

FOREIGN POLICY DECISION-MAKING THEORIES: SOME STEPS TOWARDS A MORE REFLEXIVE COGNITIVE BEHAVIOURALISM¹

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Introduction

As an Arabist and a politicalist trained in International Relations (further "IR"), I work on Jordan's foreign policy (further "FP"). My training in the discipline of IR and my further personal training led me to focus on foreign policy decision-making (further "FPDM") in the so-called cognitive behaviouralist current. But since the 80s, the IR literature has been marked by new currents, post-positivist ones, either called "critical" or postmodernist or... I would say that, while sticking to cognitive behaviouralism, post-positivist insights have not left me totally indifferent.

These two types of theories could be classically qualified as incommensurable. How do we do when we confront such a situation?

The first answer, which has to do with interpersonal ethics, is a kind of prerequisite and is well expressed by philosopher Richard Bernstein:

"We can never escape the real practical possibility that we may fail to understand 'alien' traditions and the ways in which they are incommensurable with the traditions to which we belong... But the response to the threat of this practical failure – which can sometimes be tragic – should be an ethical one, i.e., to assume the responsibility to listen carefully, to use our linguistic, emotional, and cognitive imagination to grasp what is being expressed and said in 'alien' traditions. We must do this in a way where we resist the dual temptations of either facetiously assimilating what others are saying to our own categories and language without doing justice to what is genuinely different and may be incommensurable or simply dismissing what the 'other' is saying as incoherent non-sense. We must also resist the double danger of imperialistic colonisation and inauthentic exoticism – what is sometimes called 'going native.'"²

¹ We are most grateful to Marie Legrand for having revised the English text of this article.

² Richard J. BERNSTEIN, *The New Constellation – The Ethical-Political Horizons of Modernity / Postmodernity*, Cambridge (MA), MIT Press, 1992, pp. 65-66 – quoted by James DER DERIAN, "A Reinterpretation of Realism: Genealogy, Semiology, Dromology", in James DER DERIAN (ed.), *International Theory – Critical Investigations*, London, Macmillan, 1995, p. 387.

The second one is more ethical-political and more decisive on a pragmatic point of view. The method "critical", scholars like Mark Neufeld use to discriminate between incommensurable theories, consists first in escaping this reasoning: "as these theories are incommensurable, they are incomparable". Because this leads to accept that we cannot communicate with or judge those working in terms of a different paradigm.¹ The stance Neufeld adopts is different: "incommensurable, still yet comparable". The key is a political-ethical one, on the basis of the implicit or explicit normative political contents upon which they are based. Even before the so-called "Third Debate" (cf. infra), Robert Cox had shown the way. According to him, there are two types of theories: "problem-solving" and "critical".²

The first one "takes the world as it finds it, with the prevailing social and power relations and the institutions into which they are organized, as the given framework for action. The general aim of problem-solving is to make relationships and institutions work smoothly by dealing effectively with particular sources of trouble."

The second one "is critical in the sense that it stands apart from the prevailing order of the world and asks how that order came about. Critical theory, unlike problem-solving theory, does not take institutions and social and power relations for granted but calls them into question by concerning itself with their origins and how and whether they might be in the process of changing."

Problem-solving theory is methodologically very efficient (and its cognitive behaviourist DM version intellectually very attractive), but its implicit ideology is basically conservative. "Critical" theory is based on superior normative political content; it is progressive and historicist. Well, you will tell me that I went off to a bad start with my cognitive behaviouralism, and, in a way, you would be right, because it is probably the most problem-solving-featured theory within the realist paradigm. However,

¹ K. POPPER, "Normal Science and Its Dangers", in I. LAKATOS & A. MUSGRAVE (eds.), *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1970, p. 56 – quoted by MARK NEUFELD, "Reflexivity and International Relations Theory", in CLARE TURENNE STOLANDER & WAYNE S. COX (eds.), *Beyond Positivism – Critical Reflections on International Relations*, Boulder & London, Lynne Rienner, 1994, p. 16.

² COLIN WRIGHT also demonstrates how the incommensurability thesis can be transcended, but disagrees with Mark Neufeld on the point of view of the criterion used. According to Colin Wright, it is not relevant to found one's theory choice on "reasoned assessment" on the basis of making explicit one's "politico-normative" commitments. See his article: "Incommensurability and Cross-Paradigm Communication in International Relations Theory: 'What's the Frequency Kenneth?'", *Millennium*, Vol. 25, n° 2, 1996, pp. 306-307. We personally kept Neufeld's politico-normative criterion, because it seemed to us that it remained particularly relevant in regard to our problematic (see further).

³ ROBERT W. COX, "Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory", in ROBERT O. KEOHANE (ed.), *Neorealism and Its Critics*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 1986, p. 208.

I did not decide to choose exclusively one of these types of theorising. Rather, I have been led to recognise the weak points and the strong points of both types of theorising, which seem, at first sight, totally irreconcilable. Trying to conciliate them in general and to apply them to the analysis of a country's FP in particular is a challenge and an experiment that we could call "critical" or reflexive cognitive behaviouralism.

Let me please first justify the choice of cognitive behaviouralism in the study of a country's FP, and more specifically, in the study of its DM processes. Let us therefore have a look very briefly at an overview of all currents in the discipline of IR.

All currents in the discipline have been classically grouped together in three paradigms¹, at least, before the recent arrival of post-positivism: these are the realist, pluralist and structuralist paradigms. For instance, Philippe Bratland and Mohammed-Reza Djallili respectively name them the "realist vision", the "interdependency paradigm" and the "imperialist and dependency paradigm"². The corresponding categories set up by James N. Rosenau are: state-centric, multi-centric and global-centric³. In his more recent book, "Thinking Theory Thoroughly"⁴, we can also find the post-internationalist paradigm, which is an evolutive synthesis of the state-centric and multi-centric paradigms.

Within the three basic paradigms, where does cognitive behaviouralism find its place? In the first one. The first paradigm is state-centric and we assume that this state-centric feature makes this paradigm relevant to study a country's FP (at first sight, it is at least the most obvious)⁵. Within the first paradigm, we assume that the cognitive behaviouralist subparadigm is the most appealing to study a country's FPD processes. The "Behavioural Revolution" should be mentioned here. The

¹ MARTIN HOLLIS & STEVE SMITH, *Explaining and Understanding International Relations*, Oxford, Clarendon, 1991, p. 38.

² PHILIPPE BRATLAND & MOHAMMED-REZA DJALLILI, *Les relations internationales*, Paris, Presses universitaires de France (Coll. "Que Sais-Je?", n° 2456), 2^e éd., 1990, p. 11.

³ JAMES N. ROSENAU, "Order and Disorder in the Study of World Politics: Ten Essays in Search of Perspective", in RAY MACRODOR & BENNET RAMBERG (eds.), *Globalism Versus Realism: International Relations' Third Debate*, Boulder (Co.), Westview Press, 1982, pp. 1-7. In this latter book, the "Third Debate" refers in fact to an inter-paradigmatic debate, that between paradigm n°1 (state-centrism) and paradigm n°2 (pluralism), and not to the "positivism vs. post-positivism" schism (see further).

⁴ JAMES N. ROSENAU & MARY DUREE, *Thinking Theory Thoroughly – Coherent Approaches to an Incoherent World*, Boulder / San Francisco (Oxford, Westview Press, 1995).

⁵ This is not to say that the second and the third paradigms should totally be put aside. We namely think that the insights of the latter can be integrated to the first. For instance, the second one can help consider a larger range of actors (sub-, trans-, and supra-national) beyond the state (but with which the state has to cope) and also consider phenomena of integration and giving up of sovereignty (which have some effects on the FP of the concerned states), and the third one can for instance help study how decision-making elites shape foreign policies on the basis of "centre-periphery" stakes.

"Second Debate" – between realism and behaviouralism – gave rise to the consideration – as "evident" as it might seem – that FP decisions are not made by the state (or the "realist statesman" – who appears to be a kind of "neutral" agent of the state who can but pursue its "objective" national interest¹), but by its "more human" subjective decision-makers. Hence the emphasis on the mental and institutional universe of the latter. Here, Snyder, Bruck & Sapin made a breakthrough: "It is one of our basic methodological choices to define the state as its official decision-makers – those whose authoritative acts are, to all intents and purposes, the acts of the state. *State action is the action taken by those acting in the name of the state*. (...) It is also one of our basic choices to take as our prime analytical objective the re-creation of the "world" of the decision-makers as they view it. (...) This is a quite different approach from trying to re-create the situation and interpretation of it *objectively*, i.e., by the observer's judgment rather than of the actors themselves."² The first generation of the "Behavioural Revolution" was made up of DM input-models such as that of Snyder, Bruck & Sapin and that of Brecher, Steinberg & Stein³. The second generation followed with DM process-models like that of Graham T. Allison⁴. And the third generation is still up-to-date with efforts aiming at integrating the first and the second together (and in this way, relating processes to inputs): see for instance Zeev Maoz⁵ works⁶. Neorealism has been for its part an attempt to bring more "scientificity" into realism in order to confront the criticisms behaviouralism had been levelling to it⁶ and also a re-affirmation of the centrality of the state in international affairs – centrality which was challenged by the second paradigm. According to Bahgat Korany, as a reaction to behaviouralism, neorealism – as a comeback of realism – can be understood less in regard to its intrinsic assets than to the former's weaknesses: because of its excessive methodology and its tendency to atomise research issues, it would not have provided a panop-

tic vision of IR – and so "little theory" would not have succeeded in ousting "grand theory". But this is precisely the reason why we personally chose behaviouralism: because of the attention it pays to that particular IR object which is FPDm. Within the first paradigm, so was the situation, roughly said, until the 80s.

But, as previously mentioned, new currents have been entering the discipline since then. Mainly as a move within the first paradigm⁷, the arrival of post-positivist currents has given rise to the so-called "Third Debate"⁸ (positivism – mostly equated with (neo) realism – vs. post-positivism), after the so-called "First" (idealism vs. realism) and "Second" (realism vs. behaviouralism) debates⁹.

And the experiment we were talking about would then consist in trying to integrate some insights of post-positivist currents, in particular of "critical" theory, into cognitive behaviouralism.

First, we will begin with a summary of post-positivist criticisms of the first paradigm in general – the realist paradigm (which, let us repeat it, namely comprises behaviouralism). Secondly, we will go over to criticisms we can level at post-positivist currents. Thirdly, we will then be ready to argue synthetically in favour of a "critical" or reflexive cognitive behaviouralism.

1. A post-positivist criticism of IR realism

The criticism post-positivists have been levelling at realism since the 80s is that very realism that has been developed in the IR discipline as of the inter-war period and the post-WWII period in America. The critics point at that "sea change", which has to do with those migrating "European-formed thinkers like Reinhold Niebuhr and Hans Morgenthau who introduced a more pessimistic and power-oriented view of mankind

¹ Jean BARREAU, *Théories des Relations internationales – La Grammaire des Evénements*, Louvain-la-Neuve, Artec, 3^e éd., 1994, pp. 21-22. The author refers to prominent realist scholar Hans MORGENTHAU, *Politics Among Nations – The Struggle for Power and Peace*, New York, Knopf, 1973.

² Richard C. SNYDER, H. W. BRUCK & Burton SAPIN, "Decision-Making as an Approach to the Study of International Politics", in Stanley HOFMANN (ed.), *Contemporary Theory in International Relations*, Englewood Cliffs, Prentice-Hall, 1960, p. 153. Idem in: Richard C. SNYDER, H. W. BRUCK & Burton SAPIN, "The Decision-Making Approach to the Study of International Politics", in James N. ROSENAU (ed.), *International Politics and Foreign Policy*, New York, The Free Press of Glencoe, 1961, p. 189.

³ Michael BRECHER, Blema STEINBERG & Janice STEIN, "A framework for research on foreign policy behavior", *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. XIII, n° 1, March 1969, pp. 75-101.

⁴ Graham T. ALLISON, *Essence in Decision – Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*, Boston, Little / Brown, 1971.

⁵ Zeev MAOZ, *National Choices and International Processes*, Cambridge / New York / Port Chester, Cambridge University Press, 1990.

⁶ According to Bahgat KORANY, neorealist K. Waltz and R. Gilpin "recast some principles of the realist school in a very sophisticated way"; if "a concern for rigour differentiates neorealists from their ancestors [realists], continuity dominates on the point of view of basic premises and background questions" – in "On en sommes-nous? Au-delà de l'«apple pie» anglo-saxon", in Bahgat KORANY (ed.), *Analyse des relations internationales – Approches, données et concepts*, Montréal, Gaëtan Morin, 1987, resp. pp. 300-301 & p. 302.

¹ *Ibidem*, p. 300.

² Post-positivist currents can be also very critical of currents in the second (for instance, neo-institutionalism) and third (for instance, Marxism) paradigms. But the criticism mainly focused on dominant first-paradigm (neo) realism.

³ Yosef LAPID, "The Third Debate: On the Prospects of International Theory in a Post-Positivist Era", *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 33, 1989, pp. 235-254.

⁴ The evolution of the discipline has been classically described along the lines of these three "debates". A serious historiography demonstrates however the mythology of such depictions. For instance, Peter WILSON shows how "in the sense of a series of exchanges between interlocutors holding opposing 'idealist' and 'realist' points of view, the first great debate never actually occurred". On the other hand, "(a)s a pedagogic device for bringing order to a bewildering array of theories and approaches (...), the notion of a 'first great debate', is not without merit". See Wilson's article: "The Myth of the 'First Great Debate'", *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 24, December 1998 (Special Issue: "The Eighty Years' Crisis 1919-1999"), p. 1.

into an American milieu conditioned by eighteenth-century optimism and nineteenth-century belief in progress". So, for instance, "Dean Acheson and George Kennan, in laying the foundations of U.S. Cold War policy, acknowledged their debt to Reinhold Niebuhr, whose revival of a pessimistic Augustinian view of human nature challenged the optimistic Lockean view native to American culture". This type of realism has since then become dominant in the discipline.

But there has been since the 80s what we could call a second "sea change" – this time not a human, but a textual one (and this is quite coherent with the postmodernist vision) – which saw a new generation of American scholars importing a French school of thought with Foucault and Derrida as its main references.

We can summarise the post-positivist criticism of realism in the IR discipline in three points. All of them relate to the lack of reflexivity in realism's epistemology, which would be inherent to its positivist posture (to be more precise, of a particular kind of positivist posture). We can distinguish three kinds of reflexivity – those based on (a) ontological, (b) social-cultural-historical, and (c) ethical-political issues.

As a basis for argumentation, let us have a look at an extract of 1959 realist (and later neorealist) Kenneth Waltz's "Man, the state, and war":

"Each state pursues its own interests, however defined, in ways it judges best. Force is a means of achieving the external ends of states because there exists no consistent, reliable process of reconciling the conflicts of interest that inevitably arise among similar units in a condition of anarchy. A foreign policy based on this image is neither moral or immoral, but embodies merely a reasoned response to the world about us."

On an ontological point of view, that positivism which is criticised by the post-positivist detractors of realist IR theories is based on the assumption that there exists

¹ Robert W. Cox, *op. cit.*, pp. 240-241.

² *Ibidem*, p. 249 (footnote 5).

³ Kenneth Waltz, *Man, the State, and War*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1959, p. 238 – quoted by Klaus-John DODDS, "Geopolitics and foreign policy: recent developments in Anglo-American political geography and international relations", *Progress in Human Geography*, 18 (1994) 2, pp. 190.

⁴ Indeed, Colin Wright notes that "(a)lthough there is, within IR theory, a tendency to equate positivism with a naïve belief in a world 'out there' and to construe it as a form of realism, within philosophy the notion of positivism as being anti-realist is uncontroversial" – Colin Wright, *op. cit.*, p. 303 (footnote 58). The author notes with Martin Hollis that, philosophically, positivists were 'anti-realists at bottom': the 'independent world' in question is for the latter finally "a construct, perhaps hypothetico-deductive, perhaps grandly transcendental, but nevertheless a construct made by extracting a consistent story from experiences which are nevertheless subjective" – Martin Hollis, "The Last Post", in Steve Smith, Marysia ZALEWSKI & Ken BOOTH (eds.), *International Theory – Positivism and Beyond*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1996, pp. 303-304 – quoted by Colin Wright, *op. cit.*, p. 303.

somehow a reality independent from the one who observes it and that this observer has to discover this very autonomous pre-existing reality and the laws which govern it. To some extent here, the object is independent from the subject. For non-positivists, "the point of view creates the object", as linguist de Saussure said¹. Realists see the state, inter-state violence, and war as essential realities, which are to be described and explained as "they are". This is "the world about us" of Waltz. For non-positivists, these realities have to be understood not as "they are" (in essence), but as they have been socially and culturally constructed by human beings through history.

And, indeed, on a social-cultural-historical point of view, non-positivists see objects and discourses on objects as social, cultural and historical constructs, while in realism as considered here, objects are essential, a-historical realities which are imposed on us and with which we have to cope as such. "Positivism deals with externally perceived givens; historicism [non-positivism] with events or institutions that are 'made'"². "This distinction is less self-evident in English than in Latin languages, where the corresponding words are past participles of the verbs 'to give' and 'to make', in French, «donnée» and «fait». So discourses on objects tend to be seen as neutral accounts of reality. Realists tend then to overlook that, as part of a social field, the academic one, they are social actors who have to cope with their inner positions in their field and with their outer relations with other fields of society, namely the political one.

And so we are coming to the ethical-political point. First, the consequences of the realists' vision of objects. Their essentialist vision of objects leads them to a deterministic neutral naturalism. "A foreign policy based on this image is neither moral or immoral, but embodies merely a reasoned response to the world about us." Things are "like they are". We cannot change them, we just have to "manage"; this is the very word. This point of view leads to the neutral management of the world as "it is", it is conservative. But as Steve Smith says, "(t)here is no more political position than one which claims to be 'neutral' or which simply allows the 'facts to speak for them-

¹ To some extent, because, for instance, as Colin Wright notes, Waltz, "often a favoured target of post-positivist attacks" (we ourselves have just been introducing the post-positivist criticism of realism with an extract of the author's 1959 "Man, the State, and War"), "described the naïveté of students of politics who 'frequently mentioned 'reality that is out there''. Moreover, Waltz himself stated that "what we think of as reality is itself an elaborate conception constructed and reconstructed through the ages". Colin Wright, *op. cit.*, p. 301 – quoting Kenneth N. WALTZ, *Theory of International Politics*, Reading, Addison-Wesley, 1979, resp. p. 4 (note 14) & p. 5.

² Yohan ARIFIN & Giuseppe MERONE, "Les relations internationales: entre 'traditionalistes' et 'post...'", *Le Trimestre du Monde*, n° 27, 1995, p. 77.

³ Robert W. COX, *op. cit.*, p. 254 (footnote 32).

⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 254 (footnote 32).

selves". Under cover of neutrality, they help the world remain as "it is". Postmodernist insights show how "realism in its universalist philosophical form and particularist state application has (...) helped to constitute the discordant world it purports to describe".¹² Actually, according to postmodernist Ashley, realism reduces the reality of the political community to the sole national space and postpones *ad aeternam* the possibility of realising the political community at the international level and, in doing so, legitimises interstate violence. This leads to legitimise the "realist statesman", while imposing silence upon anything that could unveil the historical and political arbitrariness and contingency of this state of affairs. Because there does exist a political community on the political scene, precisely, that of "realist statesmen", who share the same views and who agree at least on the possibility of not getting on with each other.¹³ This is the ideological point. On the other hand, on a sociological point of view, "critical" currents have shown how academics and politicians, as the "state's privileged story tellers", are deeply interconnected in the worldviews they produce and in the political agendas they shape. The "consequence-oriented" ethics of realists' theories suits them very well, while theories based on moral imperatives not to be infringed of a "rule-oriented" ethics' become embarrassing "in their role of the Prince's adviser – if not of the Prince himself (we think here in particular about the numerous American statesmen who are "cross-overs" of the academic study of IR, such as Acheson, Kissinger, Kennan and Dulles)".¹⁴ Let us also think about other highly geopolitical places like "think tanks", colloquiums and other types of academic expertise provided to FP decision-makers (cf. *infra* – 3.2.3).

This rather dark post-positivist criticism of realism should not exempt post-positivists themselves from criticism too.

¹² Steve SMITH, "Epistemology, Postmodernism and International Relations' Theory: A Reply to Østerud", *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 34, n° 3, 1997, p. 333.

¹³ James DER DERIAN, *op. cit.* ("A Reinterpretation ..."), in James DER DERIAN (ed.), *op. cit.*, 1995, pp. 370-371.

¹⁴ Richard K. ASHLEY, "The Geopolitics of Geopolitical Space: Toward a Critical Social Theory of International Politics", *Alternatives*, XII, 1987, pp. 403-434 & "Untying the Sovereign State: A Double Reading of the Anarchy Problematic", *Millennium*, Vol. 17, n° 2, pp. 227-262 – See the comments by Yohán ARIJIN & Giuseppe MERKONE, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

¹⁵ Klaus-John DODDS, "Geopolitics, experts and the making of foreign policy", *Arva*, 25 (1993) 1, pp. 70-74.

¹⁶ The distinction between "consequence-oriented" ethical traditions and "rule-oriented" ethical traditions is made by David R. MAREL & Terry NARDIN, "Convergence and Divergence in International Ethics", in Terry NARDIN & David R. MAREL (eds.), *Traditions of International Ethics*, Cambridge / New York, Port Chester, Cambridge University Press ("Cambridge Studies in International Relations", n° 17), 1992, pp. 297-322.

¹⁷ Klaus-Gerd GIESSEN, "Corporatisme paradigmatique, théories déontologiques et nouvel ordre mondial", *Études internationales*, Vol. XXIV, n° 2, juin 1993, p. 325. The author exposes both kinds of the above mentioned ethical traditions, focusing on the realist and the deontological currents.

2. A criticism of IR post-positivism

Let us take our three kinds of epistemological reflexivity again and have a look at two post-positivist currents: the "critical" one and the postmodernist one. The crucial point here is *ontological*. Nevertheless, let us have a brief look at the *social-cultural-historical* and *ethical-political* points too in order to show that the problematic – if this time explicit – remains highly complex.

Let us begin with the *ethical-political* point in "critical" theory. IR emancipatory theories which are intended to be built are underdeveloped – but this is maybe something quite coherent with the approach (theorists would just give procedural guidelines and imperative markers – a framework – to all other social actors, who would have to define further the societal / political project through intersubjective debate?). Let us illustrate the point. According to Neufeld, a relevant question is: "Which general social agenda / political project is most appropriate in terms of the needs of the planet?"¹⁸ The general line he provides follows the path of an Aristotelian finality of a search for a political-moral order which promotes freedom and equality conceived at the scale of the global *polis*¹⁹, through "reasoned assessment", but what does this imply? Mervyn Frost has shown that post-positivist scholars (that he calls 'constitutive') have in practice not really undertaken serious ethical argument – "argument about what is to count as oppression (as opposed to liberation), or about what is to count as an emancipatory practice (as opposed to an enslaving one), about what would be fair in international relations, what just, and so on". To go on into this problematic and illustrate its complexity, let's assume, for instance, that the answer to our questioning on Neufeld would be a procedural one, like that of John Rawls' "Theory of Justice": the "just order" has to be built through an intersubjective debate with imperative limits put on the sacred values of freedom and equality.²⁰ But when we try to cope with this problematic on the level of "different" political communities – from the national level to the global level – and here we come to the *social-cultural-historical* issue –, it gets more complicated. In the debate "constructivism vs. communitarianism", we have seen Rawls' falling into cultural relativism.²¹ The fact that "critical" scholars consciously assume a

¹⁸ Mark NEUFELD, *op. cit.* ("Reflexivity ..."), in Claire TURENNE SJÖLANDER & Wayne S. Cox (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 33.

¹⁹ Mark NEUFELD, *The Restructuring of International Relations Theory*, Cambridge / New York / Melbourne, Cambridge University Press ("Cambridge Studies in International Relations", n° 43), 1995, pp. 9-10.

²⁰ Mervyn FROST, "A turn not taken: Ethics in IR at the Millennium", *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 24, December 1998 (Special Issue: "The Eighty Years' Crisis 1919-1999"), p. 127.

²¹ John RAWLS, *A Theory of Justice*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1971.

²² John RAWLS, *Political Liberalism*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1993. See also his article: "The Law of Peoples", *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 20, n° 1, Autumn 1993.

²³ Klaus-Gerd GIESSEN, "Charité paternaliste et guerre juste: la justice internationale selon John Rawls", *Les Temps Modernes*, 54^e année, n° 604, mai-juin-juillet 1999, pp. 40-62.

subjectivism rooted in their social-cultural universe does not solve the more general problematic of the "universalism vs. particularism" debate.¹ But one could say that a step of epistemological self-consciousness has at least been made.

Let's go over to postmodernists, first on the point of view of *social-cultural-historical* reflexivity. With their radical subjectivism, they neglect to see that, like those that they criticise, they all produce discourses in a specific field – the academic one –, and that they, as such, are submitted to the production and reproduction rules of the field, in which actors struggle for the appropriation of the capitals into stake? furthermore, as Bourdieu says, "if deconstruction deconstructed itself, it would discover historical conditions of possibility and should thus admit that it also presupposes truth and rational dialogue criteria rooted in the social structure of the intellectual universe".

As far as the *ethical-political* point is concerned, evaluative accounts on postmodernist IR works vary a lot. According to Neufeld, postmodernists, "while insisting on the politico-normative content of dominant knowledge discourses in the discipline – for example, neo-realism – [they] have been strangely reluctant to spell out, or even acknowledge, the politico-normative content of their own approach". In fact, according to Tony Porter, far from being a-moral, their approach in IR would be based on implicit values: "pluralism is privileged over order, dissensus over consensus, and disorder over peace". While recognising that postmodernism is "an emphatically political perspective", they hold that it is one "which refuses to privilege any partisan political line". And "(a)lthough one of postmodernism's most loudly self-proclaimed strengths is its rejection of the modernist repression of difference, postmodern approaches are often exceedingly brutal in their treatment of alternative approaches." Their pluralism and relativism would look very ambiguous.

¹ We personally tackled the "universalism vs. particularism" problematic in regard to the "Islam and the West" debate around the "New World Order". See our article: « "Islam-Occident": normes et perceptions croisées sur le "Nouvel Ordre mondial" », *Les Cahiers du Monde arabe*, n° 126, 1998.

² Yohan Akrifin & Giuseppe Marrone, *op. cit.*, pp. 92 & 102.

³ Pierre Bourdieu (avec Loïc Wacziarg), *Réponses – Pour une anthropologie réflexive*, Paris, Seuil, 1992, p. 38 – quoted by Yohan Akrifin & Giuseppe Marrone, *op. cit.*, p. 104. As far as their position as social actors on a wider level is concerned – "public life" –, see Stefano Guzzini, "Maintenir les dilemmes de la modernité en suspens: analyse et éthique poststructuralistes en relations internationales", in Klaus-Gerd Giesen (dir.), *L'Éthique de l'Espace politique mondial – Mélanges disciplinaires*, Bruxelles, Emile Bruylant (Coll. "Organisation internationale et Relations internationales", n° 38), 1997, pp. 279-280.

⁴ Mark Neufeld, *op. cit.* ("Reflexivity ..."), in Claire Turenne Solander & Wayne S. Cox (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 31.

⁵ Tony Porter, "Postmodern Political Realism and International Relations Theory's Third Debate", in Claire Turenne Solander & Wayne S. Cox (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 120.

⁶ J. GEORGE & D. CAMPBELL, "Patterns of Dissent and the Celebration of Difference: Critical Social Theory and International Relations", *International Studies Quarterly*, 34(3), September 1990, p. 281 – quoted by Mark Neufeld, *op. cit.* ("Reflexivity ..."), in Claire Turenne Solander & Wayne S. Cox (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 31.

⁷ Tony Porter, *op. cit.*, in Claire Turenne Solander & Wayne S. Cox (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 115.

A more positive appreciation of the current has been made by Stefano Guzzini. Evaluating Connolly and Walker's works, he states that the ethical-political point at stake here would be that of "maintaining the dilemmas of modernity in abeyance", which would mean that while allowing themselves to have a discourse on the "truth" (and thereby making a rupture with Ashley's postpositivism), it has continuously to be (self) problematised. Here then there is a distanciation with the radical post-modernist position (held by Ashley) which states that every attempt to elaborate an alternative discourse to dominant modern discourse would only result in reproducing another "sovereign voice". So post-structuralist Connolly and Walker would not be that much relativist and do not avoid the above-mentioned "universalism vs. particularism" debate. Admittedly, postmodernists will say that this debate, which is related to the "cosmopolitanism vs. communitarianism" debate, is typically a modern debate, because it does not avoid the demarcation of sovereign identities, should it be between communities (universalism / particularism) or within communities (cosmopolitanism / communitarianism). But this is not to say that they stop here. Connolly, for instance, invokes a "second order ethicality", which recognises the contingency and historicity of value assertions which would, as such, have no pretence of temporal nor spatial roots: so a non-territorialised democracy is considered "no longer locked behind the bars of the state". More generally, he develops an 'agnostic ethic of care', which is a "primary quest (...) for ways to cultivate care for identity and difference in a world already permeated by ethical proclivities and predispositions to identity". Postmodernists are well aware that they cultivate self-contradiction, paradox and ambiguity and the criticism made by modernists in this sense is evaluated by them as a gesture aiming at imposing coherence (which is one more aspect of modernity) on them. We would say that the "permanent state" of contingency they aim at leads them to cultivate not so much an "in-between" (which would still be too much spatially or temporally located), but a "dialectical" (we would rather say "synlectical") postmodern momentum by which the negating of the modern premise is to be seen not diachronically, but synchronically. This comes from their rejection to reify, to sovereignise, to empower what they have just disempowered. And in this suspended

¹ Stefano Guzzini, *op. cit.*, pp. 247-285.

² Molly Cochran, "Postmodernism, ethics and international political theory", *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 21, 1995, p. 245.

³ W. CONNOLLY, *Identity/Difference: Democratic Negotiations of Political Paradox*, Ithaca, 1991, p. 12 – quoted by Molly Cochran, *op. cit.*, p. 246.

⁴ W. CONNOLLY, "Democracy and Territoriality", *Millennium*, Vol. 20, n° 3, 1991, p. 479 – quoted by Molly Cochran, *op. cit.*, p. 249.

⁵ W. CONNOLLY, *op. cit.* ("Identity/Difference..."), p. 10 – quoted by Molly Cochran, *op. cit.*, p. 246.

⁶ Molly COCHRAN, *op. cit.*, p. 248 – who refers to R. ASHLEY & R.B.J. WALKER, "Reading Dissidence/Writing the Discipline: Crisis and the Question of Sovereignty in International Studies", *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 34, n° 3, 1990, p. 375.

momentum, unlike modernists, they would not fear vacuum and indeterminacy (a fear, which would be typically modern): on the contrary, they would celebrate uncertainty.¹

One could develop more these *social-cultural-historical* and *ethical-political* points in post-positivist currents. But the point which should be discussed here for the very purpose of our argumentation is the *ontological* one, because it has to deal with benefits we can still benefit from in the realist paradigm, at least, in one aspect of its posture: the attention it pays to what Bhaskar calls "intransitive" objects (cf. *infra*).

Indeed, what are the "objects" of post-positivist research in IR, especially in post-modernist research? We put "objects" between inverted commas because for post-modernists, the dichotomy between subject and object is illusory. Postmodernists don't focus on what we classically could consider as IR objects as such: indeed one could say that their "objects" are modern realist subjects' discourses on modern realist "incontestable objects": the world is a realist text which has to be deconstructed. The confusion about what post-positivist scholars precisely consider as "substantive" issues has led some to state that they "have been more adept at pointing out what is omitted in rationalistic theory than in developing theories of their own with a priori content".² In a way, one could say that postmodernists depend a lot on realist constructions. But this is quite coherent with their posture: concerned to demonstrate how IR theory is produced, they contend that the intertext between old world and new is a "better "model"" than any "relation between "theory and evidence""³.

We have just mentioned that the dichotomy between object and subject is on a post-modernist point of view illusory. Even "critical" researchers avoid using the O/S dichotomy; they will rather talk about texts and referents of texts,⁴ signifiers and signifieds. One more interesting formulation of this dichotomy is that of Bhaskar, who considers two kinds of objects: transitive and intransitive. *Transitive* objects are objects of knowledge, which science uses in order to deepen its knowledge of *intransitive* objects, i.e. the objects of knowledge which exist independently of that knowl-

edge: Bhaskar's theory is in this respect relativist about the transitive object without being relativist about the intransitive object.⁵

In post-positivism, the hyper-reflexivity has led to meta-discourses, that is to say, discourses on discourses. Post-positivist "objects" are the realist transitive objects. Where do the intransitive objects remain, if we consider that the empirical world is not only a text? Keohane has asked the advocates of approaches which he calls "reflective" to develop an empirical research programme (but, once again, the question is: what is considered as relevant empty?): "the greatest weakness of the reflective school lies not in deficiencies in their critical arguments but in the lack of a clear reflective research program that could be employed by students of world politics."⁶ But even "critical" researchers recognise now that it's time "to move beyond the meta-theoretical stalemate of the Third Debate".⁷ As Alexander Wendt points out, "from the standpoint of theory development", the point of "second order" theory [i.e. "meta-theory"] "must ultimately be to contribute to our growing understanding of world politics (...), and as such it must eventually come to grips with thinking about first order [i.e. "substantive"] problems".⁸

We want to adopt the reflexive insights of post-positivism without rejecting the gains of positivist cognitive behaviouralism – at least and foremost the general positivist concern for "intransitive" objects – which should then be reformed with "critical" reflexivity. We think indeed that we should avoid falling into the most exacerbated hyper-reflexivity and tend to continue questioning in transitive objects, yet in a reflexive way – that is to say, with a highly developed awareness that this process includes the transitivity issue. It presupposes that we are conscious that describing and explaining reality includes a process of constructing this very reality (cf. *infra* – 3.1.5 & 3.2.1): as Mervyn Frost says, "IR theorists, in their theorizing activities, are themselves engaged in the constitution of the reality which they study".⁹ And as Wayne S. Cox & Claire Turenne Sjolander say, let's aim at a "reflexive international relations theory, which accepts that theory is as much a reflection of the world as it is [we personally would have said: "as it has been constructed"], as a construction of the world as it might be".¹⁰

¹ Colin Wright, *op. cit.*, p. 309 – who refers to Roy Bhaskar, *Scientific Realism and Human Emancipation*, London, Verso, 1986.

² Robert Keohane, *op. cit.* ("International ..."), in James Der Derian, *op. cit.*, 1995, p. 300.

³ Wayne S. Cox & Claire Turenne Sjolander, *op. cit.* ("Critical ..."), Claire Turenne Sjolander & Wayne S. Cox (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 1.

⁴ Alexander Wendt, "Bridging the theory/meta-theory gap in international relations", *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 17, 1991, p. 383.

⁵ Mervyn Frost, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

⁶ Wayne S. Cox & Claire Turenne Sjolander, *op. cit.* ("Critical ..."), in Claire Turenne Sjolander & Wayne S. Cox (eds.), *op. cit.*, 1994, p. 10.

¹ R.B.J. Walker, *Inside/Outside: International Relations as Political Theory*, Cambridge, 1993, p. 16 – in Molly Cochran, *op. cit.*, p. 245.

² Yohann Arrifin & Giuseppe Marrone, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

³ Robert Keohane, "International Institutions: Two Approaches", in James Der Derian (ed.), *op. cit.*, 1995, p. 302.

⁴ W. Connolly, *op. cit.* ("Identity/Difference ..."), p. 38 – quoted by Molly Cochran, *op. cit.*, p. 239.

⁵ Wayne S. Cox & Claire Turenne Sjolander, "Critical Reflections on International Relations", in Claire Turenne Sjolander & Wayne S. Cox (eds.), *op. cit.*, 1994, p. 8.

3. Some steps towards a more reflexive cognitive behaviouralism in FPD

The challenge here is thus not to reject cognitive behaviouralism, but to reform it in a reflexive way – and this both *internally* and *deontologically*.

3.1. Internal criticism of cognitive behaviouralism

If we proceed to an overall deconstruction of the underlying ideology of FPD cognitive behaviouralism, we'll have to cope, not only with the general ethical-political issue of realism (see the first part of this article), but also with its very proper ethical-political problematic as such.

3.1.1 – We saw that the kind of realism, which we have to do with, is problem-solving-featured and not "critical". Cognitive behaviouralism is a particularly accentuated kind of problem-solving ideology; it is indeed even explicit in its general framework, because it has precisely to deal with problem-solving! So, as a problem-solving ideology, it can be very conservative. Though, there are some breakthroughs within certain DM models, which depart from the modern problem-solving rationality and are in this sense progressive, because the conservative progressivism is bypassed by another conception of the motives of human behaviour. We will come back to this point later on.

When we try to understand or explain a FP decision, we easily have a tendency to question "the" rationality upon which it is based. Why these inverted commas? We easily succumb to the temptation of a certain conception of rationality, that is to say that rationality according to which the FP decision-maker, while looking for a solution to the problem which he confronts, aims at optimising means and ends (that is to say, "in realist words", at promoting national interest by maximising national power¹). In fact, that rationality, named "pure" by Paul de Bruyne² and upon which the analytical model is based is not "the" rationality, but a well-specified kind of rationality.

¹ Jean BARREA considers the rational model (i.e. the analytic model, based on the "pure" rationality – see below) as the bridge between the traditional (i.e. realist) and the scientific (i.e. behaviouralist) currents. Cf. his book: *op. cit.*, 1994, p. 38.

² Paul de BRUYNE makes a distinction between the models based on "pure", "bounded", "adaptive" and "political" rationalities. Cf. his book: *Modèles de décision – Les rationalités de l'action*, Louvain, Peeters, 1981. See also the synthetic tables of these models in his more recent book: *La Décision politique*, Louvain / Paris, Peeters, 1995, pp. 247-251.

This is what we can see while reviewing a series of DM models¹, which are each one, a criticism of "the" rationality, the so-called "pure" rationality. So, as far as the "bounded" rationality model² is concerned, the decision-maker no longer searches for optimising the tension between means and ends, but for "satisfying" it. Furthermore, according to the cybernetic model³, which is based on the "adaptive" rationality, the decision proceeds from a pre-established resolving procedure. According to the cognitive model⁴, the decision-maker makes his decision on the basis of an analogy with a past experience. According to the bureaucratic-politics model⁵, the decision proceeds from a bargaining between groups that promote the respective interests of their organisations. Finally, as far as the "political" rationality model⁶ is concerned, objectives are "discovered" or invented in the course of action, while the decision is rationalised a posteriori.

These are as many different types of rationalities, as many breaches into the conceptual framework of "the" rationality: we have left mono-rationality for multi-rationality⁷. But this would be well too easy, as Lucien Sfez demonstrates. Indeed, Sfez states that most of criticisms formulated against "the" rationality are nothing more than amendments to it, in that they would only aim at rendering it more credible in front of empirical reality, without challenging the foundations upon which it is based. In other words, the models, which he calls "neo-rationalist", such as the "bounded" and adaptive rationality models, would not have led us away from the mono-rationality. What does this mean? Lucien Sfez mentions two presupposed items in this concept.

¹ Zeev MAOZ (*op. cit.*) makes a distinction between the analytical, cybernetic, cognitive and bureaucratic-politics models. For a synthesis of the first three models, Maoz (*op. cit.*, pp. 230-231) refers to J.G. STEIN & R. TANIER, *Rational Decision Making – Israel's Security Choices*, 1967, Columbus, Ohio State University Press, 1980.

² H.A. SIMON, *Models of Man*, New York, John Wiley, 1957.

³ J.D. STEINBRUNER, *The Cybernetic Theory of Decision – New Dimensions of Political Analysis*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1974.

⁴ For this model, Zeev MAOZ (*op. cit.*) namely refers to I.L. JANIS & L. MANN, *Decision Making – A Psychological Analysis of Conflict, Choice, and Commitment*, New York, Free Press, 1977, to R. JERVIS, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1976, and to E.R. MAY, *Lessons of the Past – The Uses and Misuses of History in American Foreign Policy*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1973.

⁵ This model originates in Graham T. ALLISON's research on the Cuban Missile Crisis. Cf. his book: *op. cit.* He exposed the other models as well, demonstrating that they did not exclude each other, but that they were complementary, each one bringing some procedural aspects of a FP decision to light.

⁶ Paul de BRUYNE, *op. cit.* ("Modèles..."), pp. 66-86. The author namely refers to M.D. COHEN, J.G. MARCH & J.P. OLSEN, "A Garbage Can Model of Organizational Choice", *Administrative Science Quarterly*, Vol. 17, n° 1, March 1972, pp. 1-25.

⁷ Lucien SFEZ, *La décision*, Paris, Presses universitaires de France (Coll. «Que sais-je?», n° 2181), 2^e éd., 1988.

First, mono-rationality presupposes that we are able to clearly understand the chain of causes of a behaviour and thus to segment every DM process in different stages. And so we do in distinguishing diagnosis, search, revision, evaluation, choice, and implementation.¹ The only model that seems to avoid this discontinuous sequentiality is the "political" rationality model, according to which P. de Bruyne mentions decisional "flows"² in this regard.

Secondly, mono-rationality presupposes our "unavoidable" propensity to promote the "profit-efficiency" binomial – return on our acts, as a value inherent to our reasonable conception of progress. Once again, the only model that seems to avoid mono-rationality is the "political" rationality model, since, though the decision-maker is still considered as promoting "progressive profitability", it is so afterwards, in a *posteriori* rationalisation process. Thus this model presupposes indeed that the DM process is not necessarily based on a pre-established efficient and profitable resolving procedure, though the decision-maker rationalises it as such, *a posteriori*.

In this sense, we state that the "political" rationality model is the only model mentioned here to abandon the era of "certain man" (cf. the rationalist model based on the "pure" rationality) and that of "probable man" (cf. the neo-rationalist models based namely on the "bounded" and "adaptive" rationalities) for the era of "uncertain man", because of his multi-rationality, in the restricted sense as defined by Lucien Sfez,³ that is to say, a "man" who is not exclusively guided by the unrestrained quest of "progressive profitability", but whose horizons are open to other values... but which values...? post-modern ones? It is not easy to answer this question, all the more so since this yet "uncertain" man keeps hiding behind "probable man" or "certain man" in his rationalisation attempts. But here the rationalist conceptualisation seems to integrate post-modern insights: and post-modernism – at least viewed by modernists – would be the invention of a new kind of rationality – and not irrationality.

Still, if we get more conscious with authors like Sfez of the possibility of viewing the contemporaneous decision-maker also as an "uncertain man", it is ethically problematical to throw away the mono-rational visions of a "progressive profitability" (a) on a strictly normative point of view, and (b) as far as means are concerned.

If, on descriptive and explanatory points of view, "progressive profitability" could – case by case – be put aside, on a strictly normative point of view, it is problematical –

¹ Zeev Maoz, *op. cit.*, pp. 39-40.

² Paul de Bruyne, *op. cit.* («Modèles...»), p. 67.

³ Lucien Sfez, *op. cit.*, makes a distinction between "Homo economicus" («l'homme certain»), "Homo probabilis" («l'homme probable»), and "Homo erraticus" («l'homme aléatoire»).

cal to dismiss the whole "Prometheus", at least if means are subordinated to ends, which can be post-modern ends – even if these are defined underway and not *a priori*. Indeed, searching solutions to problems is probably a universal human behaviour. "The West", with its progressive ideology emanating from the Renaissance up to the Enlightenment, has maybe put this quest to its paroxysmic point and has most clarified it. Confusion proceeds from the fact that "the Other" is not viewed with his proper finality criteria of that "instrumental reason" which is probably universal. We do not recognise the same logic in "the Other" because we evaluate his behaviour with our proper finality criteria. "The Other" is no less efficient as far as the ends he defines are concerned, but, in our perception, they do not make sense. The "progressive profitability", as long as it does not become an end in itself, and as long as it is submitted to ends which it is intended to serve (and as long as it fits with emancipatory ethics – but what does it consist of?) conserves all its virtuous value.

While mentioning the possibility of behaviours that fit with "political" rationality, we do so contribute to escaping from the conservative, a-historical, essentialist ideology of mono-rationality. In this sense, cognitive behaviouralism makes itself "critical".

3.1.2 – We already exposed the "consequence-oriented" ethics of IR realist theory. If the decisionism contained in realism leads to exceptionalise and reduce the ethics of "realist statesman", legitimising by the "reason of State" a particular ethics for this "uncommon" citizen that is in charge of the affairs of the state, the structuralism contained in behaviouralism (and neo-realism) leads to the disappearance and irrelevancy of any concern for ethics at all in the "structures of the systems" analysed. First, the analysis in terms of rationalities can re-introduce a concern for the ethical stakes comprised in a decision (see *infra* Lucien Sfez' concepts of "multi-rationalities" vs. "mono-rationality"). Furthermore, the attention we pay to "structures" of decision does not necessarily prevent us from paying attention to its agents. The "agent-structure" problematic can be fully integrated to cognitive behaviouralism. It goes hand in hand with the historicisation imperative (cf. *infra* – 3.1.4). Finally, the attention paid to FP outcomes can be useful here too (cf. *infra* – 3.1.3 & 3.2.3).

¹ Klaus-Gerd Giesen, "Entre décisionisme et structuralisme: la précarité de l'éthique individuelle dans les théories des relations internationales", in Michel Girard (dir.), *Les individus dans la politique internationale*, Paris, Economica, 1994, pp. 37-38. The author considers behaviouralism as a step between realism and neo-realism: realist decisionism would have evolved to neo-realist structuralism through behaviouralist anthropomorphism and positivism. Anthropomorphism is in fact already a kind of structuralism and this is why we consider that behaviouralism is already structuralist. Behaviouralist DM models are explicitly structural-functional models.

3.1.3 – We should be cautious when analysing FP outcomes¹ in the so-called “operational environment” (the reality “outside” the decision-maker’s mind, of which the researcher would have a better grasp than the latter)². The temptation to focus on FP outcomes, taking into account the impact of a decision in the operational environment can lead to a normative bias, on a deontological point of view: evaluating FP on the basis of management criteria, in terms of efficiency, while putting aside other ethical stakes in play³. Of course, “good” DM in order to avoid inadvertent war, crisis management to prevent escalation and war can have virtuous aspects, though it remains in the general framework of the state sovereignty and the “anarchical” inter-state system: as such, we have to be conscious that the measures put forward in such a framework are palliative and do not challenge the existing order in a radical way. But there remain ethical problems in helping DM with ends that we might consider as immoral. More generally, we should evaluate policy outcomes not so much in relation to the decisions which led to them, but as moral vs. immoral issues, adopting an ethical-political stance and putting aside our “scientific” stance as defined in a strictly positivist way (cf. *infra* – 3.2.3).

3.1.4 – We should introduce historicity to help us show that a DM process is historically situated and, in doing so, escape deterministic naturalism. In analysing a country’s FP, you can see that DM processes can change through time, for instance,

¹ The distinction between “FP decisions” and “FP outcomes” is made by Ole R. Holsti, “Theories of International Relations and Foreign Policy: Realism and Its Challenges”, in Charles Kegley Jr. (ed.), *Controversies in International Relations Theory – Realism and the Neoliberal Challenge*, New York, St Martin’s Press, 1995, p. 56.

² As far as the distinction between the “operational environment” and the “psychological environment” (the latter is defined as the “very reality” according to the decision-maker’s mind, which he perceives while making decisions) is concerned, BRECHER, STEINBERG & STEIN (*op. cit.*, p. 86) relied on Joseph FRANKEL (*The Making of Foreign Policy – An Analysis of Decision-Making*, London, Oxford University Press, 1963) and Richard C. SNYDER, H. W. BRUCK & Burton SARIN (*Foreign Policy Decision-Making: An Approach to the Study of International Politics*, New York, Free Press, 1962), who themselves relied on Harold & Margaret SPROUT, “Environmental Factors in the Study of International Politics”, in James N. ROSENAU (ed.), *International Politics and Foreign Policy*, New York, Free Press, 1961, p. 109. BRECHER, STEINBERG & STEIN (*op. cit.*, p. 77) make the point that, although Snyder, Bruck & Sapin acknowledge the distinction between the operational environment and the psychological environment, they wrongly consider the latter as irrelevant. BRECHER, STEINBERG & STEIN (*op. cit.*, p. 81, footnote 6) make the distinction in a rather positivist way, though they seem to doubt somehow on the real grasp researchers can have on the reality: “‘Reality’ is a term which may be applied to the analyst’s observations of the operational environment. It can be questioned whether the social scientist is capable of more accurate perceptions of that environment than is the participant decision-maker. This will vary in degree with the analyst and the decision-maker. Generally the decision-maker has superior access to sources of information which can enhance his insight into reality. The social scientist is, however, normally less involved and therefore likely to be more objective. Moreover, he possesses skills which enhance his objectivity and accuracy.”

³ Here again the finality of efficiency poses an ethical stake (except if efficiency is viewed as an ethical value as such).

on the point of view of the number of actors implied, going from a very autocratic or oligarchic circle of decision-makers to more democratic forms of DM. It can help us, for instance, not to legitimise a very elitist DM process per se, because “it is the way it is”. You are not obliged to agree with the DM process neither on a procedural point of view nor with the ends it aims at. More generally, we should be aware of the fact that, on the short-term, we legitimise the institution of the state and the inter-state system. Introducing historicity helps us conceive that a given DM process is contingent and contextual.

3.1.5 – On a social-cultural point of view, there is a point to be raised. Sylvan & Majeski have shown that USA FPDM is based on a problem-solving culture¹. We will come back later on this point on a deontological point of view. Here, this insight leads us to ask the question of cross-cultural limitations to apply such a kind of theorising outside empirical American cases. This should be handled very carefully. We can ask the same question with methodological individualism: while originating from the individualistic Western society, some researches show that they can also be relevant in the study of non-western societies, namely in Arab societies². Is it really relevant to talk about “Western” ways of reasoning? And how do we cope with the issue of Third World’s highly “Westernised” local elites?

3.1.6 – Postmodernist researches can help us learn to be more careful with our input data, our empirical facts, on a discursive point of view. “Der Derian (...) has usefully pointed out that much of Janis’s work on the Bay of Pigs fiasco and the Cuban missile crisis relies on the accounts of Henry Kissinger. Rather than assuming that Kissinger’s accounts within his book, *A thousand days* (...), were motivated by self-justification of the author’s role and a vindication of the Kennedy administration, Janis assumed that this text was a ‘document’ and capable of having a real meaning. Janis’s work ignored the issue of how texts are reconstructions dependent on a variety of interpretations rather than simply recording certain life-events.” This process has to do with “*a posteriori*” rationalisation (cf. *supra*).

¹ Klaus-John DODDS, *op. cit.* (“Geopolitics and foreign policy...”), p. 201. The author refers to D. SYLVAN & S. MAJESKI, “Intervention and neutralization: the 1961 decisions in Vietnam and Laos”, Paper presented to the Annual Conference of the International Studies Association, Washington DC, 14-18 April 1987 & “Rhetorics of place characteristics in high level US foreign policy making”, Paper presented to the Annual Conference of the International Studies Association, Atlanta, 1-4 April 1992.

² Jean-Noël PERRIE, « Vers une anthropologie déconstructiviste des sociétés musulmanes du Maghreb », *Peuples méditerranéens*, n° 54-55, janvier-juin 1991, p. 233.

³ Klaus-John DODDS, *op. cit.* (“Geopolitics and foreign policy...”), p. 194. The author refers to James DER DERIAN, “The boundaries of knowledge and power in international relations”, in J. DER DERIAN & M. SHAPIRO, *International/intercultural relations – postmodern readings of world politics*, Lexington, Lexington Books, 1989.

3.2. *Deontological criticism of cognitive behaviouralism*

3.2.1 – As FPDM researchers, we should be conscious of the fact that we do not only “describe” and “explain” reality, but that we also help constitute this very reality. Our theories are not only a “representation” of reality; it is also a “construction” of that very reality. During the seminar held in Mons around James N. Rosenau, of which this article is a by-product, we were trying to characterise the “transformative age”, the “new epoch” we were – and we are – living in. But as chairman Reimund Seidelmann said about Rosenau’s contribution, we were indeed at that very moment in a way also “inventing history”. In the 21st century, people looking back to the 20th century will see the beginnings of their realities, as Rosenau said, but we would add that we, people of the 20th century, are also constructing those future realities now. As researchers, in conceptualising the future world, our observation of emerging realities and our prospectives have performative effects: the “transforming age” is evolving – yet partially – in conceptualising it. Transformations are at work in part (just the part we play as social actors among other social actors) because we are shaping worldviews and namely by our teaching and as “state’s privileged story tellers” we are socialising these worldviews and creating universes of references, we help shape the political agendas³. In this particular case of FPDM research, we could say that we participate in producing and reproducing the “problem-solving” ethos. An analogy outside the international relations’ field can be made for instance with psychoanalysis. In the beginning of the century, the psychoanalytic referents were only shared as a way of describing and explaining human behaviour by a small number of people. Nowadays a major part of the society knows its most common referents and it has indeed become for the as such socialised people the very reality of phenomena occurring in human life.

3.2.2 – FPDM should always express the ethical consequences of the possible impact of their writings in the political realm. DM theories are indeed very helpful to know more about how human beings function, psychologically and sociologically. Let

³ James N. ROSENAU, “After the Cold War: Theoretical and Methodological Challenges – Talking Points”, Paper presented at the Seminar “Theories of International Relations after the Cold War: Plural Theoretical Challenges”, Seminar organised by the Political Department of the Free University of Brussels (ULB), the Unit of Political Sciences and International Relations of the Catholic University of Louvain (UCL) & the Faculty of Political Sciences of the FUCAM with the participation of James ROSENAU (George Washington University), Mons (Belgium), 1999, February 26.

⁴ Klaus-John DODDS, *op. cit.* (“Geopolitics, experts...”), pp. 70-74.

⁵ For a theory of how ideas, ideals, utopias progressively come true in the political realm, see the analytical framework of Jean BARREA in his book: *L’Utopie ou la guerre – d’Erasmus à la crise des Européens*, Louvain-la-Neuve, Clio, 2^e éd., 1986. He considers three steps – intellectual-cultural maturation, socialisation, and political-institutional crystallisation –, that are progressively passed through the crises of reality.

me compare this with neuro-linguistic programming: the very efficient social-psychological knowledge contained in this psycho-therapeutic current poses ethical problems in terms of the use of it. It can seem rather naïve, but there should be a kind of “handle with care” notice attached to each FPDM research. But of course, once again, it depends on the ends at which we aim: conflict-resolution theorisation is of great ethical value, even if it does not escape the conservative posture of managing conflicts in a given system – the inter-state system.

3.2.3 – FPDM analysts should be very careful in mixing their scientific activity with counselling activities in the political sphere. This is not to say that it should be completely put aside. But we have to be well aware of the stakes in play on an ethical point of view in the light of what we exposed about the reality-constituting process of theorising (see 3.2.1). We personally do not think that counselling on a permanent basis is generally appropriate: empathy and a potential collusion of interests risk to lead to too much mutual supporting and to lead then to the collapse of the “critical” imperatives. Occasional counselling can have sometimes virtuous effects. We already experienced this in the field of external expertise with the Belgian-Maghreb co-operation for development administration. Repeated “critical” pressures to put an end to conditional aid have finally been fruitful (for sure not exclusively as a result of external expertise, but as a modest contribution of it, besides other social forces at work). But more generally, FPDM researchers can undertake public debate on an ethical-political point of view also as critical citizens. Like anybody else, they are not obliged to agree with the values motivating FP decisions nor with the outcomes to which they lead. They can adopt an assertive political posture on FP outcomes “besides” their scientific task of description and explanation of FP decisions (in the strictest positivist sense of the term), and critically “within” this task as far as they also construct reality. William Wallace advocates in this regard a posture of “semi-detachment”. There is indeed a middle ground between political collusion and intellectual abdication.

We could conclude with Alker & Biersteker’s last guideline which “is a call for greater dialectical sensitivity concerning one’s own research situation, combined with humility and openness in theory development”.

And as far as our three kinds of epistemological reflexivity are concerned, while the social-cultural-historical and ethical-political problematiques could maybe somehow be reduced (with or without illusion), we will never solve the ontological one.

¹ William WALLACE, “Truth and power, monks and technocrats: theory and practice in international relations”, *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 22, 1996, pp. 301-321.

² Hayward ALKER & Thomas BIERSTEKER, “The Dialectics of World Order: Notes for a Future Archeologist of International Savoir Faire”, in James DER DERIAN (ed.), *op. cit.*, 1995, p. 271.

In Jorge Luis Borges' "Ruinas Circulares", there is that man who wants to create a man in dreaming. He is successful in doing so. But what a horror when he realises that he himself is dreamt of by another dreamer...

¹ "Las Ruinas Circulares" is a part of "El Jardín de Senderos que se Bifurcan", in his work "Ficciones".

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Afzendingkantoor

Imprimerie Bietlot, B-5060 Gilly

STUDIA DIPLOMATICA

VOL. LII: 1999, Nos 1-2

LES THÉORIES DES RELATIONS INTERNATIONALES À L'ÉPREUVE DE L'APRÈS-GUERRE FROIDE: DÉFIS THÉORIQUES PLURIELS

Claude ROOSENS, Mario TELÒ et Pierre VERCAUTEREN (sous la dir.)

*Journée d'étude
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l'UCL,
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