



Conclusions

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Wor(l)ds Beyond the West

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Globalizing International Relations sets out to critically examine divides and diversity in the discipline, both within and beyond its ‘Western’ core. It is an important contribution to the sociology of the IR discipline by both contributing to the longstanding literature on the parochialism of the mainstream American IR discipline (Hoffmann 1977; Holsti 1985a; Wæver 1998; Smith 2000; Crawford and Jarvis 2001) and its colonial legacies (Long and Schmidt 2005) as well as to the increasing number of inquiries into how IR is done, sometimes differently, elsewhere around the world (Jørgensen and Knudsen 2006; Tickner and Wæver 2009; Acharya and Buzan 2010). The mostly empirical approach taken throughout the chapters does not stand so much in contrast to, or move beyond, these earlier postcard-like studies of IR in different locations around the world, but inscribes itself as the necessary extension of these. The previous mappings of what IR is and how it is done in China, Russia, Iran or Latin America are a necessary background for the endeavor undertaken here. As the editors have summarized and tabularized the chapters in the introduction, I wish to use this concluding chapter to position the volume in relation to existing research in the sociology of IR and discuss how it contributes to that literature.

This volume is predicated on the assumption that there is a connection between our geographical location and our intellectual (pre)dispositions. The editors conceive of location in wide terms, including gender, ethnic, religious political and cultural location, but after all the volume is entitled *Globalizing IR*, not gendering IR or historicizing IR. Much like the majority of the existing sociology of IR literature, most chapters *spatialize* divides and diversity, leaving the gap between the sociological and historiography of IR largely intact. Indeed, sociological studies of IR have been excessively focused on geographical parochialism and continues to perceive itself as the ‘American Social Science’ *par excellence* (for recent critiques, see Kristensen 2015b; Turton 2015). American dominance is usually seen as problematic because geographical positionality is presumed to be connected somehow to intellectual (pre)dispositions. The implications of this geopolitical version of the where-you-sit-is-where-you-stand argument, is that any search for intellectual diversity and pluralism must always be connected to a search for geographical diversity. American IR, despite its considerable diversity, cannot contain all possible worlds of IR. This assumption explains the hyphenation “geo-epistemology” employed throughout the volume. The project is thus predicated on a basic idea in the sociology of science – namely that of *relativity* – that can be traced to the Pascalian notion that “what is truth on the one side of the Pyrenees is error on the other” (Woolgar 1988:22). One of the key contributions of the comparative sociology of IR, or ‘IR around the world’ literature (Friedrichs 2004; Jørgensen and Knudsen 2006a; Tickner and Wæver 2009) is its contribution to disciplinary reflexivity by following the ‘it could be otherwise’ maxim. Simply by documenting national differences, the sociology of IR has shown that even what seems universal is in fact parochial once you gain a little, in this case geographical, perspective. This comparative IR around the world literature also suffers from two major limitations, however. First, comparative exercises may not always find the desired diversity outside the ‘West’, as numerous of the preceding chapters also confirm. What good are these comparative studies of IR around the world if there is no relativity—if the Western branch of the discipline has become so hegemonic, and others

so socialized, that IR looks the same no matter where we look? Second, the documentation of how IR is done, sometimes slightly differently, in peripheral corners of the world does not seem to have made a large impact on the way IR is done in the metropolis. For these and other reasons, *Globalizing International Relations* advocates for the need to go beyond mere empirical examinations of IR around the world.

Another way in which this book diverges from the typical sociology of science approaches is in its normative impetus. The sociology of science typically does not aim to settle which geographical variety should count as legitimate knowledge—this is left to the epistemologists and philosophers of science—but simply documents the variety of knowledge claims in order to explain the sources of variation (Woolgar 1988:22). This volume, on the contrary, sets out to not only examine but also *promote* diversity in International Relations. Drawing on feminist and postcolonial insights, there is a strong anti-colonial, anti-eurocentric, anti-racist, and anti-sexist undercurrent throughout the essays. This normativity is one of the main strengths of the volume. The chapters are clearly shaped by the authors' personal trajectories and experiences. Most authors, who are students of IR, are reflexive about how they are being schooled in mainstream IR and the implications it has for their gaze on world politics. Although this book is not intended as a contribution to the pedagogy of IR—a sub-strand of the sociology of IR literature that examines syllabi (Alker and Biersteker 1984; Holsti 1985; Robles 1993; Nossal 2001; Friedrichs 2004; Biersteker 2009; Hagmann and Biersteker 2014) and teaching practices around the world and in multi-cultural classrooms (Kasimovskaya 2002; Prasirtsuk 2008; Balakrishnan 2009; Chong and Hamilton-Hart 2009; Chong and Tan 2009; Hadiwinata 2009; Minh 2009; McMahon and Zou 2011; Bertrand and Lee 2012; Faria 2012)—it may nonetheless be of interest to this tradition to because most chapters are written by students, several of whom actively engage their classroom experiences as recipients of IR discourse in a productive encounter with the overarching 'Globalizing IR' debate. This engagement should promote reflexivity about our scholarly positionality and how it affects the research we do, for IR students and teachers alike.

The most evident normative goal throughout the volume is that IR must be pushed towards more diversity in order to become what the authors variously call a "fully balanced and pluralist", "democratic" and "globalized" discipline with "equal opportunities" for scholars regardless of origin. One version of this argument is that we get a fuller picture of world politics if we hear more voices. For example, some chapters problematize that a US-centric discipline cannot truly grasp the opinions of scholars from other countries (e.g. Chen and Zhu). However, a fundamental problem here seems to be that a significant part of the US mainstream does not accept the principle of relativity: that the production of IR knowledge is related to geopolitical perspective. Or, as E.H. Carr once put it in a letter to Stanley Hoffmann: "The study of international relations in English speaking countries is simply study of the best way to run the world from positions of strength. The study of international relations in African and Asian Universities, if it ever got going, would be a study of the exploitation of the weaker by the stronger." (cited in Haslam 2000:252–253). Unlike Carr's classical realism infused by Mannheimian sociology of knowledge, the conventional positivist view today continues to be that truth has no perspective. Correspondingly, the lack of non-Western voices in IR need not constitute a major problem for the discipline because Americans, equipped with a rigorous social science toolbox, are perfectly capable of analyzing the foreign policy of another country or give a complete picture of world politics as a whole.

The authors in this volume are right to challenge such a view, but nevertheless tend to assume that there is something unique about the subject matter of IR that makes geographical diversity more urgent in this discipline: As Kleinn argues, "IR's subject matter demands the inclusion of non-Western voices". Why any more than physics? Economics? What is special about IR? A common response is that we cannot be satisfied with a situation where a small fraction of the world's

population retains a monopoly of interpretation over the politics of the *globe*. But it is rarely made explicit why we should be better able to live with such a situation in geography, forestry, business administration, physics or medicine? As I have argued elsewhere, there is a need for more comparative studies of the sociology of IR vis-à-vis other disciplines, for example to study its relative Americanness or Westernness (Kristensen 2015b). Given its focus on the globalization of IR, this volume obviously does not cover much of the cross-disciplinary divides, although it does appear in comparison to anthropology (Kleinn), aboriginal studies (Dudziak) and the engagement with post-colonial studies and feminism more broadly. The chapter by Kleinn, which compares the IR worlding debate to that in anthropology, should be emphasized in this context. More such studies are needed to bring the much-desired reflexivity to IR, a discipline that often portrays its problems as unique: E.g. as the American or Western-centric discipline *par excellence*. If indeed other disciplines suffer, or have suffered, from similar (neo)imperial legacies, their experiences could bring some perspective to IR's debate. We should of course be aware that lessons from other disciplines are not necessarily transferable to IR and the major difference compared to anthropology is perhaps, as Kleinn notes, that anthropology with its different geographical schools of thought (e.g. British, American, French) and its traditionally more localized and parochial subject matter (e.g. tribal structures) was always less totalizing than IR and thus more tolerant of the existence of different 'geo-epistemologies'. After all, it is easier for non-core/western scholars to contribute in a discipline where local, contextual and native expertise is valorized. Comparatively, IR's valorization of theoretical contributions has tended to be proportional to their detachment from context. IR, with its totalizing gaze on the globe, has thus had a much harder time recognizing its parochialisms and that there are other worlds beyond the West.

The basic idea of Worlding as a normative project is exactly to move from these totalizing theories about the international, the Western invention of a singular Westphalian international, towards theories about the world(s) (Agathangelou and Ling 2009; Walker 2010; Ling 2013)—a more *worldly* IR that is both more planetary and transcendent of sovereign particularisms but also more open to the mundane, down-to-earth micro-context of thinking about different worlds. The search for other worlds starts, in *Globalizing International Relations* too, with a critical inquiry into the world has already been worlded for us. Especially worldings like the First vs. Third World, Western vs. non-Western World, core vs. periphery and Global North vs. South are rejected as Orientalizing and imperial constructs. Most essays in this volume explicitly aim to avoid perpetuating such dichotomies, especially the 'West' and 'non-West', and focus instead on intersectionality. The 'West' is notoriously difficult to define, as several chapters note (citing Hutchings 2011), but apparently also hard to resist. The scientometrician in me cannot help but note the irony in that 'Western', with 463 occurrences, is the fourth most-used word in this book after IR, international and Chinese (sorting out stop-words like the, of, and). This irony is probably valid for most attempts by critical IR scholars to move beyond conceptual trappings of 'the West', whereas few positivist scholars prefix IR knowledge as 'Western' or 'non-Western'. One of the reasons why these dichotomies continue to permeate this volume, despite the awareness that they are essentialist, is that they are useful for examining *power relations*. Dichotomies like North-South, West-non-West and core-periphery are not simply relations of difference. The Hegelian trap, mentioned by several authors, also pertains to a hierarchical master-slave relation, appearing here as culturalized, gendered, colonized and racialized relations of super/subordination. Western/non-Western, core/periphery, south/north signify different modes of power, but unlike the more neutral term geo-epistemology, they all describe power relations and help the authors cut through them. West and non-West must sometimes be deployed as "strategic essentialisms" in the very struggle against these power relations (Spivak 1996:214).

This is so because, not despite, of the fact that these dichotomies are notoriously ambivalent. There is a ‘non-West’ within the ‘West’ as Dudziak persuasively demonstrates in the case of Australia. Vast areas of the globe that long have been worlded as ‘West’ in IR, and the sociology of IR, are in fact postcolonial. Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Ireland (Cox and Nossal 2009), but even Singapore or Hong Kong could be analyzed as postcolonial countries. Yet, these countries are usually categorized as ‘Anglo-World’, part of a ‘core’ organized around a certain language (Anglo). Meanwhile, their political, colonial and race histories have been erased—as has been the case in the history of IR, more generally (Vitalis 2000, 2010; Krishna 2001; Long and Schmidt 2005; Jones 2006). Therefore, few scholars study the ‘indigenous’ and pre/post-colonial IR thought in Canada or Australia. Aboriginal knowledge is given no space as ‘Western IR’. Only by destabilizing the Westernness of the ‘West’ does it become evident that one of the conditions of possibility for the West is this historical erasure of the non-Western within. Chapters in part one and three, in particular, make important contributions to the critique and destabilization of mainstream ‘Western’ IR. The continued colonial legacy of Western IR is further exposed when Appeltshauser argues that colonial race branding has played an under-recognized role in current civil conflicts in Africa by dividing the continent into master races, subject races and natives and then arbitrarily assembling state structures upon this racialized map. This postcolonial critique is coupled to an epistemological critique of quantitative civil war research, which does not see these complex historical relations that do not lend themselves easily to quantification. After these, necessarily negative, deconstructionist exercises we are left with an awareness that colonial histories or aboriginal knowledge have been excluded from IR, wrongly so, but could potentially certainly be brought back into IR. The recommendation, however, is that we “de-school” ourselves and “unlearn” IR. While this dismantling of IR as we know it may be a necessary step on the way to a more pluralist discipline, it does not seem to be sufficient. An additional step would be to further explore *how*, say, aboriginal history may enrich IR. How does it subvert established ways of knowing in new and innovative ways?

The second part of the volume moves beyond the negative and critical project of dismantling Western IR. Its strategy for moving beyond the fallacies of the ‘West versus the Rest’ formula is to turn to *national* explanations: e.g. Chinese IR (Chen and Zhu, Mokry), Iranian IR (Linke-Behrens) or Russian IR (Lydkin). Motivated by the search for a “clean slate”, as Lydkin argues in the case of Russia, the (re)turn to statist IR may contain the promise for a more *international* discipline. That is, if a ‘more international’ discipline simply seems to convey the desire for equal representation of scholars from the different countries around the world. The nationalizing IR strategy is equally flawed if the goal was a more worldist, not simply *international*, discipline. Nevertheless, the country-specific chapters are usually those that yield the most ‘exotic’ and ‘different’ insights into ‘non-Western’ IR. The main contribution of the country-specific chapters is that give the reader a critical insight into national discourses on civilization and world order. In line with other works on “Russian IR” and the “Russian school”, which have focused largely on the relationship between academia and broader articulations of post-Soviet Russia’s national vision and civilization (Tsygankov 2003, 2008; Lebedeva 2004; Mukharyamov 2004; Shakleyina and Bogaturov 2004; Solovyev 2004; Tkachenko 2004; Tsygankov and Tsygankov 2004, 2007, 2010; Morozov 2009; Sergounin 2009), Lydkin examines Russian worldings, or civilizational visions, as exemplified by three key Russian thinkers. Similarly, in the case of Chinese IR, Chen and Zhu discuss the four main theoretical approaches involved in the construction of a “Chinese School” exemplified by four individuals (Liang, Zhao, Yan and Qin) (Ren 2008; Noesselt 2012; Qin 2012; Wang and Buzan 2014). Both the Chinese and Russian case imply that there is some divergence and thus that the political overlay in these (semi)authoritarian settings does not result in complete homogeneity within academia. The analyses note that Chinese and Russian scholars have individual opinions, but

not so much the *debate* lines among them and how their positions relative to each other (Qin 2011; Shambaugh and Ren 2012; Zhang 2012; Kristensen and Nielsen 2013; Ren 2013; Zhang and Chang 2015).

Although there are some theorizing attempts brewing, especially in (rising) great powers like Russia and China, *Globalizing International Relations* largely confirms that theory is not very prestigious, it is perhaps even a luxury, in most non-Western countries (cf. Tickner and Wæver 2009). For example, Linke-Behrens' bibliometric study of Iranian journals finds that the most pressing issues in Iranian IR are typically Iran's own foreign and security policy, not IR theory. China, in particular, seem to be the exception from this pattern (Chen and Zhu, Mokry)—but one is left puzzled why China and not elsewhere? If this is because China as a rising power needs theoretical visions of world order, the link between rising power and knowledge production remains undertheorized. Besides, despite the existence of a vibrant theory debate within China, gatekeeping mechanisms mean that this does not necessarily translate into mainstream Western IR. The most systematic inquiry into these gatekeeping structures is Mokry's study of the Chinese IR that gets published in Chinese journals and that published in Western journals. Comparing articles on China's *Peaceful Rise* in the national and international discourse community, it confirms both that there are stylistic differences (e.g. more references in English journals, see also Breitenbauch 2013), and in terms of content, that some issues are taboo (or not in demand) domestically, and vice versa internationally. Mokry finds that Chinese scholars generally share a concern for China, especially policy relevance to China's particular situation as a rising power, and are not concerned with theory *per se*. The two need not be contradictory, of course, as the literature on China's practice-oriented meta-theory indicates (e.g. Geeraerts and Men 2001). Methodologically, it should be noted that Mokry examines only articles about *Peaceful Rise*, which provides part of the explanation why Chinese scholars are mostly concerned with explaining China's foreign policy to the world, not theorizing. Theoretically inclined articles by a scholar like Tang Shiping do not appear in this study because they are not about China or *Peaceful Rise* (Kristensen 2015a). The most interesting finding, therefore, is that even within these *Peaceful Rise* articles, scholars tend to be more detached and speak a conventional IR paradigmatic language when publishing in Western journals, while scholars publishing in Chinese journals are more concerned with Chinese problems and Chinese culture. The study furthermore confirms Lynch's (2009) finding that Chinese publications on *Peaceful Rise* adopt a more aggressive, or at least realist, stance in domestic publications compared to the more reassuring stance in international publications. What explains this difference? Is this strategic choice of different outlets by Chinese scholars or hegemonic gatekeeping structures forcing them to publish certain things in order to be accepted in mainstream IR discourse while keeping other deliberations in the Chinese language?

These questions of gatekeeping structures in the mainstream Western discipline are treated extensively throughout the volume. Rüländ, in particular, outlines these structural and material barriers to theorizing beyond the West: from colonial educational systems shaped by Western IR to neoimperial structures where scholars are trained in prestigious Western institutions funded by Western foundations; the general underdevelopment of the periphery, which spills over into poorer universities, under-resourced libraries and overburdened academics; A lack of social recognition for academia resulting in brain drain to other sectors and countries; A general commercialization of academia, which leaves academics preoccupied with mode-II like consultancy tasks for the government and business (although this trend may be equally strong, if not stronger, in Western academia). *Globalizing International Relations* also shows us gatekeeping is not only material and structural, but epistemic. Powerful gatekeepers enforce a standardized notion of what counts as 'IR', Fredua-Mensah argues, which again set certain limits to theoretical innovations from beyond the Western core. New IR theories constructed in the periphery are forced to conform to the

disciplinary ‘originals’ constructed by the metropolis. Excessive conformity to the “normal science” of the Western IR canon will of course be stifling to innovation, but it is a classical insight from the sociology of science that theories must be new to get published but never so new that they are not *recognized* as contributions to the discipline. As Richard Whitley has argued, 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” (Whitley in Wæver 1998:716). As another sociologist of science, Randall 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” (Collins 1998:31). Even the most revolutionary scholarly contributions that would eventually overturn the dominant paradigms must balance innovation and conformity—what Thomas Kuhn called “the essential tension”—because it is “only investigations firmly rooted in the contemporary scientific tradition are likely to break that tradition and give rise to a new one” (Kuhn 1977:227). For scholars to successfully promote their ideas as innovative, they need to effectively balance being original and recognizable. As Whitley puts it, “only contributions which are *recognized as new* can lead to high reputations” (Whitley 1984:119 my emphasis) and it is not possible to recognize the novelty of the argument without placing it in relation to a certain tradition or canon. Innovation, in order to be *recognized* as such, must be hybrid (old and new, Western and non-Western, innovative and recognizable). Thus, if we “forget” or “unlearn” IR, as several authors in *Globalizing International Relations* propose, how will we recognize a new and creative contribution when it is made? Will any argument be new again? If so, is there not a risk that currently powerful positions, say, the quantitative security and democracy studies discussed by Appelthausser and Kemmel, will simply reassert themselves?

If we instead accept that theoretical innovations are always relative to the intellectual space and canon where it is put forward—that the field does come with a certain historicity—the problem is not only that we have learned too much Western IR but also that we have not learned enough about its colonial legacies. The problem furthermore seems to be the currently recognized canon, based on which gatekeepers inevitably make judgments about innovativeness, is almost exclusively Western. “Western IR” has been naturalized as “IR”. An alternative solution to the forgetting, de-schooling and unlearning of Western IR canon (Bleiker 1997; Tickner and Blaney 2013) is therefore to provincialize it by constructing or ‘recovering’ alternative canons. The retrieval of alternative canons has been key to the pre-Qin project of the Tsinghua School in China (Yan 2011; Zhang 2011). This reconstructive exercise has its own essentialist pitfalls (Cunningham-Cross and Callahan 2011), but it may nonetheless contribute to a provincialization that puts the Western IR canon in a new light. We might even come to consider Machiavelli (1469-1527) as Kautilyan (350-275 BC), not the reverse as is currently the case (Behera 2007). The reconstruction of IR is not simply a matter of adding previously missing pieces, and sorting out their chronology, but of rereading the discipline. *Globalizing International Relations* may not offer definitive solutions for how to reconstruct a more pluralist and diverse discipline, but as a series of student essays (by prospective scholars?) in itself signifies that change is underway.

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