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Zhang, Y., & Kristensen, P. M. (2017). The Curious Case of 'Schools' of IR: From the Sociology to the Geopolitics of Knowledge. *Chinese Journal of International Politics*, *10*(4), 429-454. https://doi.org/10.1093/cjip/pox013

Peer reviewed version

Link to published version (if available):
10.1093/cjip/pox013

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The Curious Case of 'Schools' of IR: From the Sociology to the Geopolitics of Knowledge

Introduction

Critical examinations of the global state of the disciplinary International Relations (IR) have long pointed to its peculiar geographical asymmetries: A dominant American 'core' produces most of the theories, if not always methodologies and epistemologies, that are then widely disseminated and consumed around the globe. In sharp contrast, IR theoretical knowledge produced at its putative peripheries and semi-peripheries rarely travels to this presumptive heartland of the discipline.[1] These geopolitical core-periphery patterns in the disciplinary knowledge production have recently been subject to numerous critical empirical analyses, most of which confirm the asymmetric nature of the field.[2] Recent calls for reimagining IR as a truly *global* discipline are clearly informed by an intellectual discontent with this disciplinary status quo.[3]

Less attention, however, has been paid to an equally curious asymmetry in the use of disciplinary terminologies to label theoretical outputs produced in different corners of the globe. Theoretical output from the United States is usually known simply as 'theories' or 'isms' (realism, liberalism, constructivism, for example), which are rarely prefixed with 'American', perhaps due to their allegedly self-evident claim of universality. Meanwhile, it is increasingly common to use 'school' to refer to most *non-American* attempts at IR theoretical knowledge production.[4] Further, most

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[1] Stanley Hoffmann, 'An American Social Science: International Relations', *Daedalus*, Vol. 106, No. 3, 1977, pp. 41–60; Kalevi Holsti, *The Dividing Discipline* (Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1985); Ole Wæver, 'The Sociology of a Not So International Discipline', *International Organization*, Vol. 52, No. 4, 1998, pp. 687–727; Arlene Tickner and Ole Wæver, *International Relations Scholarship Around the World* (London: Routledge, 2009).

[2] Jonas Hagmann and Thomas Biersteker, 'Beyond the Published Discipline', *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 20, No. 2, 2014, pp. 291–315; Peter Marcus Kristensen, 'Revisiting the "American Social Science"', *International Studies Perspectives*, Vol. 16, No. 3, 2015, pp. 246–269; Wiebke Wemheuer-Vogelaar, Nicholas Bell, Mariana Morales, Michael Tierney, 'The IR of the Beholder,' *International Studies Review*, Vol. 18, No. 1, 2016, pp. 16–32.

[3] Amitav Acharya, 'Global International Relations (IR) and Regional Worlds', *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 58, No. 4, 2014, pp. 647–659; Amitav Acharya and Barry Buzan, 'Why Is There no Non-Western International Relations Theory? Ten Years On', *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, 2017. doi: 10.1093/irap/lcx006; Arlene Tickner, 'Core, Periphery and (neo)imperialist International Relations, *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 19, No. 3, 2013, pp. 627–646.

[4] The only exception that we know of is a note in a conference paper by Ole Wæver, 'Aberystwyth, Paris, Copenhagen - New 'Schools' in Security Theory and their Origins between Core and Periphery',

recognized non-American 'schools' are prefixed by a geographical signifier that indicates their origins, boundedness, and particularity. Most notable is the 'English School', but there is also some talk of a 'French', 'Italian', 'Russian' and 'Australian School'.[5] Other notable examples, labeled for the city or institution of origin, include the Copenhagen, Paris, and Aberystwyth Schools in critical security studies and the Tsinghua School.[6]

More recently, the attempted formation of a number of national schools beyond the 'West' have attracted considerable scholarly attention from their advocates and detractors alike, including in the pages of this journal.[7] The intellectual pursuit of a 'Chinese School', 'Korean School', 'Japanese School', 'Indian School' and 'Brazilian School', among others, demonstrate that the search for national schools beyond the West is extensive and in earnest.[8] As Phillip Darby notes, 'the proliferation of schools and schools-in-the-making is now extending through much of the formerly colonized world. There is a case to be made for an Indian IR, a Korean

presented at the annual meeting of the *International Studies Association,* Montreal, March 17-20, 2004, pp. 12-13, but deleted in the published version of the paper. Wæver, 'Aberystwyth, Paris, Copenhagen: The Europeanness of new "schools" of security theory in an American field', in Arlene Tickner and David Blaney, eds., *Thinking the International Differently* (London: Routledge, 2012), pp. 48–70.

[5] Roy Jones, 'The English School of International Relations,' *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 1, 1981, pp. 1–13; Jérémie Cornut and Dario Battistella, 'Is French IR emerging?,' *Revue Française de Science Politique*, Vol. 63, No. 2, 2013, pp. 97–128; Jörg Friedrichs, *European Approaches to International Relations Theory* (London: Routledge, 2004); Stephen Gill, 'Epistemology, Ontology and the 'Italian School',' in Stephen Gill, ed., *Gramsci, Historical Materialism and International Relations* (Cambridge: CUP, 1993), pp. 21-48; Marina Lebedeva, 'International Relations Studies in the USSR/Russia: Is there a Russian National School of IR Studies?,' *Global Society*, Vol. 18, No. 3, 2004, pp. 263–278; James Cotton, *The Australian School of International Relations* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2013), pp. 237–251.

[6] Wæver, 'Aberystwyth, Paris, Copenhagen: The Europeanness'; Xu Jin and Sun Xuefeng, 'The Tsinghua Approach and the future direction of Chinese International Relations research', *Global Review*, 6, 2014, pp. 18-32.

[7] Amitav Acharya, 'Dialogue and Discovery: In Search of International Relations Theories Beyond the West,' *Millennium*, Vol. 39, No. 3, 2011, p. 626; Ching-Chang Chen, 'The Absence of non-Western IR Theory in Asia Reconsidered,' *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, Vol. 11, No. 1, 2011, pp. 1–23; Wang Jiangli and Barry Buzan, 'The English and Chinese Schools of International Relations: Comparisons and Lessons,' *Chinese Journal of International Politics*, Vol. 7, No. 1, 2014, pp. 1–46; Linsay Cunningham-Cross and William Callahan, 'Ancient Chinese Power, Modern Chinese Thought,' *Chinese Journal of International Politics*, Vol. 4, No. 4, 2011, pp. 349–374; Hun Joon Kim, 'Will IR Theory with Chinese Characteristics be a Powerful Alternative?,' *Chinese Journal of International Politics*, 2016, Vol. 9, No. 1, pp. 59-79.

[8] Takashi Inoguchi, 'Japan, Korea and Taiwan: Are one hundred flowers about to blossom?,' in Arlene Tickner and Ole Wæver, eds., *International Relations Scholarship Around the World* (London: Routledge, 2009), pp. 86–102; Peter Marcus Kristensen, *Rising Powers in the International Relations Discipline* (Copenhagen: University of Copenhagen Press, 2015); Zhang and Chang, *Constructing a Chinese School of International Relations*; Yan Xuetong et al, *Ancient Chinese thought, modern Chinese power* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011); Young Chul Cho, 'Colonialism and Imperialism in the Quest for a Universalist Korean-style International Relations Theory,' *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 28, No. 4, 2015, pp. 680–700; Jong Kun Choi, 'Theorizing East Asian International Relations in Korea,' *Asian Perspective*, Vol. 32, No. 1, 2008, pp. 193–216.

IR or a non-Western IR to redress the Eurocentrism that engulfed the discipline early in the 20th century.'[9] As numerous non-American schools are in the making, one remains hard pressed to mention any theoretical endeavor in the American heartland of the discipline that is also labeled as a 'geographical school'.

This puzzling asymmetry in labeling theoretical knowledge production has thus far escaped serious attention in the discipline. Despite the fact that geographical and institutional labels have been increasingly commonly used to describe non-American approaches to theorizing IR, no IR study has focused exclusively on how schools form and function, what they do to the discipline, and why and how school labelling matters politically and intellectually.[10] This paper aims to fill that gap. It examines the curious school phenomenon as both a mode of describing the global state of the discipline and as an expression of the aspiration of marginalized voices and communities outside the American core to advance their knowledge claims. The paper has two principal purposes: one is to investigate the sociological factors driving and sustaining school formation in IR; and the other is to critically assesses the political effects of such labeling for the discipline.

The paper is organized into three main parts. We start, in the first section, with a consideration of how the question of *geo-epistemic diversity* has been articulated in the historical evolution of the discipline of IR, paying particular tribute to E. H. Carr for his pioneering efforts for initiating the 'sociology of IR'. Drawing broadly on research in the sociology of knowledge, the second section discusses the sociological dynamics driving and sustaining the formation of intellectual schools of thought. As we outline a sociological explanation of IR schools, we analyze schools of thought as self-conscious, intellectually distinct, socially recognized and institutionalized collective endeavors at knowledge production. We exemplify these in the cases of the English, Chinese, the Copenhagen and other geographically labeled schools of thought in IR. Finally, in the third main section, we move beyond labeling phenomenon and discuss the contentious geopolitics of knowledge associated with the strategic use of school labeling by both its opponents and proponents. We consider what school labeling tells us about the close linkage between the political

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[9] Phillip Darby, 'Engaging with Asia: Three lives,' *Australian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 50, No. 1, 2015, pp. 209–210.

[10] It should be noted that IR is not unique in labelling its schools geographically and institutionally. Other fields do this too, as we will discuss below.

and the epistemic in its different incarnations in our collective endeavor at knowledge production in the discipline of IR.

Geo-epistemic Diversity in International Relations

It is fairly common among IR scholars, and not only sociologists of the discipline, to argue that IR is done quite differently around the world.[11] Although it seems almost oxymoronic to have national International Relations, scholars routinely point to a general geographical split between 'American IR', which tends to be rationalist and positivist, and 'European IR', which is generally more reflectivist and post-positivist.[12] Although it is hard to say whether IR is and has been more attentive to national variations than other disciplines, the concern with geopolitical and geocultural variations in the way that IR is done can be traced back to the historiography of the disciplinary growth. The initial interest in national variations was clearly based on a notion of disciplinary exceptionalism. That is to say that the interest in *different* national perspectives on IR was related to the implied *raison d'etre* of IR: to improve mutual understanding among states. The very interest in *different* national perspectives on IR involves a departure from the assumption that science is universal and a move into the sociology of knowledge. The first and more explicit engagement with the sociology of knowledge is seen in E. H. Carr's engagement with Karl Mannheim's sociology of knowledge in *The Twenty Years' Crisis* (1939).[13]

E. H. Carr and National Variations of IR Knowledge Production

In *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, E. H. Carr offered a proto-sociology for understanding the geopolitics of knowledge production in IR. Drawing on Karl Mannheim's

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[11] Tickner and Wæver, *International Relations Scholarship Around the World*.

[12] Wæver, 'The Sociology of a Not So International Discipline'; Ole Wæver, 'Aberystwyth, Paris, Copenhagen: The Europeanness'; Steve Smith, 'The Discipline of International Relations: Still an American Social Science?,' *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, Vol. 2, No. 3, 2000, pp. 374–402; Daniel Levine and Alexander Barder, 'The closing of the American mind: "American School" International Relations and the State of Grand Theory,' *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 20, No. 4, 2014, pp. 863–888.

[13] E.H. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919-1939* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1939); For an excellent reading of Mannheim's influence on Carr, see Charles Jones, 'Carr, Mannheim, and a Post–positivist Science of International Relations,' *Political Studies*, Vol. 45, No. 2, 1997, pp. 232–246.

sociology of knowledge, Carr directly stressed the social embeddedness and relativity of knowledge, particularly in his claim that 'Haves' thinks IR differently from 'Have-nots'. The socio-historical position and political-material interests of the knower, he argued, determine IR knowledge. This is particularly true if the knower is part of the dominant-but-declining strata, which defends the antiquated status quo order vis-à-vis the 'oppressed-but-rising' strata, which attack that order. [14] The situatedness of *theories* of international relations in terms of the dichotomy of 'haves' vis-à-vis 'have-nots' was evident to Carr when he criticized the status quo bias of idealist theories of international relations in the inter-war years, which, he claimed, 'emanated almost exclusively from the English-speaking countries. British and American writers continued to assume that the uselessness of war had been irrefutably demonstrated by the experience of 1914-1918, and that an intellectual grasp of this fact was all that was necessary to induce the nations to keep the peace in the future'. [15]

For Carr, Anglo-Saxon theories of international relations are invariably 'the product of dominant nations or groups of nations' and indeed a 'convenient weapon for belaboring those who assail the *status quo*'. [16] Theories are neither universal nor disinterested in Carr's view. They are always connected to the identity, interest and power of their originators. One of the notable achievements of Realism, according to Carr, is 'to demonstrate that intellectual theories and ethical standards of utopianism, far from being the absolute and a priori principles, are historically conditioned, being both products of circumstances and interests and weapons framed for the furtherance of interests'. [17] Carr thus posits Realism as a sociology of knowledge, well aware that Realism itself 'is as much socially conditioned, and just as much the reflection of particular interests, as utopianism'. [18]

The question of the social embeddedness and relativity of knowledge depending on variations in national/geopolitical/geocultural context continued to be explored persistently in the subsequent decades of scholarship. This is especially true in terms of the differences between the dominant American IR, on the one hand, and British and continental European IR on the other, which has been debated at length at least

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[14] Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1954 [1929]), p. 236.
[15] Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919-1939*, p. 67.
[16] Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919-1939*, p. 187.
[17] Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919-1939*, p. 87.
[18] Jones, 'Carr, Mannheim, and a Post–positivist Science of International Relations,' p. 238.

since the 1950s.[19] Stanley Hoffmann's claim that IR as an American social science and Ole Wæver's critique of IR as 'a not so international discipline' are two prime examples. In the last ten years or so, a more systematic comparative sociology of science, or 'IR around the world' literature, has explored different national and geocultural perspectives on the international, focusing more recently on 'non-Western' IR.[20] Such a comparative sociological approach to making inquiries into knowledge production is often motivated by its seeming relativity, notably its *geographical* relativity along the Pascalian notion that 'what is truth on the one side of the Pyrenees is error on the other'. [21] This comparative approach is further enhanced and complemented by the post-colonial critique of the geopolitics of knowledge, which sees colonialism as laying the groundwork for organizing knowledge around the colonial and the imperial differences; and geographies of knowledge of world politics, which interrogate where knowledge is produced and how it circulates.[22] Both take us back to the more general question of the problematic relationship between knowledge and power in IR.

Knowledge and Power: The Tragedy of Great Power Theorizing

To the extent that the sociology of IR has given us a variety of frameworks for analyzing the factors that make IR different in different countries, most interventions have been concerned with the extent to which the distinctiveness of the discipline (capitalized IR) in a given country is related to its foreign policy stance, broader

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[19] Jean-Baptiste Duroselle, 'L'étude des Relations Internationales', *Revue Française de Science Politique*, Vol. 2, No. 4, 1952, pp. 676–701; Alfred Grosser, 'L'étude des Relations Internationales, Spécialité Américaine?', *Revue Française de Science Politique*, Vol. 6, No. 3, 1956, pp. 634–651; Holsti, *The dividing discipline*; Wæver, 'The Sociology of a Not So International Discipline'; Smith, 'The discipline of international relations: still an American social science?'; Steve Smith, 'The United States and the Discipline of International Relations: "Hegemonic Country, Hegemonic Discipline"', *International Studies Review*, Vol. 4, No. 2, 2002, pp. 67–86; Robert Crawford and Darryl Jarvis, *International Relations: Still an American Social Science?* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2001); Friedrichs, *European Approaches to International Relations Theory*; Knud Erik Jørgensen and Tonny Brems Knudsen, *International Relations in Europe*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006).
[20] For some overviews, see Tickner and Wæver, *International Relations Scholarship Around the World*; Acharya and Buzan, eds., *Non-Western International Relations Theory*; Robbie Shilliam, *International Relations and Non-Western Thought* (London: Routledge, 2010); Chen, 'The absence of non-western IR theory in Asia reconsidered'; Tickner and Blaney, *Thinking the International Differently*.
[21] Steve Woolgar, *Science: The Very Idea* (Chichester: Ellis Horwood, 1988), p. 22.
[22] John Agnew, 'Know-Where: Geographies of Knowledge of World Politics,' *International Political Sociology*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 2007, pp. 138–148; Walter Mignolo, 'The Geopolitics of Knowledge and the Colonial Difference,' *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, Vol. 101, No. 1, 2002, pp. 57–96.

geopolitical position and current events in world politics (i.r.). Not surprisingly, the relationship between IR and i.r.—and the related debate between what may be called the internalist and the externalist accounts—has become the main point of contention in the sociology of IR.[23] The beginning of a sociology of IR as a research program in this manner arguably starts with Stanley Hoffmann. In his now canonical essay *International Relations: An American Social Science*, Hoffmann was explicit about national embeddedness of IR in the United States and how it related to its growing power status: 'The growth of the discipline cannot be separated from the American role in world affairs after 1945', he contends, in particular, 'the rise of the United States to world power'.[24] America's preponderance of power enabled it to mold world politics and required a theoretical justification for doing so. Two other contextual variables facilitated the development of a discipline: namely the *institutional opportunities* between American politics and academia and the *intellectual predisposition* towards applied Enlightenment.

Hoffmann clearly shares with Carr a focus on the social embeddedness and national relativity of knowledge that runs through much of the later sociology of IR literature. Moreover, these early interventions share a concern with the intimate relationship between the locus of power and the production of knowledge in IR. Where Carr focuses on the difference in the IR perspectives of Haves and Have-nots, Hoffmann sees a divide between IR in the powerful, of which there is plenty, and the lack of IR as seen from the weak: 'the political preeminence of the United States is the factor I would stress most in explaining why the discipline has fared so badly, by comparison, in the rest of the world'.[25] The power-centered understanding of the production and circulation of knowledge in IR therefore persists from Carr to Hoffmann. Such an intimate relationship between power and knowledge is restated in more blunt terms by Ken Booth almost two decades later in his claim that 'the institutionalization of the subject [of IR] and its development underlines simply and clearly the crucial relationship between the global distribution of power and global production of knowledge' and by Steve Smith when he argues that 'truth and knowledge are functions of power' and that 'the discipline [of IR] reflects U.S.

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[23] Wæver, 'The Sociology of a Not So International Discipline'; Brian C. Schmidt, 'On the History and Historiography of International Relations,' in Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse, and Beth A. Simmons, eds., *Handbook of international relations* (London: Sage, 2002), pp. 3–22.
[24] Hoffmann, 'An American Social Science,' pp. 43-49.
[25] Hoffmann, 'An American Social Science,' pp. 43, 48.

political, economic and cultural hegemony.'[26] It also finds a distinct echo in recent studies in critical geopolitics where the uneven distribution of global power is seen to have imposed a common "script" of world politics more in some places than in others.[27]

The claims and critiques that the powerful in i.r. also dominate IR knowledge production have contributed, perhaps unwittingly, to a growing focus on scholarly efforts at IR theorizing in those countries that are becoming increasingly powerful in i.r.. The so-called 'emerging' or 'rising' powers, that is. These types of rising-power-produce-IR explanations are still in vogue when explaining recent attempts to construct national schools of IR beyond the West. The entrenched assumptions that IR theories tend to be produced by great powers are evident, for example, when Amitav Acharya claims that 'Changes to the global distribution of ideas will increasingly accompany changes to the global distribution of power' and when he asks 'whether the development of distinctive schools of IR theories are the exclusive preserve of great powers, for example China, Japan, India and so on' and accepts that 'This of course would be hardly unusual given the historically close nexus between power (Britain, Europe and the USA) and the production of IR knowledge.'[28]

The expectation that IR theoretical alternatives will come out of rising powers has probably most clearly articulated in China. It has prompted Chinese scholars to ask 'will China's rise bring the rise of Chinese IR theory?',[29] and to claim that 'A Chinese IRT is likely and even inevitable to emerge along with the great economic and social transformation that China has been experiencing and by exploring the essence of the Chinese intellectual tradition'.[30] Not only has China's changing role in the international system provided valuable opportunities for Chinese scholars to theorize IR, but the construction of IR theories with Chinese characteristics has also

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[26] Ken Booth, '75 Years On: Rewriting the Subject's Past-Reinventing Its Future,' in Ken Booth, Steve Smith, and Marysia Zalewski, eds., *International Theory: Positivism and Beyond* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 331; Smith, 'The United States and the Discipline of International Relations', p. 69; Smith, 'The discipline of international relations', p. 394.

[27] John Agnew 'Emerging China and Critical Geopolitics: Between World Politics and Chinese Particularity', *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, 2010, 51, No. 5, pp. 569–582.

[28] Acharya, 'Dialogue and Discovery,' p. 625; Acharya, 'Global International Relations (IR) and Regional Worlds,' p. 656.

[29] Wang Yiwei, 'China: Between copying and constructing,' in Arlene Tickner and Ole Wæver, eds., *International Relations Scholarship Around the World* (London: Routledge, 2009), p. 114.

[30] Qin Yaqing, 'Why is there no Chinese international relations theory?,' *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, Vol. 7, No. 3, 2007, p. 313. For a more recent assertion that constructing a Chinese School of IR is not only desirable, but also inevitable, see Ren Xiao, 'The "Chinese School" debate: personal reflections,' in Zhang and Chang, eds., *Constructing a Chinese School of International Relations*, pp. 35–51.

become a necessary preparation for the essential trappings of China's rise as a global power. [31] The ongoing debates on the construction of a 'Chinese School' of IR continues to grapple with the question of the 'Chinese consciousness' and 'the Chinese sensibilities' in theoretical innovation as China rises. [32]

Such 'great power theorizing' is tragic in at least three senses. First, power political explanations are invariably reductionist, despite their apparent persuasiveness—i.e. that a rising China needs IR theory like America did and that the intimate relationship between the locus of national power and national production of knowledge can be historically traced back in the IR disciplinary development. An exclusive focus on the great power politics of theorizing leaves us with a very crude power-based sociology of knowledge, where knowledge is often reducible to national power. IR theory then becomes a state identity project, where knowledge always only serves power, i.e. 20th century American IR serving the United States rise to global power, the English School as a way of managing imperial decline, the Chinese School as an attempt to legitimize Chinese hegemony in East Asia and beyond, and so on. We miss all the other factors that influence theorizing as well as the differences within China or the United States. Second, power political readings of knowledge production assume an unproblematic relationship between power and knowledge in IR theorizing. They lead inescapably to limited understanding of what IR is and to a parochial vision of what IR theories can be. And when it comes to explaining 'schools of thought', power political readings are problematic, even absurd, in such cases as the Copenhagen school (a theory for the security policy of the city of Copenhagen?). Third and finally, it raises more questions about, than provide answers to, the geopolitics of knowledge production and geographies of knowledge and power.

The Sociology of IR as Geography of Knowledge

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[31] Li Wei and Tang Jian, 'China's Changing Role on the International Stage and Opportunities for Chinese Scholars' Theoretical Innovation', *The Journal of International Studies*, No. 4, 2014, pp. 40-58; Yang Jiemian, 'Preparing for China to Become a Global Power: Constructing Chinese International Theory', *World Politics and Economic*, No. 8, pp. 149-155.

[32] Qin Yaqing, 'Constructing a Chinese School of International Relations Theory', *People's Daily*, 15 February 2016; Guo Shuyong, 'The Growth of the Chinese Consciousness in the Development of Chinese International Theory and the Prospect of a Chinese School of IR', *International Review*, No. 1, 2017, pp. 19-39. See also Yan Xuetong, 'An International Relations Theory of Moral Realism', *International Studies*, No. 5, 2014, pp. 102-128.

Recent sociological inquiries into the IR disciplinary and theoretical development started to challenge these externalist explanations by arguing that the causal connection between i.r. events and IR theorizing is often vague and it is mostly assumed rather than demonstrated.[33] The most influential is probably the attempt made by Ole Wæver to construct a non-reductionist framework, which turns Hoffmann's three variables mentioned earlier into a more elaborate threefold typology of factors to explain why IR has been done differently in different places. These are, namely, Society and polity (comprising cultural/intellectual styles, 'ideologies' or traditions of political thought, form of state and state–society relations, foreign policy), Social sciences (comprising general conditions and definitions of social science and disciplinary patterning), and Intellectual activities in IRY (comprising social and intellectual structure of the discipline and theoretical traditions).[34] Waever's three-fold typology, wittingly or not, has further reinforced the claim of the geo-epistemic diversity of the discipline in its contemporary manifestation. This threefold typology has been supplemented in later studies by variables like domestic political culture and institutions.[35] Through a wealth of case studies, we now know that IR is 'quite different in different places' around the world,[36] depending on variations in an increasing number of variables. The development of scientific knowledge of IR, to borrow from Richard Whitley, is 'sociologically problematic'.[37]

This assertion of the sociologically problematic nature of IR knowledge production is complemented and further sustained by the intervention of the geography of knowledge literature, which challenges the idea of a universalist epistemology and advances the concept of geo-epistemology grounded in the argument that 'knowledge and processes of knowledge production are not independent from space and time, but contingent upon respective places (in a narrow,

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[33] Wæver, 'The Sociology of a Not So International Discipline'; Schmidt, 'On the History and Historiography of International Relations'.

[34] Wæver, 'The Sociology of a Not So International Discipline'.

[35] Henrik Ø. Breitenbauch and Anders Wivel, 'Understanding National IR Disciplines Outside the United States: Political Culture and the Construction of International Relations in Denmark,' *Journal of International Relations and Development*, Vol. 7, No. 4, 2004, pp. 414–443; Jørgensen and Knudsen, *International Relations in Europe*.

[36] Wæver, 'The Sociology of a Not So International Discipline', p. 723.

[37] Richard Whitley, *The Intellectual and Social Organization of the Sciences*, 2nd edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. ix.

geographical sense), histories, and identities.'[38] Knowledge production is, in other words, geographically (of both spatial and temporal dimensions) relational. Critical awareness of geopolitics of knowledge, i.e. knowing where knowledge is produced (i.e. the social-geographical sources of knowledge), and how it is ordered and circulated in world politics, argues John Agnew, is crucial in guarding against 'the interpretive projections from the knowledge experiences of specific places/times onto all places/times' and against 'privileg[ing] a singular history of knowledge associated with a specific world region or of conceptions of knowledge that implicitly or explicitly presume their self-evident universality'. [39] Colonialism and global hegemony, Agnew further asserts, are two powerful political conditioning factors under which knowledge of world politics is produced and circulates.[40]

   If we accept that IR knowledge production is sociologically problematic and that geo-epistemic variations need to be taken seriously, the question remains: Does this imply that every country—perhaps even city, institution and individual—has its own distinctive IR school of thought based on its particular society-polity, academic institutions, styles, disciplinary delineations and historical trajectories? Surely not, as this would imply that we have as many schools as we have scholars. Distinctive geographically labeled *schools of thought*, we argue, are always a product of more than their different geographical-cultural-historical locations. We need a more elaborate vocabulary for thinking about '*schools of thought*'—as opposed to the '*geo-epistemic diversity*' treated in the above—and a more nuanced sociological scheme to explain their formation.

School of Thought: Towards a Sociological Explanation of School Formation

How can we explain sociologically the curious case of schools of thought in IR? Drawing on the sociology of science and the sociology of intellectual life, we have identified a number of social conditions and dynamics that foster the emergence of genuine and distinctive 'schools of thought' in IR. In what follows, four such dynamics and conditions are discussed as constituting an analytical scheme in explaining the formation of distinctive 'schools' of IR. They are, namely, (1) carving

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[38] Wiebke Wemheuer-Vogelaar and Ingo Peters, 'Introduction: Global (izing) International Relations: Studying Geo-epistemological Divides and Diversity', in Peters and Wemheuer-Vogelaar (eds.) *Globalizing International Relations: Scholarship Amidst Divides and Diversity* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), pp. 4-5.
[39] Agnew, 'Know-Where', p. 138.
[40] Agnew, 'Know-Where', p. 146.

out a distinctive intellectual position in relation to the status quo; (2) opposition-recognition dynamics; (3) the formation of social and intellectual networks; and (4) control over an institutional infrastructure.

Before proceeding, three caveats are in order. First, the presence and interplay of these dynamics, either individually or collectively, constitutes only some *necessary* conditions for the formation of school of thought. That is, we argue that it is hard for schools of thought to emerge if they do *not* have a distinct position relative to the status quo, are *not* subject to debate and opposition, are *not* embedded in a broader social-intellectual network, and do *not* have some support by a material-institutional infrastructure. That said, these are not *sufficient* explanations. Why and how a school of thought comes into being is also highly contingent in the first instance upon ideas and idea entrepreneurs.

Second, in sociological terms, large-scale political and economic changes – such as those highlighted above – are also important to consider as 'the outmost level of macro-causality' because they may 'indirectly set off periods of intellectual change'. Here we follow Randall Collins who argues in his sociology of intellectual change that the external world 'does not so much directly determine the kinds of ideas created as give an impetus for stability or change in the organizations which support intellectual careers, and this moulds in turn the networks within them'.[41] Sociopolitical structures are thus awarded an indirect causal role in that they may shape the organizations supporting intellectual life, which again allow intellectuals to face inward at intellectual controversies within the academic field.[42] However, the primary sociological drivers of intellectual change, and school of formation in particular, are at the micro-level of intellectual controversies, (op)position-taking, and networks. We therefore put a particular emphasis on the first two dynamics.

Finally, we do not imply in our discussions below that the four dynamics must play out in the particular sequence in order for schools of thought to emerge. Their particular arrangement in the following rather serves to move from the two most micro and science-internal factors towards more socio-institutional factors at the meso-level. In practice, however, the process of carving out a distinctive intellectual position unfolds in the short term and is, logically, likely to occur prior to the opposition and recognition by critics. Similarly, we expect social network formation

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[41] Collins, *The Sociology of Philosophies*, p. 51, 82.
[42] Collins, *The Sociology of Philosophies*, p. 324.

to occur early on but also to expand over the long term, even for generations, while the consolidation of an institutional-material base, publication outlets and the like, is likely to unfold over the medium term.

Distinctive Intellectual Position in Relation to the Status Quo

The construction of new schools is a relational and oppositional process vis-à-vis the status quo. New schools are defined as much by what they are as by what they are not—in relation to opposing old schools in their field. New intellectual schools develop, in Randall Collins' rendering, as innovation by opposition. The intellectual field, Collins argues in his theory of intellectual innovation, functions as a 'structured rivalry'. In the competition for what he calls limited intellectual 'attention space', intellectuals 'thrive on disagreement, dividing the attention space into three to six factions, seeking lines of creativity by negating the chief tenets of their rivals'.[43] In order to be recognized as such, new schools of thought must therefore not only present different and innovative thinking but also position themselves in relation, and often in opposition, to important debates, positions and questions in the field. New schools will therefore have to be familiar with, draw on, and relate to the status quo knowledge (what Collins calls cultural capital) in order to find and exploit new openings in the attention space. In the words of Collins, 'When there is "room" for a new position in the intellectual field, ambitious thinkers will search for those elements in the available corpus of materials that will maximally contradict the existing prominent positions.'[44]

This type of innovative position-taking in relation to traditional positions in the field has important parallels to that explored in Bourdieusian sociologies of IR, although the problem is framed in terms of field and habitus rather than structure and agency. In this perspective, IR is seen as a field of relational position-takings where the objective position of academic agents within the field is both what enables and constrains their 'space of possibilities' (e.g. their strategies for putting forward new ideas or schools of thought). It is both a field of forces that imposes itself on agents and a battlefield or arena for the struggles playing out among them.[45] The field

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[43] Collins, *The Sociology of Philosophies*, p. 876.
[44] Collins, *The Sociology of Philosophies*, p. 134.
[45] Gerard van der Ree, 'Saving the Discipline,' *International Political Sociology*, Vol. 8, 2014, p. 219.

defines an agent's position and thus delimits, in Hamati-Ataya's words, 'the possible strategies an agent has within a given configuration of the field to 'play' the game by investing his/her capital in it, through 'position-takings' that are necessarily relational, since they depend on an agent's position with respect to others within a structured space.'[46] As new peripheral schools seek to establish themselves, or even subvert existing hierarchies, she continues, it is necessary to engage and know the 'mainstream' or 'status quo' positions in the field. Not in order to assimilate themselves into it, but, quite the contrary, to prevent assimilation and to realize their subversive and innovative potential.[47] As van der Ree elaborates, any attempt to put forward new IR theories or schools will therefore always face a 'simultaneous need to overcome, as well as uphold, the status quo.'[48]

An emerging school of thought must therefore never be so new that it is unclear how it contradicts 'existing prominent positions' and that it is not *recognized* as a contribution to the field. As Collins puts it, 'ideas cannot be too new, whatever their creativeness [but] must also be important, that is, in relation to ongoing conversations of the intellectual community.'[49] New schools of thought must, therefore, balance innovation and conformity to tradition or what Thomas Kuhn called 'the essential tension'. This goes even for revolutionary scientific breakthroughs, according to Kuhn, as 'only investigations firmly rooted in the contemporary scientific tradition are likely to break that tradition and give rise to a new one.'[50] New schools are therefore expected to relate to existing ones and to emerge from scholars who are well versed and trained in the status quo. There is an element of constructive and strategic agency from new schools, as 'the socially agreed upon boundaries of schools of thought influence how developers of new knowledge explicitly think about and position themselves within their field; thus, there is an explicit strategic dimension to knowledge positioning'.[51]

Examples of these types strategic position-taking can also be found in the case of contending IR schools. The methodological positioning in the 'Second Great Debate' is a case in point. The strategic nature of position-taking is perhaps best

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[46]Inanna Hamati-Ataya,, 'IR Theory as International Practice/Agency,' *Millennium*, Vol. 40, 2012, p. 631.
[47] Hamati-Ataya, 'IR Theory as International Practice/Agency, p. 645.
[48] van der Ree, 'Saving the Discipline', p. 220.
[49] Collins, *The Sociology of Philosophies*, p. 31.
[50] Thomas Kuhn, *The Essential Tension* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), p. 227.
[51] S. Phineas Upham, Lori Rosenkopf, and Lyle Ungar, 'Positioning Knowledge: Schools of Thought and New Knowledge Creation,' *Scientometrics*, Vol. 83, No. 2, 2010, p. 556.

exemplified in Hedley Bull's iconoclastic statement in 'International Theory: A Case for Classical Approach', where he positions the classical approach, characteristic of what emerged as the English School, in sharp opposition to the 'American School of Scientific Politics'.[52] This purposive widening of the Atlantic divide, which was further reinforced by Morton Kaplan's framing of it into the 'traditional' vis-à-vis the 'scientific' approach to theorizing IR, strengthened the collective identity of the emerging English School.[53] Apart from the English School, however, most other geographical schools do not fit neatly into the great debates narrative. European security 'schools', Wæver maintains, have been successful despite not being interventions into American theoretical debate. Indeed, he proposes that the fact that they are not major competitors in the American 'great debates' is part of the reason why they are called 'schools'.[54] In terms of strategic positioning vis-à-vis the status quo, however, the Copenhagen School of securitization did initially make a similar move against the 'traditional': it was initially juxtaposed to 'traditional' security studies as it proposed a 'new framework' for studying non-traditional security threats. As critical security studies has now developed into a subfield of its own, however, the Copenhagen School itself has become the tradition against which new schools seek to position themselves. At a more general level, proponents of a Chinese School can be said to have strategically positioned it vis-à-vis the alleged Eurocentrism of the entire 'Western IR' tradition with pretentiously universalist claims as represented by traditional Western IR theories, such as realism, liberalism and constructivism.

The logic whereby new schools must relate to existing schools and debates is also evident in Richard Whitley's argument that scientific fields 'reward intellectual innovation—only new knowledge is publishable—and yet contributions have to conform to collective standards and priorities if they are to be regarded as competent and scientific'.[55] By the same token, emerging schools must not only insert themselves into a web of existing positions in order to carve out their distinctiveness, even when breaking with them, but they must also play by the general rules of the game, i.e. communal standards for good practice. In some cases, however, new

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[52] Hedley Bull, 'International Theory: The Case for a Classical Approach,' *World Politics*, Vol. 18, No. 3, 1966, pp. 361–377.

[53] Tim Dunne, *Inventing International Society* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 1998), p. 6. Morton Kaplan, 'The New Great Debate,' *World Politics*, Vol. 19, No. 1, 1966, pp. 1–20

[54] Wæver, 'Aberystwyth, Paris, Copenhagen: The Europeanness', p. 48 and Wæver, 'Aberystwyth, Paris, Copenhagen: New 'Schools'', p. 13.

[55] Quoted in Wæver, 'The Sociology of a Not So International Discipline,' p. 716.

schools not only try to carve out an intellectual niche by playing by the rules but also attempt to subvert the dominant schools and their standards for good research. 'Arising in opposition to the status quo, a new school both introduces innovations into the accepted idea system of a discipline or specialty and challenges the authority structure of its field', Olga Amsterdamska contends, stressing that as it strives for recognition, a new school may formulate their own intellectual goals, methods and criteria of evaluation.[56] She goes so far as to argue that 'a school of thought can strive to establish an independent right to legitimize scholarly research and thus also to bypass or overthrow the existing scholarly elite' and that 'in attempting to achieve authority, those who proclaim a new school can lay more stress on the distinctiveness of their goals, methods, and criteria than intellectual history may determine is warranted.'[57]

If all emerging schools emphasize their distinctiveness vis-à-vis positions in the American mainstream—perhaps excessively so in the case of the Chinese School according to its critics,[58] it is not clear that all of them have actively sought to fundamentally subvert existing hierarchies and standards for evaluating research in the existing IR discipline still dominated by American IR. While the English School's classical approach and historical-sociological methodology and the Copenhagen School's discursive speech-act theory of securitization do diverge from conventional American standards of research, the Tsinghua school and this very journal for example have sought rather to emulate the standards for high-quality research that prevail in the mainstream American discipline.

Opposition-recognition dynamics

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[56] Olga Amsterdamska, 'Institutions and Schools of Thought,' *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 91, No. 2, 1985, p. 332.

[57] Amsterdamska, 'Institutions and Schools of Thought,' p. 332.

[58] Yan makes such a critique of Chinese School proponents in *Ancient Chinese Thought, Modern Chinese Power*, yet is himself critiqued for overplaying the exceptionalism and Chineseness while ignoring relevant Western scholarship making similar points by, for example, Victoria Tin-Bor Hui, 'Building Castles in the Sand,' *Chinese Journal of International Politics*, Vol. 5, No. 4, pp. 425–449. See also critics of exceptionalism and the romanticization of Chineseness in Chinese IR theorizing in Kim, 'Will IR Theory with Chinese Characteristics be a Powerful Alternative?'; Gilbert Rozman, 'Invocations of Chinese Traditions in International Relations', *Journal of Chinese Political Science*, Vol. 17, No. 2, 2014, pp. 111–124; Peter Marcus Kristensen and Ras Tind Nielsen, 'Constructing a Chinese International Relations Theory,' *International Political Sociology*, Vol. 7, No. 1, 2013, pp. 19–40; Peter Marcus Kristensen and Ras Tind Nielsen, '"You need to do something that the Westerners cannot understand"', in Nicola Horsburgh, Astrid Nordin, Shaun Breslin (eds.) *Chinese Politics and International Relations* (London: Routledge, 2014).

Another factor that contributes to the recognition, and to some extent the formation, of new schools is opposition and debate in the field. Most new schools become recognized precisely because they become subject to opposition, resistance and debate. In that sense, schools or scientific/intellectual movements can be seen as 'collective efforts to pursue research programs or projects for thought in the face of resistance from others in the scientific or intellectual community.'[59] The relational and (op)positional agency thus also works on behalf of status quo positions. Kuhn argued specifically that defenders of the status quo paradigm tend to ferociously resist theoretical alternatives rather than, in some Popperian sense, let their own paradigm be falsified in the light of factual anomalies.[60] 'A new scientific truth does not triumph by convincing its opponents and making them see the light,' Kuhn cited Max Planck approvingly from his autobiography, 'but rather because its opponents eventually die, and a new generation grows up that is familiar with it.'[61] Of course, schools work at a different level than paradigms, and their less all-encompassing nature may allow for coexistence and tolerance, even if they too may be incommensurable. Still, resistance to recognition and direct opposition from the status quo positions testifies not just to the struggle but also to the very emergence of a new school of thought. As an indication of this opposition-recognition dynamic, the labels of schools are often given and used by their critics for the purpose of delegitimizing its existence and denying it recognition.

A notable example of opposition-recognition dynamics leading to the crystallization and emergence of national schools is the labeling of the 'Austrian School' of economics by opponents from the 'German Historical School' during the Methodenstreit. Although the label 'Austrian' was a pejorative one as seen from the German perspective, the smear 'boomeranged' and catapulted the Austrian School to fame.[62] The most prominent case in IR is perhaps that of the 'English School', a label coined by Roy Jones to advocate its closure.[63] It is also a critic who coined the term 'Copenhagen School'.[64] Ole Wæver, a leading proponent of the Copenhagen School,

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[59] Scott Frickel and Neil Gross, 'A General Theory of Scientific/Intellectual Movements,' *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 70, No. 2, 2005, p. 206.

[60] Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, p. 18-19, 77, 150-151.

[61] Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, p. 151.

[62] Ludwig Von Mises, *The Historical Setting of the Austrian School of Economics* (New Rochelle: Arlington House, 1969), pp. 19–20.

[63] Jones, 'The English School of International Relations'.

[64] Bill Mcsweeney, 'Identity and Security: Buzan and the Copenhagen School,' *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 1, 1996, pp. 81–93.

in turn, was instrumental in labeling other European schools in critical security studies like the 'Paris' and 'Aberystwyth' Schools.[65] This name-calling is important because when prominent opponents engage a new school in debate, the process of name-calling becomes a battle of mutual positioning: ground for opposition for the opponents, and an assertion for recognition by proponents. This is often what propels new schools to fame. In this dynamic, resistance from dominant positions in the field implies recognition of a serious contender and is often more than what most new schools can hope for—particularly in the opposition-recognition by the mainstream American discipline.

The opposition-recognition dynamic can be elaborated through Randall Collins' logic of rivalries for securing, and then protecting, the limited slots that exist in the attention space of any intellectual field. For Collins, 'The underlying dynamic [of intellectual life] is a struggle over intellectual territory of limited size.'[66] He views attention space as largely a zero-sum game where no one is willing to give up territory without a fight. The social structure of the intellectual world, in his words, 'allows only a limited number of positions to receive much attention at any one time. There are only a small number of slots to be filled, and once they are filled up, there are overwhelming pressures against anyone else pressing through to the top ranks.'[67] This framing helps understand why the global recognition of the English School as a distinctive and systematic approach to theorizing IR—a credible alternative to the mainstream IR theories—is only recent. For the English School, the battle of opposition-recognition has been a long drawn-out one. It is only after the end of the Cold War when large political and economic transformations indirectly set off periods of intellectual change that the restructuring of the attention space in the intellectual field of IR becomes possible. As the structural opportunities arise for reconfiguring the attention space, a group of self-identified English School scholars have cultivated diligently these opportunities through intensive intellectual maneuvering, securing for the English School one of the limited number of attention slots in this reconfigured intellectual territory of limited size of IR.[68]

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[65] C.A.S.E. Collective, 'Critical Approaches to Security in Europe'; Wæver, 'Aberystwyth, Paris, Copenhagen: New 'Schools''.

[66] Collins, *The Sociology of Philosophies*, p. 75.

[67] Collins, *The Sociology of Philosophies*, p. 75.

[68] Yongjin Zhang, 'The Global Diffusion of the English School', in Cornelia Navari and Dan Green, eds., *Guide to the English School in International Studies* (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014), pp. 223–240.

If Collins is right and if the English School case is the norm not the exception, then opposition-recognition dynamics are likely to play out even more vigorously and passionately in the battle for recognition by 'non-Western' schools of IR. So far 'non-Western' schools have not been able to muster the same kind of attention and recognition in the 'global' discipline, even in the form of critique or calls for closure, as the European schools mentioned above. The 'Chinese school', 'Korean School', 'Japanese School' and to an even greater extent the 'Brasilia School' are largely self-proclaimed schools coined and debated by proponents.[69] To the extent that they have actually attracted critique, this is mostly from domestic critics who argue that these schools are mostly self-promoted and insular rather than schools coined and engaged by outsiders.[70] Most international writing on these non-Western schools has been part of 'IR around the world' surveys—that is, making them exotic 'postcards from' China, India, Korea, etc.—rather than as an integral part of ongoing theoretical debates in the discipline, where their ideas are engaged, applied and critiqued.

This dynamic of 'dominance by neglect'[71] is pervasive in the global disciplinary landscape. There are a number of sociological explanations for this, but one has particular relevance in the context of opposition-recognition dynamics in the field. The so-called 'geographical schools' are not only subject to opposition-recognition dynamics in one field, i.e. the American-global core. Opposition-recognition dynamics also work at the level of regional or national fields, as illustrated by the dynamic debate among critical security schools in Europe and increasingly sub-schools in China. This is an important insight when it comes to understanding the innovation of theoretical approaches from beyond the American core of the discipline. Theoretical interventions from beyond the American core, the geo-schools as they tend to be called, play a 'two-level game' where they navigate between relevant (op)positions in the global (read: Anglo-American) and the

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[69] Amado Luiz Cervo, 'Política Exterior e Relações Internacionais do Brasil,' *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional*, Vol. 46, No. 2, 2003, pp. 5–25; Qin, 'A Chinese School of International Relations Theory'; Ren Xiao, 'Toward a Chinese School of International Relations,' in Wang Gungwu and Zheng Yongnian, eds., *China and the New International Order* (London: Routledge, 2008), pp. 293–309; Ren, 'The "Chinese School" debate'.

[70] For the Chinese case, see Yan, *Ancient Chinese Thought, Modern Chinese Power* and critics cited in Kristensen and Nielsen, 'Constructing a Chinese International Relations Theory'; For the Brazilian case, see Hugo Arend, 'Brazilian Readings of International Relations,' Paper for the IPSA-ECPR Joint Conference, São Paulo, February 16-19, 2010; and critics cited in Peter Marcus Kristensen, 'Southern Sensibilities,' *Journal of International Relations and Development*, 2017, doi:10.1057/s41268-017-0107-z.

[71] Waever, 'Still a Discipline after all These Debates?', p. 313.

domestic field. The Chinese School debate is an illustrative example. It both works through global position-taking vis-à-vis Western IR theories *and* through 'domestic' position-taking in the debate for and against a Chinese School and later the more structured rivalry between the Tsinghua, Guanxi and Tianxia schools.[72]

What makes the Chinese School debate interesting is exactly that it is clearly a *debate* with different relational position-takings, both domestically as well as internationally. The Chinese School debate is different from the conversation on theory construction in other 'non-Western' or 'Southern' contexts precisely because it has been subject to domestic debate among China's top IR scholars, both for and against a Chinese School and between sub-schools. In comparison, there are also advocates of constructing IR theory from India through recovering Indian cultural-philosophical resources and by formulating alternative epistemologies. There is nevertheless a broad consensus that building an Indian school would be a nativist project that should be avoided. While these scholars also lament Eurocentrism and Anglo-American dominance in the global discipline, they rarely position themselves on the global level as a 'non-Western' or even 'Indian' theory vis-à-vis Western IR theory, as is often the case with Chinese School positioning. Their positioning is rather 'post-Western IR'.[73] The Indian theory conversation thus plays two different (op)position-recognition games. In the Brazilian case, too, there is less domestic debate on a nation-wide Brazilian School and the closest is those who advocate a Brasilia School. Compared to the Chinese School, however, the 'Brasilia School' is even more driven by self-promotion, is even more insular, and has not been directly put forward as a contender on the global field.[74]

For theorists from outside the American core, the opposition-recognition dynamics are interesting also because for them, the domestic and global fields are often not only differentiated *territorially*—as the inside field versus the outside field—but also *functionally* as the 'field of production' and the 'field of reception', respectively.[75] The fields of production and reception will of course be identical to scholars who produce and speak mostly to a domestic audience, but are not to those

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[72] Zhang and Chang, *Constructing a Chinese School of International Relations*.
[73] See for instance Navnita Behera, 'Re-Imagining IR in India,' *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* Vol. 7, 2007, pp. 341–368; Deepshikha Shahi and Gennaro Ascione, 'Rethinking the absence of post-Western International Relations theory in India,' *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 22, No. 2, pp. 313-334; Kristensen, *Rising Powers in the International Relations Discipline*.
[74] Kristensen, 'Southern Sensibilities'.
[75] Bourdieu in Helen Turton, *International Relations and American Dominance* (London: Routledge, 2016).

aiming to position a 'domestic product' in a 'global field of reception'. In principle, the logic of relational position-taking in a domestic field of production and a global field of reception also applies to new American theories. But due to the parochialism of American IR and its conflation of 'American' and 'Global' IR, these theoretical products will often be put forward only in relation to the dominant positions in the American field. As we will discuss further in the final section, this conflation is also part of the explanation why American theories are rarely put forward as 'American' theories. For geographical schools from the periphery, by contrast, even if they are successful in gaining recognition in the global field of reception, there are obvious pitfalls of having played the two-level game: they will often enter as a representative of IR from a particular country or region while the heterogeneity in the field of production tends to be downplayed or ignored. The navigation between the global and domestic field also explains why naming remains such a contentious issue for the Chinese School. The generic 'Chinese School' label has certain advantages in a global field of reception where a rising China is gaining ever more attention. Yet the domestic discourse has clearly shifted in recent years from the pursuit of a singular 'Chinese School' toward a more structured rivalry among the Tsinghua, Tianxia and Guanxi/relationality schools, or indeed parallel theoretical innovations in developing relational constructivism, social evolutionism and moral realism, among others. [76]

A final reason why non-Western geographical schools have not yet gained much opposition and/or recognition in the global discipline may have to do with the fact that these schools are still in their intellectual infancy and have not yet a significant contribution to knowledge production, not to speak of carving out a distinct position that warrants recognition. Moreover, they remain relatively closed intellectual and social networks, not as connected as they could, and should, be to the social and intellectual networks of the dominant Euro-American discipline, its journals, book presses, associations, conferences, awards and general symbolic infrastructure.

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[76] L.H.M. Ling, 'What's in a name? A critical interrogation of the "Chinese School of IR",' in Zhang and Chang, eds., *Constructing a Chinese School of International Relations*, pp. 17–34; and Yongjin Zhang, 'Constructing a Chinese School of IR as a Sociological reality', in Zhang and Chang, eds., *Constructing a Chinese School of International Relations*, pp. 192-209; Ren, 'The "Chinese School" Debate'; Yan, *Ancient Chinese Thought, Modern Chinese Power*; Yan, 'An International Relations Theory of Moral Realism'; Li Changwen, 'Critical Thinking on Three Paradigms of International Relations Theories, *Journal of Jiangnan Social University*, 2, 2017, pp. 49-54.

Social and intellectual networks

Distinctively positioned ideas that are subject to debate and opposition/recognition dynamics do not, in themselves, make a school. Schools are social and intellectual collectives. Genuine schools of thought, Joseph Schumpeter asserted, 'are sociological realities. They have their structures—relations between leaders and followers—their flags, their battle cries, their moods, and their all-too human interests.'[77] A school of thought is defined by social and intellectual networks in so far as it is 'a socially constructed and informal community of researchers who build on each other's ideas and share similar interests [and a label] for dense social networks that distribute information through personal ties, conferences, conversations, etc.'[78]

    This network conception of schools of thought implies some degree of exclusivity. Social and intellectual network formation indeed usually start out as exclusive clubs with restricted membership and continue to have one or a few canonical figures. This is clearly the case with the British Committee on the Theory of International Politics, which laid the foundation for the emergence of the English School.[79] When Roy Jones coined the term the 'English School', it was to refer to a body of publications on the question of order in world politics written by a group of thinkers closely associated with the British Committee on the Theory of International Politics such as Manning, Wight, and Bull, as well as those by Donelan, Northedge and Purnell, among others.[80] Similarly, Bill McSweeney coined the term the 'Copenhagen School' to refer to 'several publications on the security theme' produced by Barry Buzan and collaborators at the Copenhagen Peace Research Institute—an initially quite small network.[81] None of these two schools have remained small exclusive networks, however. It is in large part their ability to be inclusive that has allowed them to be propagated over time and space.

    Concerning their propagation over time, followership is an important dimension of school formation. 'Schools of thought', as sociological realities, must attract

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[77] Joseph Schumpeter, *History of Economic Analysis* (Londong: Routledge, 2006), p. 783.
[78] Upham, Rosenkopf, and Ungar, 'Positioning knowledge,' p. 556.
[79] Brunello Vigezzi, 'The British Committee and International Society,' in Cornelia Navari and Dan Green, eds., *Guide to the English School in International Studies* (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014), p. 37.
[80] Jones, 'The English School of International Relations,' p. 1.
[81] Mcsweeney, 'Identity and Security,' p. 81.

followers and disciples (think school like a school of fish) and turn into collective intellectual movements with their own battle cries and distinctive identity. Randall Collins emphasizes not only horizontal but also vertical (teacher-student) personal relationships as an important network characteristic of schools of thought.[82] Indeed, one can often find very direct personal ties between successive generations of teachers and students, or "young recruits", as have also been noted in the case the English School (e.g. Wight-Bull-Vincent).[83] The social structure of such relations between leaders and followers of a school, however, should not be understood in the narrow sense of a group of scholars dogmatically representing a specific line of thought or following a distinctive and systematic approach to research in IR with a well-established signature method that all adherents agree to take. It is also important to emphasize that training is only one way of gaining followers and expanding the temporal and spatial reach of a school of thought.

Schools of thought are constituted not only of horizontal networks among a club-like elite and vertical networks between leader and followers, but potentially also of broader social and intellectual networks in the field. As Randall Collins argues, it is within such networks that scholars engage in interaction rituals at conferences, workshops and other types of academic debate and exchange.[84] These expanding networks allow schools to be spatially propagated and to travel beyond their origins. It is through these more expansive intellectual networks that a scholar can make the best use of his/her knowledge to win broader recognition and attention in the field and to form the so-called 'coalitions in the mind.' Indeed, the construction of global social and intellectual networks is a large part of the explanation why these schools become widely recognized as 'schools' in the first place. The reconvened English School in the twenty-first century, for instance, has evolved into distinctive global and regional intellectual networks.[85]

One does not have to be 'schooled' by the originators and enter into the school's mentor-student lineages to be included, but one does have to (self)-identify with it and at least be familiar with, even if critical of, its origins and traditions. The English School is successful in its global diffusion precisely because of its constitution as 'a heterogeneous community of scholars from a variety of countries

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[82] Collins, *The Sociology of Philosophies*, p. 64-65.
[83] Dunne, *Inventing International Society*, p. 6.
[84] Collins, *The Sociology of Philosophies*, p. 19.
[85] Zhang, 'The Global Diffusion of the English School'.

who proudly identify themselves with this school'.[86] As famously conceptualized by Martin Wight, the English School can be seen as 'a great conversation' open to anyone who is interested in the idea of international society as a central problematique in understanding international relations.[87] The English School in its current incarnation therefore resembles more of a 'coalitions in the mind' as it claims a heterogeneous group of scholars ranging from post-structuralist James Der Derian to critical theorist Andrew Linklater, and to socio-anthropologist Iver Neumann, and to a reformed structural realist Barry Buzan, among others.

The Copenhagen School, too, has also spurred an immense amount of research on 'securitization' both in Copenhagen, Europe and beyond, so much so that it has arguably transformed from school into a 'securitization theory'. Part of the success of both schools thus also lies in the fact that they are expandable networks whose ideas are able to travel, so that a South African or a Chinese can be working with/within the English or the Copenhagen School. Other aspiring national schools today—whether Brazilian, Chinese, Indian, Korean or Japanese—will invariably have to balance exclusivity and distinctiveness with some degree of openness as a social and intellectual network. Purely nativist schools of thought with limited social and intellectual networks—e.g. a Chinese School by and for the Chinese people—will find it harder to get recognized as a genuine school of thought.

In one sense, the Chinese School of IR can also be characterized as a broader conversation or 'coalition in the mind' based on the shared belief in the possibility and desirability of constructing a Chinese School of IR and firm commitment to and strong interests in its construction. Rather than one homogenous school of thought, it is a conversation about how to theorize a distinct perspective on world politics that draws on Chinese cultural resources and is informed by a historically contingent situation of China's rise to a global power status. And once we zoom in on the geo-epistemic lens, the putative Chinese School is marked by profound disagreements among its advocates as to the agenda, the methodology, and the focus of its empirical research for the Chinese School project, and its possible theoretical contribution to

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[86] Emanuel Adler, 'Barry Buzan's Use of Constructivism to Reconstruct the English School,' *Millennium*, Vol. 34, No. 1, 2005, p. 171; Dunne, *Inventing International Society*.
[87] Wang and Buzan, 'The English and Chinese Schools of International Relations,' p. 10.

knowledge production.[88] However, the Chinese School still has to prove its ability to travel over time and space.

Institutional infrastructure

The final, and most literal, definition of a 'school of thought' refers to organizations where teaching and learning takes place.[89] The institutional context is more important because the dynamics of school formation outlined above can be reinforced by support from an institutional and material base, especially the more autonomous control the school wields over this base.[90] There is a sociologically important point in emphasizing control over infrastructure because it enables schools to determine their own criteria for entry, quality and excellence and thus obtain a certain degree of intellectual autonomy, credibility and legitimacy. Moreover, control over institutional infrastructure, say a journal, can serve to cultivate and/or promote a discourse and debate (i.e. opposition-recognition dynamics) and help diffuse the school and its ideas beyond its immediate base (i.e. network expansion).

As for legitimation and autonomy, new schools are subject to the dynamics of a 'dual legitimation system' as alluded to above.[91] On the one hand, they attempt to achieve recognition from the scientific establishment. On the other, they also aim to establish their own means of legitimation by gaining control over their own institutions, hiring, training, and publishing according to their own criteria for validation. Amsterdamska identified this 'seemingly contradictory strategy' that 'appears to be characteristic of schools of thought in general' in the following words

> [I]nsofar as access to valued resources in science is dependent on the recognition of the value of scholarly contributions, schools must strive for external legitimation of their research; insofar as their aim is to assert

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[88] Kristensen and Nielsen, 'Constructing a Chinese International Relations Theory'; and Zhang and Chang, *Constructing a Chinese School of International Relations*. For most recent debates in China about the prospect of a Chinese School of IR, see Guo Shuyong, 'The Growth of the Chinese Consciousness in the Development of Chinese International Theory and the Prospect of a Chinese School of IR', *International Review*, 1: 2017, pp. 19-39; Lu Linyu, 'Constructing a Chinese School of International Relations Theory', *Chinese Journal of European Studies*, 5, 2016, pp. 129-145; and Meng Honghua, 'From Chinese Characteristics to a Chinese School'', *International Review*, 2, 2016, pp. 1-13.
[89] Collins, *The Sociology of Philosophies*, pp. 64-65.
[90] Collins, *The Sociology of Philosophies*.
[91] Amsterdamska, 'Institutions and Schools of Thought,' pp. 340–341.

independent scientific authority, they attempt to create separate means for the legitimation of scientific work.[92]

It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that several schools of thought are often centered on and named after institutions—that is, places for instruction and learned conversation: Think of the Institut für Sozialforschung at Goethe-Universität Frankfurt for the 'Frankfurt School' of critical theory, Cambridge University for the 'Cambridge School' of Intellectual History, Kyoto University for the 'Kyoto School' in philosophy, the University of Chicago for the 'Chicago Schools' (in economics and sociology) or the Copenhagen Peace Research Institute for the 'Copenhagen School' in IR and the Institute for International Studies at the Tsinghua University for the 'Tsinghua Approach/School'. The institutional level of analysis is probably the most common across different fields, compared to national or regional schools, which contain more diversity within and also tend to be less institutionally anchored.

Institutionalized schools can attract a steady inflow of students and a lineage of teacher/mentor-student relations that allows the school to be propagated through socialization. The institutional infrastructure is furthermore important because it allows for control over material and organizational (employment and promotion) as well as symbolic resources (prestige and recognition). Institutionalization thus lends autonomy and allows schools to determine their own criteria for entry, quality and excellence. Given the relatively high degree of strategic dependence in IR on the limited access to and control of necessary means of intellectual distribution, particularly through highly reputable journals,[93] this autonomy is, not surprisingly, often supported by control over a journal outlet, particularly at a time when journal publication not only confers symbolic but also material capital. Prominent cases include the 'Chicago School' and the *American Journal of Sociology* and the 'Frankfurt School' and the *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*.[94] In the case of Chinese IR, the Institute for International Studies of Tsinghua University publishes both *Quarterly Journal of International Politics* (in Chinese) and the *Chinese Journal of International Politics* (in English). The latter was established in large part to create an

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[92] Amsterdamska, 'Institutions and Schools of Thought,' p. 341.
[93] Wæver, 'Still a Discipline after all These Debates?', pp. 314-315.
[94] Andrew Abbott, *Department and Discipline* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1999); Martin Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research, 1923-1950* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), p. 114.

(Anglophone) space for Chinese international thought, theorizing the rise of China, Chinese culture and philosophy and it has proved instrumental in bringing the Chinese School debates to global attention.[95] The *Revista Brasileira de Politica Internactional* has been an outlet for the so-called Brasilia School, but is also the oldest and arguably most prominent IR journal in Brazil. As schools are rarely confined to their institutional base, access to, and preferably control over, a communication outlet and an association create a space for intellectual conversation and the diffusion of ideas.

The control over journals does not automatically or necessarily strengthen the institutional infrastructure of a school of thought, although such control is enabling and empowering in terms of determining one's own criteria for quality and excellence, thus conferring some degree of intellectual autonomy. Intellectual entrepreneurship is an important consideration as well. In the case of *The Chinese Journal of International Politics*, one of the most successful outlets for publishing and disseminating Chinese thought on International Relations, this seems to be aimed more at creating a discursive space for Chinese research on International Relations and the International Relations of China rather than introducing new research standards for the discipline as a whole. The Journal has followed and sought to emulate the standards for high-quality research as defined by the mainstream American IR, rather than challenge or problematize them.[96]

School Labeling and Geopolitics of Knowledge

Having outlined a sociological framework for understanding the formation of schools of thought, let us return now to the labeling puzzle outlined in the introduction. All ideas develop in a specific historical, social and geographical context. If that is broadly accepted, why are only some labeled after specific geocultural/geographical sites, while others are simply called theories and paradigms? Why are 'isms' such as liberalism, realism and constructivism not considered part of a wider 'American School'? What does such labeling do and what purposes does it serve? Why do labels matter? What is the contentious politics behind the (epi)phenomenon of school

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[95] Peter Marcus Kristensen, 'International Relations in China and Europe,' *Pacific Review*, Vol. 28, No. 2, 2015, pp. 161–187.
[96] Kristensen, 'International Relations in China and Europe'.

labeling? Answers to these questions depend contingently on the perspective from which one speaks, the dominant and privileged core or the marginalized and underprivileged peripheries of the discipline.

In the first instance, there is a certain 'repressive tolerance' involved in the use of geographical and institutional labeling of schools of thought by the 'core'.[97] It grants recognition of its existence, but not as a *theory* on par with other (American) theories. As already noted, in a broader geopolitical pattern in the sociology of 'schools' in IR, such labels are conferred almost exclusively to international thought produced *outside* the United States. Theoretical knowledge produced in the American core is mostly referred to prestigiously as theories and paradigms—regardless of the fact that some observers have proposed the notion of an 'American School', especially in IPE.[98] Privileging theoretical knowledge produced in the United States as 'untainted' by its geocultural origins effectively creates parallel but hierarchical universes in the disciplinary knowledge production. The labeling of geographical and institutional school conveniently relegates them to a different and arguably inferior universe of knowledge production and circulation. It becomes an integral part of a strategy of 'dominance by neglect' by the core as mentioned earlier.

Second, for sceptics and critics at the core, a repressive use of the school label serves the purpose of *singularizing* and *homogenizing ideas*. It implies that all thought with the given geographical or institutional denominator can be described in singular terms. This serves to impose a greater degree of homogeneity within the school. Compared with American IR, which presents itself as pluralistic, these schools of thought would look hopelessly parochial and provincially monotonous. A common defense against the labeling of an American school of IR would typically ask 'What do Kenneth Waltz, Richard Ashley, Cynthia Enloe, and Craig Murphy have in common?[99] Yet, this diversity does not preclude certain geo-epistemic characteristics of American IR. Arguably, there is also significant diversity within geographically labeled schools of IR. Significant differences between pluralism and solidarism in the English School can be in part attributed to different geo-epistemic position privileging international society vis-à-vis world society perspectives. There

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[97] Wæver, 'Aberystwyth, Paris, Copenhagen: New 'Schools'', p. 13.
[98] Daniel Maliniak and Michael Tierney, 'The American school of IPE,' *Review of International Political Economy*, Vol. 16, No. 1, 2009, pp. 6–33; Levine and Barder, 'The Closing of the American Mind'.
[99] Porter cited in Wæver, 'The Sociology of a Not So International Discipline,' p. 688.

is also significant epistemological and methodological diversity within Chinese IR, as illustrated above, even though the notion of singular 'Chinese School' seems to suggest otherwise.

Third, for the 'core', labeling schools of thought with the geographical and institutional prefix is useful in localizing ideas, thus denying their potential for developing a universal theory. It is true that a contextualist reading could thus situate the Copenhagen school as a response to growing concerns over non-traditional security threats from migration to environmental degradation in post-cold war Europe. The English School could be situated as a response to Great Britain's imperial decline and the rise of postcolonial politics. Indeed, its ideas on the expansion of international society and the standard of 'civilization' have been read in such a manner.[100] Yet, few would claim that the Copenhagen or the English School are simply 'schools' in the sense of a class of likeminded people at the same location and the ideas they advance have only 'local' application. Neither is particularly tied in empirical focus to its own geographical context compared to, say, the Chicago School of sociology, which used the streets of Chicago as their laboratory.[101] As we have also argued, both schools have travelled beyond their original geographical settings and geocultural sites, and have expanded both in membership and empirical applications. Both have boasted extensive global social and academic networks. To the extent that both the Copenhagen School and the English School have arguably made some inroads into the American 'core', they are, however, exceptions.

The use of national labels by the core, such as Chinese, Indian, and Korean, has proved effective so far in localizing those theoretical noises from the peripheries, and even in delegitimizing their counter-hegemonic claims against the dominance of the American 'core'. From the perspective characteristic of IR as an American social science, geographically labeled 'national' schools are invited into the global field only as schools that are local, applicable only to their own geographical context, and constructed and developed only for their own nation-state and perhaps only by, and for the consumption of, their nationals. Not surprisingly, as one Chinese scholar noted from his personal experience at an international conference, whereas advocating the

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[100] William Callahan, 'Nationalising International Theory: Race, Class and the English School,' *Global Society*, Vol. 18, No. 4, 2004, pp. 305–323.
[101] As Abbott quibbles in his history of the Chicago School of Sociology, it 'is often about the city and, if so, nearly always about Chicago…whether it is counting psychotics in neighbourhoods, reading immigrants' letters to the old country, or watching the languid luxuries of the taxi-dance hall.' Abbott, *Department and Discipline*, p. 6.

construction of a national school of IR, such as the Chinese School as a counterbalance to the alleged Eurocentrism in IR is often seen as 'nationalistic', defending the universalist pretensions of the existing theories can claim to be cosmopolitan.[102] Even a well-intentioned critic of national schools of IR warns that 'schools yoked to the nation or even to a regional grouping pose dangers of their own. One suspects there is another great debate in the making, and perhaps this time around it will help to clear the air.'[103]

Clearly, school labeling affects *how* such theorizing efforts from the peripheries and semi-peripheries are invited into the conversation in the heartland of the discipline, i.e. their positionality in a globalized American social science. School labelling in this understanding has helped reinforce and reclaim the centrality of mainstream IR theories and the universality claims of the American 'core', as well as marginalize, if not totally discredit or delegitimize, alternative approaches as inherently locally bounded, though not decidedly parochial and flawed. If this is indeed the case, why should the school labeling have been willingly appropriated by their proponents at the disciplinary peripheries, particularly in the non-Western IR epistemic communities? What particular strategic purposes has school labeling served in promoting theoretical innovation beyond the West? We argue that school labeling has been actively appropriated by its proponents when designating emerging geographically labeled national schools of IR beyond the West for three strategic and political reasons.

First, geographical school making at the peripheries carries special political significance and it is purposely contentious. It is true that for some, particular those advocating *national* schools, this is meant to assert a particular national identity through producing alternative theories. But for others, waving the flags of national schools of IR beyond the West is not only aimed at alternative knowledge production. Rather, it is also a purposeful political contention,[104] as many feminist, post-colonial and green battle cries have been. It is to make a political point to disturb the status quo, to articulate a protest over the prevailing disciplinary fashion, and to engage in a kind of academic insurrection, or 'epistemic disobedience' in the words of Walter

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[102] Ren, 'The "Chinese School" debate,' p. 44.
[103] Darby, 'Engaging with Asia,' p. 210.
[104] Charles Tilly and Sidney Tarrow, *Contentious Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

Mignolo,[105] against theoretical and intellectual hegemony of either its Eurocentrism reincarnation or an American social science manifestation.

Second, the appropriation of geographical school labels by those at the peripheries can be read as a strategic way to decenter and provincialize, perhaps even nationalize, American IR and expose the self-serving interests of its pretentiously universalist epistemology. In asserting their legitimacy, emerging non-Western schools have often claimed to be counter-hegemonic, in particular against the dominance of American IR as an intricately differentiated structure of authorities that privileges a singular site for knowledge production with a particular conception of what is credible and legitimate knowledge. Looking through geo-cultural lenses, challenging the universalist claims of American IR theories through theoretical innovation by non-Western IR schools is to assert knowledge claims from the putative peripheries and semi-peripheries of the discipline in its existing geography of knowledge. It not only attempts to break down the prejudices embedded in the existing knowledge system, but also question the claim of the American 'core' as the creator, depositor and distributor of universal knowledge. Moreover, as a strategic, or 'cynical' in Bourdieusian terms, move, it deploys an otherwise marginalized periphery habitus as a potentially 'subversive capital'.[106]

Third, geographical school making becomes an articulation of 'an epistemic awakening'. In highlighting the global power differential in the geopolitics of knowledge-making, it unveils the geo-historical linkage between the political and the epistemic. It lays bare the nature of the 'epistemic violence'[107] historically committed by Eurocentrism 'understood as a way of conceiving of and organizing knowledge',[108] which continues to obstruct and undermine 'Southern' or 'non-Western' approaches to knowledge. Against this backdrop, non-Western school labeling and -making constitutes an intervention into the uneven geo-political structures of IR, as it calls into question the modern and colonial foundation of the control of knowledge while also creating an opening for alternative sources and modes of knowing. As a proponent of Indian theorizing puts it in an interview, 'We

[105] Walter Mignolo, 'Epistemic Disobedience, Independent Thought and De-Colonial Freedom', *Theory, Culture & Society*, Vol. 26 (7–8), 2009, pp. 1–23.
[106] Hamati-Ataya, 'IR Theory as International Practice/Agency', p. 643.
[107] Gayatri Spivak, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?', in Rosalind Morris (ed.), *Can the Subaltern Speak?* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010 [1988]).
[108] Mignolo, 'The Geopolitics of Knowledge and Colonial Difference', *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, p. 84.

just want to say that we can think. It's as simple as that.'[109] School labeling is political, as it is integral of a collective action to redress epistemic injustice, which contributes to the oppression of those at the margins and their claims as knowers.[110] From a sociology of knowledge stance, it is important to stress that this is primarily a move in disciplinary politics, not necessarily a product of great power politics as the most externalist accounts, and many critics of new schools, would have it.

Conclusion

Schools of thought in IR as self-conscious, intellectually distinct, socially recognized and institutionalized collective endeavors at knowledge production are clearly an integral part of the disciplinary growth of IR. It has become increasingly part of the historiography of IR. Following the tradition of sociology of IR pioneered by Carr, we set out to explore how geo-epistemic diversity has informed (or not) our understanding of the sociologically problematic nature of IR knowledge production in the existing discipline. The categorization of collective endeavors of non-American theoretical knowledge production as 'schools' and the use of geographical and institutional labels to name them, we have argued, help solidify the core and periphery configuration in the discipline of IR. Using the insights generated by the sociology of science and of philosophies, we have identified four clusters of sociological conditions and dynamics that facilitate the formation and sustain the operation of schools of thought in IR. In exemplifying how these dynamics are operationalized in the instance of the formation and operation of the English School, the Copenhagen School and the Chinese School, however, it becomes abundantly clear that not far behind the epistemic is the political and that the sociological and the political are inseparable. Where knowledge is produced often determines whether it is accepted as genuine contribution to knowledge with what degree of universality/particularity and thus how it is accepted, ordered, disseminated and consumed in the discipline. School labeling in this sense is more than an epiphenomenon. It constitutes a battleground for contestation and legitimation. While the 'core' uses the school label to create a parallel, and explicitly inferior, universe of knowledge production to localize theoretical noises from the peripheries, the school

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[109] Kristensen, *Rising Powers in the International Relations Discipline*, p. 454.
[110] Miranda Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

label is proactively appropriated by those at peripheries and semi-peripheries to assert their knowledge claims, to legitimate their theoretical enterprises and to provincialize American IR. For non-Western national schools of IR, the appropriation of the school label can also be seen as a call for 'epistemic justice' in terms of removing the colonial and imperial epistemological foundation of the knowledge control in the first instance. To the extent that the curious case of schools of IR embodies a harrowing struggle for IR to become a truly global discipline, it demands more attention from the discipline and entails more in-depth research to better understand the persistence of geopolitics of knowledge and its perils in our collective pursuit of constructing a truly global IR.