

National Interest and the Universal Good in Hegelian Political Philosophy in Finland

Juha Sihvola

Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies

Is it always permissible for a state's foreign policy to be exclusively determined by the national interest, so that we do not have any moral obligations in the sphere of foreign policies that could overdrive our obligations to our compatriots? Answers to this question define a basic division in the discussion concerning the philosophy of international relations. Those who answer yes are often called political realists, whereas it is more difficult to find a general term for those who say no; among them we find a wide variety of cosmopolitans, universalists, and moralists.

Allen Buchanan and Martha Nussbaum are among a group of philosophers who have criticized interest-based argumentation in international relations. Buchanan has argued against the so-called permissible exclusivity thesis, which states that all cosmopolitan principles, including human rights, should be subordinated to the national interest in foreign policy decisions.¹ He does not see any good reasons for subscribing to the Hobbesian view that no moral obligations apply to foreign policies. The Hobbesians have argued that it is not possible to uphold morality in situations in which the survival of the nation is at stake, as it is always the case in foreign policies by definition. In Buchanan's view, however, it is simply not true in the globalized world that states and nations are in a state of anarchic life-or-death struggle with each other. He also rejects instrumental justifications for the exclusive priority of the national interest. There is no invisible hand that would direct the pursuit of various national interests for the good of all humanity, and it is not the case that moral considerations in foreign policies should necessarily lead to pretentious moral imperialism.² Nussbaum's criticism goes even deeper.³ She

1 Buchanan 2005. Cf. Buchanan 2004.

2 Cf. Morgenthau 1985.

3 Nussbaum 2006, 224–324.

has argued that the so-called contractarian tradition as a whole is an insufficient basis for a theory of international justice. Our obligations to the world's poor cannot be explained with a reference to mutual advantages and interests, since we live in a world in which it is simply not true that cooperating with others on fair terms will be advantageous to all. Buchanan and Nussbaum agree that the national interest is not a sufficient basis for global ethics or international justice or even decent foreign policies. There are definitely cases when a sacrifice of one's own interests is required from the rich and the strong.

Not only philosophers but also politicians often bring forward moral considerations in their reflections on foreign policies. Moral overtones are especially conspicuous in American discussions concerning international relations. The role of the United States is often seen as the main defender of freedom, democracy and human rights on a global scale. However, I am not planning to assess the validity of the American claims. On the contrary, I am interested in the question of why the political language in foreign policy issues in Finland is so different.

It is remarkable how the notion of national interest still plays an important role in the Finnish political discourse. Even if we look at some recent speeches by the former Foreign Minister Erkki Tuomioja, the former President Martti Ahtisaari, and even President Tarja Halonen, who all have a long history of involvement with human rights issues and development projects, we can see that even they have a tendency to justify their cosmopolitan agendas by arguing for its convergence with the national interest. The notion of necessary sacrifice does not seem to have any role in the Finnish foreign policy discourse.

In order to throw some light on this difference, I shall explore the Hegelian philosophical tradition that has influenced Finnish political thought on international relations and foreign policies in important ways. I shall focus on the political thought of the philosopher Johan Vilhelm Snellman and argue that his influence may to some extent explain the dominance of national interest language in political rhetoric.⁴ However, I shall show that Snellman's thought diverges in interesting ways from mainstream Hegelianism in its interpretation of the national interest. In particular, Snellman developed an interesting argument about the convergence of national and cosmopolitan interests.

4 I do not pay particular attention to Snellman's (1806–1881) biography. However, he studied Hegelian philosophy in Finland, Sweden and Germany, but for a long time, he had difficulties in attaining an academic appointment for political reasons. During the more liberal reign of Alexander II, he became both a professor in philosophy and an influential statesman who prominently participated in the Finnish nationalist movement. It is unfortunate that there is very little scholarly literature on Snellman available in English. On the background of Snellman's thought, see, e.g., Manninen 1996. There are comprehensive biographies of Snellman which are only in Finnish and the most recent is Savolainen 2006.

Even if Snellman's philosophical influence was rather limited after the popularity of Hegelianism gradually withered away, his political writings were much read and appreciated for a long time. The two most influential presidents after the Second World War, Juho Kusti Paasikivi and Urho Kekkonen often claimed to be followers of Snellman in their views, especially concerning international relations. Snellman's heritage was open to various interpretations, and there has been no lack of such interpreters in foreign policy discussions in the 20th century Finland. The varieties of Snellman's followers extend from Machiavellian hard-liners to left-wing pacifists. Snellman's own writings provided materials for developing his ideas to both directions.

Hegelian Political Philosophy and International Relations

Hegel's political philosophy, as presented in his book *Philosophy of Right*, centers on the idea that the state has an ethical goal which can be understood as the common good.⁵ One has to recognize the ethical goal of the state and commit oneself to its realization in order to be able to participate to the activities of the state as a citizen. When participating politics, the citizens have to set aside their subjective and private projects and cooperate with other citizens in order to recognize and realize the common good. The idea of commitment to the common good as a characteristic of political activity was to a large extent borrowed from Rousseau and his theory of the General Will, but Hegel definitely rejected the contractarian framework applied by Rousseau and Kant. In Hegel's view, the common good cannot be conceived as being based on a contract – either historical or imagined – by individual citizens. Neither can it be understood in terms of the individual citizens' good or well-being. The goal of the state is something that emerges as a result of historical development and transcends all individual goals. The pursuit of this goal is expressed in the ethical or virtuous life of a citizen, to which Hegel refers to as the term *Sittlichkeit*. Individuals do not choose their state in either practice or theory; they are born into it. Hegel's theory furthermore requires that citizens often have to sacrifice their individual interests, even their lives, in the pursuit of *Sittlichkeit*; the duty for military defense, in particular, requires this.

Despite the idea that the state is a result of historical development, Hegel's political thought is not particularly nationalistic. In this respect, it considerably differs from the mainstream of German romanticism. The citizen participates to the state as a human being, not as a German or an Italian, or a Roman Catholic or a Jew (*Philosophie des Rechts (PR)* § 209). Citizenship is above all the moral realization of humanity. Also, unlike many representatives of the Romantic Movement, Hegel

⁵ Hegel 1983. Of the wide variety of studies on Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* and his political thought in general, see especially Westphal 1993; Taylor 1979; Tunick 1992.

was not a cultural relativist. When the Romanticists denied the assessment of national cultures from any external viewpoint, Hegel held that the world history provided the criteria of such assessment. The world history essentially consists of the gradual emergence of freedom, and individual states, societies and cultures can be evaluated with respect to their roles in this historical development. It is the philosophy of history that brings in a universalist perspective to Hegel's thought.⁶

Although Hegel is in a sharp opposition to the contractarian tradition of Hobbes, Rousseau and Kant, his views on international relations come surprisingly close to some contractarian views, and what is perhaps even more surprising, especially Hobbes. This can be seen e.g., in *The Philosophy of Right*, in which Hegel states:

The fundamental proposition of international law ... is that treaties, as the ground of obligations between states, ought to be kept. But since the sovereignty of a state is the principle of its relations to others, states are to that extent in a state of nature in relation to each other. Their rights are actualised only in their particular wills and not in a universal will with constitutional powers over them. This universal proviso of international law therefore does not go beyond an ought-to-be, and what really happens is that international relations in accordance with treaty alternate with the severance of these relations. (PR § 333)

It is remarkable that Hegel even used the contractarian notion of the state of nature here. And it is the Hobbesian, not the Lockean, Pufendorfian, or Grotian, state of nature that he means.⁷ The state of nature is a condition in which there are no binding moral norms. This is clear from the passage quoted, as well as from the following passages in the *Philosophy of Right* (PR § 334–340) in which Hegel heavily criticizes Kant's treatise *On the Eternal Peace* and argues that the activities of a concrete state cannot be regulated by abstract moral principles. However, Hegel does not completely deny the existence of international law. He argues (PR § 338–339) that the states recognize each other as states even in war, when rights disappear and force and chance hold sway, and regard war as something that is assumed to pass away and result in peace. In order to maintain the possibility of a future peace, the states have to uphold at least some norms regarding such issues as taking prisoners, respecting the envoys, and protecting the civilians. Hegel also points out that the extent to which these norms are respected depends on the customs of nations. In the absence of international authorities and sanctions, there are, however, no definite restrictions to the activities of sovereign states.

6 On Hegel's philosophy of history see, e.g. Beiser 1993.

7 On the contractarian tradition and its varieties see, Boucher and Kelly 1994.

Depending on the circumstances, treaties and obligations between the states are either followed or rejected.⁸

Hegel comes close to Hobbes in his view that international relations always involve a potential conflict and there cannot be any binding moral norms to regulate it. He often uses military and even bloody metaphors to describe the nature of international relations. In the introduction to his *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, he famously describes world history as a “slaughter-bench at which the happiness of peoples, the wisdom of states, and the virtue of individuals have been victimized” (*PR* § 24). Unlike Hobbes, Hegel did not merely interpret historical development as a war of all against all, but also held that dialectical struggles between ideas, humans, and nations created a kind of ethical structure into history. The ethical goals of history are, however, not realized through intentional human action, but through “the cunning of reason”, *die List der Vernunft*. In this respect Hegel’s line of thought is not so much based on Hobbes as a creative application of Adam Smith’s idea of the invisible hand.⁹

Snellman was a relatively faithful follower of Hegel, but not in a slavish manner. There are also interesting differences between the two philosophers.¹⁰ An important area in which Snellman diverges from his teacher is the theory of civil society. Hegel made distinctions between three aspects of society with different regulating principles: the family, the civil or bourgeois society (*die bürgerliche Gesellschaft*), and the state. The family and the state are spheres of altruism, particular and general, respectively, whereas the bourgeois society, the most important aspect of which was economy, was regulated by generalized egoism. The emergence of a space for expressions of subjectivity and individual interests was in Hegel’s view an essential characteristic of modern society; and it was just in this respect in which he held that the modern societies allowed more space for freedom than the ancient city-states in which the citizens’ life was exhaustively politicized.

Hegel also thought, following Adam Smith, that the expressions of subjective interests in a market economy with free competition and no privileges could produce good results for the society as a whole. In this respect Hegel came close to economic liberalism. Snellman, however, did not accept Hegel’s theory of bourgeois society, since he regarded selfishness and egoism in all their forms as reprehensible. In his view, the citizens should take the common good into account, even when they act in the civil society or in the economic life. The rejection of the sharp distinction between

8 See also Hicks 1999.

9 See e.g., Davis 1989, 50–66.

10 The differences between Hegel and Snellman were highlighted in an interesting way by the Finnish political scientist Jussi Teljo in his studies in the 1930s. See e.g., Teljo 1934. Cf. Manninen 1996.

moral and selfish activity implied a thorough revision in the Hegelian view of the relation between the state and the civil society. If Snellman was willing to cut down all selfishness in the civil society, we can tentatively ask whether analogous revisions to the standard Hegelianism can be found in his views on international relations and foreign policies. We shall be able to see that this indeed turns out to be the case.

In the following I shall first discuss the most important philosophical writings of Snellman on international relations and then draw some conclusions from them. These writings consist of two temporally and substantially distinct groups. On the one hand, we have the last three chapters of his main treatise on political theory, originally published in Sweden with the title *The Study of the State (Läran om staten)* in 1842.¹¹ On the other hand, we have an unpublished manuscript on nationalism, originally intended to be offered to the German philosophical journal *Der Gedanke*, and lecture notes from the beginning of 1860s.¹² There are others, more politically and practically oriented texts, above all, the polemical article “War or Peace for Finland” published in 1863 at the time of the Polish rebellion in the Finnish newspaper *Litteraturbladet*, and extensively quoted by later commentators. I shall only marginally discuss this group of writings.¹³

Snellman and *The Study of the State*

International relations are only discussed at the end of *The Study of the State*, in the chapters on sovereignty (LS 65.), international law and the relation between ethics and politics (LS 66.), and necessity in world history and the freedom of knowledge (LS 67.). In chapter 65, Snellman argues that sovereignty is an essential feature of being a state. Sovereignty requires, on the one hand, that a nation becomes conscious of being independent and capable of expressing independence through its legislation of laws concerning right and wrong for itself. On the other hand, it requires that this independence is recognized by other nations. Because independence expresses itself in the right of the nation to make decisions on what is right and wrong for itself without external intervention, the nation, in Snellman’s view, also has to have the right to make decisions on war and peace, if it aims to be independent.

Snellman denies that he admires war by saying that “it is really unfortunate if millions of lives are sacrificed ... for trivial reasons”, but he also takes distance from those, apparently the Kantians, who hope for an eternal peace (LS 65). He predicts

11 Snellman 1993, 297–448.

12 Snellman 1997.

13 Snellman 1998b, 141–150.

that there will always be wars between states but the causes for future wars will be more often based on trade interests, national honor and ideologies, rather than hereditary issues and a mere thirst for power. Snellman argues for a view that there will remain a perpetual threat of war in the following approach. Wars are always fundamentally related to the independence, power and political influence of the nations. The essence of a nation involves an aim “to raise itself above other nations to lead the development of humanity in the world history” (LS 65), but this is an aim that is in conflict with the aims of all the other nations since they cannot voluntarily submit themselves to be led in this way. War does not follow from all instances of nationalist ambition, and it is not necessary that the world is governed by mere violence. On the contrary, Snellman says, “the power of the nations is not in the amount of men fit for war, but in the patriotism, customs, culture, and nationalist spirit of their members” (LS 65). The nationalist spirit has a twofold effect: on the one hand, it civilizes the nation by creating its morality, but, on the other hand, it also creates international competition, conflict, and even war. War can often be prevented, but peace at all costs is not even desirable, since the strengthening of the national ambition also needs war every now and then. Snellman expresses his contempt of slack and hedonist nations, and for some reason, mentions the Swiss as an example of these vices.¹⁴

The analysis of the potential of conflict between the various nationalist spirits at the international level leads to a discussion concerning the views of the classical theorist of international law, Hugo Grotius (LS 66). Snellman finds attractive features in Grotius’ theory of *ius gentium* but also argues that it implies conclusions that are not far from Machiavelli. In Snellman’s view, Grotius was right to raise what he calls the ordinary aspects of the relations between nations above the prescriptions of natural law. This is a reference to the distinction Grotius made between the international law concerning the relations between the states (*ius gentium*) and the natural moral law concerning the relations between individual human beings (*ius naturale*). Snellman finds this distinction acceptable, but regards the Grotian criteria for a justified war as prudential. If any war that protects the nation’s independence is justified, it is very difficult to draw the line between moral and immoral wars, especially in the absence of an international court to settle the disputes.

In fact, one might, according to Snellman, argue that even offensive wars become justified in this way, since they enhance the nationalist spirit and thereby the capacity to protect independence. Snellman admits that the ordinary citizens more easily regard defensive wars as morally acceptable, since their necessity for securing peace and protecting independence is more obvious. He argues, however, that ordinary citizens are all too ready to accept imminent peace at all

¹⁴ His contempt for the Swiss may be due to his conflict with the Swiss jurist J. K. Blutschli. On this see, below.

costs, although this may weaken both the nationalist spirit and independence in the long run. Wars of aggression cannot be forbidden with a reference to the Grotian principles. The same goes with the obligation to keep promises: if the states and their rulers had kept all their promises, eternal peace would have been achieved a long time ago, Snellman remarks with a considerable irony. The conclusion of all this is that the issues of war and peace are indeed regulated by principles other than the natural moral law, but not by the international law in the sense conceived by Grotius, but by prudential considerations that follow from Grotius' own starting points, even though he did not notice this himself.

Snellman does not dismiss international law as merely a fake. He appreciates the fact that the public opinion has led to some relief in the miseries of war. Prescriptions of international law concerning envoys, prisoners of war, and civilians are often respected because of the public opinion, but the underlying considerations are prudential rather than moral. Snellman even remarks that the principle of respecting the contracts one has made is sometimes undesirable because it would consecrate violence in cases in which a weak ruler has been forced to make contracts that deny the nation's independence for ever. It is the nationalist spirit that Snellman sees as the governing principle in international relations, and if moral considerations conflict with it, the nationalist spirit should be prioritized: "If an individual sets his love for humanity, his notion of justice, above what he knows to be best for the state, he betrays his country. If he does this, because he does not know the real interests of the country, he is unworthy to serve the state. All this might sound harsh, but it has to be so" (LS 66).

In the last chapter of *The Study of the State* (LS 67), Snellman emphasizes that it is not national power or honor that is the highest law in the world history, but the highest form of the nationalist spirit, Hegelian ethical life or *Sittlichkeit*. When the nations compete with each other to reach the leading position and use all means that promote this aim, they do not do this for the sake of mere competition, but for the sake of developing the capacities needed for an ethical life in themselves. This is just what Hegelian *Sittlichkeit* means: an ethical life in which activities promoting and constituting the common good of the state are chosen for the sake of themselves as expressions of the highest human freedom, not for the sake of compliments and rewards.

Snellman makes it very clear that the environment of the ethical life is an individual nation and an individual state, not the world as a whole. The interest of the nation or the state is not whatever its rulers or citizens happen to desire or decide upon, but there are high ethical criteria involved. Snellman strictly follows Hegelian anti-relativism here, although he also points out that ethical life has to find particular and original expressions in each nation. He also repeats his view that the development of ethical life requires competition between nations in both war and

peace. This competition, even if it involves war, is fundamentally good for the whole of humanity. The positive effects of war are argued for as follows: “War saves nations from the uniformity of customs and culture that follows from the continuous supremacy of a single nation and leads to a stagnation in the development of the civilization. The national spirit would burn out in the dominating nation and wither away in the oppressed nations.” (LS 67) Imperialism necessarily leads to moral decay as in the example of Rome makes it clear, and, therefore, it is a bigger threat to civilization than war and conflict.

Mr. Paasikivi, who was the president of Finland during the difficult years after the Second World War and an admirer of Snellman, once said in a private discussion that the last three chapters of *The Study of the State* should have been torn out of all the copies of the book and ripped into small pieces.¹⁵ The elderly president thought that the Machiavellian lines of thought were quite unsuitable to small nations, which, according to him, should rather struggle to enhance general trust in international treaties.

Paasikivi was to some extent right about Snellman’s Machiavellianism in *The Study of the State*, but not quite. The national interest in the form of the nationalist spirit was the ultimate regulating principle in international relations, but its role was described in a Hegelian context. The Hegelian *Sittlichkeit* provided the criteria to assess the development of the nationalist spirit, but particularly cultural features were also essential in this development, and nationalist tones were much stronger in Snellman than in Hegel.

Moreover, the various nationalist spirits were assumed to be in perpetual conflict with each other, and the ethical principles of *Sittlichkeit* that regulated relations between individuals within a nation could not at least directly concern relations between the nations. The development of international law under the pressure of public opinion could to some extent mitigate conflicts, but it was always subordinated to the national interest. Competition and conflicts between nations even contributed to the good of the humanity as a whole, since they prevented imperialism.

The good of the humanity was thus described in Snellman’s study in the standard Hegelian terms: it could not be promoted directly, but only as an unintentional byproduct of the development of the diverse nationalist spirits. At this stage of his career, Snellman presents more or less a mainstream Hegelian version of the idea of the invisible hand. In his criticism of imperialism, Snellman even anticipates an interesting variant of political realism, represented by Hans Morgenthau, who claimed that political realism based on the national interest is a preferable alternative to

15 Immonen 2003, 315, cites the diary of history professor Arvi Korhonen on this. Cf. Paasikivi 1957, 71.

universalistic moral claims that are often mere pretensions of cultural imperialism.¹⁶ It is, however, clear that there is little divergence in *The Study of the State* from orthodox Hegelianism to a more ethicized conception of international relations.

Manuscripts and Lecture Notes From the 1860s

During the two decades from 1842 to 1862, Snellman's thought on international relations underwent important changes. In his manuscript on nationality and nationalism from 1862, he emphasizes a close relation between the nation and the state.¹⁷ He argues that each nation should be able to form a state and each state should ideally consist of a single nation. Taking distance from what he calls German humanism, Snellman claims that it is above all each nation rather than each state that has an important function in the service of the whole of humanity. The nationalist developments in Europe in the middle 19th century were obviously the context in which Snellman's writing in the 1860s should be understood.

In an interesting remark, Snellman now argues that nations have two types of obligations and rights: those executed in the existence towards themselves and those executed in the existence towards the humanity as a whole. He also claims that even when nations exist for themselves, they should execute this right by developing the culture of humanity in themselves and thereby make themselves links in the chain of human development. By distinguishing the category of existence towards the humanity as a whole, Snellman seems to imply that it is concerned with something other than making ethical development towards *Sittlichkeit* in the national context. This notion can be understood as opening up a more cosmopolitan and universalistic dimension in Snellman's thought: when existing towards the humanity as a whole the nation cannot merely justify its activities with a reference to its nationalist spirit and national interest. Here we have a clear divergence from the views presented in *The Study of the State*. Unfortunately, Snellman does not clarify the distinction between the nation's two modes of existence nor develops it further.

There are other differences, too. There is a lengthy discussion on international law in Snellman's manuscript and he is very critical of its recent developments. In his view, international law, being least of all the disciplines falling under practical philosophy, deserves to be called *Wissenschaft*. In particular, Emeric de Vattel and his legal positivism are targets of Snellman's criticism. De Vattel's theory, which bases the principles of international law to the rights of existing states and their contracts, fails to appreciate the rights of nations in any significant sense. Legal

¹⁶ See especially Morgenthau 1985.

¹⁷ Snellman 1997.

positivism cannot explain the emerging law of nations and the development that had resulted in the abolition of slavery and serfdom from Europe and the acceptance of the principle according to which nations had to be given at least some rights and power to take care of their own affairs.

Again, Snellman also points out that the development of the public opinion had had a civilizing effect to restricting the action of the states in their international relations, since it acts as a power that makes the principles of international law effective. This time, unlike in *The Study of the State*, however, he does not subordinate these restrictions to the national interest and the nationalist spirit or refer to the exceptions that are made in the application of international law for the sake of the national interest. He does not explicitly subordinate international law to the national interest, or the other way around; in fact the potential issue conflict between the two is not raised at all.

Snellman emphasizes in one passage that sovereignty gives the state a right to legislate on its own laws without external intervention. He also insists the state does not have such sovereignty in its relations to other states, but its activities are restricted by the law of nations. The law of nations, unlike de Vattel's version of positivist international law, even restricts internal sovereignty in an indirect way, since it requires the recognition of the rights of all nations to live without repression, or at least of those nations who have achieved a sufficiently civilized way of life. There is some ambiguity on Snellman's view concerning internal sovereignty. The philosopher, having first denied the right to external intervention, briefly entertains the possibility that in some extreme cases a state may intervene in the affairs of another state to secure a decent life for a repressed nation. Snellman's considerations are indirectly related to Finland's position in the Russian empire, but his conclusions are far from clear and do not include any explicit political suggestions.

Snellman again speaks of the nationalist spirit and measures its strength by its contribution to the general culture of humanity, as he had also done in *The Study of the State*. Now there are no traces of the central Hegelian idea that Snellman had entertained in the earlier treatise according to which the nationalist spirit expresses itself in the nation's competitive attitude towards other nations and thereby makes wars and conflicts inevitable. On the contrary, there is a strong emphasis on international cooperation and dependence between the states: "Today's nations feel solidarity to each other in more than one sense and understand the principle: today for you, tomorrow for me." Or: "Even the most powerful states are subordinated to this forced dependence. It can express itself in different forms in politics: in the form of free movement, trade as well as business and financial advantages, in the form of a need to have a constitution, promotion of laws and defensive and offensive coalitions, even in the form of benevolent neutrality between the rulers and the nations and the affirmation by public opinion. One cannot deny that

glorious history, important position in science, literature, and fine arts, even a wise constitution, good laws and a stable order in themselves create sympathy in other nations and thereby protect independence.”

These ideas of international cooperation and dependence get an even stronger expression in Snellman’s lecture notes from 1863.¹⁸ Now he speaks with sympathy about the human wish to work and even make sacrifices for the good of humanity. This wish, he says, is very common among young people. However, he also rejects what he calls the cosmopolitan interest: it is impossible to formulate, because nobody knows the will of humanity. There exists no such a thing as humanity as a totality. A genuinely global society capable to express its interests is not yet conceivable.

The criticism of the cosmopolitan interest has a parallel in the manuscript on nationality and nationalism, in which the utopian ideas concerning a federalist world-state presented by the Swiss jurist and political theorist J. K. Bluntschli are heavily criticized.¹⁹ In both contexts, Snellman speaks favorably of the plurality of nations, but in his lecture notes he outlines an idea of an ethical world-order through which the good of humanity can be realized.

However, again no reference to the Hegelian idea according to which the universal good of humanity can only be realized by the cunning of reason by the acts of individual nations pursuing their particular interests in competition. On the contrary, the nations are assumed to be dependent of each other and consciously seek cooperation and peaceful interaction with each other.

Snellman also assumes that in this process the national interest and the good of humanity converge. However, he rejects the idea of sacrifice: “The interests of humanity are included in the interests of all nations, which means that the interest of each nation requires that relations to other nations are taken into account. Among Christian nations this is conscious, and the international system is spinning its webs all over the world, so that the European peoples are dependent on what happens in America, India, China, Japan, and Australia.” We can see how the Hegelian metaphor of the “slaughter-bench” of history is replaced by a vision of a globalized network.

18 Snellman 1998a.

19 Johann Kaspar Bluntschli (1808–1881), a contemporary of Snellman, was a remarkable figure in Swiss and German politics. He is known for his opposition to both left-wing radicalism and reactionary Roman Catholicism. In his writings, he discussed the relation of the church and the state and issues related to international law. He also became one of the founders of the Institute of International Law at Ghent in 1873. See Meyer von Kronau on Bluntschli in *Allgemeine Deutsche Biografie*.

Conclusions

Snellman's unpublished writings were little known before they were edited, commented and published in the 1990s in a large, directly government-funded project. Therefore, it has not been commonly appreciated that Snellman more or less rejected the Hegelian philosophy of history in his views on international relations in favor of a view that was much more congenial to a moderate form of cosmopolitanism. The reason for this may be that he outlined a much gloomier view of the prospects of international cooperation in his most well-known paper on foreign policies "War or Peace for Finland?" from 1863, which was mentioned earlier.²⁰

In "War or Peace", Snellman warns his compatriots from wishfully thinking that the Polish rebellion would create an opportunity for Finland to secede from the Russian empire with a possible support from Russia's enemies and join again with Sweden. He even regarded expressions of solidarity with the Polish cause as dangerous. Snellman argues for his view with a reference to considerations about caution and risks, but also to a more general view according to which each nation should only trust itself and seek its own good: "Only in youthful fantasies nations promote the good of humanity by making sacrifices for the sake of each other. In reality each nation pursues its own interests, and so it really should." Snellman added in a very Hegelian tone that the success of these pursuits is dependent on their consistency with the interests of humanity. However, many later commentators interpreted Snellman's view in terms of Machiavellian or Hobbesian *Realpolitik*.

There may have been special political reasons for Snellman to have been silent about his ideas concerning international cooperation and interdependence of the states that he developed almost simultaneously in his more philosophical work. However, it is understandable that the Machiavellian reading of his doctrine become dominant, since it also received strong support from *The Study of the State*. It was also a view that many people in Finland found helpful in order to conceive of the geopolitical position of their country in between Russia or the Soviet Union and Germany, a position that caused many difficulties for Finnish foreign policies for most of the 20th century.

As mentioned above, there have been many Finnish politicians who have recently put forward ideas about the convergence of the national interest and the good of humanity through an international cooperation, most likely without knowing that Snellman had argued for this kind of view in his unpublished writings in the 1860s. It is good to remember the cosmopolitan argument according to which there

²⁰ Snellman 1998b.

is no automatic guarantee for this convergence of interests.²¹ If one is willing to genuinely care about the interests of humanity in general and the world's poor in particular, real sacrifices seem to be required, but this is not allowed in the Hegelian tradition. It is possible that the strong influence of Hegelianism, although sometimes interpreted in softer Snellmanian terms, to some extent explains why the support of solidarity and sacrifices on behalf of the world's poor is weaker in Finland than in the neighboring Scandinavian countries.

²¹ Buchanan 2005.

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