

On the Constitutive Role of Knowledge in European Armaments Cooperation

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Introduction

In the following paper I will examine the extent to which think tanks in different European countries form an epistemic community for European armaments cooperation. One strand of the cognitive school of regime theory holds that causal beliefs play a crucial role in the creation and change of regimes. They argue that decision-makers face uncertainty about causal relationships and need reliable issue-specific knowledge, which gives those who can provide it a certain political influence. The processes by which knowledge is disseminated from epistemic communities to politicians and by which governments learn are thus at the center of the academic analysis carried out by this school.

Regarding European armaments cooperation, it has not yet been examined whether European think tanks form such an epistemic community. This is surprising, because think tanks are usually considered to be part of an epistemic community and armaments cooperation has been Europeanized over the last decade. As a result, one would expect them to have played a role in this process.

Taking four think tanks in three European countries as case studies and examining their discussion concerning the creation of the European Armaments Agency (EDA) in the period from 2003-2005, I will argue that they can indeed be considered as an epistemic community, although they do not agree entirely with regard to consensual knowledge, providing partly different accounts for the purposes and wider goals of cooperation.¹ I propose that their different explanations should not be regarded as examples of different cause-effect relationships but rather as explanations of a different kind: one that makes sense of actions by pointing to the reasons for which they were pursued and to the institutional facts that make them intelligible.

This will not only allow for a more comprehensive account of the type of knowledge examined in the empirical case, but will also point to an alternative

¹ In the following I will sometimes speak of think tanks but actually mean the researchers and analysts working for them, as only they can be considered members of an epistemic community.

understanding of the way in which epistemic communities become involved in the political process. Rather than taking the usual route and analyzing the processes by which consensual knowledge is disseminated to wider policy circles, I hold that think tanks contribute to political reality in a performative way: *by analyzing, publishing, or advising they contribute to the construction of a social reality.* That is, through publishing about European armaments cooperation, the European defense industry, and the European armaments market, they also participate in actually creating these institutional facts. More particularly, they make sense of them. Thus any disagreement about the meaning of these concepts and the nature of cooperation can be considered as the expression of an ongoing debate. More specifically, to highlight the precise role of these epistemic communities shifts attention from a lack of consensus about a correct description of the world to a disagreement about the construction of social and political reality, which by its very nature is contested.

A related argument is put forward by Antoniadis who speaks of *Denkgemeinschaft* to account for the social context on which their recognition is based and to highlight the normative character of the knowledge.² He distinguishes between ad hoc and holistic epistemic communities. The first type is defined by a policy problem and “their life is limited to the time and space defined by the problem and its solutions”.³ The second is more holistic and “aiming at the establishment and perpetuation of beliefs and visions as dominant social discourses”.⁴ In contrast I will argue that the two types do not only in practice overlap, as Antoniadis holds, but that any epistemic community contributes to the construction of the world in which its arguments are acceptable and accepted. Moreover, I complement Antoniadis generic account with an empirical case.

² Andreas Antoniadis, "Epistemic Communities, Epistemes and the Construction (World) Politics," *Global Society* 17, no. 1 (2003).

³ Emanuel Adler and Peter M. Haas, "Conclusion: Epistemic Communities, World Order, and the Creation of a Reflective Research Program," *International Organization* 46, no. 1 (1992). p. 371. Quoted in Antoniadis, "Epistemic Communities, Epistemes and the Construction (World) Politics." p. 28.

⁴ Antoniadis, "Epistemic Communities, Epistemes and the Construction (World) Politics." p. 28.

I proceed in four steps. First, I briefly outline the concept of epistemic community and its four dimensions. I will then argue that indeed the four think tanks can to a large extent be considered as an epistemic community and outline the evidence that points to the contrary. In a fourth step, I will propose to incorporate knowledge that explains institutional and intentional phenomena into the concept of epistemic community. Finally, I argue that in addition to disseminating their knowledge in the wider political arena, think tanks also take part in politics by the very act of publishing about armaments cooperation. I illustrate three ways through which meaning is made, namely in terms of national political projects, in terms of other European integration projects, and in terms of European institutional rules.

The concept of epistemic community

International regimes are one main type of international institutionalization⁵ and have been explained by two schools of cognitive theory, which differ between them in their concept of knowledge. While one argumentative line stresses the constitutive role of knowledge, the other points to causal beliefs as an explanation for the formation and change of regimes. The latter argue that decision makers in a setting of strong international interdependence face a high degree of uncertainty regarding the consequences of action.⁶ Such uncertainty stimulates the demand for information of a particular kind: “depictions of social or physical processes, their interrelation with other processes, and the likely consequences of actions”.⁷ These depictions necessitate the application of scientific or technical know-how.

In response to the demand, networks of experts that are capable of elaborating and providing this kind of information come into being. Since

⁵ See on this point John Gerard Ruggie, "International Responses to Technology: Concepts and Trends," *International Organization* 29, no. 3 (1975), pp. 568-574 or Robert O. Keohane, *International Institutions and State Power. Essays in International Relations Theory* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1989), pp. 3-4.

⁶ See for the following Peter M. Haas, "Introduction: Epistemic Communities and International Policy Coordination," *International Organization* 46, no. 1 (1992), pp. 3-4.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

decision-makers seek their advice, they acquire political influence on a national and transnational level and to the extent that they are able to institutionalize their influence in international bodies, they can disseminate their views further into international relations.⁸ An epistemic community can consist of experts from different backgrounds but all of them must share a “sufficiently strong claim to a body of knowledge that is valued by society”,⁹ and the recognition of their expertise in a particular domain is the basis for such a claim.¹⁰ The members of an epistemic community all hold in common a set of normative beliefs that inform the reasons why they engage in a political action of a particular kind. Furthermore, they have a common political enterprise, which is that of a number of practices linked with a set of problems that they set out to tackle. Moreover, they embrace shared notions of validity, which are internally defined and make new knowledge claims subject to internal truth tests. Finally, they share a number of causal beliefs based on the analysis of social or natural phenomena that make up or are related to the issues in their domain. Given this basis, they are then able to illuminate the complex relationships and linkages between potential policy options.

Regarding the contribution to policy making, this school of cognitive regime theory is interested in the processes by which consensual knowledge – a consensus shared by the members of the epistemic community – is accepted by policy makers and is acted upon.¹¹ Hence epistemic communities are considered as channels that enable the circulation of ideas from society to government and among countries. Experts are thus considered as “cognitive baggage handlers” and “gatekeepers” who control the entering of new ideas into political institutions. Norms or beliefs systems are considered in this

⁸ Ibid., p. 17.

⁹ Ibid., p. 16. The following paragraph is based on Haas, "Introduction: Epistemic Communities and International Policy Coordination.", p. 3, if not indicated otherwise.

¹⁰ The argument is circular, which underlines the self-referential character of knowledge. See Haas, "Introduction: Epistemic Communities and International Policy Coordination.", p. 17, especially footnote 38.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 30.

approach either as merely influencing the interpretation of decision makers, thereby restraining her rationality, or simply as causes for action.¹²

European think tanks and European armaments cooperation

European think tanks

The role of think tanks in European armaments cooperation has received little attention in academic scholarship. The topic is not addressed either by the few studies on European think tanks, or by the large body of literature on European armaments cooperation.¹³ For the purposes of this study think tanks are understood as independent and non-profit research organizations that provide advice and ideas on particular problems.¹⁴ More specifically, they (1) engage in research and analysis, thereby identifying problems and transforming them into policy issues; (2) generate new ideas and make

¹² Ibid., pp. 27-28.

¹³ On European think tanks see the different contributions in Diane Stone and Heidi Ulrich, *Policy Research Institutes and Think Tanks in Western Europe: Development Trends and Perspectives, Discussion Papers, No. 24* (Budapest: Open Society Institute, 2003).; Diane Stone and Andrew Denham, *Think Tank Traditions: Policy Research and the Politics of Ideas* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2004)., and Alan J. Day, "Think Tanks in Western Europe," in *Think Tanks & Civil Societies. Catalysts for Ideas and Action*, ed. James G. McGann and R. Kent Weaver (New Brunswick, N.Y. and London: Transaction Publishers, 2000). as well as the recent study by the Fondation Schuman in Brussels "Europe and Its Think Tanks: A Promise to Be Fulfilled," (2006).. In the literature on European armaments cooperation I am only aware of Ulrika Mörth's work, who assesses the contribution of several European think tanks in the creation of a common understanding regarding armaments cooperation. In comparison to my study Mörth looks at armaments cooperation as a case of organizing and uses an approach based on organizational fields. Though related to the regime approach, it does not offer an equivalent for the concept of epistemic communities. Moreover, she focuses on a different type of think tanks in her study. I therefore regard my work as complementary to hers. See Ulrika Mörth, *Organizing European Cooperation. The Case of Armament* (Lanham, Boulder (Col.), New York, Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2003). as well as her articles Ulrika Mörth, "Competing Frames in the European Commission: The Case of the Defence Industry and Equipment Issue," *Journal of European Public Policy* 7, no. 2 (2000). and Mörth, *Organizing European Cooperation. The Case of Armament..*

¹⁴ See *Oxford English Dictionary (Oed)* (2006 [cited 3 December 2006]); available from www.oed.com. under the entry of "think tank". I am aware of the limited character of this definition. For a good introduction to the *problematique* of independence and objectivity of think tanks see the collections of articles in R. Kent Weaver and James G. McGann, "Think Tanks and Civil Societies in a Time of Change," in *Think Tanks in Western Europe*, ed. R. Kent Weaver and James G. McGann (New Brunswick, N.Y. and London: Transaction Publishers, 2000). and Stone and Denham, *Think Tank Traditions: Policy Research and the Politics of Ideas..*

proposals on how to tackle the problems; (3) promote debate in two possible ways: either by offering an informed or reflective voice in policy debates and/or by facilitating the exchange of ideas and information between government and the public.¹⁵

In my analysis of think tanks, I proceed along two dimensions. According to their institutional setting, I distinguish the subsidiaries of international organizations; Brussels-based think tanks; university-based research institutes, and EU Member States' think tanks.¹⁶ To this dimension¹⁷ I add another one, namely the focus of the think tanks, which is whether they work primarily on EU or on security issues. Out of eight types in the resulting matrix, I analyze four organizations in France, Germany, and the UK. These three countries have been chosen for several reasons: As mentioned above, they have accounted for the majority of the armaments cooperation projects over the last sixty years. They can be considered as the main protagonists of ESDP, with the UK and France representing two fundamentally different orientations towards it. Finally, Germany and the UK are the countries with the largest number of think tanks in the EU.¹⁸ The four think tanks are the *Düsseldorfer Institut für Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik* (DIAS) and the *Centrum für angewandte Politikforschung* (CAP) as university-based think tanks with a security and a EU focus respectively. The *Fondation pour la Recherche Stratégique* (FRS) and Centre for European Reform (CER) serve as examples for Member States think tanks with a security and a EU focus respectively.

¹⁵ See Heidi Ulrich, "European Union Think Tanks: Generating Ideas, Analysis, Debate," in *Think Tank Traditions. Policy Research and the Politics of Ideas*, ed. Diane Stone and Andrew Denham (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2004), p. 54. Similarly, Weaver and McGann, "Think Tanks and Civil Societies in a Time of Change.", p. 3, and Day, "Think Tanks in Western Europe.", pp. 103-104.

¹⁶ Here I follow Ulrich. For a detailed discussion see Ulrich, "European Union Think Tanks: Generating Ideas, Analysis, Debate." and Stone and Ulrich, *Policy Research Institutes and Think Tanks in Western Europe: Development Trends and Perspectives.*, pp. 22-26.

¹⁷ Though the distinction is not entirely coherent one could imagine these four types as forming a continuum where the first two types are most exposed to international political actors and less to national institutions of a specific state and the latter two types being embedded in a context that is shaped stronger by one particular national debate.

¹⁸ "Europe and Its Think Tanks: A Promise to Be Fullfilled.", p. 16.

European armaments cooperation

The case study of this paper is European armaments cooperation, and, more specifically, the regime that was put into place with the creation of the European Defense Agency. I have chosen this case not only because it is the only such intergovernmental agency in the world, but also because its creation presents an important event in the history of European armaments cooperation. The establishment of a central authority responsible for armaments development, production, and procurement was first suggested in 1950 when France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Germany debated the creation of a European Defense Community. When the French Parliament did not ratify the treaty in 1954 nine Western European states founded the Western European Union, and France proposed a 'European Armaments Agency'. This last, however, was not supported and thus a merely consultative body responsible for promoting the standardization of equipment and called the Standing Armaments Committee (SAC) was set up.¹⁹ In 1992, after the incorporation of the IEPG into the WEU, a detailed plan for the establishment of a European armaments agency was developed under the supervision of defense ministers, who endorsed it in principle in 2001 but never went on to implement it.

In parallel, the European Commission suggested the establishment of several agencies to deal with different defense policy issues. In 2002, a Working Group on Defense was retroactively set up by the European Convention to make suggestions regarding the EU's defense policy and institutions. The Draft Treaty for the Constitution for Europe included a suggestion for the establishment of a "European agency for armaments, research, and military capabilities".²⁰

¹⁹ It focused its efforts on the standardisation of data regarding the supply side of the market but with equally little accomplishment. P. De Vestel, *Defence Markets and Industries in Europe: Time for Political Decisions?* vol. 2004, *Chaillot Paper 21* (Paris: Institute for Security Studies of WEU, 1995), chapter 1.1.

²⁰ The European Convention, *Draft Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe* (2003 [cited 12 December 2006]); available from <http://european-convention.eu.int/docs/Treaty/cv00850.en03.pdf>, Article 40.

In June 2003, the European Council decided in principle to establish an “intergovernmental agency for defense capabilities development, research, acquisition, and armaments”.²¹ It thereby started to pursue this idea, independently of the ratification of the Constitution. In June, twenty-four of the EU countries founded the European Defense Agency (EDA), which operates under the authority and political supervision of the Council.

As High Representative/General Secretary, Javier Solana became the Head of the Agency and Nick Withney, a British civil servant, its Chief Executive Officer. A Steering Board composed of the defense ministers of the participating Member States²² acts as the decision-making body. All wider decisions concerning, for example, its strategy and long-term financing are taken by the General Affairs Council of the EU. The Agency is structured into four specialized divisions: Capabilities Development, Armaments Cooperation, Research & Development, and Industry & Market. By January 1st 2005, eighty employees selected on merit from the participating Member States started their work in Brussels.

In the next section, I examine whether the researchers working in the think tanks mentioned above can be considered as members of an epistemic community. For this, the discussion of European armaments cooperation in general and the creation of the EDA in particular will be analyzed on the basis of the publications of these think tanks. As an agency, the EDA is the most concrete form of international institutionalization. As Ruggie has argued, international organizations can only be meaningfully understood if their task-environment, i.e. the regime they serve, is taken into account.²³ It is assumed that, when examining and depicting the Agency, think tanks will also give attention to a wider conception of European armaments cooperation.

²¹ At the March Council 2003 the future EDA was still called “intergovernmental agency for the development and acquisition of defense capabilities”. The Council of the EU, *Presidency Conclusions - Brussels European Council 20 and 21 March 2003* (2003 [cited 6 February 2007]); available from http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/ec/75136.pdf, March 20-21 2003, Article 35.

²² All EU countries but Denmark take part in the EDA. They are called the “participating Member States” (pMS).

²³ Ruggie, “International Responses to Technology: Concepts and Trends.”, pp. 568-574.

Think tanks as members of an epistemic community

Shared normative beliefs

In the following I will argue that researchers in the European think tanks share three normative beliefs. First, they all agree that the nature of threats has changed fundamentally since the end of the Cold War, calling for new security and military responses on the European level to counter them.²⁴ The most inclusive analysis of the new threat environment comes from the security-oriented German think tank DIAS, and it is echoed in similar ways in the publications of the other German think tank, the EU-oriented CAP.²⁵

The DIAS researchers basically argue that the asymmetric structure of enmity, operational experiences and the twofold process of closer European integration and enlargement call for an overarching, comprehensive or “networked” security policy rather than the fragmented approaches followed so far. This would imply, among other things, the joint management of all national security sectors and actors. It would shift the focus onto network-centric or network-enabled capabilities, which would in turn allow for increased cooperation among them. The armaments industry is one of the actors that needs to be closely involved as it can supply know-how, innovation, technology but also financial and management resources. The European Defense Agency is considered to be in a “key position” regarding the control of procurement and research activities of a “networked security sector” in Europe.²⁶ Without subscribing to the networked security concept,

²⁴ For the CER see Steven Everts and Heather Grabbe, "Why the Eu Needs a Security Strategy," *CER Briefing Note* 2003.; David Hannay, "Global Threats Require a Global Response," *Financial Times*, 2 December 2004., and Daniel Keohane, "Europe's New Defence Agency," *CER policy brief* June (2004)., p. 2. For the FRS see H  l  ne Masson, "La Politique Europ  enne De L'Armement: La M  thode Des "Petits Pas"," in *Annuaire Strat  gique Et Militaire*, ed. Odile Jacob (Paris: Fondation pour la recherche strat  gique, 2003)..

²⁵ See especially Julian Lindley-French and Franco Algieri, *A European Defence Strategy* (G  tersloh: Bertelsmann Foundation, 2004)., for example the “Core messages” and the analysis on pp. 20-26.

²⁶ Heiko Borchert, *Vernetzte Sicherheitspolitik. Politisch-Strategische Implikationen Eines Neuen Leitbildes*, vol. 2006 (Wien: B  ro f  r Sicherheitspolitik der Landesverteidigungsakademie, 2004)., p. 8. Consequently, Borchert and Rummel speak of three transformations, that of the military, the security sector, and the industry. Borchert,

the CER equally argues “many of the current challenges facing European armed forces – such as peacekeeping in the Balkans, Afghanistan and Iraq, or the global threats of terrorism and weapons proliferation – require pan-European responses.”²⁷ In sum, none of the analysts has challenged the project of armaments cooperation or has voiced “Euro-sceptic” views; on the contrary, they have all considered it as a real solution to several problems.

Second, there is agreement that the EU should aspire to gaining the capacity for autonomous military action and acquiring the necessary military capabilities. According to the think tanks, the Gulf and the Balkan wars in the 1990s have been formative in this respect for policy-makers and think tankers alike. Thus policy makers were taken by surprise and ashamed about their limited national abilities to contribute troops or to handle the crises in Europe’s territory.²⁸ Moreover, they became aware of the existence of a (widening) military gap in comparison with the US forces, which operated not only with more advanced technological means but also with new concepts and strategies.²⁹ The main conclusion was that “Europe” should be able to act militarily in cases where the US does not wish to proceed. To this view all analysts subscribe. French and German researchers even hold that to secure its autonomy in military action, the EU must have full control over the technological and industrial means to do so.³⁰

Vernetzte Sicherheitspolitik. Politisch-Strategische Implikationen Eines Neuen Leitbildes., p. 20.

²⁷ Keohane, "Europe's New Defence Agency.", p. 2.

²⁸ Thomas Bauer and Martin Agüera, "Meads Ist Unverzichtbar. Kritische Auseinandersetzung Mit Der Debatte Um Das Luftabwehrraketensystem," *CAP Working Paper* 2005., p. 7.

²⁹ Franco Algieri, Thomas Bauer, and Jürgen Turek, "An Einer Europäischen Armee Führt Kein Weg Vorbei. Nur in Einem Gemeinsamen Kraftakt Können Die Neuen Herausforderungen Bewältigt Werden," *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 29 September 2003.; Jürgen Turek and Thomas Bauer, "Etablierung Eines Europäischen Rüstungsmarktes. Auch Bei Der Ausstattung Des Militärs Muss Die Zuständigkeit Der Einzelnen Nationen Zurücktreten," *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 25 April 2003.

³⁰ See Masson, "La Politique Européenne De L'Armement: La Méthode Des "Petits Pas".", p. 1; Hélène Masson, "Quand Le Binôme Commission Européenne / Industries De Défense Et D'Aéronautique Passe Outre La Filiosité Étatique?" in *Annuaire Stratégique Et Militaire*, ed. Odile Jacob (Paris: Fondation pour la recherche stratégique, 2004)., here p.1; Hélène Masson, *Quel Marché De Défense Européen?* (2006 [cited 4 January 2007]); available from <http://www.frstrategie.org/barreCompetences/industriesdef/20060517.pdf>., p. 1, and Cedric Paulin, "L'agence Européenne D'Armement: L'Impulsion Decisive Pour

Finally, all analysts accept the United States as a benchmark against which the European efforts should be compared. For once, they all share the concern about a gap regarding military and technological capabilities between US and European forces.³¹ Moreover, the US is the standard regarding the size and the structure of the defense market as well as for the size and structure of defense companies. It offers, for example, the advantages of a homogenous regulatory system and larger budgets for equipment as well as for research and development.³² In addition, US firms are the benchmark for the competitiveness of European armaments companies, as it is against these firms that they have to prevail in export markets or with whom they team up in joint transatlantic projects.³³ Finally, the US is considered a partner and the EU should aspire to be on equal terms with it. What this means in concrete situations differs widely: from the adoption of a “buy European-first” rule to imitate US protectionism or security of supply policy³⁴ to acquiring military assets so that the Pentagon might consider the EU for a coalition.³⁵

L'Europe De L'Armement," *L'ena hors les murs*, no. 341 (2004)., here p. 1 for the FRS. For the CAP see Lindley-French and Algieri, *A European Defence Strategy*., pp. 50 and 55 for the clearest expression of this notion but also Franco Algieri and Thomas Bauer, *Defining and Securing the Eu's Strategic Interests* (2003 [cited 12 December 2006])., p. 4 and Turek and Bauer, "Etablierung Eines Europäischen Rüstungsmarktes. Auch Bei Der Ausstattung Des Militärs Muss Die Zuständigkeit Der Einzelnen Nationen Zurücktreten.". For the DIAS see the implicit argument made in Borchert, *Vernetzte Sicherheitspolitik. Politisch-Strategische Implikationen Eines Neuen Leitbildes*., p. 8.

³¹ For the CAP see Algieri, Bauer, and Turek, "An Einer Europäischen Armee Führt Kein Weg Vorbei. Nur in Einem Gemeinsamen Kraftakt Können Die Neuen Herausforderungen Bewältigt Werden."; Turek and Bauer, "Etablierung Eines Europäischen Rüstungsmarktes. Auch Bei Der Ausstattung Des Militärs Muss Die Zuständigkeit Der Einzelnen Nationen Zurücktreten."; The CER quotes another sources saying "the Americans take the plane, while the Europeans take the train". Daniel Keohane, "A Lack of Military Muscle. Can Europe Bridge Political Divides and Make Progress on Its Fractured Defece and Security Policy in 2003?" *the Parliament magazine* 10 March (2003)., p. 25.

³² Lindley-French and Algieri, *A European Defence Strategy*., p. 54; Daniel Keohane, "More Bang for Our Bucks," *New Statesman* 30 November (2001)., p. xxix; on the size of the budget see also Daniel Keohane, *Why Collaborate in Europe?* (2004 [cited 21 December 2004]). and Masson, *Quel Marché De Défense Européen?* ([cited].), p. 12.

³³ Masson, "Quand Le Binome Commission Européenne / Industries De Défense Et D'Aéronautique Passe Outre La Filosité Étatique?", p. 1 and Masson, *Quel Marché De Défense Européen?* ([cited].), p. 1, though without mentioning US firms explicitly under competition and Keohane, "More Bang for Our Bucks.", pp. xxviii-xxix.

³⁴ Lindley-French and Algieri, *A European Defence Strategy*., p. 17; similarly Masson, *Quel Marché De Défense Européen?* ([cited].), pp. 11-12.

³⁵ Keohane, "A Lack of Military Muscle. Can Europe Bridge Political Divides and Make Progress on Its Fractured Defece and Security Policy in 2003?", p. 25.

Nevertheless, there is a shared understanding that Europe should aspire to be respected by the US.

Common political enterprise

The researchers of the four think tanks analyzed here also share a common political objective. More generally, this is concerned with security and defense policy, European politics, and the armaments industry. Occasionally, they venture into issues like space but then always with a view to its significance for military applications. All researchers work and publish in these domains, where either all or some of the topics overlap. More specifically, these researchers are concerned with a “set of common practices associated with a set of problems”³⁶ in European armaments. Two meanings are possible for the last phrase: first, it can be that the common practices are followed by researchers; alternatively, they can be identified with decision-makers and thus become the object of the research.

I opt here for the latter interpretation of the term,³⁷ because another characteristic of epistemic communities, that of causal beliefs, is also said to result from an examination of “practices leading or contributing to a central set of problems”.³⁸ A practice is understood here as a habitual action, a pattern of behavior, or an established procedure.³⁹ What, then, are the sets of practices and problems in European armaments cooperation?

To structure this analysis, I distinguish between three types of actors who engage or are involved in different practices: governments, international organizations, and defense companies. Regarding the practices of

³⁶ Haas, "Introduction: Epistemic Communities and International Policy Coordination.", p. 3.

³⁷ But also according to the first interpretation of this criterion, the researchers of the think tanks would qualify as an epistemic community: They shared discursive practices as all authors publish regularly on armaments issues in daily newspapers, in newsletters and reports of their institutions, and they are invited to speak at conferences as well as on other public occasions about these issues. Except for the specific content of their output, they share these characteristics with many other employees of think tanks.

³⁸ Implying that the practices are the object of research. Haas, "Introduction: Epistemic Communities and International Policy Coordination.", p. 3.

³⁹ As opposed to a repeated exercise to acquire, improve or maintain proficiency; to the application of a theory or an idea, and to carrying out or exercise of a profession. See *Oxford English Dictionary (Oed)* ([cited].), under “practice n”.

governments, I discern between collaboration on specific projects and the regulation of collaborative and other issues. Collaborative practices include joint activities on the research, development, testing, and/or production of a new weapons system. In addition, governments can procure, use, and maintain this weapons system together. And indeed researchers of all the think tanks refer to such practices of collaboration in their work.⁴⁰ They also share an equal concern for the other kinds of cooperative practice performed by governments, which is the regulation of issues such as all the activities mentioned above as well as questions of standardization, state aid and competition, intra-community transfers and exports, or dual-use items.⁴¹ Researchers also link the same occasions to such practices. Thus they all refer to the bilateral meetings of the Heads of State and Government of the main armaments producing countries as an important event in the development of the EDA. Another example is the shared attention paid to the announcement or commissioning of major weapons system resulting from armaments collaboration.⁴²

⁴⁰ The A(-)400M military transport aircraft is a case in point but there are other examples too. For references see for instance Keohane, "More Bang for Our Bucks.", p. xxviii; Turek and Bauer, "Etablierung Eines Europäischen Rüstungsmarktes. Auch Bei Der Ausstattung Des Militärs Muss Die Zuständigkeit Der Einzelnen Nationen Zurücktreten."; Algieri, Bauer, and Turek, "An Einer Europäischen Armee Führt Kein Weg Vorbei. Nur in Einem Gemeinsamen Kraftakt Können Die Neuen Herausforderungen Bewältigt Werden.", or Lindley-French and Algieri, *A European Defence Strategy.*, p. 53 for the CAP; Borchert, *Vernetzte Sicherheitspolitik. Politisch-Strategische Implikationen Eines Neuen Leitbildes.*, p. 17 for DIAS; Masson, "La Politique Européenne De L'Armement: La Méthode Des "Petits Pas".", pp. 21 and 33.

⁴¹ The examination of the EDA and its creation can be regarded as a discussion of regulative practices of activities such as capability development, research and development, as well as competition and market issues. References can be found in almost all publications of think tanks cited in this study.

⁴² For the Eurofighter Typhoon commissioned by the UK, Germany, Italy, and Spain see for example Daniel Keohane, *Europe's Defence Agency Cleared for Take-Off* (2004 [cited 20 December 2006]); available from http://www.cer.org.uk/pdf/keohane_esharp_march04.pdf.; Keohane, "Europe's New Defence Agency.", pp. 2 and 3; Franco Algieri, Janis Emmanouilidis, and Claus Giering, "Flexibility in Eu Foreign and Security Policy," *EU Reform. Convention Spotlight* 2003., p. 3; Algieri, Bauer, and Turek, "An Einer Europäischen Armee Führt Kein Weg Vorbei. Nur in Einem Gemeinsamen Kraftakt Können Die Neuen Herausforderungen Bewältigt Werden."; Masson, "La Politique Européenne De L'Armement: La Méthode Des "Petits Pas".", p. 22, and Hélène Masson, "Les Industries De Defense En Europe," *Géoéconomie* 26, no. Summer (2003).. The publication of a White Paper, the decision by one government to proceed with the development and production of a new weapons system on its own are similar practices, which are of concern to all researchers, albeit to a different degree.

International organizations such as NATO, the European Union and the Western European Union are also all taken into account in work by these analysts. They are regularly engaged in declaring, reporting, and deploring the state of armaments cooperation. They host conferences on specific issues and invite representatives from different ministries and industrial companies to attend these. Moreover, all researchers relate to the different Treaties of the European Union, the Communications of the European Commission, the report of the working group of the European Convention, and the activities of the European Defense Agency.⁴³ Further evidence in support of this point is provided by the fact that most analysts focus on the same occasions, such as the Summit Meetings of NATO or the EU. Another example is that they have mostly published about the EDA on three occasions: first, the Agency is discussed in analyses about the work of the European Convention; then they are discussed in relation to when its institutions take shape, and finally, in late 2005 or early 2006, once the EDA had reached a major milestone by adopting a Code of Conduct on Armaments Procurement.⁴⁴

⁴³ See for example the discussion of the Code of Conduct on Armaments Procurement in Masson, *Quel Marché De Défense Européen?* ([cited].), pp. 10-12 and Thomas Bauer, "Neuer Verhaltenskodex Für Mehr Rüstungswettbewerb in Europa. Zum Beschluss Der Europäischen Verteidigungsagentur," *CAP Postionen* 2005.. Also Keohane refers to the Code, but actually before its adoption. Keohane, "Europe's New Defence Agency.", p. 5. The DIAS did not publish specifically on this issue but on wider aspects of the EDA, for example in Roman Schmidt-Radefeldt, "Die Weiterentwicklung Der Europäischen Sicherheits- Und Verteidigungspolitik Im Eu-Verfassungsvertrag: Auf Dem Weg Zu Einer Europäischen Armee?" *DIAS Analyse* 13 (2005). or Heiko Borchert, "Rollenspezialisierung Und Ressourcenzusammenlegung: Sechs Thesen Zur Konzeptionellen Weiterentwicklung," *Die Beziehungen zwischen NATO und der EU. Partnerschaft, Konkurrenz, Rivalität?* (2005).. There is less reference to NATO documents or reports of bodies of the EU such as the Council, COREPER, or the Parliament.

⁴⁴ For the FRS see Masson, "La Politique Européenne De L'Armement: La Méthode Des "Petits Pas"."; Paulin, "L'agence Européenne D'Armement: L'Impulsion Decisive Pour L'Europe De L'Armement.", and Masson, *Quel Marché De Défense Européen?* ([cited].) respectively. For the CAP see Algieri and Bauer, *Defining and Securing the Eu's Strategic Interests* ([cited].); Thomas Bauer, *Defence Agency Vs. Commission? Claims and Realities of a Comprehensive European Armaments Policy Strategy* (2005 [cited 16 December 2006])., and Bauer, "Neuer Verhaltenskodex Für Mehr Rüstungswettbewerb in Europa. Zum Beschluss Der Europäischen Verteidigungsagentur." respectively. For the CER see for example The European Convention and EU foreign policy: Learning from failure article by Steven Everts and Daniel Keohane, *Survival*, Autumn 2003; Keohane, *Europe's Defence Agency Cleared for Take-Off* ([cited].), and Keohane, "Europe's New Defence Agency." respectively. For the DIAS, which does not entirely fit this pattern, see Schmidt-Radefeldt, "Die Weiterentwicklung Der Europäischen Sicherheits- Und Verteidigungspolitik Im Eu-Verfassungsvertrag: Auf Dem Weg Zu Einer Europäischen Armee?" and Borchert,

Moreover, researchers all share a concern about the state of defense companies and their activities. They all consider three firms as prime examples of European transnational defense firms: the European Aeronautic Defense and Space Company (EDAS), Thales of France, and BAE Systems of the UK, although the latter makes half of its turnover in the United States. However, major merger or acquisition activities in one country that could have possible consequences for the industry in other European countries, future cross-border consolidation, or armaments cooperation in general are a shared concern.

Shared validity criteria

There are only few indicators with regard to the acceptance of the same validity criteria. Like much of the other research developed by think tanks (and academic institutions), the information referred to and used in the publications is gained in a systematic manner.⁴⁵ Methods like interviews and workshops with expert participants from politics, industry, and other public institutions are used by all analysts. Moreover, all researchers have an academic training and have at least the equivalent of a Masters degree. In the case of the French FRS and the German DIAS, some researchers have also been awarded a PhD. These degrees are in fields that are closely related to armaments cooperation such as international relations, European politics, or in the case of the Ph.D. degrees, security and defense politics. Judging by the content as well as the level of background education of researchers, it can be assumed that they share the criteria for valid knowledge that are accepted in the social sciences.

"Rollenspezialisierung Und Ressourcenzusammenlegung: Sechs Thesen Zur Konzeptionellen Weiterentwicklung."

⁴⁵ Similarly, one could argue that outsiders recognize the expertise of these researchers. Thus high-level administrators, politicians, and industrialists seek their advise, attend their meetings and contribute to their output. In some cases, they make their views known directly in the publications of the think tanks. Such an argument would, however, collide with Haas' insistence on internal validity criteria.

This last point, however, merits a qualification.⁴⁶ Researchers differ considerably in their methodology to analyze and present the issues. The spectrum ranges from a systematic and academic method with precise quotations in the case of the analysts from the FRS and DIAS on the one hand, to a rather journalistic manner, where the lines between the political aspirations of one government and positions that are agreed upon become blurred, by CER analysts, on the other. By the same token, researchers vary in the importance they give to official documents. Thus CAP and CER analysts provide comparatively little background information and commentary on the institutional context, the specificities of the legal situation and its implications. Their counterparts of the FRS and the DIAS, on the other hand, stress the historical dimensions of the topic and analyze meticulously the different legal texts and their relations to each other.⁴⁷ These divergences coincide with the different levels of academic degrees. While some researchers of the DIAS and the FRS working the domain of armaments hold a Ph.D. title, none yet does so in the CAP and CER think tanks.

There is yet another indicator that might strengthen the case for shared validity criteria: cooperation with other think tanks. While the four organizations do not cooperate with each other directly (for instance, by holding joint seminars, publishing together or at least in the same media), some of them do cooperate with the same third parties.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ A qualification would also be in place because of the debate on what kind of knowledge is accepted as such by social scientists. There seems to be little agreement but on the requirement for the approach to be systematic, based on a transparent methodology, and argued in a comprehensible manner.

⁴⁷ There are several possible explanations that could be given for this phenomena ranging from individual style, educational background, and cultural or political bias because of being embedded into a particular national system or organizationally close to a government organization. But this aspect is not of interest here, where I only state that there remarkable differences in the methodology to approach the topic and that they will play out in the analysis and conclusions of the think tanks.

⁴⁸ Thus the CER held joint workshops with the French think tank IRIS, which is in turn cooperating with the FRS, as a list of a number of joint publications shows. For references search the websites of the two think tanks at http://www.cer.org.uk/index_new/test_search.html and <http://www.frstrategie.org/recherche.php?q=IRIS> respectively. Accessed online 6 February 2007.

Though these are only weak indicators to support the claim that the researchers share the same criteria for the validity of knowledge, they do not testify to the contrary. By the same token, they do not challenge the wider argument that the researchers of the think tanks examined here are members of an epistemic community, as the following extensive examination of shared causal beliefs will show.

Shared causal beliefs and consensual knowledge

In their definition of epistemic community, cognitive regime theorists speak of “causal beliefs” and knowledge about “cause-and-effect relationships” which are offered to policy makers in situations of uncertainty. A cause is that which brings about an effect, an action, phenomenon, or condition. In this sense cause and effect are correlative terms.⁴⁹ In the epistemic community literature, the concept has been used with a wide understanding to include material factors as well as motivations, goals, objectives, aims, reasons, and norms.⁵⁰ Therefore I will also refer to these items under the header of “causal beliefs” in the following examination.

All authors agree on the existence of four causal arguments, differ slightly on the reason why the EDA has been set up, and differ considerably on the wider reasons for armaments cooperation. The four most commonly held causal beliefs are of quite a different magnitude. The first type concerns the conviction of the existence of economies of scale in the defense industry. Economies of scale are mostly understood as “per unit cost savings by producing more of a good or a service”.⁵¹ This notion lies at the heart of the

⁴⁹ See *Oxford English Dictionary (Oed)* ([cited].), under the entry of “cause”.

⁵⁰ See for example Risse-Kappen Thomas Risse-Kappen, "Identity in a Democratic Security Community: The Case of Nato," in *The Culture of National Security. Norms and Identity in World Politics*, ed. Peter Katzenstein (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996). or Jeff Checkel, "Ideas, Institutions, and the Gorbachev Foreign Policy Revolution," *World Politics* 45, no. 2 (1993)..

⁵¹ Though imprecise, this is the most common definition also used, for example, by DG MARKT of the European Commission. DG MARKT European Commission, *Glossary: E/Economies of Scale* (2003 [cited 6 February 2007]); available from http://ec.europa.eu/comm/competition/general_info/e_en.html.. In French *économies d'échelle* and in German *Größeneffekte* or *Skaleneffekte* . The reason is often seen in the ability to spread fixed cost to a larger number of output units. This is, however, better

argumentat that a transnational consolidation of the supply side of the defense sector will lead to immense economic advantages. Companies should be allowed to merge cross border or to acquire their competitors in other countries. All researchers share this notion and do not critique it.⁵²

Analysts also believe in the wider link between economics and arms cooperation. This causal belief is expressed in two forms. On the one hand, analysts are convinced that the end of the Cold War led to profound changes in the threat perception of European states, and hence in the considerable reduction of defense budgets. In combination with pressure from US competitors, this has led to the restructuring of the defense industry on a national level and contributed to its consolidation on a European level.⁵³ The other side of the coin is the belief in the economic advantages of armaments cooperation, as it allows military capabilities to be improved without raising defense budgets.⁵⁴

The argument made by the British Centre for European Reform (CER) serves as a case in point.⁵⁵ Its researchers suggest that European states partly waste their defense budgets due to inefficiencies. As a group, European countries are the second biggest defense spender in the world after the US, but they dupli- and triplicate their efforts. Moreover, the cost of new military equipment is ever increasing so that no European country can afford it alone, hence the

captured by the concept of economies of scope. For a precise definition in microeconomic terms see <http://skaleneffekt.know-library.net/>

⁵² Thus Paulin of the FRS refers to a study by Hartley about the potential cost saving due to a common European defense market of 1992, which bases its main argument on economies of scale. Paulin, "L'agence Européenne D'Armement: L'Impulsion Decisive Pour L'Europe De L'Armement.", p. 1. This study, originally tasked by the European Commission, has never been published due to the far reaching assumption made by Prof. Hartley. Alexis Hamel, "L' Europeanisation De La Politique Aeronautique Francaise De Defense: Entre Civilianisation De L' Industrie Et Recomposition De L' Etat (1944-2004)," (L' Institut d' Etudes Politique de Paris, mention science politique, 2004)..

⁵³ See for example H el ene Masson, "La Recherche De D efense: Une Assurance Pour L' Avenir De La Politique Europ eennne De S ecurit e De D efense," in *Annuaire Strat egique Et Militaire*, ed. Odile Jacob (Paris: Fondation pour la Recherche Strat egique, 2002)..

⁵⁴ See for example Tim Garden and Charles Grant, "Europe Could Pack a Bigger Punch," *Financial Times*, 17 December 2002. for the CER; for the CAP see Turek and Bauer, "Etablierung Eines Europ aischen R ustungsmarktes. Auch Bei Der Ausstattung Des Milit ars Muss Die Zust andigkeit Der Einzelnen Nationen Zur ucktreten."

⁵⁵ See for example Daniel Keohane, "The Eu and Armaments Cooperation," *CER working paper 2002.*, especially p. 1; Keohane, *Europe's Defence Agency Cleared for Take-Off* ([cited)..

need for cooperation. However, armaments cooperation with European partners has had a mixed record in the past, dogged by delays and cost overruns. Consequently, European governments need to improve their cooperative effort.

Occasionally, another causal chain is advanced to make the economic case for armaments cooperation: if European governments continue to invest insufficiently, Europe will not be able to sustain a competitive and indigenous defense industry in the long term. Cooperation is here again seen as a remedy for this problem.⁵⁶ While the German think tanks subscribe to both positions,⁵⁷ the French *Fondation pour la Recherche Stratégique* (FRS) stresses the latter rationale, highlighting the fact that European companies are too small to compete successfully with or rather against US American defense firms for export markets if governments will not cooperate and allow for European-wide consolidation.⁵⁸

Finally, researchers of all think tanks hold that armaments cooperation has positive effects for military forces. For example, it is held that weapons systems produced in collaboration projects are interoperable. Interoperability is in turn regarded as a *conditio sin qua none* for successful military missions both within NATO and the EU. Moreover, all analysts agree on the effect that armaments cooperation among European partners will lead to increased military capabilities and/or a more competitive defense industry. Both will enable the countries to gain a greater weight in political, technological, and military terms in their relationship with the United States. While all analysts agree on the cause-effect scheme, however, they do not all endorse it as a reason to pursue armaments cooperation.

⁵⁶ Keohane, *Why Collaborate in Europe?* ([cited]).

⁵⁷ Turek and Bauer, "Etablierung Eines Europäischen Rüstungsmarktes. Auch Bei Der Ausstattung Des Militärs Muss Die Zuständigkeit Der Einzelnen Nationen Zurücktreten."

⁵⁸ Masson, *Quel Marché De Défense Européen?* ([cited]), p. 1 or Masson, "Quand Le Binome Commission Européenne / Industries De Défense Et D'Aéronautique Passe Outre La Filiosité Étatique?", p. 1. This is a case where normative and other causal beliefs come together. Such an argument wouldn't make much sense without the belief that the European defense industry should be maintained and that economies of scale exist.

In addition, other causal beliefs exist, including the one that the characteristics of a particular country determine its interest and might pit it against others. All, for example, agree that the UK and France have been crucial in initiating ESDP and closer armaments cooperation. Their lead, together with Germany, is regarded as a necessary condition for the success of any armaments cooperation on a European scale. Beyond this consent, however, researchers differ on other characteristics that might determine the interests of a country. Analysts of the French FRS, for instance, hold that states with a significantly large defense industry have different interests than those, which do not have or only harbor niche-producers. This basically pits France, the UK, Germany, Italy and maybe Sweden and Spain against most of the other EU Member States with regard to a common procurement policy or a common defense market. Analysts of the CER make a distinction between big and small Member States and their attitudes to European defense policy in general but not to armaments in particular.⁵⁹ They explain the idea of structured cooperation as suggested by the European Convention according to the criterion of military capabilities, whereby the UK and France would form an *avantgarde*. Similarly, researchers of the CAP argue for differentiated integration but include other criteria such as a large defense industry and participation in collaborative projects.⁶⁰

Based on these more general causal beliefs, all researchers also share to a large extent the specific belief about the reasons for the creation of the EDA: the improvement of European military capabilities. Despite this agreement, French and German researchers *additionally* consider the strengthening of the defense industry as equally important. Though the British CER occasionally mentions the support of the European defense industrial and technology base as one aspect of armaments cooperation, it does not consider this to be a legitimate purpose for its existence or for the work of the

⁵⁹ Charles Grant, "Europe Can Sell Its Defence Plan to Washington," *Financial Times* 2003.. Steven Everts and Antonio Missiroli, "Beyond the 'Big Three'. To Claim a Global Role, the Eu Needs Its Own Security Council," *International Herald Tribune*, 10 March 2004., or Charles Grant, "Stumbling Towards Unity," *Global Agenda 2004* (2004)., p. 207.

⁶⁰ Algieri, Emmanouilidis, and Giering, "Flexibility in Eu Foreign and Security Policy.;" Lindley-French and Algieri, *A European Defence Strategy*., pp. 50-51.

European Defense Agency.⁶¹ The industry is rather seen as a “main beneficiary” because it would become more competitive.⁶² German analysts see, in addition, the possibility that the EDA will support the transformation of the *Bundeswehr*.⁶³ The *Bundeswehr* would, for example, receive new equipment “faster and at a lower price” or the discussion about a possible change from a conscript to a professional army might receive new impetus.⁶⁴ For the security-oriented DIAS, finally, the transformation of military forces is the main purpose of armaments cooperation and the work of the EDA.⁶⁵

These differences become even more pronounced with regard to the explanation of why European states cooperate on the improvement of their military capabilities.⁶⁶ For the London-based and EU-oriented CER, the most important reason for this is that they expect to gain the respect of the US government and thereby the ability to exert greater influence on its security deliberations.⁶⁷ While the CER also argues that improving capabilities is the only way to save, reform, and strengthen NATO by closing a capability gap and by enabling European countries to take a fairer burden, they consider this

⁶¹ Keohane, "More Bang for Our Bucks.", p. xxix.

⁶² It is, however, not outlined how that could happen. The two other beneficiaries are the military, which would receive better equipment for a smaller price and the tax payer, getting higher value for money Daniel Keohane, "Eu on the Offensive About Defence," *European Voice* 22-28 July (2004). and Keohane, "Europe's New Defence Agency.", p. 6.

⁶³ See Turek and Bauer, "Etablierung Eines Europäischen Rüstungsmarktes. Auch Bei Der Ausstattung Des Militärs Muss Die Zuständigkeit Der Einzelnen Nationen Zurücktreten." and Algieri, Bauer, and Turek, "An Einer Europäischen Armee Führt Kein Weg Vorbei. Nur in Einem Gemeinsamen Kraftakt Können Die Neuen Herausforderungen Bewältigt Werden." respectively. Another example is the researchers' demand that the parliament – *Bundestag* – will take the activities of the EDA into due consideration when deciding on budgetary or industrial issues. Bauer and Agüera, "Meads Ist Unverzichtbar. Kritische Auseinandersetzung Mit Der Debatte Um Das Luftabwehrraketensystem.", p. 9.

⁶⁴ See Turek and Bauer, "Etablierung Eines Europäischen Rüstungsmarktes. Auch Bei Der Ausstattung Des Militärs Muss Die Zuständigkeit Der Einzelnen Nationen Zurücktreten." and Algieri, Bauer, and Turek, "An Einer Europäischen Armee Führt Kein Weg Vorbei. Nur in Einem Gemeinsamen Kraftakt Können Die Neuen Herausforderungen Bewältigt Werden." respectively.

⁶⁵ Borchert, *Vernetzte Sicherheitspolitik. Politisch-Strategische Implikationen Eines Neuen Leitbildes.*, p. 8. Consequently, Borchert and Rummel speak of three transformations, that of the military, the security sector, and the industry. Borchert, *Vernetzte Sicherheitspolitik. Politisch-Strategische Implikationen Eines Neuen Leitbildes.*, p. 20.

⁶⁶ Since this includes also cooperation on other issues in addition to the common development, production, testing etc. of military equipment and the making of rules about it, I will in the following speak of “defense and armaments cooperation”.

⁶⁷ Keohane, "A Lack of Military Muscle. Can Europe Bridge Political Divides and Make Progress on Its Fractured Defence and Security Policy in 2003?", pp. 24 and 25.

merely as a means. Such measures would make it more likely that the US would use NATO, which would otherwise be relegated to a regional instead of a global actor (i.e. reduced to a “cleaning lady” consigned to places where America will not go, like Africa).⁶⁸ Most important, they would enable European forces to interoperate with its allies in projecting military power.⁶⁹

In the eyes of the CER, the political ambitions of the EU provide another reason for improving military capability but can also be inferred from the relationship with the United States.⁷⁰ Given the high dependence of European forces on US military assets and the technological gap to the US forces,⁷¹ it is conceded that European countries should be able to conduct autonomous operations to carry out the “Petersberg Tasks”.⁷² To enable this, they have agreed to provide their armed forces with certain military capabilities, which sets the frame for the work of the EDA.⁷³ In terms of a common defense

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 25.

⁶⁹ Grant, "Stumbling Towards Unity.", p. 206.

⁷⁰ Both lines of argument can be found, one starting with the common threat perception as in Keohane, "Europe's New Defence Agency.", p. 2 or from the agreed upon common mission as in Keohane, "A Lack of Military Muscle. Can Europe Bridge Political Divides and Make Progress on Its Fractured Defence and Security Policy in 2003?", p. 25. The latter indicates a closer form of cooperation as governments do not only share threat perceptions but also agree upon to meet them and how to do so.

⁷¹ The German GAP shares this impression and Turek and Bauer see interoperability with US forces at times as the only reason why defense industrial issues have gained a political character. Turek and Bauer, "Etablierung Eines Europäischen Rüstungsmarktes. Auch Bei Der Ausstattung Des Militärs Muss Die Zuständigkeit Der Einzelnen Nationen Zurücktreten."

⁷² "Europeans cannot always expect Uncle Sam to save the day. This is part of the rationale behind the EU's defence policy - namely that the Europeans will be able to conduct autonomous military operations. But without new equipment European soldiers might not even get to the battlefield."Keohane, "A Lack of Military Muscle. Can Europe Bridge Political Divides and Make Progress on Its Fractured Defence and Security Policy in 2003?", p. 25.

⁷³ See for example Steven Everts and Daniel Keohane, "The European Convention and Eu Foreign Policy: Learning from Failure," *Survival* 45, no. 3 (Autumn) (2003)., p. 174, Keohane, "Eu on the Offensive About Defence.", Keohane, "A Lack of Military Muscle. Can Europe Bridge Political Divides and Make Progress on Its Fractured Defence and Security Policy in 2003?", p. 25, Keohane, "Europe's New Defence Agency.", p. 2 and with special emphasis on R&D cooperation Keohane, "Europe's New Defence Agency.", p. 3, and Geoff Hoon, *Launch of the Centre for European Reform's "a European Way of War" by the Secretary of State for Defence at the Reform Club, London, 1 July (2004 [cited 21 December 2006])*. The fact that the EU has also agreed upon a Headline Goal with regard to civil capabilities is barely mentioned in the argumentation. Its consideration might lead to other conclusions as for the tasks of the EDA and its relations with the Commission.

market, however, the dimension should ultimately be transatlantic, with defense companies also merging between European and US partners.⁷⁴

By contrast, the narrative of the French FSR hardly ever makes any reference to NATO but centers instead upon cooperation within the EU. Based on an extensive analysis of the Treaties and official documents, the FRS explains European armaments cooperation to a great extent with reference to institutional factors and their dynamics. The analysis of the Treaty on European Union (TEU)⁷⁵ shows how the rules of the TEU, and more specifically its Article 296, establish the basis for both the European Commission and governments to act in the field of armaments.⁷⁶ Underlining the point that armaments policy remains mainly a national prerogative, the FRS highlights three reasons, which emerge from the institutional setting of the EU and which led to a progressive "Europeanization" of this domain. First, and most important, the political will of the EU to be able to act autonomously and independently.⁷⁷ In the FRS's view, this requires endowing it with credibility regarding industrial and technological capabilities. In addition, cooperation is seen as a means to ensure military interoperability and as a contribution to diplomatic and economic policies. As such, it has to guarantee the security of supply of the armed forces but also the freedom to employ certain systems and to export them. In this sense an equal "partnership with the United States" will strengthen the European position when it comes to entering this most lucrative but also very protected defense market.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ Charles Grant, "Nato's New Role," *Financial Times*, 7 August 2002..

⁷⁵ Also known as the Maastricht Treaty or Treaty of Maastricht.

⁷⁶ Masson, "La Politique Européenne De L'Armement: La Méthode Des "Petits Pas".", pp. 1-6.

⁷⁷ Masson, *Quel Marché De Défense Européen?* ([cited].), p. 1. Hélène Masson, "L'Agence Européenne De L'Armement: Le Temps Suspendu," *Les Cahiers de Mars* 180, no. 2ème trimestre (2004)., here p. 2 and Hélène Masson, *L'Action Commune Créant L'Agence Européenne De Défense* (2004 [cited 24 January 2007]); available from <http://www.frstrategie.org/barreCompetences/industriesdef/AED.pdf>, p. 3.

⁷⁸ Masson, "La Politique Européenne De L'Armement: La Méthode Des "Petits Pas".", p. 1; Masson, "Quand Le Binome Commission Européenne / Industries De Défense Et D'Aéronautique Passe Outre La Filiosité Étatique?", here p.1; Masson, *Quel Marché De Défense Européen?* ([cited].), pp. 1, 6 and 12.

The story of the EU-oriented German CAP coincides with the narrative developed by the FRS, although with three variations: first, the EU is presented as rather passive, reacting to the expectations and demands of others when it sets out to become a “comprehensive security actor”.⁷⁹ The credibility of the EU and its ability to live up to expectations are thus at the core of the argument, as is the own aspiration to act globally and militarily.⁸⁰ Second, fulfilling to these expectations is presented as requiring the necessary military capabilities and a firm institutional basis as well as control over defense industrial resources.⁸¹ Armaments cooperation is seen as a way out of the dilemma created by tight budgets, rising costs, and strong political ambitions that should ensure interoperability among European but also with US forces. Therefore, collaborative projects with US companies should not be excluded, although European projects should be given priority.⁸² In other words, the ambition for an independent or autonomous role in the world is linked to a strong partnership with the United States. Third, the ultimate goal behind the sharing of the economic and military burden among EU countries is, in the eyes of the CAP, a Defense and Military Union (DMU), and, for some of the researchers, even involves the establishment of “common European forces”.⁸³ This will, finally, lead to the “emancipation of Europe as a globally cooperating and capable security actor”.⁸⁴

⁷⁹ See for example the reference to Solana’s remark about credibility in Algieri, Bauer, and Turek, “An Einer Europäischen Armee Führt Kein Weg Vorbei. Nur in Einem Gemeinsamen Kraftakt Können Die Neuen Herausforderungen Bewältigt Werden.”; or similarly in Franco Algieri and Thomas Bauer, *Europa - Die Gespaltene Macht. Die Konventvorschläge Zur Sicherheits- Und Verteidigungspolitik* (2003 [cited 15 December 2006]); available from <http://www.cap-lmu.de/aktuell/positionen/2003/europa.php>.

⁸⁰ See for example the reference to Solana’s remark about credibility in Algieri, Bauer, and Turek, “An Einer Europäischen Armee Führt Kein Weg Vorbei. Nur in Einem Gemeinsamen Kraftakt Können Die Neuen Herausforderungen Bewältigt Werden.”; or similarly in Algieri and Bauer, *Europa - Die Gespaltene Macht. Die Konventvorschläge Zur Sicherheits- Und Verteidigungspolitik* ([cited]).

⁸¹ Algieri and Bauer, *Defining and Securing the Eu's Strategic Interests* ([cited]), p. 4.

⁸² To play an independent or autonomous role in the world requires the control of the defense industrial resources. Ibid.([cited]), p. 4. Procurement from other sources e.g. the USA are excluded on grounds of specific European military requirements or the political will for independence. See Turek and Bauer, “Etablierung Eines Europäischen Rüstungsmarktes. Auch Bei Der Ausstattung Des Militärs Muss Die Zuständigkeit Der Einzelnen Nationen Zurücktreten.” for both views.

⁸³ Algieri, Bauer, and Turek, “An Einer Europäischen Armee Führt Kein Weg Vorbei. Nur in Einem Gemeinsamen Kraftakt Können Die Neuen Herausforderungen Bewältigt Werden.”.

Summary

To conclude, there is strong evidence that the researchers of the four European think tanks analyzed here are members of an epistemic community. As I have argued, all the analysts share a number of normative convictions. Thus they hold that the changed security environment requires a response on the European rather than the national level and that the EU should acquire the means for autonomous military action. Implicitly and explicitly, the United States serves as the standard against which European efforts and achievements are compared. Moreover, their activities focus on a set of common practices in the issue area of security and defense policy, European politics, and the armaments industry. Researchers follow closely and examine the practices of governments, international organizations, and industrial companies in this respect. Moreover, they publish about events and developments that take place on similar occasions. The discussion of the shared criteria to validate knowledge yielded only very weak evidence but did not indicate that the researchers are not part of the same epistemic community.

However, the analysis of shared causal beliefs showed at best mixed results. On the one hand, I demonstrated that all analysts share a number of causal beliefs, including a common understanding about the cause for the creation of the European Armaments Agency. On the other, I established that even with regard to the latter, the agreement is only partial – improving military capabilities, with French and German researchers holding that it equally

Along the same lines, speaking of a DMU but not of a “European Army” see Lindley-French and Algieri, *A European Defence Strategy*, pp. 50-51. For the purpose of capability development see also Schmidt-Radefeldt, “Die Weiterentwicklung Der Europäischen Sicherheits- Und Verteidigungspolitik Im Eu-Verfassungsvertrag: Auf Dem Weg Zu Einer Europäischen Armee?” and Borchert, “Rollenspezialisierung Und Ressourcenzusammenlegung: Sechs Thesen Zur Konzeptionellen Weiterentwicklung.”

⁸⁴ Turek and Bauer, “Etablierung Eines Europäischen Rüstungsmarktes. Auch Bei Der Ausstattung Des Militärs Muss Die Zuständigkeit Der Einzelnen Nationen Zurücktreten.” and Algieri and Bauer, *Europa - Die Gespaltene Macht. Die Konventvorschläge Zur Sicherheits- Und Verteidigungspolitik* ([cited].. The quote is taken from Thomas Bauer, *Europas Sicherheit. Gemeinsame Verteidigungspolitik Nimmt Form An* (2004 [cited 15 December 2006]); available from http://www.cap-lmu.de/aktuell/positionen/2004/eu_verteidigung.php. and translated from German: “Emanzipation Europas als global kooperativer und fähiger Sicherheitsakteur können”.

serves the strengthening of the defense industry and, in some cases, also the transformation of the armed forces. More important still, there seems to be little agreement about the reasons that led European governments to engage in defense and armaments cooperation or on the wider goals of the endeavor. Apparently, key terms like “armaments cooperation” mean different things to different researchers.

This difference on the goals of armaments cooperation is not a minor linguistic point as it has repercussions for the understanding of other issues, concepts, and arguments. Such a notion greatly widens the scope of the cooperation as it adds topics to be discussed or tackled together. The nature of these also affects the extent to which the behavior of participating Member States is integrated. The formulation of harmonized or common procurement rules, for example, would make governments’ behavior commensurable that is “in sinc” with each other. Such a step has so far been avoided due to the legally non-binding character of the Code of Conduct. With such a broad notion in mind, the EDA (its funding, authority, and tasks) would be much more extensive. Regarding the latter, the proposals include tasks that are enabling and even executive in their character, with German think tanks suggesting that it should procure defense equipment. In addition, the analytical perspective widens to other organizations that can take on tasks or aspects of tasks for the regime, notably the European Commission, but also the European Space Agency, as discussed in the documents of the French think tank FRS.

What are we to make of these contradictory results? In the following I will argue that the notion of knowledge entailed in the concept of epistemic communities needs to be refined. It will then become clear that the different explanations cannot be considered as a disagreement in terms of different descriptions of reality, but as active contributions to the creation of a common social reality about which there is no overall consensus.

On types of consensual knowledge

As already mentioned, the terms “causal beliefs” subsumes different notions of “cause” and presents them all as cause-effect relationships. However, as has been argued elsewhere, explanations differ according to the character of

the phenomenon under examination. Hence we can distinguish between the three images of the world: the world of brute facts, of intention and meaning, and of institutional facts.⁸⁵

While the world of brute facts exists quite⁸⁶ independently of human institutions, the latter two types do not, which has consequences for the type of knowledge that is needed to explain a phenomena in them. For the world of brute facts, clear definitions, precise measurements, and certain amount of background knowledge would allow theories to be developed in the form of mathematical functions. On this basis an explanation then takes the form of antecedence conditions (the causes) and a covering law, which links them to the effects. Most important is that, on this view, cause and effect are independent of each other.

This is, however, not the case for the phenomena of the two other worlds. “To explain” means, then, to make the goals for which the action was undertaken, comprehensible and to reconstruct the motif, which seems to be a sufficient reason for a particular conduct. Though the motifs always precede the actions, they are not their antecedence conditions, because the researcher would impute the motifs after “a goal is assumed to be controlling”.⁸⁷ Motif and goal would hence not be determined independently of each other.⁸⁸

Finally, in the world of institutional fact, explanations involve a reference to human institutions, more specifically to conventions and constitutive rules. The latter takes the form of “X counts as Y in C” and X thereby becomes subject to certain rules that are entailed in Y. Constitutive rules as compared to other institutional facts have acquired a normative status as they have

⁸⁵ For the purpose of this paper I naively use the term in the sense outlined by Searle. Institutional facts are facts that require human institutions for their existence. John R. Searle, *The Construction of Social Reality* (New York: Penguin Books, 1995), p. 2. For the distinction of the three world images see Friedrich V. Kratochwil, *Rules, Norms, and Decisions. On the Conditions of Practical and Legal Reasoning in International Relations and Domestic Affairs* (Cambridge (England) and New York: Routledge, 1989), ch. 1.

⁸⁶ I say “quite” although we may assume that it exists, a statement about the world of brute facts require language as a human institution. Searle, *The Construction of Social Reality*, p. 27.

⁸⁷ Kratochwil, *Rules, Norms, and Decisions. On the Conditions of Practical and Legal Reasoning in International Relations and Domestic Affairs*, p. 25.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 24-25.

become a “matter of general policy”.⁸⁹ Only on the basis of such institutions is it possible to explain certain behavior, such as threatening or promising, as practices.

The explanations of defense and armaments cooperation offered by the think tanks can now be much understood much more clearly. First, there is a general consensus regarding some cause-effect relations. I would attribute the notion of economies of scale in the defense industry to this type of knowledge. The shared understandings about the economic and military advantages of armaments cooperation rely already on a wide range of institutional facts such as “threat perception”, “defense budget”, or “defense industry”. So does the distinction that is made between producer and non-producer countries. When it comes to the reasons for creating the European Defense Agency and for armaments cooperation in general, additional institutional facts such as “military capability”, “fair burden sharing”, or the EU Treaties are referred to. But at the same time the explanation is complemented with accounts about the intentions and reasons of policy makers motivating their engagement in defense and armaments cooperation.

The upshot of this argument is that researchers of think tanks share a consensus about causal beliefs in the strict sense. They also share consensual knowledge of a different kind than mere cause-effect relationships - knowledge about some institutional facts concerning armaments cooperation, which they employ in their diverging explanations of this phenomenon. Finally, they do not entirely share notions about the goals and purposes of cooperation.

However, instead of limiting the analysis to the strict notion of consensual knowledge or, alternatively, discarding the concept of epistemic community for my analysis, I suggest embracing the variety of explanations put forward by think tanks. This will also shed a new light on what researchers do as members of an epistemic community.

⁸⁹ This paragraph draws on Searle, *The Construction of Social Reality*., pp. 43 and 48 and Kratochwil, *Rules, Norms, and Decisions. On the Conditions of Practical and Legal Reasoning in International Relations and Domestic Affairs*., pp. 25-27.

On the performative contribution of think tanks

So far I have focused on what think tanks say about European armaments cooperation and whether this allows us to conceive of them as an epistemic community. Once this has been established, the analysis usually proceeds by examining the ways in which consensual knowledge becomes accepted by policy makers and is acted upon.⁹⁰ Instead, I argue that think tanks do something *by* making their work public.⁹¹

In the following I demonstrate that the explanations of think tanks for European defense and armaments cooperation cannot only be considered as descriptions of social reality that might have an effect on policy makers or not. More important is the fact that by producing and publishing their explanations they also contribute to the construction of a reality by way of making sense of what is going on. This entails that a social endeavor is endowed with meaning and purpose and embedded into a wider social context. Notions such as defense and armaments cooperation, the European Defense Agency, the European Defense Industrial and Technology Base, or a European Defense Equipment Market are all institutional facts or social constructs. Do they exist more or less in reality than the German, French, or British defense industries or the national markets? If they do, then we would need to concede that the sum of national defense industries are the same as the European defense industry. This is not, however, the case. The latter term has a very different meaning according to the institutional context in which it is used, whether it is the European Commission speaking for twenty-seven Member States, the EDA with twenty-six participating Member States, or the organization for the management of armaments collaboration projects – OCCAR, with only six Member States.

⁹⁰ See the discussion of the concept of epistemic community above.

⁹¹ This move is inspired by an analogy to Austin's speech act theory. John Langshaw Austin, "How to Do Things with Words," ed. J.O. Urmson and Marina Sbisa (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975).. In terms of his speech act theory, the former two aspects correspond to the locutionary act and perlocutionary effect respectively. What I suggest to consider is the analogy, in the case of think tank publications, to the illocutionary force of a speech act.

The divergences in the accounts of researchers become thus understandable as an instance of an ongoing contest in the construction of cooperation. Although there is some agreement over this, wholesale agreement about its nature, purposes, and goals cannot be discerned. This disagreement is an expression of the political diversity in Europe and of the continued search for a compromise, which, once reached, will probably be unstable or will give rise to new issues that will, again, be conceived of in very different terms with different aspirations. In the remainder I will show how researchers contribute to the construction of what they are writing about by writing about it. They give it meaning in terms of national political projects, past and present experience of European integration, and European institutional facts. In this process they construct the cognitive frames through which cooperation and its future development is to be viewed and understood, together with the norms to assess its development and achievements. These constructions are partly overlapping, partly parallel and independent of each other, and partly contradictory.

Constructing cooperation in terms of a wider national project

One way in which all researchers make sense of European armaments and defense cooperation is by relating it to other national political projects and making it sensitive in terms of the wider national discourse to security and defense issues. But the making of sense is not a one-way street, as the meaning of established concepts in the existing discourse is thereby also altered and the self-understandings of actors is extended by another dimension which has effects on their interests.

The CER will serve as an example. Its explanation of European armaments cooperation blends neatly with the wider UK view on ESDP, which has been characterized as "Atlanticist business as usual".⁹² Howorth argues that the risk of NATO becoming irrelevant has been the most important reason underlying the UK's change in attitude to a European defense policy and has been

⁹² Jolyon Howorth, "Discourse, Ideas, and Epistemic Communities in European Security and Defence Policy," *West European Politics* 27, no. 2 (2004), p. 223.

presented as a means to strengthen NATO.⁹³ In his view, the latter is seen as the cornerstone of European security, and EU defense cooperation is thought to complement this in those missions where the US would not choose to participate.⁹⁴ In linking European defense and armaments cooperation so closely to the relation with the United States, the CER also establishes a normative standard against which the achievements and aspirations of cooperation are to be measured. This norm is then partly dependent on the verdict of Washington, the White House as much as Congress.

At the same time, the CER, with this kind of presentation, also affects the way that the UK sees itself in Europe, its interests, and the role it wants to play. By highlighting the role of the Blair government in setting off set off ESDP and leading several armaments cooperation initiatives, it increases the visibility and thereby the responsibility and commitment of the government to European cooperation. That is to say, if European defense is depicted as an area where Britain, together with France, can lead and its Prime Minister can underpin the UK's pledge to the EU, then British interests are altered and redefined in a new manner.⁹⁵ With this argument, CER analysts construct the space in which it becomes suddenly possible and sensible to consider Tony Blair's staunch support for the US in the run up to the Iraq war in 2002-2003 as an affront to the partner with whom he wanted to lead. He would not have encountered any credibility problem, had European defense and armaments

⁹³ In the words of a senior UK official, "we would not have touched Saint-Malo with a barge-pole", if there had not been a conviction that NATO was in trouble. *Ibid.*, endnote 15 and his general argument at p. 221.

⁹⁴ For a discussion of the different notions of "autonomy" of the UK and France at their St. Malo meeting see Jolyon Howorth, "Britain, France and the European Defence Initiative," *Survival* 42, no. 2 (2000), pp. 221-222 and 230.

⁹⁵ Two examples will suffice: "European Defence is a prime example of Britain shaping the debate in Europe." Hoon, *Launch of the Centre for European Reform's "a European Way of War" by the Secretary of State for Defence at the Reform Club, London, 1 July* ([cited].. "More importantly, Prime Minister Blair has reasserted British leadership in European defence, one of the few areas where the United Kingdom is well qualified to set the European Union's agenda." Charles Grant, "Reviving European Defence Co-Operation," *NATO Review* Winter (2003)..

cooperation not been constructed as part of the British identity and political interest in the first place.⁹⁶

Constructing cooperation in terms of other European projects

The social reality of armaments cooperation is also constructed by rendering it meaningful in terms of other European integration projects.⁹⁷ Both German think tanks thus explain armaments cooperation and the creation of the European Defense Agency in light of the European Monetary Union and the European Central Bank.⁹⁸ By doing this they create the understanding of a very close form of cooperation, i.e. of the integration of formerly independent national institutions with a very strong central and independent international body. The metaphor of an achievement in another area of European cooperation suggests that an analogous realization in defense and armaments would be natural and positive too. Such a reading is supported by the fact that the author points to the “harmonization and rationalization of processes” as a concomitant of such a development. Though this is not an argument of spillover, pointing to examples of successful integration in other policy sectors and stressing analogies makes integration in the security sector appear as something overdue, the action of catching up or the closing of an unnatural gap. Moreover, it carries the notion that the current project is likely to be yet another success.

The European Defense Agency is constructed as an actor of exclusive status as it ensures the advantages of efficiency and transparency, and the prestige

⁹⁶ Howorth, "Discourse, Ideas, and Epistemic Communities in European Security and Defence Policy.", pp. 221-222.

⁹⁷ According to Lakhoff and Johnson many of our key concepts are based on metaphors, understanding a thing in terms of another thing. They shape not only our understanding but also our judgment. For an extensive discussion see George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980)..

⁹⁸ See for example Lindley-French and Algieri, *A European Defence Strategy*., especially pp. 50-51; Schmidt-Radefeldt explicitly states that the armaments cooperation regime is “replicating structurally the model of the Eurozone and the mechanisms of the European Stability and Growth Pact”Schmidt-Radefeldt, "Die Weiterentwicklung Der Europäischen Sicherheits- Und Verteidigungspolitik Im Eu-Verfassungsvertrag: Auf Dem Weg Zu Einer Europäischen Armee?", pp. 8-9, or Borchert, "Rollenspezialisierung Und Ressourcenzusammenlegung: Sechs Thesen Zur Konzeptionellen Weiterentwicklung.", p. 11.

and authority associated with a “European level”. Moreover, German think tanks depict it as a strong, resourceful, and independent authority, expected to play a role of growing responsibility in the future. In other words, it is expected to play a leadership role in the transformation not only of military forces of the European countries but of the entire security sector, extending its activities into additional areas and including further actors.

In sum, researchers use categories that build on common experiences in the history of European integration and link them with new concepts used in European defense and armaments cooperation. As a result, they do not merely describe but also construct the situation in which cooperation takes place, the relevant actors, their status, and the interests involved.

Constructing cooperation in terms of European constitutional rules

In yet another way, think tanks contribute to the construction of a European defense industry and armaments market when they render the project meaningful in terms of the institutional facts created in the process of European integration. The French FRS provides the most systematic account of this kind. Its explanation, unlike any other, has strong historical and institutional roots in the EU, although with some elements that are characteristic of the wider French discourse on ESDP. Based on the analysis of the Treaty on European Union and other official documents, the researchers demonstrate how the rules construct the Commission as responsible for the Common Market; and Member States as actors that can under certain conditions deviate from the rules that the Commission is tasked to control. Thus the Treaty does not only give the Commission a mandate to act in a certain way but it also endows governments with the specific status of actor, expected to play a certain and limited role. The roles and the interaction between the actors, as well as its dynamics, can only be properly understood if the rules of the Treaty are taken into consideration.

In other words, the States have laid down the constitutive rules that also change their status and affect their interests in the political space of the European Union. While think tanks don't establish such constitutive rules, they

contribute to their interpretation, understanding, and acceptance, and consideration, and in wider arena. By linking them systematically with other concepts – new and old – such as the “European defense market”, a “European defense industrial and technology base”, and a “European armaments policy”, they provide the building blocks for further analysis and debate.⁹⁹ In this course the meaning will evolve and might alter. Other actors, such as defense companies, which act in this political space will do so basis of an understanding that has been constructed with the contribution of think tanks.

To explain cooperation in terms of constitutive rules allows us not only to conceive of the complexity of European defense and armaments cooperation but also to understand its subtle alterations. First, the creation of the European Defense Agency is presented as flowing mainly from two springs and as developing in parallel along two lines that stress the institutional density of the Agency’s environment:¹⁰⁰ on the one hand, the work of the European Convention, which was taken up by the European Council and pursued independently of Intergovernmental Conference on the Draft Treaty within the EU framework. On the other, the FRS stresses, unlike any other think tank, the importance of bilateral declarations of issued on the meetings between the leaders of France and Germany, France and the UK, and the UK and Italy in late 2002 and early 2003, where the agreement between the UK and France are considered to be of key importance.¹⁰¹ Like other researchers, the FRS maintains that governments will continue to play the most crucial role

⁹⁹ See for example Masson, "La Politique Européenne De L'Armement: La Méthode Des "Petits Pas".", especially pp. 24-26; Hélène Masson and Cedric Paulin, "Le Marché De Défense: Concept Et Réalité," *Notes de la FRS* 29 November (2005)., and Masson, *Quel Marché De Défense Européen?* ([cited]).

¹⁰⁰ Masson, "La Politique Européenne De L'Armement: La Méthode Des "Petits Pas".", pp. 19-20. Shorter versions can be found in Masson, "L'Agence Européenne De L'Armement: Le Temps Suspendu.", here p. 1 and Masson, "Quand Le Binome Commission Européenne / Industries De Défense Et D'Aéronautique Passe Outre La Filiosité Étatique?", here pp. 2-4, where also the Meeting of the Heads of States of Belgium, France, Germany, and Luxembourg is mentioned as supporting this project.

¹⁰¹ The fact that the Commission is associated with the work of the Agency – it is member of the Steering Board but has no voting right – is also presented as a sign of a break with the past: governments have finally recognized that the Commission has an active role to play in the regulation of the defense sector. Masson, "L'Agence Européenne De L'Armement: Le Temps Suspendu.", here p. 2.

in defense and armaments cooperation, but its argument differs from theirs. Instead of pointing to the national political project or to interests, it refers to the institutional rules underlying cooperation.

To conclude, in order to support the claim that the researchers of the think tanks analyzed in this study are members of an epistemic community, I have argued that the contradictive accounts that they give about the goals and motivations of European defense and armaments cooperation are not an expression of disagreement about an observable reality, i.e. about cause-effect relationships, which can be overcome by assent to the same validity criteria and then sorted out. They are better considered as attempts to make sense of an ongoing development and thereby as a contribution to the construction of a common political reality. The accounts are partly overlapping, both complementing but also contradicting each other. This reflects an ongoing contest about the nature of the cooperation, the actors to be involved in it, their status, and interests. The lack of a body of homogenous knowledge is hence understood as an expression of diversity without which political debate and political life are not possible.

Conclusion

In this paper I have attempted to make two contributions to the academic debate. On the one hand, I argued that the role of European think tanks in European armaments cooperation can be fruitfully analyzed by applying the concept of epistemic community. On the other, I demonstrated that the concept requires refinement regarding the aspect of consensual knowledge and with respect to the way in which its members participate in politics. I proceeded in four steps.

First, I outlined the concept of epistemic community and its four dimensions, stressing the aspects of consensual knowledge and the traditional interest in the process of how knowledge becomes accepted by policy makers and is acted upon. I then presented some background information on the empirical case study. Third, I argued that there is strong evidence in favor of thinking of think tanks as an epistemic community for armaments cooperation. However, the important aspect of shared consensual knowledge about causal beliefs

pointed to the opposite conclusion. A discussion of different types of knowledge revealed that researchers agree only on cause-effect relationships in the very narrowest sense of the term, of which there is basically only one. All other knowledge with reference to the intentions of policy makers and to institutional facts is only partly shared.

Finally, accepting the heterogeneity of the wider notion of consensual knowledge, I argued that the different accounts of think tanks should not be understood as a disagreement about a correct description of reality. Rather, it should be seen as a contribution to its construction by way of making sense of social reality. By publishing, think tanks suggest to conceive of defense and armaments cooperation in Europe in a specific way; to accept the actors and their roles that are depicted, and the rules and norms that are implied. I then presented three different ways of how think tanks create meaning with regard to defense and armaments cooperation, which are partly overlapping, complementary, and partly contradicting. This divergence, not seen as a lack of consensus that might be overcome in the long run, is instead considered as a part of an ongoing political contest about the nature of armaments cooperation.

While it might not come as a surprise that think tanks are engaged in such a political contest – since many academics might not consider them to be independent and objective, it was the aim of this paper to show that epistemic communities contribute to such political endeavors whether they like it or not. The reason for this broader claim is that by the very act of explaining something, by the act of making sense, one becomes involved in politics.

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