The Babel of European Union Studies

Beyond the Trans-Atlantic Divide

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the babel of European union studies: beyond the trans-Atlantic divide

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Abstract

This article examines four - metatheoretical, (sub)disciplinary, epistemological and methods – scholarly differences in European Union (EU) studies, and whether these are linked to the geographical and institutional affiliations of the authors operating in the field. The study uses a novel data set based on a quantitative content analysis and human coding of 1597 articles in leading journals dealing with the EU published in the period 2003-2012. The article shows that USA-based scholars score on average - though in many cases, not significantly - higher when it comes to indicators of a comparative politics approach to the EU, use of a rational choice, positivist and statistical vocabulary, and articles coded as quantitative. However, on most of these indicators scholars in some European countries, and especially some institutions, score significantly higher, suggesting that we should disaggregate 'Europe' when discussing scholarly differences in the field.

Keywords European Union studies; meta-analysis; scholarly styles; sociology of science; quantitative–qualitative divide

The state of EU studies can be described using the Babel metaphor: a field speaking different metatheoretical, sub-disciplinary, epistemological and methodological languages (Pollack, 2005; Jupille, 2006; Wessels, 2006; Rosamond, 2006; Eilstrup-Sangiovanni ed., 2006; Paterson, Nugent and Egan ed., 2010). This article examines the Babel of EU Studies by tracing linguistic differences among EU scholars using techniques from information retrieval as well as natural language processing and quantitative content analysis. In so doing, the article contributes to the growing sociology of knowledge literature that reflects on the nature, structure and practice of EU studies as an academic field (e.g. recent special issues see Adler-Nissen and Kropp (2015) and Manners and Whitman (2016))Qualitatively, a number of studies have examined the archaeology of the field, its present state and how it can be advanced in the future (Rosamond, 2006, 2015; Eilstrup-Sangiovanni ed., 2006; Paterson, Nugent and Egan eds., 2010; Pollack, 2005). Quantitatively, studies have inspected the evolution of the field by counting and coding publications by EU scholars (Keeler, 2005; Jupille, 2006); examined research designs in the subfield of Europeanisation studies by surveying a sample of the most quoted articles (Exadaktylos and Radaelli, 2009); scrutinized 'the rise and fall of EU studies in the USA' by counting scholars and scholarships (Andrews, 2012); and citation network analyses have mapped the communication practices of EU scholars in general (Jensen and Kristensen, 2013) or more specifically research on interest groups in the EU (Bunea and Baumgartner, 2014).

This article primarily contributes to the quantitative strand of research on EU studies by utilizing automated text analysis to take stock of the field and its purported dividing lines. By examining 1597 articles published within the field of EU studies in the decade from 2003-2012, the article examines differences in scholarly 'languages' with a particular focus on whether and how these are associated with geography and institutional affiliation.

This inquiry follows the 'it could be otherwise' maxim in the sociology of knowledge. As Steve Woolgar argues, much sociological inquiry into knowledge production follows the Pascalian notion that 'truth on this side of the Pyrenees, error on the other side' (Woolgar, 1988: 22). The sociology of knowledge does not aim to settle which claims should count as legitimate knowledge but simply documents extant knowledge claims in order to understand the potential sources of any variation. By examining differences in EU studies using an empirical meta-study, we can hopefully raise awareness among EU scholars about how they operate in the field.

The article is structured as follows. Section 2 elaborates on different 'languages' used in EU studies. Section 3 discusses how these differences can be measured empirically. Section 4 examines the inter- and intra-journal 'linguistic' differences and determines whether these are associated with geography and institutional affiliation. Section 5 draws out the conclusions and implications of the study.

'LINGUISTIC' SUBFAMILIES IN CONTEMPORARY EU STUDIES

Existing stocktaking on EU studies has identified four interrelated differences – meta-theoretical, (sub)disciplinary, epistemological and methodological – within the field. The following subsection discusses the defining properties of these differences.

THE META-THEORETICAL DIFFERENCES

The process of European integration has, since its launch in early 1950s, attracted intense scholarly attention. For many decades, the intellectual study of this perplexing phenomenon was characterized by intense debate, first about the normative desirability of the process and subsequently about its drivers (Eilstrup-Sangiovanni ed., 2006). In the 1990s, the titanic clashes between grand theories of European integration gradually faded into the background as neo-institutionalist approaches gained prominence (Trondal, 2001).

The late 1990s witnessed an insurgence against what some scholars perceived as the increasing hegemony of rational choice theory within EU studies. This was concurrent with the broader Perestroika movement that sought to pluralize political science beyond the dominant rationalist and statistical approaches. With the publication of a 'manifesto' in a special issue of the *Journal of European Public Policy*, entitled 'The Social Construction of Europe', a number of scholars argued in favor of a constructivist approach to the study of the EU (Christiansen al., 1999). The special issue acted as a catalyst of constructivist studies examining how the process of European integration influences the identities and preferences of actors through the diffusion of ideas and norms, rather than taking these for granted as rational choice approaches tended to do (Schimmelfennig, 2001; Checke,l 2005).

This line of reasoning was refuted by Andrew Moravscik (Moravscik, 2001a, Moravscik, 2001b; see also Pollack, 2005: 366). A series of enlightening exchanges followed, and in 2003 a special issue of *Comparative Political Studies* comprising prominent scholars from both camps proposed various strategies to narrow the abyss between rationalism and constructivism (Checkel and Moravcsik, 2001; Jupille *et al*., 2003). Despite that attempt to bridge their differences, rationalism and constructivism are today portrayed as the two main rivals in textbook accounts of EU studies. Rationalism is usually equated with rational choice

theories, whereas constructivism is frequently associated with sociological theories (Pollack, 2005).

THE (SUB)DISCIPLINARY DIFFERENCES

Alongside the 'neoinstitutionalist turn' in EU studies in the early 1990s, a critique emerged of what some scholars perceived as the dominance of International Relations within the field (for an overview, see Pollack, 2005: 368). The main protagonist of this view was Simon Hix (1994, 1998) who called for more explicit comparative politics research in the study of the EU.

Other scholars argued that comparative politics and public policy perspectives would naturally become more relevant as a result of the widening and deepening of European integration through the Single European Act (from 1986) and the Maastricht treaty (from 1992) (Hurrel and Menon 1996; for an overview, see Eilstrup-Sangiovanni ed., 2006: 327). Furthermore, some argued that the sub-disciplinary boundaries between International Relations and Comparative Politics had already become increasingly blurred (Milner, 1998; Jupille, 2006).

In the 2000s, the debate over the sub-disciplinary balance of power within EU studies was somewhat replaced by a debate over inter-disciplinarity. A number of scholars lamented the marginal role of studies grounded in History and Sociology within the field (Kaiser, 2008; Favell and Guiraudon, 2011) and calls were made for greater inter-disciplinarity (Warleigh-Lack and Phinnemore eds., 2009).

THE EPISTEMOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES

Differences in epistemological 'languages' concerns whether EU research should be conducted according to positivist or post-positivist premises. This distinction is closely related to the previous meta-theoretical debate between rational choice and constructivist approaches. Most of Moravcsik's rebuttal of constructivist EU studies was not aimed at their claim that 'ideas matter' but rather their inability, in his view, to formulate clear and consistent hypotheses about when and how 'ideas matter'—hypotheses that can be tested against empirical evidence and thereby run the risk of being proven wrong or inferior compared to rival explanations (Moravcsik and Checkel, 2001: 231).

Within the constructivist camp, this criticism has been addressed in two fundamentally different ways (Rosamond, 2007: 15-16). On the one hand, positivist epistemology has been embraced through the formulation of falsifiable hypotheses about how ideas spread, for instance, via socialization (mainstream constructivism). On the other hand, positivist epistemology has been challenged by post-positivists arguing that scientific knowledge is not only produced by a rigorous testing of competing *explanations* but also by *understanding* the possible determinants behind social change, which cannot readily be isolated into measurable variables (Checkel, 2003; Risse, 2004).

METHODOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES

This difference concerns the methods and data used by EU scholars to persuade peers of the validity of their knowledge claims. Here, one can broadly distinguish between scholars who apply quantitative methods relying on large-n numerical data, and those who deploy qualitative and interpretivist methods based on textual data (Jupille, 2006: 222-225). Empirical evidence provided both by Jupille (2006: 222-225) and Jensen and Kristensen (2013: 15) demonstrates that the majority of articles published in leading EU journals feature qualitative

methods. However, there seems to be a specialization in terms of methods: the journal *European Union Politics* is the main outlet for quantitative research, the *Journal of Common Market Studies* occupies the middle ground, and the *Journal of European Public Policy* is the powerhouse of qualitative research. The tendency over time, however, is that quantitative research is on the rise within EU studies.

A TRANSATLANTIC MACRO-DIVIDE?

The literature on EU studies tends to portray all these divides as related to one macro-divide: the Atlantic Ocean. Verdun (2003: 86-87) coined two provocative archetypes in her discussion of this American/European divide in EU studies: the former privileges comparison and generalization while the latter favors the unique and particularistic. Jupille's (2006: 217) two 'scholarly styles' are also very much in line with the geographical divide: 'In the EU Studies context, 'scholarly style' refers primarily to the question of 'grand' (generalizing) theory versus concrete/grounded/particularizing theory, which is sometimes assimilated to American and European stylistic differences' (Jupille, 2006: 217).

Rosamond (2006) goes a step further, by also including epistemological and methodological considerations when he describes the two main models. The mainstream model is associated with American scholars (or scholars inspired by the American tradition), who perceive the EU as ''a polity like any other' [which] is best served by the standard tools of political science [and] conforms to a set of standardized epistemological positions and epistemological rules of thumb (Rosamond, 2006: 236). By contrast, the pluralist model often deployed by European scholars perceives the EU as 'a new type of polity' [the study of which is an] inherently multidisciplinary affair [that] benefits from the input of work from diverse epistemological and epistemological standpoints' (Rosamond, 2006: 236).

Linking differences in EU scholarship to geographical location is not a new endeavor. Kaiser (1965) long ago argued that American scholars mostly searched for general explanations by using nomothetic approaches, whereas European scholars were more inclined to seek national explanations using ideographic approaches. However, as noted by most of the abovementioned scholars the notion of a European-US divide might be more a cliché than a reality. The following section elaborates on how to empirically study whether this is the case.

MEASURING GEO- AND INSTITUTIONAL-LINGUISTIC DIFFERENCES IN EU

STUDIES DATA SELECTION

To examine whether geography is associated with different scholarly styles in EU studies, we have generated a sample of 1597 journal articles published between 2003-2012 in the journals *European Union Politics* (EUP), *Journal of Common Market Studies* (JCMS), *Journal of European Public Policy* (JEPP), and *West European Politics* (WEP). The delineated period 2003-2012 is conditioned by the inclusion of EUP in the Web of Science in 2003. It is important for the analysis that the journal is listed in Web of Science as this allows us to include research articles and exclude other types of documents such as editorial notes and book reviews. Furthermore, Web of Science enables us to extract information about individual articles, especially the geographical location and institutional affiliation of the author(s), which is used in the following analysis. It should be noted that Web of Science makes geographical distinctions within the UK between England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, but does not do the same for semi-autonomous regions in other countries.

In selecting the four abovementioned EU journals, we follow Keeler (2005: 559), Rosamond (2006: 12), and Hooghe and Marks (2008: 112). As these journals also pub-

lish non-EU articles, however, we have screened each journal and excluded pieces that do not deal with the EU[1].

Table 1 outlines the total number of articles from each journal and the number of included articles. As can been seen from the table, the majority of articles have been excluded from *WEP* as this journal is primary concerned with comparative politics in Europe rather than the EU. It has nevertheless published a significant number of articles dealing with the EU (Hooghe and Marks, 2008: 112). When examining geographical differences, we exclude 282 coauthored articles (corresponding to 17.7 percent) written by two or more authors located in different countries as we are interested in studying cross-country differences. Similarly, when we examine the institutional level, we omit 448 coauthored articles (corresponding to 28.1 percent) written by authors located in different institutions. We make this choice because it is not evident how coauthored research should be attributed (half a paper per author/country or individual sections per author/country). We are aware that leaving out coauthored papers might privilege a certain kind of EU research (e.g. research often done in larger groups or networks, such as large data-driven studies or comparative studies comprising many country experts) over others (e.g. research often done individually, such as theorising), but leave it for further studies to confirm whether there is a significant difference between single- and co-authored EU research.

[Insert Table 1]

QUANTITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS AND STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

We employ a quantitative method to examine 'geo-linguistic' and 'institutional-linguistic' differences in EU studies. Articles utilizing automated text analysis have been on the rise within EU studies (Klüver, 2009; Reinhard, 2012). A number of approaches exist, ranging from simple dictionary methods and advanced supervised learning, to fully automated clus-

tering methods (Grimmer and Stewart, 2012). This study utilizes the dictionary-based approach, which has proven to be a powerful tool for analyzing large amounts of texts (Ibid.). As the name implies, it relies on dictionaries containing concepts that are indicative of different linguistic families. The program then scans documents for the selected words and determines the frequency with which they occur. The assumption behind the dictionary approach is simple but powerful: namely, that the more words from a given dictionary occur in a text, the more the text expresses the traits of that lexicon (say, words like variable, probability, estimators, randomization, ANOVA, T-test, Coefficient and Scatterplot for a positivist-statistical lexicon). Compared to human coders, automatic text analysis is extremely reliable (Reinhard, 2012: 1347). The method also has limitations, of course. It radically decontextualizes words from the textual context in which they are used. A key limitation of the approach is therefore its lack of semantic sensitivity, as it is not able to detect homographs, i.e. polysemous words whose meaning is contingent upon context. It does not distinguish between the positive or negative use of words (say, if a post-positivist criticizes positivism using words like hypothesis, variable and probabilistic). This is less of an issue when dealing with more specialized nomenclatures (it is harder to imagine a post-positivist critic using words like ANOVA, Chi-square or Mann-Whitney U test).

The study applies the automated text analysis software called Diction (version 6.1.4.5) (Hart and Carroll, 2011), which is able to read and edit various types of documents including PDF files. This is important because the structure of the sampled articles differs between the four selected EU journals and within them over time. In order to homogenize articles, we have decided to include text from the introduction to the conclusion plus references. This implies that elements such as abstracts, keywords, acknowledgements, funding and corresponding authors have been excluded from the content analysis as these elements

vary across journals and time. Moreover, Diction allows us to create customized dictionaries, which is essential because we are interested in examining particular traits associated with the different paradigms that are said to differentiate EU studies.

MEASURING DIFFERENCES

META-THEORETICAL 'LANGUAGES'

Selecting words that represent a given meta-theoretical paradigm is a challenging task. One way is to let experts in a given paradigm define its key concepts. However, this runs the risk that the experts will become the main explanation for any variation. To measure meta-theoretical differences, we constructed two corpuses by searching in Web of Knowledge's Social Science section under the research areas 'International Relations', 'Public Administration' and 'Political Science', using the keywords 'rational choice' and 'constructivism'. By the end of 2012, 282 articles had been labeled with the term 'constructivism'. Of these, we selected a randomized sample [2] of 92 articles, out of which we were able to include 71.720 articles were labeled 'rational choice'. Of these, we selected a randomized sample of 91 articles, from which we were able to include 67. The residual between the randomized and included articles emerges from the exclusion of journal articles published in the four EU journals and because it was not possible to find PDF versions of some articles, especially the older ones. The corpuses are thus slightly biased towards more recent articles. Each group of articles was then merged into a text file, which we transformed into a word frequency matrix after having excluded trivial words by applying stop words.

To identify words that are particularly distinctive for one corpus vis-à-vis the other we utilize the statistical technique called frequency profiling (Rayson and Garside,

2000). The technique cannot automatically single out exactly which words are characteristic of each of the two paradigms, but it helps narrowing down the options by listing concepts in diminishing order of importance (Ibid.: 5). Scrutinizing the raw and profiled frequencies, it becomes clear that 'constructivism' is highly correlated with words used within International Relations (such as international, Asian, IR, security etc.) whereas 'rational choice' is highly correlated with words from comparative politics or, more specifically, the study of legislative features (such as party, voters, voting, turnout etc.). This calls for a qualitative differentiation between concepts that is indicative of the meta-theoretical paradigm *per se* and not the research area or subdiscipline, though the two may often overlap. This distinction is made by three experts on each paradigm. Compared to the expert selection bias that we problematized initially, this challenge is addressed by letting the experts in question choose from among the most frequent concepts, and by only including those words on which there is agreement between them. The strong correlation between paradigms and research areas supports the use of a dictionary-based approach, as semi-automated and automated approaches run the risk of conflating paradigms and research areas, thus tapping into the wrong dimension. Appendix 1 (Tables 1 and 2) contains the quintessential concepts in the constructivism dictionary and the rational choice dictionary, respectively. It is important to bear in mind that these are the most discriminating words, not necessarily those most frequently used within a paradigm, although the two do correlate.

(SUB)DISCIPLINARY LANGUAGES

In principle, the automated dictionary approach could be applied to categorize articles according to (sub)disciplinarity. However, determining the exact affiliation of an article requires considerable semantic sensitivity and as a consequence all 1597 articles have been categorized via human coding (i.e. a by research assistant with a codebook). Three broad 'in-

dicators', in diminishing order of importance, are used to determine an article's affiliation. The first reading looks at the keywords, abstract and/or introduction of an article to search for clues. In many of the articles, the author(s) explicitly states the (sub)disciplinary affiliation by, for instance, mentioning that the article 'adds to the public administration literature' or that an 'International Political Economy perspective' is taken on a given issue. Secondly, references are scrutinized to see which type of literature and journals, if any, dominate. So if an article quotes a majority of IR articles, journals and books, this makes it likely to belong to the IR category. Third, we look at the affiliation of the author(s) to see whether the person(s) is located in a department focusing on a certain sub-discipline such as IR or Public Administration. Finally, in instances of doubt, a senior coder was consulted about whether the author was known to belong to a certain sub-discipline. Nine different (sub)disciplines were inductively determined: Comparative Politics (CP), Economics (Eco), History (His), International Political Economy (IPE), International Relations (IR), Law (Law), Political Theory (PT), Public Administration (PA) and Sociology (Soc).

EPISTEMOLOGICAL LANGUAGES

Concepts used to capture the epistemological and methodical difference cannot readily be isolated from articles listed in the Web of Knowledge, so the selection of linguistic markers is based on a textbook approach. Specifically, concepts are extracted from the indexes of three widely used textbooks as well as from a web page and differenced according to their epistemological nature, that is, whether they belong to the positivist vocabulary or not[3]. Two caveats are in order, however. First, despite important differences between, say, Popperian falsificationism and logical positivism, we include both in the broad positivist category for the present purpose of examining positivist versus 'post-positivist' differences. Second, is important to note that the analysis operates with a positivist vocabulary vis-à-vis a residual category,

which could be called *non*-positivist but which does not constitute a post-positivist vocabulary (see also the global Teaching, Research and International Policy (TRIP) survey on this terminology). The search terms are listed in appendix 1 (Table 3).

MEASURING METHODOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES

Following Jupille (2006), methodological 'languages' are operationalized by constructing a dataset that manually codes articles according to whether they are quantitative (i.e. rely on numerical data) or qualitative (i.e. rely on textual data). As an additional indicator of methodological differences, we use the concepts from the indexes associated with the statistical paradigm, which were also extracted from the above-mentioned textbooks. These are listed in Appendix 1 (Table 4).

DISCUSSING MEASUREMENTS

Figure 1 illustrates the logic of different corpuses. Looking first at the constructivism circle, our lexicon contains concepts like 'discourse', 'identity' and 'normative' because these are frequently used within that paradigm without overlapping with other groups of concepts. By contrast, the word 'social' is frequently used within constructivism but carries a low discriminating value because it is also frequently used in ordinary language. The linguistic markers for rational choice include the words 'behavioral', 'equilibrium' and 'preferences'. The word 'institution' is placed at the intersection of 'Rational Choice' and 'Constructivism' and is excluded from our lexicon as it is frequently used by both paradigms and thus carries a low discriminating value. Moving on to the positivism circle, this intersects with the rational choice circle with regard to words such as 'assumption' and 'exogenous', whereas concepts such as 'falsification', 'validity' and 'explanatory' are more unique. With regards to concepts

used within the statistical paradigm, this includes linguistic markers such as ANOVA, Logarithm and STATA, which are distinct. However, the statistical paradigm subsumes the positivist paradigm because concepts used within the latter are normally also used within the former.

[Insert Figure 1]

Table 2. summarizes the different differences and how these have been operationalized for empirical measurement.

[Insert Table 2]

Before examining how national and institutional affiliations are associated with different paradigms, we first look at the nature of the indicators. Appendix 2 outlines the bivariate correlations between the measurements created using human coding and those created using automated text analysis. As is evident from the table, the association goes in the expected direction, i.e. the Constructivist vocabulary is negatively correlated with the Rational choice, Positivism and Statistics vocabularies. The variables also work in the intuitively expected way when it comes to the association between the different paradigms and the coding of articles as quantitative or qualitative.

MEASURING AFFILIATION

This study also examines the relationship between the use of the vocabularies above and the graphical location of their authors - or more specifically the country and institution where the author(s) of an EU article was based at the time of publication. Geographical information is extracted from the Web of Science. However, as articles sometimes have multiple authors from different countries and institutions, we have isolated groups of articles that are exclusively affiliated with one country or institution, that is, single-authored articles or coauthored articles where all coauthors are based in the same country. We could have used the nationality of the authors and/or the location of the university where they earned their doctorates as alternative indicators for geo-linguistic style. However, this coding would not only be time consuming, it is also not as straightforward as it seems (e.g. is nationality determined by country of birth, citizenship or residence?). Therefore, we use current country and institution of affiliation to measure geographical location.

ANALYSIS

In the following, we analyze the association between geographical and institutional affiliation and the variations in vocabulary along the four differences.

GEOGRAPHICAL DIFFERENCES

JOURNAL DIFFERENCES3

Table 3 provides an overview of the countries publishing most EU studies in the chosen journals. It is worth noticing that some countries do not make the cut-off point of 30 articles published in the decade 2003-2012. Scholars based at institutions in Southern Europe are poorly represented (Spain: 16, Greece: 13, Portugal: 4) at least relative to the size and number of universities and researchers in these countries compared to some of the smaller countries that

do make the list (International Association of Universities 2017). However, it is less puzzling when considering their expenditure on research and development (UNESCO 2016: 307ff). What is even more puzzling in this light is that countries like Italy and especially France are so low on the list despite scoring high on number of institutions, researchers and research expenditure (Ibid.). Indeed, Italy would not have made it had it not been for the European University Institute, which is not an Italian university but an international research institution. It is also remarkable that no Eastern European country is included although this region has produced several prominent EU scholars (Hungary: 12, Czech Republic: 5, Estonia: 3, Slovenia: 3, Poland: 1).

[Insert Table 3]

In terms of overall ranking, EU studies is not an 'American Social Science', as International Relations was once characterized (Hoffmann, 1977; Smith, 2000), but rather an English Social Science: England (321) accounts for almost twice as many articles as Germany (175) and the United States (174), which are the second and third largest producers of EU studies, respectively. Hence, although American-based scholars have qualitatively been very influential in EU studies especially when it comes to crafting integration theories, the field is nowadays quantitatively dominated by European-based scholars.

It is notable that a country's EU membership/skepticism does not seem to be a major predictor of its production of EU studies. Quite the contrary, as England ranks higher than Germany, Switzerland higher than Italy, and Norway higher than Sweden. The argument could be made that EU-skeptical countries, especially those in its vicinity, also need to understand the nature of the beast, and therefore that many other factors besides the degree of EU

skepticism determine a country's output of EU articles. First of all, one should bear in mind that the sample only includes journals published in English, which may give native speakers an edge. Second, scholars based in southern Europe or even Germany may also be able to reach a large number of fellow scholars by publishing in their mother tongues. Non-English language outlets such as the French 'Revue Française de Science Politique', the Italian journal 'Il Mulino' or the German journal 'Integration' are read and cited by many scholars. Moreover, many of these countries are also known to have a culture of publishing monographs, at least relative to the more journal-oriented publish-or-perish culture in Northern Europe. On the institutional level, it should also be noted that that research institutes that publish important working papers series are downplayed in a study focusing only on journals.

Third, proactive government initiatives like the RAE/REF are known to boost publication output in the UK, just as the comfortable funding for academia in countries such as Norway and Switzerland enables higher rankings for those countries than for, say, Italy in most disciplines. This ranking may thus tell us more about government policies and the broader geography of scientific output than it does about EU studies (or skepticism) in particular.

Looking at the different journals, it is apparent that EUP publishes mostly articles from scholars based in the USA, Germany, and the Netherlands followed by England and Switzerland; whereas scholars based in Scotland, France, Norway, Denmark, Sweden and Belgium play a more marginal role in this journal. EUP is the only journal that publishes more work by scholars based in the USA than scholars based elsewhere, which may (partly) explain why this journal has been identified as the 'hub' for American literature in EU studies (Ibid.). In contrast, scholars based in England tend to publish in JCMS, as is also the case for Belgium and Scotland. Scholars based in Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and France seem to prefer to publish in JEPP – almost half of their articles are in this journal – although this jour-

nal is generally dominated by scholars based in England, Germany and USA. No country publishes most in WEP, but among those that do, England vastly outnumbers other countries, followed by Germany, the Netherlands and the United States.

META-THEORETICAL DIFFERENCES

Figure 2 shows the average number of rational choice words for different geographical areas. The rational choice vocabulary is most often used by scholars in Germany, Ireland and Netherlands, and least often by scholars in Scotland, Norway and England. The reason why Germany is the leader when it comes to Rational Choice vocabulary may have less to do with the general academic culture in the country than with specific institutions, as especially Mannheim and Konstanz Universities are major suppliers of pioneering, rational choice-inspired EU studies. What is striking is that scholars located in the USA do not use rational choice vocabulary more frequently than many of their European counterparts. By looking at the average number of rational choice words used in the EU versus the USA, it is possible to examine whether there is evidence of a transatlantic difference in EU studies. The figure shows that US-based scholars (41.1) use rational choice vocabulary marginally more than scholars based in the EU (40.15). The difference is not statistically significant, however. Moreover, as illustrated, when we disaggregate the EU, scholars in some European countries use concepts associated with rational choice more than US-based scholars, on average.

[Insert Figure 2]

Figure 3 similarly outlines the association between geography and the constructivist vocabulary within EU studies, where it can be seen that Denmark, Norway and Sweden are among

the most constructivist countries. This may reflect the strong dominance of constructivism in the three Scandinavian countries where Denmark, for example, was identified as the hotbed of the insurgency against rational choice in EU studies at the turn of the millennium, and more generally in IR as the birthplace of the Copenhagen School (Christiansen *et al*., 1999). Comparing the aggregate figure of the EU (24.5) with the US (22.8) shows that scholars based in the latter apply constructivist vocabulary to a slightly lesser degree.

[Insert Figure 3]

Taken together, the study shows that American scholars use rational choice concepts more, and constructivist concepts less. However, the differences are small. The study also provides evidence of a geographical specialization, with Germany, the Netherlands and Ireland scoring high on rational choice measures, whereas the Scandinavian countries score high on constructivism. It therefore makes more sense to focus on intra-European divides than on the somewhat worn 'Atlantic divide'.

(SUB)DISCIPLINARY DIFFERENCES

Concerning (sub)disciplinary differences, Table 4 shows that if Comparative Politics was marginalized in EU studies, this is definitely not the case anymore. By contrast, the vast majority of EU scholars publishing articles in the last decade take a Comparative Politics perspective. Besides Comparative Politics, International Relations, Public Administration and Economics are the major (sub)disciplinary perspectives on the EU in the selected journals. The data corroborate that Sociology and History play a marginal role in the four selected journals (Kaiser 2008; Favell and Guiraudon, 2011). However, this is not unexpected as our

'sample' of journals comes from Political Science and these two 'neglected' disciplines have their own journals on Europe/European studies, namely the *European Journal of Sociology* and *Journal of European Integration History*. Moreover, social science disciplines such as Anthropology are missing except for a few articles, which was not enough to justify the creation of a category.

Looking at whether geography is associated with disciplinary approaches, Table 4 shows that scholars based in Norway and Switzerland are more inclined to take an IR perspective when studying the EU. This could indicate that scholars outside the EU tend to treat the EU as an international organization. This pattern is not consistent, however, as it does not hold for scholars in the USA. The sub-disciplinary pattern may also, to some extent, be accounted for by academic traditions when studying the EU. The Comparative Politics perspective on the EU is predominant, especially in Sweden, the Netherlands, Germany, and the USA. Countries like Denmark, Norway and Scotland publish relatively more articles that adopt a Public Administration perspective. The association between geography and disciplinary approaches may partly account for why Southern and Eastern Europe are poorly represented, as scholars placed in these countries are perhaps more inclined to take other disciplinary perspectives when studying the EU and thus to publish in journals specialized within that discipline. Political science has, for historical reasons, remained inchoate in Eastern Europe where the natural sciences have dominated, and where disciplines like Sociology and Economics are perceived as more prominent within the social sciences.

[Insert Table 4]

There are also cross-journal differences when it comes to (sub)-disciplinarity, as can be seen in Table 5. *WEP* and *EUP* are dominated by a Comparative Politics perspective whereas *JCMS* and *JEPP* are characterized by a more multi-disciplinary approach - although they, too, are dominated by Comparative Politics. *JCMS* is the journal that, as a percentage of its output, publishes the most International Relations articles, whereas *JEPP* publishes proportionally more Public Administration articles. The differences are, by and large, consistent with the stated aims and scope of the four journals. Hence, when looking at sub- disciplinarity through the lenses of the four selected journals, it bears mentioning that these have certain preferences for certain disciplines or research designs which may exclude parts of the academic community studying the EU in a certain country[4]. In other words, we cannot observe the dominant way of studying the EU in each country but only how it is studied in the four chosen journals.

[Insert Table 5]

EPISTEMOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES

Figure 4 shows the differences in the use of positivistic terminology within EU studies. As can be seen, scholars based in the Netherlands, Germany, and Ireland employ positivist concepts more than scholars in other countries. The three countries were also top scorers when it came to using rational choice terminology, with Germany coming in first, Ireland second and the Netherlands third. Scholars in France, Scotland and England were less likely to use positivistic nomenclature. If we compare the average result for scholars in the EU with the US, we see that US scholars are more likely to apply positivistic vocabulary. It thus provides

some evidence for the fact that American-based scholars are more inclined to conduct research in accordance with the positivist paradigm which is characterized by systematically testing theories against empirical evidence to identify patterns or regularities with regard to the object of study. However, as the content analysis demonstrated, several countries use positivist nomenclature more often than American-based scholars, especially those located in the Netherlands. Again, we find that intra-European divides are more outspoken than the Trans-Atlantic one.

[Insert Figure 4]

METHODS DIFFERENCES

Having examined the (sub)-disciplinary, meta-theoretical and epistemological differences in EU studies, we now turn to differences in methodology using the two indicators we developed: automated text analysis of concepts used within statistics, and human coding to determine whether articles are quantitative or qualitative. Figure 5 illustrates that US-based scholars are more inclined to use statistical vocabulary, followed by scholars in Ireland and the Netherlands. By contrast, scholars in Scotland, Denmark and Norway are significantly less inclined to apply this nomenclature.

[Insert Figure 5]

The results pertaining to the difference, based on the human coding of 'quantitative' or 'qualitative' articles, are presented in Figure 6. On average, US-based scholars publish con-

siderably more quantitative articles. Only scholars in the Netherlands publish a small majority of studies classified as quantitative and are therefore very different from scholars placed in all the other countries, including the US, where the majority of studies are qualitative. Scholars in Scotland and France are less inclined to publish quantitative studies compared to everybody else in the sample. The results are axiomatically the opposite when it comes to studying the EU from a qualitative perspective: Here Scotland and France score highest, whereas the Netherlands and the USA score lowest.

Looking at the aggregated data for the EU and US in Figures 5 and 6, US-based scholars are more likely to publish articles that are quantitative and apply statistical concepts than scholars based in the EU are. In this way, the alleged stylistic or cultural differences find support in the data.

[Insert Figure 6]

INSTITUTIONAL DIFFERENCES

Having explored the relationship between research vocabularies and country of affiliation in EU studies, we now turn to the institutional level. Here eight universities have published a sufficiently large number of articles (>18) in the four journals studied to be subject to analysis. The eight universities are the London School of Economics, University of Leiden, University of Oslo, University of Mannheim, University of Amsterdam, University of Edinburgh, European University Institute and Oxford University.

META-THEORETICAL DIFFERENCES

Figures 7 and 8 show the various averages between institutions and theoretical paradigms. They indicate that EUI, Mannheim and Leiden Universities score high on applying quintessential rational choice vocabulary compared to other institutions, but also in regard to their country average (the latter two especially do so in *EUP*). This is hardly surprising to most students of the EU as these universities have published many influential studies utilizing rational choice frameworks to conceptualize and study (especially) informal and formal decision-making in the EU. By contrast, Oslo and Edinburgh Universities score high on the use of constructivist nomenclature compared to the other institutions, but not to their country average. This confirms the common perception within the discipline, as Oslo University, in particular, with the ARENA center for EU studies, has been the largest supplier of cutting-edge constructivist research to the field.

[Insert Figure 7]

[Insert Figure 8]

(SUB)DISCIPLINARY DIFFERENCES

Tables 6 and 7 display the descriptive distribution among institutions, journals and subfields. With the caveat that the N is very small, it is clear that Mannheim and Leiden Universities are more prone to publishing in *EUP*; Edinburgh University and the LSE publish more in *JCMS*; and Oslo University and the EUI publish in *JEPP*, while Oxford University is more equally distributed among the four journals. The relationship between institutions and journals is most likely a function of variation in meta-theoretical, (sub)disciplinary, epistemological and methodological approaches to the EU. As previously noted, the Comparative Politics ap-

proach is dominant when studying the EU but there is also institutional variation here: Mannheim University predominately applies a Comparative Politics perspective; Oslo University is differenced between International Relations and Public Administration, as is the LSE (which also takes an Economics perspective).

[Insert Table 6]

[Insert Table 7]

EPISTEMOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES

These institutional differences are also reflected in epistemological choices. Edinburgh and Oslo Universities use few notions associated with positivism, which corresponds to their country averages (se figure 9). By contrast, Mannheim, Amsterdam and Leiden Universities top the list when it comes to applying positivist words, and do so even more than their country averages would predict (se Figure 9).

[Insert Figure 9]

METHODS DIFFERENCES

The final difference concerns differences in methods. Figures 10 and 11 show that when it comes to the application of statistical vocabulary and articles coded as quantitative, Mannheim and Leiden Universities are, unsurprisingly, the top scorers. The two institutions also score considerably higher than their country averages. By contrast, Edinburgh and Oslo Uni-

versities score lowest on the statistical and quantitative indicators, and highest when it comes to publishing qualitative research. Both institutions score lower than their country averages on the two indicators.

[Insert Figure 10]

[Insert Figure 11]

CONCLUSION

This article has analyzed the 'Babel of EU Studies' based on a quantitative content analysis and human coding of 1597 articles published in the period 2003-2012. It examined four different types of scholarly vocabulary—meta-theoretical, subdisciplinary, epistemological and methodological—and the extent to which these are linked to the geographical and institutional affiliations of the authors operating in the field. The article supports the idea that EU studies in the period examined reflects normal science in the sense that it now makes use a wide spectated repertoire of meta-theoretical, sub-disciplinary, epistemological and methodical perspectives though with some specialization (Pollack, 2005). However, important variation exists.

The examination of the *meta-theoretical differences* suggested that European and US-based scholars on average use rational choice and constructivist vocabulary almost to

the same extent. There is therefore no firm evidence for a transatlantic meta-theoretical difference. However, once we disaggregate the European, we find that scholars in Germany, Ireland and the Netherlands use rational choice vocabulary more often than scholars in Denmark, Norway and Sweden who are more inclined to use concepts associated with constructivism. Looking at the meta-theoretical difference at the institutional level, EUI and Mannheim University use the highest number of rational choice concepts, while Oslo University uses least rational choice concepts and most constructivist concepts.

In terms of *(sub)subdisciplinary differences,* the analysis showed that most scholars working in the field take a Comparative Politics perspective, followed by International Relations and Public Administration. While there may well have been a deficit of Comparative Politics studies in the 1980s and 1990s, this is definitely not the case in the period studied in this article. By contrast, there is support for the argument that History and Sociology, not to speak of Anthropology and Ethnography, play a marginal role. However, the analysis also showed cross-country variation as, for instance, scholars in Sweden and Netherlands are more inclined to take a Comparative Politics perspective, whereas scholars in Denmark and Norway frequently adopt a Public Administration perspective. At the institutional level, Mannheim University almost exclusively analyses the EU from a Comparative Politics perspective, whereas the EUI, for instance, produces many articles within the realm of Public Administration.

As for the *epistemological differences*, US based scholars are more likely to use positivist terminology than European based scholars. But again, the starkest divides are intra-European: scholars in the Netherlands, Germany and Ireland make more use of positivist terminology than US based scholars, and much more than scholars in France, Scotland and England. The country level findings resonate with the institutional level findings as Mannheim,

Amsterdam and Leiden Universities are significantly more inclined to apply positivist concepts.

Concerning *methodological differences*, the analysis confirms the common perception that US-based scholars use more statistical concepts than Europeans. This argument is supported by a manual coding of articles as quantitative and qualitative, which shows that US based scholars, second only to scholars in the Netherlands, produce a comparatively larger number of quantitative studies. However, it should be noted that the differences are not significant vis-à-vis scholars based in EU.

The general conclusion which comes out of the paper is that there are geo-epistemic divides in EU studies but the different research vocabularies in EU studies do not relate to geography in the way usually envisioned: namely, as a Trans-Atlantic divide. Instead, we find important intra-European divides that shed new light of the way we think of EU studies. As such, this empirical sociology of EU studies opens up for a discussion about the implications (or not) for scholarly practices within the discipline. Like previous sociologies of EU studies, it certainly calls for caution about the sweeping generalization often made in textbooks. The often dichotomized textbook accounts of disciplinary differences—e.g. the Trans-Atlantic divide—may be misrepresenting the field as actually practiced in the articles in its journals. This also points to a broader gap between the EU studies we do in journals and the EU studies we teach in classrooms. It that sense, this exercise is also a call for reflexivity about the implications of reproducing conventional (hi)stories about the field. More empirically founded sociologies and historiographies of the field can contribute to enhancing awareness about these important issues.

Notes

This was done by searching the article for keywords related to the EU most notably 'European Union' and 'EU' and in cases where an article did not refer to these terms we read it cursorily to determine whether it nonetheless did focus on the EU.

[2]The reason for taking a sample instead of all articles was due to computational constraints.

[3] Agresti, A., and B. Finlay (2013). 'Statistical Methods For the Social Sciences.' Dellen, San Francisco, CA. Box-Steffensmeier, J. M., Brady, H. E., and Collier, D. (eds.). (2008). The Oxford Handbook Of Political Methodology. Oxford Handbooks Online. Wooldridge, J. (2006): Introductory Econometrics: A Modern Approach, Mason, OH: Thomson. http://www.statistics.com/resources/glossary/ [retrieved on 1 May 2014]

[4] We are grateful to one of the reviewers for making this point.

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