International Relations as a Field of Study

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The field "International Relations" (commonly abbreviated IR) focuses on a variety of subject matters. The many connotations which are usually associated with the term "relations" (one of the most underspecified terms in the field itself) and the aesthetic quality which accompanies relating the name of the field (IR) to a broad set of subject matters subsumed under the same term in minor letters, "international relations", help explain why both IR and "international relations" are still widely accepted. Of course, this is not to say that there is consensus. As a matter of fact, and unsurprisingly so, both the name of the field as well as any succinct description of its subject matter(s) have always been contested. Different observers have argued that the "international" ought to be replaced by "inter-state", "trans-national", or "global" – just to name a few. Others would like to see "relations" replaced by "studies" or "politics". A brief look at some of these alternative combinations – eg. "inter-state relations", "trans-national politics", or "global studies" – would give any reader a quick idea as far as different emphases is concerned even if he or she would not be familiar with the normative and theoretical underpinnings which inform these alternative descriptions of the field of study and its subject matter(s). For this very reason conceptual contestation is unsurprising: it is already an expression of the inevitable and recurring ascertainment of the borders of a field of study by the community of scholars belonging to it and claiming it as their own.

In the case of IR contestation extends well beyond the question how a rather loosely defined *field of study* – or: "fragmented 'nonfield'" (Rosenau 1993: 456) – is to be properly named. Especially in the Anglo-Saxon world IR is sometimes defined in terms of an academic *discipline* of its own, separate from political science, or as a multidisciplinary *field of study*. On a global scale, however, this is not normally the case. Here it is usually considered to be one of the major subfields (or "sub-disciplines") of political science. Even if the term "discipline" may sometimes be used interchangeably with "field of study" it is meant in the

sense of a more loosely defined field which keeps the outer borderlines both fairly fluid and permeable while at the same time emphasizing that its core is more clearly demarcated and in some ways also more stable. Of course, any such characterization of the field is in itself contestable. More specifically, two caveats need to be kept in mind with regard to any exercise in "mapping" a field of study. First, any such overview necessarily involves a particular "view from somewhere" (H. Putnam) shaped by specific individual and cultural formative experiences. Even if this view on IR is shaped by an environment which allows for pluralism with regard to normative commitments, theoretical orientations and methodological preferences it is inevitably limited by what IR-scholarship is actually accessible via particular languages and academic infrastructures. As will be discussed in more detail later on, the academic infrastructure of IR is lacking in crucial respects when measured against the ideal of a global discipline which is living up to the spread, reach and interconnections of its subject matter. Second, there is also an inevitable temporal dimension of contestation. Any overview of IR as a field of study necessarily resembles a snapshot of the field at a particular point in time. Although one might be tempted to conceive the concept of an "encyclopedia" as the 18th century *encyclopédistes* did – essentially assuming a fairly solid body of settled "knowledge" which can and ought to be "disseminated around the globe" (Diderot 2005[1755: 635]) – this notion of knowledge quickly shatters in the virtual reality of the 21st century. Hence any overview of the field will, almost inevitably, be the view of how the discipline used to operate in the past. This notion of IR as an evolving and historically situated field becomes strikingly clear when one compares similar overviews of the field in approximately ten-year intervals from the early 1920s onwards. Not only do descriptions of the subject matters change. Rather, change is ubiquitous with regard to the borderlines drawn to other (sub-) fields and the names used to denote and demarcate the field's most prominent theories. Therefore, this overview ought to be seen as a "disciplining" exercise in the dual sense of the word. It is supposed to provide a perspective on the structure of the discipline and familiarize the reader with some of the prominent conventions, theories and practices of the field of IR as they are currently viewed in the field in terms of a history of the present. At the same time it ought to be kept in mind that the very concept of scholarship points at moving beyond these conventions, theories and practices. By de-emphasizing disciplinary stability in favour of an evolutionary perspective this way of proceeding does not deny that a structural view of the discipline may be useful. As a matter of fact, it is – and we will apply such a structural perspective in the first section of this overview. However, looking at the discipline in a birds' eye perspective necessarily emphasizes the "big picture" and will thus almost inevitably appear fairly static.

The second, shorter section will therefore apply a more historical and dynamic perspective depicting the field as an expanding one along many frontiers simultaneously.

The Structure of Global IR

What a field is made up of in terms of intellectual substance – ie. its conceptualisation of the subject matter, its theories, and its understandings of appropriate procedures in producing knowledge – is not dictated by the subject matter itself. Rather it results from the interplay of specific social structures (such as institutional arrangements along disciplinary lines within universities or structures of communication in the form of journals etc.) and intellectual structures (ie. what counts as knowledge and how different bodies of knowledge connect in order to make up a discipline). Both are obviously closely interconnected. As far as the social structure of IR is concerned Ole Wæver has convincingly argued that it is best viewed as "a mix of a US/global system and national/regional ones with varying degrees of independence" (Wæver 2007: 296). Thus two elements are characteristic of IR in terms of its global structure. First, IR made in the US is dominant as *North-American* IR *and* as *global* IR. Second, other IR communities show a great variety in terms of size and intellectual traditions. However what is most noticeable from a global perspective is the extent to which they relate to IR in the US. This is another way of saying that Stanley Hoffmann´s (1977) famous line about IR being "an American social science" reverberates until today. Yet, although the dominance of American IR remains clearly visible, a broad-brush global perspective on disciplinary developments would stress the distinction between the "West" and the "non-West" rather than America versus the rest. As a matter of fact as it will be argue in more detail in the second section one of the distinguishing marks of the current developmental stage of IR in a global and evolutionary perspective may well be its *post-western* and its *post-westphalian* character. However, in a bird's eye perspective at the structures and stati(sti)cs of the present the "West" seems very well entrenched.

Size and Power

Admittedly, the IR community in the US still plays in a league of its own. Just in terms of sheer size it easily outdistances any other country by multiples. A recent survey (Jordan et.al. 2009) counted more than 4.100 IR scholars in the US with an active affiliation with a university, college, or professional school. (As of early 2009 the American Political Science

Association listed close to 4.700 members which had identified IR as their "general field".) Although similarly detailed figures are not available for many countries a very rough estimate based on a variety of sources would probably put the US share of IR scholars around the world at approximately 25 to 30 percent. Another 15 to 25 percent could probably be added for Canada, Europe, Israel and Australasia putting this "Western" share of global IR production capacity at 40 to 55 percent overall.

Although the size of academic communities is an important structural feature, in and of itself it says little about the global structure of IR in terms of institutional, structural and productive power (Barnett/Duvall 2005: 43). Yet even if one adds such a perspective it is fairly clear that the US occupies the most influential position at the center with European IR communities plus Israel and Australasia forming an appendix to the core which tries to (and has partly succeeded in) establishing a somewhat more independent profile (Friedrichs/Wæver 2009: 289-293). Three observations are noteworthy in this context. First, the institutional and structural power of US IR is reflected in how IR scholars in other parts relate to it. For IR scholars in Western Europe, Israel and South Asia and, to a lesser degree, in East Central Europe and some parts of Latin America gaining recognition in the US (ie. US-based IR journals in particular) continues to be a much crucial element for professional advancement than for IR scholars elsewhere. Since the editors of key journals are drawn largely from the IR community in the US, scholars aiming at these journals have to address the concerns of this community. Yet as many studies have shown, the theoretical debates in the US are largely driven by American foreign policy concerns, not broader global concerns. A recent survey by Tom Biersteker (2009) of the assigned or required readings for Ph.D. candidates concentrating in IR in the ten leading US departments of political science showed that on average 94 percent of the assigned readings were written by scholars who have spent most or all of their careers in the United States. As a result that segment of global IR scholarship which aims at the most prestigious journals in the field will inevitably face editors whose academic careers have been largely shaped by US concerns. Non-American Western IR scholars are more likely to be able to meet the expectations of these editors and to the extent that their work is actually being published it is therefore also more likely to speak to an agenda shared by Western societies and states. The same applies vice versa for the increasing number of US scholars being published in European peer-reviewed journals such as EJIR or JIRD (Friedrichs/Wæver 2009: 272). Although the differences between the US on the one hand and Europe and Australasia on the other are noteworthy (and have rightly been

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rehearsed many times) these differences fade against the many similarities if one contrasts IR research practices and priorities in the West as a whole with the non-West.

The second observation extends the emphasis on disciplinary autonomy within largely national borders from the US to the global level. Although the orientation on the US and its standards of IR scholarship in a fairly small (though influential) set of countries obviously reinforces American dominance it is by far not a universal phenomenon. As a matter of fact a global structure dominated by "Western" standards of science and thematic agendas coexists with significant degrees of local autonomy in IR communities around the world (Tickner/ Wæver 2009). For a field focusing on phenomena which by their very nature transcend national boundaries it is noteworthy how parochial (or: detached from a truly global discourse) *all* IR communities are around the world. This shows in an almost universal preoccupation with the foreign policy agendas of the respective countries. In the context of the US and intellectually linked IR communities such as Europe this concern is embedded in or dominated by an explicit theoretical framing of specific problems. In many other countries where the intellectual structure of the discipline is less dominated by the imperatives of theory production these foreign policy agendas often translate quite directly into research agendas. Therefore a certain "parochialism" seems to be an almost inevitable and universal characteristic of IR globally. In part this also due to the fact that the social structures of the academy have their own life and in many ways follow national patterns. Sometimes national IR communities may be clustered into regional groups with distinct characteristics such as an "Anglo-American" way of doing IR (Holden 2002) or a "Continental" one (Jørgensen 2000). However, national profiles often remain clearly visible. For instance, even a quick look at the social and intellectual structure of IR in Italy, France, Germany and the Netherlands immediately reveals remarkable differences as well as similarities on the relatively narrow space of the European continent (Friedrichs 2004). In a longer historical perspective, however, the patterns of academic institutionalization and professionalization of IR during the 20th century have also converged often following the American model of treating IR as a more or less integral part or "subdiscipline" of Political Science.

**IR as a Three-Tiered Discipline**

Third, it certainly matters whether one pursues (more or less "parochial") IR concerns in the US, in Britain, in Denmark, in China, in Thailand (Prasirtsuk 2009), in Nigeria (Ofuho 2009)

or in Brazil, just to name a few sites. Although this is not the place for a detailed analysis of the global social structure of IR (on this see Tickner/Wæver 2009) three layers of IR communities can be distinguished in terms of power, international connectedness and international visibility.

The Dominance of US-American IR

As mentioned before, the IR community in the US stands out in terms of size and power. IR scholars in the US can afford to treat the rest of the IR world with benign neglect since it is obviously irrelevant for professional advancement in the US whether or not an American scholar engages with or is knowledgeable about IR elsewhere. Second, to the extent that other IR communities relate to US discourses many largely emulate or implicitly follow the US model and the theories propagated there. If this is not taken as evidence that the American way of doing IR appears to be "right" US IR scholars may at least be forgiven for taking it as evidence of the institutional and productive power exercised by American IR – which thus reinforces the belief that the rest of the world does not really matter. Third, to the extent that IR communities in other countries are essentially decoupled from US (and thus globally dominant) discourses this is mostly due to the fact that local political concerns dominate research agendas and that "theory" (as defined in the US-dominated discourse) is largely irrelevant. Even an open-minded IR scholar from the US would probably find little incentive to care much about IR in such states. Against this background it is worth emphasizing that the *International Studies Association* (ISA) – the most important professional organization of IR/international studies around the globe which originated in the US and still largely comprises US scholars as members – has been quite supportive of efforts to build up professional structures of academic communication beyond the ISA. Yet despite these efforts ISA conventions – one of the premier sites of intellectual exchange about IR on the global stage – have largely remained intra-Western scholarly exchanges. Whereas a systematic analysis of attendance patterns at the ISA conventions 1997 (Toronto), Portland (2003) and New York (2009) based on the institutional origin of the respective scholars attending shows a noteworthy increase of EU-European scholars (16 percent in 1997; 15 percent in 2003 and 25 percent in 2009) relative to North-American scholars (US plus Canada: 76 percent in 1997; 74 percent in 2003 and 62 percent in 2009) there was essentially no change if one compared attendance along a "Western" versus "non-Western" distinction (see Graph 1).

Graph 1: Origin of Scholars Attending ISA Conferences
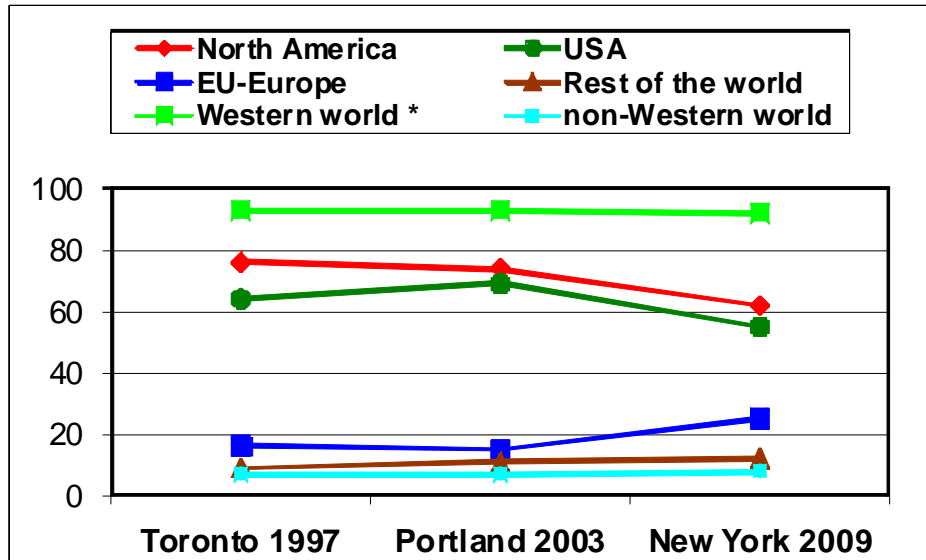
Source: Own Analysis. The analysis was based on the Convention programs as they were made available via the ISA website (http://www.isanet.org/conventions/2007/04/previous_isa_an.html). Scholars were grouped according to the state of their institutional affiliation, not their nationality.

* OECD member countries (including Israel, but excluding Japan and Turkey)

The Second Tier of Semi-Visible IR Communities

Compared to US insularity the situation is quite different if one looks at IR in a global perspective with regard to a second category of IR communities such as Britain, China, Denmark or Canada. As different as these IR communities are in terms of university systems, professional incentive structures and national traditions and as much as the American dominance may be resented in some quarters there, many of the influential IR scholars in these countries do (have to) relate to American IR in one way or another, if only by distancing themselves as to the way IR is done in the US. Therefore, what distinguishes these communities from the US on the one hand and a third category of peripheral IR communities on the other is a medium level of international visibility. International visibility (defined in terms of a certain amount of recognition by other scholars around the world) may result from very different sources such as, for instance, the natural advantage of communicating in the lingua franca (as in the case of British IR) and/or the recognition by significant others that the

work published in these communities matters, be it for purely academic reasons or due to other considerations.

1. Among the latter one can single out the phenomenon of national "schools" of IR which provides for a specific variant of this second type of IR communities with a medium level of international visibility. The so-called "English School", for instance, represents a conscious effort on the part of scholars in the United Kingdom to establish the idea of an international "society of states" as a distinct theoretical concept synthesizing elements which have been assigned in American IR to competing ("realist" and "liberal") schools of thought. In contrast to American IR English School scholarship exhibits a deep-seated skepticism vis-à-vis the "scientific" study of international relations and accordingly pays much more attention to historical processes (Linklater/Suganami 2006). These substantive differences notwithstanding, insiders have argued that the English School essentially marks "a delayed response to Britain´s loss of Empire and world status" (Little 2008: 685-686). In forming such a school, however, Britain´s IR community has not only tried to come to terms with the changed international role of the UK. It has also left a mark of distinction vis-à-vis the quasi-hegemonic US discourse thereby establishing widely recognized corporate IR-identity globally. Other IR communities in countries which are habitually ranked among the "great powers" (such as Russia (Sergounin 2009), Japan (Inoguchi 2009) and China (Qin 2007, Wang 2009)) are increasingly engaged in debates whether or not to establish national "schools" similar to the "English School" (Qin 2007; even South Korea contemplates such a strategic move, see Choi 2008). China is the most obvious and most noteworthy case both because of the size of the country and the "Eastern" tradition. Influential Chinese scholars nowadays openly advocate the establishment of a "Chinese School of IR Theory" as an "inevitable" step in the maturation of Chinese IR (Qin 2007: 329). Yet as in the case of the "English School" the emphasis on building such a distinct Chinese school on a set of core assumptions about the "material world" and the "speculative world" (327) distinct from dominant IR theories in the West in general and the US in particular only reinforces the picture of a global preeminence of a particular US-led type of theorizing centered around "realist" theory and its competitors as well as "rationalist" and "constructivist" approaches to doing IR from an epistemological and/or methodological point of view. It is against this background that scholars from "non-Western" IR communities feel at least uncomfortable if not offended if they are asked why they have not yet come up with some IR theory of their own. A special issue of the journal "International Relations of the Asia-Pacific" carried the

question "Why is there no non-Western IR theory" quite prominently in the title (Acharya/Buzan 2007a). To be sure, the whole thrust of the project was based on the intention to stimulate a debate about and the development of "non-Western" IR theory in Asia (see also Guzzini 2007). Yet the way the question was framed already carried a specific understanding as to what good IR is all about, ie. that it ought to put a premium on "theory"; that it is fairly obvious what distinguishes "theory" from "non-theory"; and that IR communities in states like China are not (yet) doing enough good "theory". Judging from recent trends, some segments in countries such as China appear willing to take up this challenge. In part this is due to a spreading realization among IR scholars that IR theories (broadly defined) do not only structure our view of the world in a very basic sense but that they are also tools for governing the world. In this analysis both the world and IR often appear as governed by the US. Empirical analyses by Chinese scholars show that this power of disciplinary socialization via Western, especially US theory discourses works even in a country like China with a large IR community and a very distinct and old tradition of its own. For instance, with the exception of one book all of the 86 IR books translated into Chinese by five leading publishers since 1990 were originally written in English and the overwhelming majority of these books had American IR scholars as authors (see the list in Qin 2007: 338-340). Thus, even if a "Chinese School of IR" drawing heavily on distinctly Chinese traditions emerges eventually it will have been mediated via theory as practiced in the English-speaking, mostly US-dominated Western world of IR.

2. A similar mixture of orientation towards American IR while tying IR scholarship back to local concerns and intellectual traditions is observable in a second variant of internationally more visible IR communities. Some IR communities in Western Europe and East-Central Europe and in Israel belong to this group. What unites them in terms of institutional, structural and productive power is that they can only draw in rather limited ways on the advantages which the British or the Chinese IR communities enjoy. While IR scholars in significant numbers in these communities publish in English, this is certainly not the case for all of them (as is the case in the UK). Also, in contrast to China none of these states are expected to play a crucial role politically in the years to come in order to pay special attention to their possibly unique ways of doing IR research. Moreover, in contrast to the UK or China most of these IR communities neither have the size nor the ambition to establish distinct "national schools" of IR. Still, in some countries substantive research programs such as the "Copenhagen School" in security studies have gained international recognition as distinct approaches well beyond

the regional context. In the case of the Copenhagen School´s "securitization" research program distinction was achieved with a more focused approach (both in terms of theoretical scope and substantive ground covered as far as the subject matter is concerned) compared to what is usually subsumed under the much broader label of a "paradigm" in the US context. Debates in such communities are similar to the US in putting a premium on theoretical work. However, even though theory debates in the US are at least taken note of in most of these, they are not (or: no longer) simply replicated. Rather, an increasing amount of IR in Europe, Australia, New Zealand or Canada is by now often inspired by philosophical and/or social science traditions and research practices distinct from those present in IR debates in the US. Here they are increasingly dominated by rational choice and formal modeling (Wæver 1998: 701-703, 727; Sigelman 2006: 469-470). Since this is not easily exportable dominant US theory preferences entail a "de-Americanization of IR elsewhere" (Wæver 1998: 726). Another way to put this is to point to an ever-present, often largely ignored and now rediscovered cultural specificity (such as in French IR, Giesen 1995); an intra-Anglo-Saxon divide between "post-Imperial 'crimson' locales" on the one hand (made up essentially of Britain, Canada, Ireland, Australia and New Zealand), and the U.S. on the other (Cox/Nossal 2009); more generally a new-found "autonomy" in Europe (Friedrichs/Wæver 2009: 274-275) of a specific "Continental" brand of Western IR (Jørgensen 2000) or at least claim an "intra-familial emancipation" (such as in Germany, Deitelhoff/Wolf 2009). To the extent that this type of work gains international recognition this is seldom due to the size of the respective IR community, the respective country's global political significance or other such factors pointed to by science studies. Rather genuine intellectual appeal and/or resonance appears to be more closely associated with quantitative as well as qualitative output resulting from comparative advantages in terms of sheer resources available and devoted to the task (as in the field of EUropean studies) and the fact that some of the original theory products travel fairly easily to other regions (as in the case of "securitization" theory). Moreover, in the European context in particular international visibility of EUropean studies and distinct approaches such as the "Copenhagen School" has been enhanced by the establishment of several new journals (many of which publish in English). Some of these, such as the *European Journal of International Relations*, have quickly established themselves among the leading journals in the field globally. These successes and differences between the US and other Western IR communities notwithstanding, it needs to be emphasized that the non-US West offers a broad variety of intellectual profiles, not all of which are as much interested in connecting via English language publications internationally as are, for instance, IR scholars in the English-speaking

world, Scandinavia, the Netherlands or Germany. As a matter of fact sizable communities such as the French with original theoretical work are quite detached from the rest of the West and have fairly little impact globally. Thus, geographical location is not necessarily a good indicator as to whether an IR community may achieve international visibility.

In any case, from a power perspective few non-Western IR communities can be counted to the semi-periphery of the second tier. Even Japan with its sizable IR community and conscious institutional efforts at increasing its visibility globally – recently by establishing the peer-reviewed English language journal *International Relations in the Asia Pacific* – is neither having much of an impact globally nor has it succeeded in establishing a distinct Japanese IR profile (Inoguchi 2007, 2009). China currently seems to be the only serious candidate for such a rise to the semi-periphery – or to put it less pejoratively: only China appears able in the medium-term to long-term to engage in competition with the West for productive power in actually "constructing the world" in a language and in theories which are distinctly Chinese (Wang 2009). Yet even sympathetic observers remain somewhat skeptical whether a distinct and globally visible Chinese School of IR might indeed be established (Qin 2007; Acharya/Buzan 2007b: 430).

The Third Tier: Sizable and (Self-)Marginalized

The third group of IR communities is both the largest (in terms of the number of national IR communities belonging to it) and the most isolated and marginalized (in terms of international visibility and power). As a matter of fact one of the expressions of its marginalization is that much less "is known" about these IR communities compared to the two other groups. In part this is due to the fact that scholars from the other two groups who are usually instrumental in producing such international "visibility" due to disciplinary power structures normally pay little attention to the research conducted there. Indeed one could easily turn the complaint (sometimes heard in the non-US West) that American IR treats research originating in Europe, Canada or Australasia with arrogant indifference, against the plaintiffs themselves since the very same pattern of ignorance can be observed in their relationship to most IR communities in Asia, Africa and Latin America (many of which have, of course, suffered through European colonization). In part, however, marginalization also results from self-conscious separation or self-reliance in Asia, Africa and Latin America or from simply refraining from engaging in "international relations" research. Some of the IR communities in

this third group (such as the Indian or Brazilian) are fairly sizable though not necessarily tightly organized professionally as their counterparts are in the US or Europe (Behera 2007, 2009; Tickner 2009). Many others are tiny with no professional organization whatsoever. In quite a few third-tier countries IR as an academic (sub-) discipline is not even present at universities or – to the extent that it actually is present – is largely characterized by a dominance of research questions which reflect the respective countries' foreign policy agenda. As a matter of fact there is often a very close connection between the foreign policy establishments and official state institutions in these countries on the one hand and IR departments on the other hand since the latter often exist primarily because they are expected to supply future diplomats for the respective foreign services (Tickner/Wæver 2009b). Unsurprisingly "theory"-oriented research as practiced and cherished in the West does not play much of a role here. Theory – conceived of in very general terms as a necessary precondition for reality-constituting observation – is of course ever present. Yet it transpires largely *implicitly* in empirical analyses. The prime research objective is seldom theorizing as such. Moreover, against the foil of Western theory discourses this implicit form of theory application carries more "realist" than "non-realist" themes. A similar observation can be made with regard to the role of methods. Where the role models of Western IR scholarship call for methodological reflection at a minimum (and often excel in offering highly sophisticated methods which are understood and applied by very small communities of scholars) the requirements for methodological rigor and meta-reflection in third-tier countries are much less stringent. Typically academic publications display a combination of some form of institutional and/or historical analysis without engaging in justificatory argument why a particular method or form of presentation has been chosen or rejected.

In a structural perspective there is fairly little intellectual exchange both among third-tier communities and between them and IR communities from the first and second tier. Moreover, some of the interaction that can be observed is stimulated by foundations located in the West which (often unintentionally) tends to reproduce existing uneven global structures of knowledge production. For instance, as the volume by Tickner and Wæver has shown the funding provided by Western foundations (such as Ford) in countries like India, East Central Europe, Latin America, or South Africa has often been very influential in developing local IR communities. One key reason was simply that state funding was limited. Yet since the type of research which was funded primarily addressed questions of more immediate local policy relevance the overall effect was to reinforce the global intellectual division of labor whereby

theory is "produced in the center and consumed and applied in and by the periphery" (Tickner/Wæver 2009 332). These effects are particularly surprising for countries which (like India) have both a comparatively old and large IR community and a philosophical tradition of their own. As a matter of fact, the Indian political philosopher Chanakya (ca. 350-283 BCE) who is usually know in the West by the name Kautilya and who is sometimes claimed among Western scholars as one of the founders of realism is apparently not even taught in any principal IR theory course in India itself (Behera 2007: 352). Similar patterns of forgetfulness and/or neglect of home-grown traditions can be observed in Japan (Inoguchi 2007) and recently also China. From a postcolonial point of view this devaluation of home-grown traditions is just one (often unreflected) expression of a "colonized" mind-set which stems from a discipline of international relations which is at its very core an "expression of the Western theory of progress" (Blaney/Inayatullah 2008: 672). This postcolonial message starts to resonate even among scholars from third-tier countries who have been socialized in Western IR thinking.
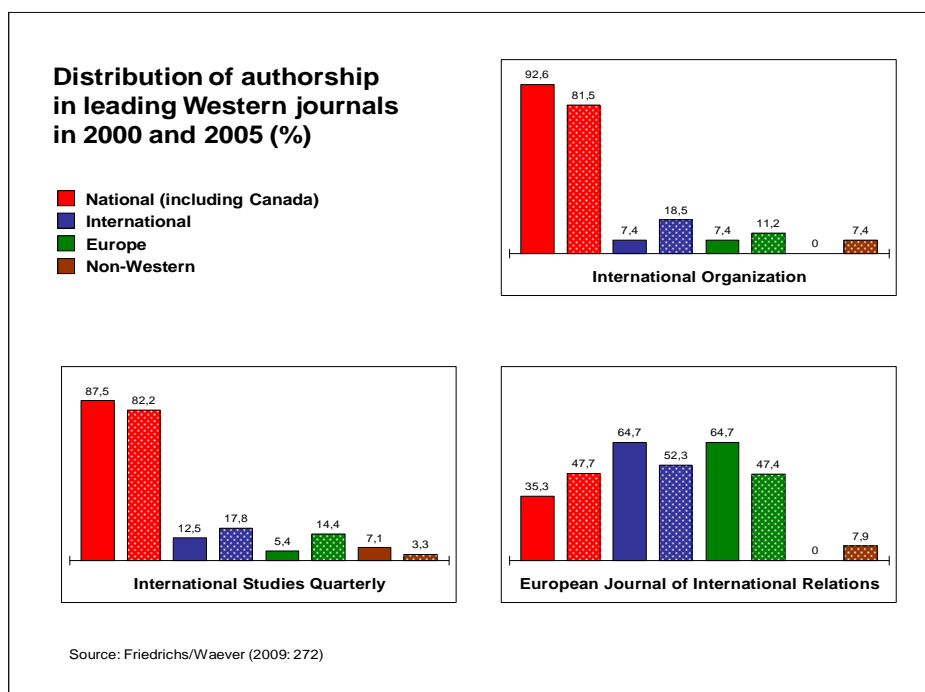
The Social Structure of the Discipline

The overall picture which emerges by looking at the social structure of IR in a global perspective is much more one of intellectual segmentation and stratification than one of intellectual integration which one might think the subject matter itself to be suggesting. This impression of a three-tiered system is reinforced if one examines another dimension of the social structure of the discipline, ie. its publication system in general and its hierarchy of journals in particular (Wæver 2007: 296-297). If access limitations (as measured in terms of journal acceptance rates) are accepted as a measure of reputation, clearly the most competitive journals of the discipline are published in the US and Europe. In the US and several European countries getting published in these top journals is of central importance in order to climb the academic career ladder. Most of the highest ranking journals are still published in the US and/or controlled by American IR scholars. As a matter of fact, a recent survey in the IR communities of ten English speaking countries found that at least four tiers can be distinguished when IR scholars from these countries are called upon to list those journals "that publish articles with the greatest influence on the way IR scholars think about international relations" (Jordan et.al. 2009: 49): "International Organization" plays in a league of its own mentioned by 73 percent of scholars questioned; a second group is made up of "International Security" (45) and "International Studies Quarterly" (44) followed by

"American Political Science Review", "World Politics" and "Foreign Affairs" mentioned by 28 percent each; the "European Journal of International Relations" (EJIR) and the "Review of International Studies" are the only non-American journals mentioned alongside the "Journal of Conflict Resolution" by a mere 14 percent (for EJIR in particular the ranking is much better if one follows the Social Science Citation Index). Thus interdependence structures are still quite asymmetrical within the West with US journals clearly outdistancing top European journals.

In other parts of the world (including some parts of the West) publishing in internationally recognized journals is not as central for recruitment practices and academic success (Tickner/Wæver 2009: 332). At the same time the "international" profile of non-Western IR journals is much more pronounced than in the West as a survey of selected non-Western journals shows in contrast to a similar survey conducted for the Western journals. For instance, more than 80 percent of the articles published in IO or ISQ in 2000 and 2005 have been published by authors located in the US or Canada (see Graph 2).

Graph 2: Authorship in Western IR Journals

Distribution of authorship in leading Western journals in 2000 and 2005 (%)

- ■ National (including Canada)
- ■ International
- ■ Europe
- ■ Non-Western

International Organization: 92,6 81,5 7,4 18,5 7,4 11,2 0 7,4

International Studies Quarterly: 87,5 82,2 12,5 17,8 5,4 14,4 7,1 3,3

European Journal of International Relations: 35,3 47,7 64,7 52,3 64,7 47,4 0 7,9

Source: Friedrichs/Waever (2009: 272)

For the Turkish IR journal "Alternatives", the "South African Journal of International Relations" and the journal "International Relations of the Asia Pacific" the number of

"national" authors has often been lower than the number of "international" authors and it has even been decreasing between 2000 and 2005. Also the number of "non-Western" authors (including "national" authors) being published in these journals has been increasing in most of these journals recently. This is in stark contrast to Western IR journals which largely remain outlets for scholarship from Western IR scholars in general and scholars from the US in particular. In other words: whereas the West remains fairly closed off from the rest of the world, there is much more of a balance among national and international authorship in non-Western IR journals.

Graph 3: Authorship in non-Western IR Journals
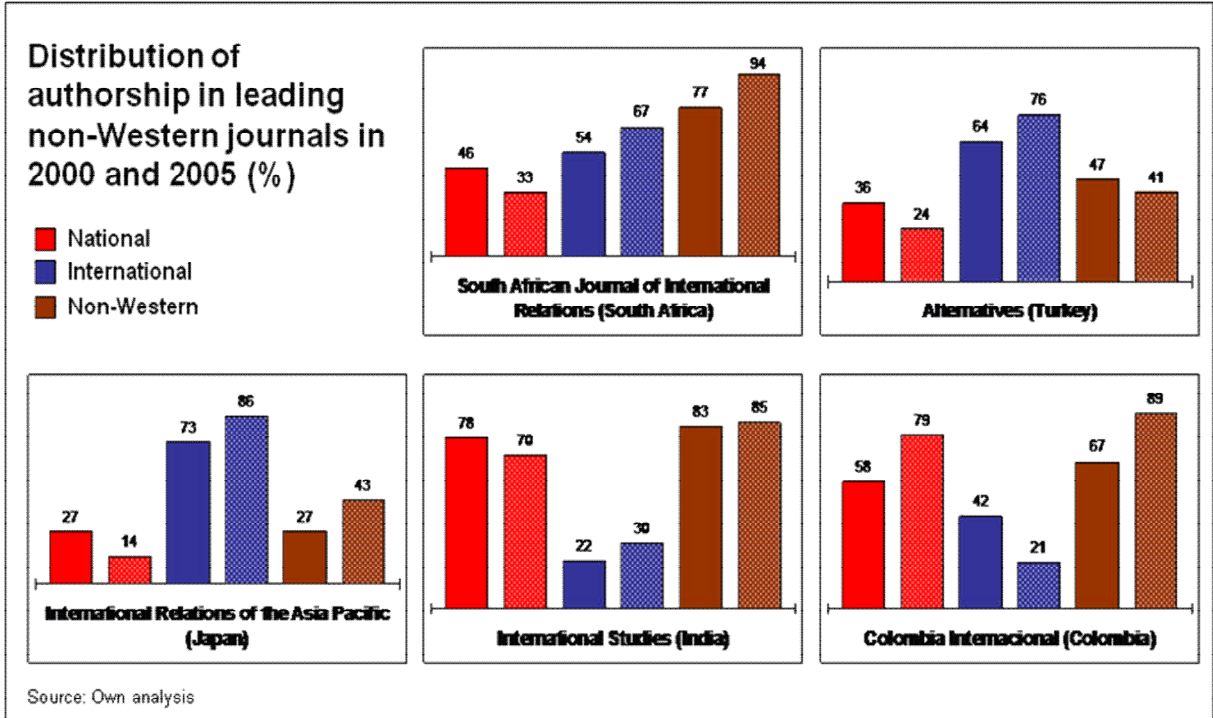
The Intellectual Structure of the Discipline

Another characteristic of the publication system of Western IR is the distinct profile of mixing theory and empirical analysis. All of the IR journals ranked among the top 20 of all Political Science journals in the Social Science Citation Index distinguish themselves as theory-oriented journals in this sense. As Kjell Goldmann pointed out in a comparison of Western IR journals from the early 1970s and early 1990s as far as "methodological approaches" is concerned, ever more articles published in the 1990s combined some form of theorizing with

empirical observation (Goldmann 1996: 252). If anything, this trend has been reinforced during the last decade. Again, the contrast with non-Western IR journals is noticeable: with the possible exception of the Japanese journal "International Relations of the Asia Pacific" all these journals primarily publish articles which eschew explicit theoretical discussion (see Graph 4).

Graph 4: Methodological Approaches of non-Western IR Journals
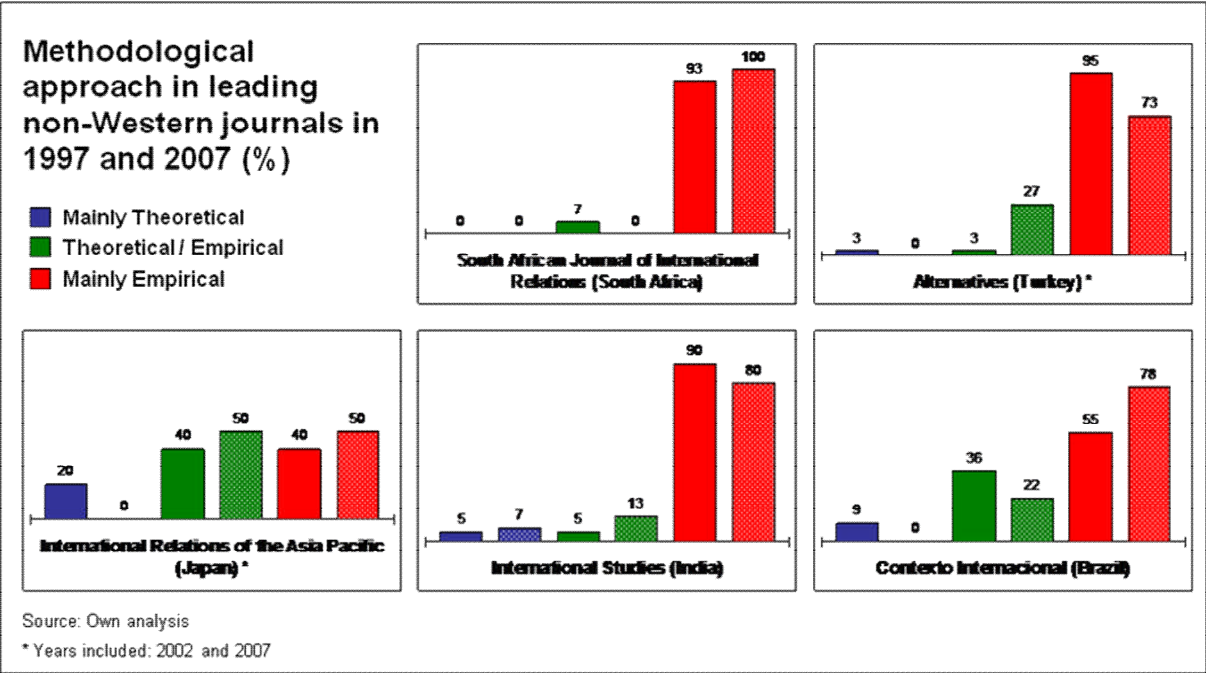
Paradigmatism and Great Debates

One of the oldest features of the intellectual structure of the discipline is paradigmatism. In IR it has come to be understood as a disciplinary preoccupation with and segregation into separate "meta-scientific constructs" with distinct ontologies, epistemologies and methodologies (Lapid 1989: 239-241). Although the allusion to Thomas Kuhn's "paradigmatic" view of the evolutionary development of scientific disciplines (Kuhn 1962) has only spread in IR in the 1970s the phenomenon as such has been a core feature of the discipline's intellectual structure (at least in its Western segment) since the mid-20th century. "Realism", "idealism", "rationalism" or "constructivism" are usually mentioned as examples

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of such "paradigms". Surpassed only by questions of epistemology and methodology such "paradigmatic" differentiation continues to generate the most division among Western IR scholars (Jordan et.al. 2009: 70). What is more, IR scholars surveyed in ten English speaking countries estimate that almost 90 percent of all IR literature is devoted to some form of paradigmatist analysis (Jordan et.al. 2009: 41). Yet, although one out of four considers his or her own work to be falling outside any paradigmatist frame, more than three quarters of the time is devoted to IR paradigms in IR introductory courses taught by these scholars (Jordan et.al. 2009: 31). In other words, the intellectual structure of discipline continues to be reproduced along paradigmatist lines even though many IR scholars do not believe that such a focus is particularly useful in their own research.

This gap in (Western) IR between the prominence of paradigmatism in teaching and individual research reflects upon what sociologist of science call "task uncertainty", ie. the extent to which scholars in a discipline agree upon what rules are to be followed and what work techniques are acceptable in producing knowledge (Whitley 1984, Wæver 2007: 299-300). In IR the level of task uncertainty is quite high since there is fairly little agreement as to what the overarching disciplinary questions are or how one should go about tackling them. The TRIP survey found that two thirds of IR scholars questioned believe that "methods" and "epistemology" generate the most division in the discipline (see also Wight 2002). Yet despite this diversity there has at least been a widespread (if sometimes only implicit) understanding that "paradigms" *as such* are a key instrument for organizing the discipline, especially as far as IR's recurring "great debates" are concerned. This not only shows in how the discipline's history is usually told (Schmidt 1998, 2002) or how IR is taught. It also shows in textbooks and handbooks – ie. works which are supposed to introduce novices to the field or which provide summaries and syntheses of what is normally claimed to be disciplinary knowledge. Just to mention two recent representative examples: As the subtitle of "International Relations Theory. Discipline and Diversity" (Dunne/Kurki/Smith 2007) indicates, the editors are keen to emphasize both the necessity of a certain disciplinary coherence and "diversity". Yet the organization of the book around nine "distinct theories of International relations – realism / structural realism, liberalism / neoliberalism, the English School, constructivism, Marxism and critical theory, feminism, poststructuralism, green theory, postcolonialism" (p. 3) shows that "diversity" is expressed not in the form of theoretical controversies over core substantive questions of international relations (eg. what causes war; what causes poverty) or methods, but paradigms. The same understanding is reflected in a recent handbook (Reus-Smit/Snidal

2008) where the presentation of a somewhat different set of nine "major theoretical perspectives" takes up almost half the space of the volume (the theories discussed here include "realism", "marxism", "neoliberal institutionalism", "the new liberalism", "English School", "constructivism", "critical theory", "postmodernism", and "feminism") . In other words: whereas IR scholars may disagree sharply as to the particular value of different paradigms, there at least seems to be widespread agreement that it is useful to conceive of the discipline in terms of *paradigmatic* differentiation and "great debates".

However, in a longer historical perspective the period during which paradigmatism and great debates were widely acknowledged as dominant features of the discipline's intellectual structure may come to an end. Recent self-reflective looks at the historiography of the discipline have convincingly shown that even in Western IR the focus on "great debates" may have been as much a reflection of the perceived need of a novel academic field to identify a disciplinary core as it has been a reflection of a common tendency in the social sciences to delimit the number of basic rival positions to a low number of macro-level theories (Collin 1998). As a matter of fact, the invocation of "great debates" as a typical characterization of overarching disciplinary divides did not begin until Morgenthau introduced the term in the early 1950s to depict what soon became to be known as the debate between realism and idealism (Quirk/Vigneswaran 2005: 98). Moreover, it already reached its pinnacle with the announcement of a second "great debate" in the 1960s pitting "traditionalists" against "behavioralists" (or "scientists") in a clash over what methods IR scholars ought to use in studying international phenomena. It was in this context that Thomas Kuhn's concept of a "paradigm" (Kuhn 1962) was first combined with the focus on "great debates", most explicitly (if somewhat misleadingly) in an article by Arendt Lijphardt in which he identified the second great debate as "a dichotomous one between two opposing paradigms" (Lijphardt 1974: 18). Yet the "third debate" already marked the end of agreement as to how to describe what it was supposedly all about. Alternatively it was framed as a debate between realism and "globalism" (Maghroori 1982), between realism, "pluralism" and "structuralism" (Banks 1985), between "positivists" and "post-positivist" (Lapid 1989) or one between "a broad body of interdisciplinary literature commonly (and often indiscriminately) labeled 'critical theory', 'post positivism', 'discourse analysis', or 'post-structuralism'" on the one hand and "the intellectual imperialism of the modern, post-Cartesian 'scientific' approach to knowledge and society" on the other hand (George 1989: 270). Others suggested that the later two descriptions already marked a "fourth debate" which in itself could be subdivided into two

sub-debates among "reflectivists" and "rationalists" on the one hand and neorealists and neoliberal institutionalists on the other (Wæver 1996: 150-170). Thus, not only the intervals between debates have become longer since the "first debate" was invented. After the "second debate" there has also been ever more contention as to whether a third and/or fourth "great debate" actually took place and, if so, what it was all about. In any case, no "fifth debate" currently appears to be in sight (Lapid 2003: 131; Wæver 2007: 304-305).

Even if "great debates" were indeed a thing of the past, paradigmatism appears to be more resilient. In Abott's reading of "generational paradigms" the emphasis on the economizing strategies of informational overload suggests a certain disciplinary immaturity in coming up with more sophisticated and adequate coping strategies. More critical readings – such as Niklas Luhmann's related lamentation about "multiple paradigmatasis" in sociology (Luhmann 1981: 58) – in contrast highlight the unforced ignorance vis-à-vis large segments of knowledge which necessarily accompanies paradigmatic self-restriction. This latter perspective has recently won more recognition. Two prominent representatives of "rationalism" and "constructivism", for instance, have joined voices in rejecting the implicit offer to conduct another "battle of analytical paradigms" since any such battle would "at the very least … encourage scholars to be method-driven rather than problem-driven in their research" (Fearon/Wendt 2002: 52). Rather than looking at the relationship between rationalism and constructivism in terms of a "debate" they pleaded for looking at it in terms of a "conversation" between two approaches which "when understood pragmatically, is largely either complementary or overlapping" (Fearon/Wendt 2002: 68). Similarly the recent "Oxford Handbook of International Relations" prominently positioned a chapter on "Eclectic Theorizing in the Study and Practice of International Relations" at the very beginning of the section which presented the nine "major theoretical perspectives" referred to above (Katzenstein/Sil 2008). In it the authors advocate "analytic eclecticism", an approach to research in IR which replaces "paradigm-driven research" with a strategy drawing widely on seemingly divergent research traditions built on distinct concepts, methods, analytics, and empirics.

Thus, although the intellectual structure of the discipline continues to be shaped by distinctions drawn in terms of "paradigms" (or the equivalent "major theoretical perspectives" etc.) paradigmatism as such has been losing some of its grip. To the extent that there is an inherent tension between "method-driven" approaches or paradigmatism on the one hand and

a focus on a "problem-driven" approach the shift towards the latter can be seen as a sign of maturation. To be sure, a loss of disciplinary coherence may loom as a downside if IR loses its traditional paradigmatic signposts (Wæver 2007: 300-301). Yet the same development can also be interpreted as an advance towards a more self-confident academic profession which need no longer engage in stylized battles in order to distinguish itself from adjacent (and presumably more reputable) disciplines such as history, law, economics or sociology. Moreover, such a move can also be justified epistemologically since the earlier rationalization for paradigmatic separation – the usual reference to the idea of "incommensurability" in Kuhn's theoretical vocabulary – has hence been problematized in the philosophy of science. For a long time Kuhn's term of incommensurability was understood to mean that the theoretical vocabularies of separate paradigms were not intertranslatable. Yet as Donald Davidson (2001 (1984): 183-198) and Richard Rorty, among others, have argued "untranslatability does not entail unlearnability" and "learnability is all that is required to make discussability possible" (Rorty 1991: 48). Paradigmatic separation, therefore, is a disciplinary convention, not an epistemological necessity. Recently this approach to "inter-paradigm" debates has been spreading in IR at least subliminally, if not explicitly (Wight 2006: 40-45). Irrespective of whether one cherishes or criticizes such a development it is yet another sign of a much broader development in the discipline: its expansion along many dimensions.

The Expansion of IR

Thus far the discipline has been examined largely in terms of its social and intellectual structures. This inevitably entails a rather static view which does not sufficiently acknowledge the tremendous dynamism of IR. Yet the dynamic development of the field is perhaps the most striking feature of the discipline. Ever since the early days of modern IR in the early 20th century, the discipline has been expanding. Although this intellectual expansion may resemble earlier colonial practices of the West in some respects (and may therefore also be described in diverse vocabularies), the phenomenon as such appears to be largely uncontroversial. Four dimensions of intellectual expansion can be distinguished: (1) territorial expansion (or spread) from a largely Western core to other countries; (2) disciplinary expansion within Political Science as measured in terms of chairs designated with denominations which are normally considered to be IR; (3) substantive expansion as measured in research problems being taken up by scholars identifying themselves as doing IR and, in interaction with the latter, (4)

theoretical and methodological expansion. Of course, none of these expanding moves ought to be imagined as linear or unidirectional. When knowledge travels it always intermingles and, thereby, transforms. The image of a marketplace where Western IR is "exported" to non-Western regions and countries or where IR "imports" from other disciplines such as philosophy or economics misconstrues knowledge as a commodity changing hands without being affected by the very transaction (Agnew 2007: 139-141). If we take this transformational dimension into account, however, the metaphor of expansion quite cogently describes a phenomenon which is as familiar as a subject matter to the IR scholar as it is ubiquitous if one looks at the dynamic development of the discipline.

Given limits of space and the earlier discussion of the global structure of IR the territorial and disciplinary expansion can be kept short. As mentioned earlier, territorial expansion was for a long time characterized (and in many ways still is characterized) by the discipline's failure to engage with the non-Western world (Darby 2008). To the extent that such engagement did take place it often followed general patterns of colonial interaction. Western IR presented its way of practicing the craft as exemplary while scholars in non-Western regions would either emulate Western IR practices (thereby, perhaps, gaining some recognition from abroad) or keep to whatever local forms of scholarship were deemed suitable in order to study things "international" (and remain largely marginalized). The last two decades have seen quite a bit of change with respect to the quantitative enlargement of IR communities outside the West and a much more self-conscious redefinition of what it may mean to do IR in places such as China, India, Kenya or Mexico. This expansion has been aided by global shifts in power as well as theoretical innovation (eg. postcolonialism). The "World International Studies Committee" (WISC), an organization of national International Studies associations which has been active since the turn of the century has certainly helped as well. Measured in terms of chairs in IR the discipline even seems to be expanding much more rapidly in non-Western regions, Latin America (Tickner 2009) and Asia in particular (see special issue 2009 of International Relations of Asia and Pacific). Nevertheless, even though almost no comparative data are available on the number of chairs in IR around the globe or relative to other disciplines in Political Science IR appears to be growing numerically even in Europe and North America, if only at the expense of other sub-disciplines (Klingemann 2007).

The Expansion of the IR Research Agenda

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By most accounts (Western) IR is essentially an invention of the 20th century (for a contrasting perspective see Olson/Groom 1991). Even if some of its origins may have been romanticized in one way or another (Osiander 1998; Schmidt 2002) it is widely accepted as common knowledge among IR scholars that the primary subject matters in the first half of the 20th century were almost exclusively related to governmental activities crossing national boundaries. Against the background of two "world wars" the question of war and peace loomed large. Accordingly early (Western) IR framed its research agenda mainly in the vocabulary of international law and diplomatic history. The methods and approaches associated with these disciplines were thought to offer the best hope for "the problem of international governmental reorganization and practice" (Potter 1923: 391; Bryce 1922) without necessarily succumbing to the sort of "idealist internationalism" for which the discipline was later chastised by realists in particular (Olson/Groom 1991: 56-78). In the middle of the 20th century the agenda was broadened to include international economics and all those aspects of international relations which could be "described in terms of decision-making by identifiable individuals or groups of individuals" (Dunn 1948: 145). More importantly, ever more scholars seemed ready to subscribe to the view that international politics rather than "international organization" constituted the core of a slowly maturing discipline. While the latter was said to be approached predominantly with a constitutional frame, the image of an international system made up of states which were interacting "almost like Leibnizian monads" (Kaplan 1961: 470) and the accompanying clash of national interests and power was considered to be more properly dealt with in a politics framework (Fox 1949: 79). The first "great debate" was an expression of this shift.

The war experience (which had involved all those countries crucial for the discipline's development in the 1950s and 60s) and the spreading realization that the advent of the "nuclear age" would not only revolutionize warfare but affect the very survival of humankind pushed the expanding research agenda of IR scholarship into the field of "strategic studies" and its focus on state practices such as "deterrence" thinking and "arms control" negotiations (Ayson 2008; Buzan/Hansen 2009). While essentially remaining in the classical IR domain of state-based international politics the novel process of European integration at least offered a paradigmatic alternative to the traditional focus on great power competition. It not only inspired a series of similar political projects in other parts of the world but helped to stimulate a new and vibrant field of study focused on comparative regional integration (Choi/Caporaso 2002). In addition, the process of decolonization laid the foundation for expanding both the

territorial reach of IR research beyond the confines of the Western world as well as the disciplinary focus on politics by intensifying the link with economics. Paradigmatically, though, the two major alternatives of the emerging "development studies" (Maxfield 2002), "modernization" theory and "dependency" theory, continued to draw almost exclusively on the Western tradition. (Neo-) Marxist inspired analyses of capitalism's contribution to the "underdevelopment" of non-Western regions by scholars such as André Gunder Frank (1967), a University of Chicago-trained economist, helped to pave the way for "International Political Economy" to fully establish itself as one of the major sub-fields of IR starting in the 1970s (Ravenhill 2008, Cohen 2008). On a parallel track the study of foreign policy which had been one of the major sections in any North American IR/political science curriculum continued to thrive as an ever more "scientific", increasingly separate and differentiating field. Foreign policy analysis (or "FPA") was the prime subfield of IR expanding into those neighboring disciplines (such as psychology and sociology) which were deemed useful in coming up with theoretical and methodological tools for making sense of group decision-making processes under routine bureaucratic or crisis situations (Carlsnaes 2002: 332-334; Hudson 2005).

With the advent of East-West "détente" and the 1973 "oil crisis" the disciplinary horizon broadened further. Although the classical focus on "high politics" security issues kept its prominent place other issues gained in importance or were added anew to the IR research agenda. First, the introduction of the concept of "transnational politics" at the end of the 1960s (Kaiser 1969) contained an unveiled critique of the state-centrism of classical IR. It also foreshadowed the broadening of the more narrowly circumscribed foreign policy perspective during the 1970s and 1980s by also looking at non-state actors and their activities and interactions at the systemic level (Risse 2002). Secondly, the Club of Rome's "The Limits to Growth" report of 1972, the first UN Conference on the Human Environment in the same year and the "oil crisis" in the following year set the stage for environmental issues to be added to the IR research agenda (Mitchell 2002; Eckersley 2007). Third, transnational relations and environmental politics both fitted in neatly with perhaps the most prominent new theme in IR since the 1970s: the spreading interest in the phenomenon of interdependence and globalization (Zürn 2002; Hay 2007). This image of an increasingly globalizing world which affected every corner of the globe and reached across all issue areas in turn helped to push a final expansion of the research agenda: the inclusion of an ever larger group of "non-state actors", to use the mainstream IR vocabulary. Alternatively, critical, postmodern, feminist and/or postcolonial theories identified a huge, highly diverse and often indiscernible group

which they called "the marginalized": victims of war, poverty or colonialism; women; or, more generally, all human beings who had become mere objects of structures and practices of power rather than being political subjects. At the beginning of the 21st century there are, thus, few phenomena which cannot be framed in one way or another as legitimate objects of study under the heading of IR. Indeed, some even argue that the discipline has to rename itself in order to do justice to the causal and constitutive connections which link so many levels of political action in "global society" (Barnett/Sikkink 2008, Albert/Cederman/Wendt 2010).

It is hardly surprising, therefore, that both the structure of the most influential professional organization in the field of international studies, the International Studies Association, and the most recent comprehensive survey of the major topics of the field appear to cover essentially any phenomenon of politically relevant social action transcending state borders. The book version of the ISA "compendium" encompasses 12 volumes and more than 8.000 pages of text (Denemark 2010). The open-ended online compendium is even more voluminous. The same applies as far as the structure of the ISA is concerned. The 24 sections are impressive not only for its breadth but also for the fact that paradigmatism is much less visible at this level of organization. Section themes include professional and pedagogical concerns (as in the "Women's Caucus" and the section on "Active Learning in IS"), epistemological and methodological concerns (as in the sections "Comparative Interdisciplinary Studies" and "Scientific Study of International Processes") but most often cover a broad range of substantive issues (such as "Diplomatic Studies"; "Environmental Studies"; "Ethnicity, Nationalism, and Migration Studies"; "Feminist Theory and Gender Studies"; "Foreign Policy Analysis"; "Global Development Studies"; "Human Rights; "Intelligence Studies"; "International Communication"; "International Education"; "International Ethics"; "International Law"; "International Organization"; "International Political Economy"; "International Political Sociology"; "International Security Studies"; "Peace Studies"; "Political Demography Section"; "Post Communist States in International Relations"). The only exception as far as a paradigmatic orientation is concerned relates to the section on the "English School".

Theoretical and Methodological Expansion

Theoretical and methodological sophistication is almost universally accepted as a key criterion for judging the quality and status of a scholarly discipline. In both respects IR has

seen tremendous, sometimes even exponential growth. If we concentrate on the last century the formative period of IR up to the 1950s was largely marked by an understanding of "theory" and "method" common among the (usually much older) disciplines from which IR was drawing its new talents: (diplomatic) history, (international) law, economics, what is nowadays called "area studies" and the study of (domestic) politics. Many of these were considered to be part of the "humanities" rather than the (social) "sciences". Accordingly the distinction, drawn in a particularly strong fashion in the course of the "behavioral revolution", between the "empirical" and the "normative" was mostly not deemed appropriate then. To be sure "science" was already cherished among IR novices. Yet it was not yet as strongly associated with a notion of the natural sciences as this was the case in the 1960s and 1970s.

The "revolutionary" shift to the new mantra of "applying scientific methods" was perhaps best captured in the transition from the 1st edition (published in 1961) to the 2nd edition of "International Politics and Foreign Policy", a textbook edited by James Rosenau (1969) who, perhaps alongside with Hayward Alker (Patomäki 1997), is himself an exemplar of the shifting epistemological, theoretical and methodological currents of the discipline during the past fifty years (Rosenau 2003: 405-420; Aydinli/Rosenau 2004). In introducing the 57 chapters of the 2nd edition Rosenau apologized for including "only 9 percent of the original selections" even though he himself had stated in 1961 that "articles were included 'only if they seemed likely to be useful in twenty years'". Yet rather than taking this to be a "cause for embarrassment" he saw "cause for satisfaction" due to the "remarkable growth in the scope and pace of the theoretical enterprise" and the "increasingly sophisticated penetration of the mysteries of international life" (Rosenau 1969: xvii). The book contained 25 articles on 14 different types of "theories and approaches" as well as 17 articles on different "research techniques and orientations". For many older IR scholars this was a misguided fixation on an ideal of science which was wholly inadequate for the subject matter of international politics. Yet Rosenau's candid assessment and selections illustrate the predominant mood and trends in the 1960s and 70s quite well. Although "classical" approaches and methods (Bull 1966) continued to have their followers – and actually benefitted themselves from the behavioral revolution (Quirk 2008) – the wave of the future seemed to be an understanding of "science" which required "an articulated secondary language that permits reasonable precision and replicability" (Kaplan 1966: 4) as well as sophisticated techniques for gathering and processing "data".

Merely listing all the new methods and techniques which were invented and/or imported in IR during that phase could spread out over a couple of pages. Suffice it to say that such a list would include almost the whole range of tools applied in other academic disciplines – ranging all the way from some of the humanities to other social sciences and the natural sciences (Harvey/Brecher 2002a, Kydd 2008, Mansfied/Pevehouse 2008, and Goldgeier/Tetlock 2008). Nevertheless even some of its initial adherents later granted that "the promises of behavioralism were not fulfilled" (Rosenau 1993: 459). Against this background, among others, the "third" (or "fourth") debate in particular represented a move beyond methodology by digging deeper to address underlying "epistemological" and "ontological" questions. Yet rather than shrinking the space, this debate enlarged it further by reinvigorating reflection about the reach and uses of "qualitative" methods and by problematizing the very basis of theory formation. In many ways the "qualitative" label reinforced an encroaching dualistic conception of methodology – with a "quantitative" pole on the other side. Of course, some influential theories and/or methods (such as rational choice and other "formal" methods) which actually thrived during the 1980s and 1990s in American IR could not easily be subsumed under such a dualistic conception. However, influential publications which reached far beyond IR (such as King/Keohane/Verba 1994) actually tried to ease the tension by arguing that there is a "unified logic" of "scientific inference" across a large spectrum of different methodologies. While this proposition was hardly acceptable to everyone it did mirror a widespread understanding of scientific analysis among IR scholars according to which the essence of scholarship lied in "linking theory to evidence". In the 2002 "Handbook of International Relations" this is the title of the single explicitly methodological chapter covering the whole spectrum from "rationalist" to "constructivist" theories, the latter even including "critical theory" (Hermann 2002). One set of the methods which thrived in IR since the 1980, so-called "case study methods" (Bennett/Elman 2008) – which were actually put at the center of "qualitative methods" by some, more "scientifically" inclined scholars (Levy 2002) – actually expressed this understanding most clearly and, for many IR scholars, convincingly.

While it certainly mirrored "mainstream" understandings the fixation on somehow "linking" theory and "evidence" with the help of certain methods had its critics – and increasingly so. As a matter of fact, since the early 1980s an ever larger number of scholars subscribed to a variety of "post-positivist" approaches which all posited the mutual impregnation of "theory", "reality" and descriptions thereof ("evidence"). Most importantly from a "methodological"

point of view, theories such as feminism, postmodernism, post-structuralism, critical theory, pragmatism and post-colonialism all questioned whether "social facts" could indeed by treated like "natural facts" as implicitly assumed by mainstream approaches (Kratochwil 2008: 455-458; Harvey/Brecher 2002b). The answer was an outright "no". Since nature did not "speak", concepts and even whole vocabularies had to be invented in order to relate to "the world out there" when one wanted to describe and explain how even small parts of it (not to mention "everything") actually hang together. In this view the issue was not whether (and if so: how) one would come up with "the" "correct" description to work with in the actual business of explanation. Rather one of the key questions was how we came to describe "the world" in a particular vocabulary in the first place and what this description did to our being in and relating to the world.

This amounted to a radical critique of the whole enterprise of how the "science" of international relations was practiced by positivists. In a sense the weight of the charge was equivalent to the one which the "scientists" had leveled against "traditionalists" during the "second debate": the charge of actually misconstruing what scholarship about "the international" was all about. "Methods", however, were not relegated to the dustbin as charges about "anything goes" seemed to indicate. Indeed, if anything the "third" (or "fourth") debate helped to further broaden the theoretical and methodological horizon of the discipline by opening it for a rediscovery of earlier roots in international law and normative theory (Byers 2008; Brown 2007) and by more explicitly incorporating "sociological" perspectivse (as illustrated with the founding of the journal "International Political Sociology" in 2007). To be sure, few of its adherents would claim that a switch to a post-positivist stance would be rewarded with any of the earlier promises of "cumulation of knowledge" or "progress" (the latter is at least kept as an option in a "Lakatosian" assessment of different IR research agendas, see Elman/Elman 2003). Yet leaving behind the strait-jacket of "method-drivenness"– which has even become a dirty word for self-proclaimed positivists (Fearon/Wendt 2002: 52) – seems to be enough in terms of gratification for them. In sum, even if the discipline may not have advanced much on the path of cumulation and progress it seems to have progressed steadily, some might even say: impressively on the path of theoretical and methodological sophistication.

Conclusion

The story of the field of International Relations could be told in an analogous fashion to the story of "the expansion of international society" (Bull/Watson 1984). It may well be that a casual reader of this article twenty or fifty years from now might actually have precisely that impression – with all the critical undertones which a postcolonial perspective would want to add. Yet this probably is how "the state of the art" appears to a big group of practitioners of IR scholarship today. As has been argued above, the discipline is in many ways not up to the task (yet?) of tackling, not to mention overcoming its many awkward parochialisms. These are all the more glaring given the almost universal expression of an ever more globalizing world – irrespective of how one may define the phenomenon of "globalization" – and the fact that the discipline itself lays claim to actually analyze these processes and features within its purview. In this light the concluding sentence of the last section may sound all too self-adulatory. If it is, is for others to judge.

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