Europe may (re-)enter a period of more antagonistic relations between different selves and (enemy) *others*. All these accounts show the extraordinary relevancy of the relationship between the *self* and the *other* and the importance of concepts such as otherness and othering to the field of IR. The next section will therefore explore how "the other" and "otherness" have informed and are also implicitly embedded in (structural) realist accounts of world politics.

[9] See for example the mentioned 2015 US National Security Strategy.

The (Dangerous) Other in Structural Realist IR Theory

According to Sartre (1993 [1943]: 223), "the problem of Others has never truly disturbed the realists [because] the realist takes everything as given [and i]n the midst of the real, what is more real than the other?". Although Sartre's "realists" probably were not the same realists that are traditionally associated with contemporary IR debates, his assessment remains rather fitting. For realists, more specifically structural realists following Kenneth Waltz' (1979) widely known understanding of world politics, the very nature of the international system compels states to continuously interact with possibly antagonistic *others*. According to the logic of Waltz' (1979: 102-104) structural realism, the anarchic nature of the international system – the absence of any higher regulatory authority that could compel or prevent states to act in a certain way – forces states to regard all other states as (enemy) *others*, and not doing so could prove potentially harmful, even fatal to a state. All states are each other's *other*, and thus each state exists in a "self-help world". Thus, Waltz' logic seems to rely on an underlying assumption of antagonistic otherness as constituent principle of international relations. In a way, structural realism is thus itself engaged in othering on a systemic level and could, much like Huntington's (1992) "Clash of Civilizations", be accused of propagating the practice of othering as policy advice.

What is more, by simply making state-centrism a necessary precondition for the theory's applicability, structural realism excludes the possibility that actors other than states could be regarded as the (enemy) *other*. Thus, on the one hand structural realism disregards actors such as terrorists who, as was discussed earlier, seem to have taken centre stage in many states' security concerns, and on the other hand forecloses the possibility of less antagonistic and more cooperative relations between states through mechanisms such as Wæver's (1998) temporal othering. Especially this second aspect has led to much criticism based on the empirical insight that there is more cooperation and less antagonistic tension within international politics than suggested by Waltzian realism.[10]

In Search of the Realist (Enemy) Other

Partly in response to criticism and partly as a criticism itself, Walt (1987) has offered a reformulation of Waltz's structural realism based on an investigation of alliance formation in the Middle East. While Walt's (1987) balance of

[10] See for example the wide-ranging literature on neo-liberal or institutionalist approaches to international relations. One particularly prominent example would be Keohane's (1984) account, which shares many of Waltz's central assumptions about international politics but argues that under these conditions cooperation is still possible and even likely.

threat thesis holds true to the basic premises of Waltz' (1979) structural realism, he somewhat weakens the claim that all other states within the international system are, or should be, continuously regarded as the (enemy) *other*. For Walt (1987: 22-25) the dominant (enemy) *other* for any given state is dependent on the conditions of aggregate power, geographic proximity, offensive power capabilities, as well as aggressive intentions. Put simply, for Walt (1985: 9) the dominant (enemy) *other* is simply the state that lies in close geographic proximity, has relatively more offensive military capabilities, can rely on a large population and more resources, and holds aggressive intentions. Although Walt (1987) does not specify this in his work, his first three aspects seem to constitute necessary but not sufficient criteria in order to determine who is the enemy (*other)*. Rather, Walt (1987: 25) seems to rely on "aggressive intentions" as the essential trigger for regarding a specific state as the enemy (*other).*

While in Walt's (1987) work the concepts of "aggressive intentions" or intentions more generally remain rather ambiguous,[11] his reformulation of Waltz' work nevertheless opens up the possibility for less antagonistic relationships between the *self* and the (enemy) *other* in international politics. Should a state, with a sufficient level of certainty, come to the conclusion that another one does not have "aggressive intentions", less antagonistic and more cooperative relations are possible or even likely. What is more, for Walt (1987: 34-35) "shared values" are important factors for less antagonistic inter-state relations. As this article proceeds, it will be shown that this insight, obvious as it may seem, has the potential to provide a better conceptual understanding of the (enemy) *other* in contemporary international relations when embedded in a larger conceptual framework.

Although primarily formulated as critique of Waltz' and also Walt's work, Schweller's (1994) "balance of interest" thesis is actually advancing Walt's (1987) work in regard to the question of (enemy) *others*. Schweller (1994: 85-87) categorizes states as either interested in maintaining or revising the status quo in world politics. His concept of "revisionist states" potentially clarifies what Walt (1987) referred to as "aggressive intentions". Accordingly, an enemy (*other)* for most states is characterized by an intention to revise the current international order – to challenge or change the present status quo. Interestingly, this combination of Walt's (1987) and Schweller's (1994) work fits rather well when looking at the initially mentioned example of Russia's engagement in Ukraine. With the annexation of Crimea in 2014 and its apparent involvement in the conflict in eastern Ukraine, Russia appears to seek a revision of, or at least undermines, the international order embedded in the principles of state sovereignty and territorial integrity that are codified in the Charter of the United Nations.[12] Hence, Russia is regarded as (enemy)

[11] For a more extensive discussion on the inherent ambiguity of Walt's (1987) usage of the concept of "aggressive intentions" see Barnett 2003: 227.
[12] See Art. 2 of the Charter of the United Nations.

other by Western states because it disregards the constitutive principles of international relations.

Thus, a combination of Schweller's (1994) and Walt's (1987) reformulations of Waltz' (1979) original proposition of structural realism already significantly improves theoretical insights about the (enemy) *other* in contemporary IR because, in contrast to Waltz' (1979) work, it opens up the possibility that not all states are by necessity the (enemy) *other* and also because it does not exclude the possibility that states could have a common interest in preserving a specific order within international relations. However, even in Schweller's account (1994) the concepts of "revisionist state" and particularly that of "order" remain poorly conceptualized because he fails to provide a discussion of what actually constitutes international order in his framework. Additionally, a combination of their accounts still entirely disregards the possibility of non-state actors (like terrorist organizations) as (enemy) *others*[13]. What is more, given their underlying state-centrism, which means that only states can be (enemy) *others,* accounts of IR resting on Waltz' original contribution are confronted with difficulties when it comes to explaining international statebuilding efforts. Since states are by theoretical necessity the (enemy) *others* it could be argued that a so-called "failed state" would, within a structural realist logic, simply mean one state (speak potential enemy) less to worry about. This obviously does not hold up to contemporary international politics, where, as mentioned in the introduction, failed states have become a mayor security concern. In the next section this article will therefore introduce Hedley Bull's (1995) understanding of international politics as states interacting within an international society and explore how Bull's work might provide a remedy for the identified shortcomings.

The (Enemy) Other to Bull's International Society

Initially formulating his thesis in a contribution to Butterfield and Wight's *Diplomatic investigations,* Bull (1969: 48) seems to reject realist accounts of international relations when writing: "Against the Hobbesian view that states find themselves in a state of nature which is a state of war, it may be argued [...] that they constitute a society without a government". He regards this international society as existent

> "[...] when a group of states, conscious of certain common interests and common values, form a society in the sense that they conceive themselves to be bound by a common set of rules in their relations

[13] At this point it should be noted that as Glaser (2003: 407) argues, "Realism is designed to understand relations and interactions between states; we [therefore] should not be surprised that it has less to tell us about non-state actors."

> with one another, and share in the working of common institutions" (Bull 1995: 13).

From this initial quote, it already becomes apparent that Bull's underlying conception of the (enemy) *other* in international politics is rather different from what Waltz (1979) claims to observe. Rather than presupposing that the only possible mode of interaction between states is one characterized by perpetual uncertainty, self-help, and ever-possible conflict, Bull (1995: 13) maintains that states within an international society "regard each other as subject to the same set of rules" and moreover share a common set of basic goals: maintaining the society, preserving the individual sovereignty of states, and the upholding of peace "in the sense of the absence of war among member states of international society as the normal condition of their relationship" (Bull 1995: 16-17).

Here, it is already possible to identify a similarity to the concepts of "status quo" and "revisionist state" that inform Schweller's (1994) account of the *other* in international relations. Important to note is that while Bull (1995: 39) argues there is an element of society present in contemporary international relations, this does not mean that this societal feature is the only or even the dominant element (Bull 1995: 39, 49). What Bull (1995: 39) calls the Hobbesian "element of war and struggle for power among states" as well as the, in his understanding Kantian[14] "element of transnational solidarity", is equally possible and may at times and in different situations dominate international relations. Here, the concept of otherness becomes particularly relevant in regard to Bull's understanding of international society, because for Bull (1995) the *others* operate within these Hobbesian or Kantian elements of international politics. While, following Bull's (1995) categorization, it could be argued that only within the "Kantian" element of international relations there is a clear overcoming of the self-other nexus in IR, exemplified by the emergence of groups of solidarity beyond and across state boarders. For Bull himself however, agents (states as well as non-state) embracing this Kantian notion actually threaten the international society and thus belong to the (enemy) *others*. This is exemplified by the primary goal that Bull (1995: 16-18) attributes to his international society: the maintenance of a rudimentary status quo in contemporary international politics by maintaining society, preserving individual sovereignty and upholding peace.

Firstly, in regard to maintenance of the society and sovereignty of individual states, Bull's (1995: 16) (enemy) *others* are all actors that contest the notion that states "are the principal actors in world politics and the chief bearers of rights and duties within it". According to Bull (1995: 16), this

[14] Here it must be questioned to what extent Bull's interpretation of Kant actually adheres to Kant's own understanding, or rather propagation, of international politics; for a more detailed discussion see Franke (2001: 33) who contends that Kant does not actually propagate a dissolution of statehood, which Bull seems to assume.

could be a dominant state with the intention "of overthrowing the system and society of states and transforming it into a universal empire". Similarly, it could also be non-state actors challenging the privileged role of states (Bull 1995: 16). In this regard, contemporary non-state actors like the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) quickly come to mind.

Secondly, in regard to the goal of peace, the (enemy) *others* of Bull's international society are not states engaging in conflict per se but rather states engaging in conflicts that run counter to the, as Bull (1995: 17) argues, primary goal of "preservation of the state system itself, for which [...] it can be right to wage war". The US-led intervention following the internationally condemned Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990 would fit into this category.[15]

Regarding "revisionist" actors (state and non-state alike) which aim to undermine the international society's preferred order of international politics – maintenance of peace, the society and sovereignty of individual states – as the (enemy) *other* along the lines of Bull's (1995) understanding thus offers an interesting possibly to explore contemporary world politics. Rather than seeing all other states as (enemy) others, states within today's international society seem to be primarily concerned about actors that pose a threat to their shared understanding of themselves – a community of independent yet closely related actors that, for them, represent the primary actors in international politics.

Bull's (Enemy) Other in Contemporary IR

This conceptual take on contemporary IR centrally informed by Bull's (1995) international society in regard to who is the (enemy) *other* can help to better understand central developments within world politics. Firstly, Bull's (1995) understanding offers a theoretical explanation of Russia as a re-emerging (enemy) *other* in international politics due to its engagement in Ukraine that is able to incorporate the realist accounts of Walt and Schweller. Russia is widely regarded to have acted in defiance of Ukrainian sovereignty and is thus seen as in breach of the international society's common set of established rules and norms. In this case the evolution of the Group of Seven (G7) is illustrative in regard to *othering*. Following the end of the Cold War increasing levels of interaction and cooperation led to the inclusion of Russia into the informal governmental forum, increasing it from G7 to G8 in 1998. This is representative of reduced alienation between Russia and its (western) counterparts. Following the 2014 events in Ukraine, however, Russia's G8 membership was suspended because Russia was perceived as not adhering

[15] The extent to which Iraq was seen as the enemy other is exemplified by various United Nations Security Council Resolutions condemning the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait; see Resolutions 660(1990) and 678(1990).

to the international society's rules and goals – as not being part of the *us* of an international community.

Secondly, connecting Bull's theoretical account with the question of otherness opens up the rather narrowly conducted debate on IR theory to concepts such as Meyer et al.'s (1997) "world cultural model". Investigating the hypothesis that "[m]any features of the contemporary nation-state derive from worldwide models constructed and propagated through global cultural and associational processes" Meyer et al. (1997: 144-145) point to the fact that states are surprisingly similar to each other despite significant degrees of variation in local cultural and political environments. Accordingly, adopting all the 'common features' associated with statehood is a way of becoming and being an accepted and legitimate member of international society – a way of moving from being the *other* towards belonging to the *us* or the *self* of the international society.

Thirdly, and closely connected to this "world cultural model", Bull's (1995) international society approach can also help to further our conceptual understanding of practices widely regarded as "statebuilding". A variety of states, non-governmental and international organizations active in the field of development cooperation are concerned with enhancing the "stateness" of so called weak, fragile or failed states.

In Somalia the international community tries to improve the country's "stateness" through a variety of different programmes by enhancing the effectiveness as well as the efficiency of existing structures or helping to establish new structures that, following Meyer et al.'s (1997) world cultural model, are traditionally regarded to be core aspects of statehood. The EU for example aims to enhance Somali military and police capabilities through training and advisory missions (Skeppströma et al. 2015: 356-357). These efforts aim to improve Somalia's hold on the monopoly on violence, which, following Max Weber's definition is a core element of statehood (Egnell and Haldén 2009: 35). With regard to the self-other nexus, there are two processes at play here. On the one hand, the international community is socializing Somalia into the international society through statebuilding measures. Through establishing state structures that follow a world cultural model, Somalia is aided in becoming a part of the *us* or the *self* of the international society. On the other hand, external capacity building is enabling Somali security forces, and thus the state of Somalia, to confront its dominant (enemy) *others,* which simultaneously are also a primary (enemy) *others* of the international society – non state actors engaged in undermining the predominant role of states within international politics. In the case of Somalia, but also more generally, pirates are an illustrative example for this *otherness* of non-state actors. By engaging in piracy, local non-state actors question Somalia's control over its territory as well as territorial waters and as a result also undermine its "stateness". At the same time piracy off the coast of Somalia (especially piracy targeting foreign vessels) also undermines the international society's principle that states "are the principal actors in world politics"

(Bull 1995: 16). Thus, in response to piracy, various international military naval operations, like the EU's Operation Atalanta, have been deployed in order to aid Somalia in retaining its stateness (Germond and Smith 2009: 573).

As the case of Somalia shows, Bull's (1995) account of international politics also offers interesting insights in regard to cooperation. Following Waltz (1979), a "failed" Somalia would simply mean one state less to worry about. Following Bull (1995) and the concept of otherness however, a failed state becomes a significant problem because it allows non-state actors to challenge the dominance of states in international politics.

Conclusion

As this article has shown, knowing who the (enemy) *other* is in different approaches to IR theories is of critical importance in order to assess their value in helping improve our understanding of contemporary international politics. With the notable exception of the recently (re-)emerging "Russian threat", particularly the western world today seems to be primarily concerned with so called 'non-traditional' security threats, meaning that oftentimes states are not primarily concerned about other states any more. By asking who the (enemy) other is in a selection of prominent structural realist approaches to IR, this article has highlighted that the primary (enemy) *others* for realists are (all) other states. While Waltz (1979) regarded all states as (enemy) *others,* prominent subsequent reformulations of his theory acknowledged that within IR the (enemy) *others* were states which Walt (1987) called "aggressive" and Schweller (1994) labelled "revisionist". While these conceptual developments can be seen as an improvement over Waltz (1979) in regard to capturing primary (enemy) *others* as in the case of Russia, they nevertheless fall short of providing an accurate account of the *other* in contemporary IR.

As this article has demonstrated, Bull's earlier account of an international society as existent in international relations provides a much more comprehensive picture of contemporary (enemy) *other.* To conceive of the *self* as an international society sharing certain common goals as well as common rules and values provides the possibility of regarding all actors (state and non-state alike) who contest the notion that states "are the principal actors in world politics and the chief bearers of rights and duties within it", as the dominant (enemy) *others* (Bull 1995: 16). An account of international politics based on Bull's international society not only helps us understand why Russia is acting in defiance of the internationally established principle of state sovereignty and why terrorist organizations attempting to undermine statehood in the Middle East are regarded as the primary (enemy) *others*, but also explains the intensive engagement in practices of statebuilding in cases such as Somalia. Only if Somalia holds common attributes traditionally associated

with statehood can it belong to the *us* or *self* of an international society of states. Moreover, non-state actors are not only Somalia's *other* because they undermine its stateness, they also, by extension, become the (enemy) *other* of the international community because they act in defiance of the principle that states are the primary actors in international politics. Thus, looking at who is the (enemy) *other* in IR theory offers the opportunity to greatly enhance our understanding of contemporary international politics. Moreover, Bull's seemingly ageing account (after all it was first articulated in 1969) might still be able to offer significant insights not only into the current practice of statebuilding but also into contemporary world politics more generally.

– I reflect –

Terrorism, failed states, organised crime, piracy, climate change, infectious diseases and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction: A selection of these issues is usually considered when it comes to contemporary academic as well as policy discussions about the main “threats” or security challenges that many states currently face. Yet, these challenges, sometimes referred to as “new security threats”, did not affect the way we discussed realist and other theoretical accounts of international relations in my most recent seminar on IR theory. International relations are conducted between states and thus, following mainstream realist interpretations of IR, states are the main security challenges for other states. To me this was somewhat unsatisfying.

Accordingly, for my paper I thought about whether it was possible to theoretically address some “new security challenges” without abandoning the state as possible source of insecurity for other states. While I was exploring who or what was the main underlying threat in some theoretical formulations the concepts of “otherness” and the “enemy other” proved to be immensely helpful instruments for a more consistent analysis of different approaches and also greatly helped to clarify my own thinking about different “enemy others”.

What became more and more obvious to me while researching, writing, and revising this paper, is that it should only be considered a first test rather than a comprehensive account of otherness in IR. As some of my reviewers have rightly pointed out, the structural realist accounts that are covered in this paper merely represent the tip of the iceberg that is realist thinking. Thus, the argument laid out here could greatly benefit from a more comprehensive overview of different strains of realist theory. Similarly, an extended and more systematic empirical application of the theoretical arguments would be beneficial in order to further prove to what extend Bull’s original formulations might still be of value when it comes to understanding today’s much more diverse international environment.

Philipp Neubauer
M.A. International Relations, 3rd Semester
Freie Universität Berlin, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin and Universität Potsdam
Contact: pneubauer@zedat.fu-berlin.de

References

Anderson, B. R., 2006. Imagined communities. Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism. London: Verso.

Barnett, M., 2003. Alliances, Balances of Threats, and Neorealism: The Accidental Coup. In: Vasquez, J. A. / Elman, C. (eds.). *Realism and the balancing of power. A new debate.* Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 222-249.

Bernstein, R. J., 1992. The new constellation. The ethical-political horizons of modernity/postmodernity. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bull, H., 1969. Society and Anarchy. In: Butterfield, H. / Wight, M. (eds.). *Diplomatic investigations. Essays in the theory of international politics.* London: George Allen and Unwin, 35-50.

Bull, H., 1995. The Anarchical Society. A Study of Order in World Politics. Houndmills, London: MacMillan Press.

Burke, A., 2013. Security Cosmopolitanism. In: *Critical Studies on Security,* 1 (1), 13-28.

Campbell, D., 1992. Writing Security. United States foreign policy and the politics of identity. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

de Beauvoir, S., 1997 [1949]. *The Second Sex*. London: Vintage.

Der Derian, J., 1987. On Diplomacy. A genealogy of Western estrangement. Oxford: B. Blackwell.

Diez, T., 2010. Europe's others and the return of geopolitics. In: *Cambridge Review of International Affairs,* 17 (2), 319-335.

Egnell, R. / Haldén, P., 2009. Laudable, ahistorical and overambitious. Security sector reform meets state formation theory. In: *Conflict, Security & Development,* 9 (1), 27-54.

Franke, M. F.N., 2001. Global Limits: Immanuel Kant, International Relations, and Critique of World Politics. Albany: State University of New York Press.

German Federal Ministry of Defence, 2006. *White Paper 2006 on German Security Policy and the Future of the Bundeswehr.* Online: https://www.bmvg.de/resource/resource/MzEzNTM4MmUzMzMyMmUzMTM1MzMyZTM2MzIzMDMwMzAzMDMwMzAzMDY3NzMzNzM0NmY3OTY0MzkyMDIwMjAyMDIw/W%202006%20eng%20DS.pdf [05/08/16].

Germond, B. / Smith, M. E., 2009. Re-Thinking European Security Interests and the ESDP. Explaining the EU's Anti-Piracy Operation. In: *Contemporary Security Policy,* 30 (3), 573-593.

Heartfield, J., n.d. *Hegel Dispirited: the reification of the Other in Kojève, DeBeauvoir and Sartre.* Online: http://www.heartfield.org/hegeldispirited.htm [05/08/16].

Hegel, G. F., 1977 [1807]. *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Oxford: Oxford University Press

Hobbes, T., 2008. *Leviathan*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Huntington, S. P., 1993. The Clash of Civilizations? In: *Foreign Affairs,* 72 (3), 22.

Jensen, S. Q., 2011. Othering, identity formation and agency. In: *Qualitative Studies,* 2 (2), 63-78.

Kaldor, M., 2012. New and old wars: organized violence in a global era. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Keohane, R. O., 1984. After Hegemony. Cooperation and discord in the world political economy. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

Lévinas, E., 1989. *The Levinas Reader*. Oxford: B. Blackwell.

Lister, R., 2004. *Poverty*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Meyer, J. / Boli, J. / Thomas, G. / Ramirez, F., 1997. World Society and the Nation-State. In: *American Journal of Sociology*, 103(1), 144-181.

Nelles, R., 2015. Merkel gegen Pegida und Islam-Hasser: Glückwunsch! Endlich Klartext [Merkel against Pegida and Islam-haters: Congratulations! Finally plain-talking]. In: *Spiegel Online,* (12.01.2015), online: http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/angela-merkel-islam-gehoert-zu-deutschland-der-kommentar-a-1012635.html [22/06/16].

Neumann, I. B., 1996. Self and Other in International Relations. In: *European Journal of International Relations,* 2 (2), 139-174.

Sartre, J.-P., 1993 [1943]. *Being and Nothingness. An essay on phenomenological ontology*. New York: Washington Square Press.

Schweller, R. L., 1994. Bandwagoning for Profit. Bringing the Revisionist State Back In. In: *International Security,* 19 (1), 72.

Skeppström, E. / Hull Wiklund, C. / Jonsson, M., 2015. European Union Training Missions. Security sector reform or counter-insurgency by proxy? In: *European Security,* 24 (2), 353-367.

Spivak, G. C., 1985. The Rani of Sirmur. An Essay in Reading the Archives. In: *History and Theory,* 24 (3), 247.

The White House, 2015. *National Security Strategy. February 2015.* Online: https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2015_national_security_strategy.pdf [05/08/16].

Turner, J. / Tajfel, H., 1986. The social identity theory of intergroup behavior. In: Worchel, S. / Austin, W. (eds.). *Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, 2nd ed., Chicago: Nelson-Hall Publishers, 7-24.

UN Security Council, 1990. *Resolution 660 (1990).* Online: http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/660 (1990) [05/08/16].

UN Security Council, 1990. *Resolution 678 (1990).* Online: http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/678 (1990) [05/08/16].

United Nations, 1945. *Charter of the United Nations.* Online: http://www.un.org/en/charter-united-nations/index.html [05/08/16].

von Hegel, G. W. F., 1977. *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Walt, S. M., 1985. Alliance Formation and the Balance of World Power. In: *International Security,* 9 (4), 3.

Walt, S. M., 1987. *The Origins of Alliance*. London: Cornell University Press.

Waltz, K. N., 1979. *Theory of international politics*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Weaver, O., 1998. Insecurity, Security and Asecurity in the West European Non-war Community. In: Adler, Emanuel / Barnett, Michael N. (eds.). *Security Communities.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 69-118.