

## Reviewing History and IR Journals:

### Academic Publication Practices and Dominance in World Society

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This article reflects on analyses of academic History journals and International Relations (IR) journals conducted by students in our Research Master's degree programme on Modern History & International Relations (University of Groningen) from 2010 till 2015. Their reports can be found online on the MHIR programme's website. This website allows access to 49 reviews of IR and History journals, covering 43 different journals in various periods between 2005 and 2014. We made it open access because we hope and expect the reviews will add to the debate about shifts in our disciplines' publication cultures, the general importance of academic journals for career development and for the identity of our disciplines.

In preparing students for an academic career it is imperative to acquaint them with the craftsmanship of the job. As for artists, ten percent in academic work is creativity, ninety percent is sweat. Part of the sweat is finding jobs and research money. Once you're in, you need research output to stay in, especially when on tenure-track, even though teaching normally takes most of the time. Where to publish and how to publish? In what form to publish? Books, chapters in edited volumes, and articles in journals or online are the obvious forms. Occasionally, policy reports, consultancy papers and opinions in newspapers contribute to the output. But what counts most, if not almost exclusively in most disciplines are peer reviewed articles, preferably in leading journals. The emphasis on these publications is common practice in the social sciences and growing in the humanities. Increasingly, scores on citation indexes are used as indicators for academic success in both clusters of disciplines.

Against this background we asked our students to analyse History journals and IR journals. Five volumes of each. What are the hottest debates, what are the most important items the journals publish, what is the scientific and societal relevance? How do editors guarantee the quality of what they publish? How are journals organized behind the scenes? Finding out how and by whom the pages are filled, with what types of procedures, provides insight in dominant practices – practices one has to follow, even if one has the ambition to change them once.

The main conclusion of our work may be frustrating for most students worldwide: History and IR journals mainly publish articles written by male U.S.-based scholars. As far as we checked: Caucasian males. Not just in the leading journals, and not just in the U.S.-based journals, but almost all 43 English language journals we investigated show such dominance, most of them up to 80%, others at least more than 50%. Also editorial boards are U.S. dominated, with still low percentage of women almost of 32% (139 out of 438 members of editorial committees and boards). Apparently the road to academic success is to look for a job in the USA and to transgender in case you are female (or use an alias).

It is generally observed that publication cultures are changing across the fields of social sciences and the humanities. Not just the media of publication, also the language to publish changes with the ongoing internationalisation. This internationalisation is more evident in continental Europe and in large parts of the Global South than in the English-speaking Anglo-Saxon world. Some may like to call it Americanisation rather than internationalisation. We hope to bring some nuance to that debate. Nowadays English is considered to be the lingua franca of the scientific community. However there is huge variety in practices, and acceptance still. Discussion is going on in France, Spain and Germany on the role of their respective languages in science and education. China may join their ranks. In some countries the official policy is aiming at preservation of the standard language as a language of science, as in France (Loi Toubon from 1994) and even in a global trading state as the Netherlands (KNAW 2003). In 2013 the Dutch association of sociologists took stance against the dominance of English in its report on research quality assessment, for reasons discussed below (NVS 2013).

### In between *Lingua Franca* and Americanisation

In a special edition on scholarly publishing practices around the world, the journal *Progress in Human Geography* (2009) remarked that 'space makes a difference' here. In 'Latin countries' and Eastern Europe the monograph is still strong, as is the resistance to the dominance of English, but in Germany, where the PhD-thesis in general is written in German, articles published in international journals are more and more respected. This kind of mixed-language situations exist also in the smaller European countries. Overall, the conclusion was that in most European countries scientific practices in human geography were changing in favour of articles written in English (Paasi, 2009:101). This appears also to be the case in the social sciences and the humanities in general (Ossenblok, *et al.*, 2012).

In their global coverage of 'peripheral IR' versus 'U.S. IR', Arlene Tickner and Ole Wæver (2009: p. 332) conclude that in Western Europe, Israel and Southeast Asia "... recognition in the United States and U.S.-based journals ... has become the ultimate path to local scholarly power". However, although East Central Europe, Brazil and Mexico increasingly sing the same song, Tickner and Wæver (2009: 332) and the 16 case studies they compare also show that in most corners of world "trying to get an article published in a leading journal ... is not the most relevant or strategic career move". The reason is obvious. IR as a discipline is closely related to international relations as a practice. And mirror-wise, a lot of Historical narratives are closely related to the state and the myths about its national history. The about 193 sovereign governments in world society have to think about their mutual relations (IR) and they have to position themselves in time and space (History).

Every state, be it Brunei, Brazil, Belgium or Botswana (to mention just four random sovereignties beginning with B), has international relations, hence a foreign policy. Policy implies some kind of vision. Vision implies some kind of theory: selection criteria about what matters for whom, and what is needed to pursue specific goals. Theory implies some kind of meta-theory or worldview/religion/belief/ontology/a big bang. Normally it takes time and distance to develop (an awareness of) meta-theory – be it St. Augustine trying to make sense of the plundering of Rome in 410, Thomas Hobbes reflecting on civil war and chaos in England (1642-1646), Carl von Clausewitz trying to get a grip on

the principles behind Napoleonic warfare or Antonio Gramsci using his imprisonment by fascist Italy for grasping hegemonic discourse.

Every minister of foreign affairs and the civil servants working for her/him conducts diplomacy and formulates foreign policies (either in public or within an autocratic elite). Hence there must be a theory (a selection mode) about what matters and what can be ignored. Some Historians provide the benchmarks for foreign policy. Where do we come from and who are 'we' in the first place? How does our history define our national identity? How do we secure, reproduce and strengthen our identity? Other Historians do research on questions of societal coherence, on topics related to economic growth, or on local or national governance. Both History and IR as academic practices developed closely in relation to state formation processes, and nation building, which explains the state-centrism which, according to Tickner & Wæver (2009: 334), is characteristic for "scholarly communities in IR throughout the world". These disciplines serve the society they are participating in, and they are supposed to support the people that pay taxes to maintain the scholars. This is called 'valorisation' of science. The concept is relatively new, and within the humanities and social sciences it is related more with public outreach, with solving today's problems, than the more strictly commercial valorisation. This connectedness with society doesn't always combine easily with the international scholarly community and its lingua franca, as was stated by the Dutch sociologists recently (NVS 2013, 15).

Much of what we read in U.S. dominated journals is about the American setting of this foreign policy based IR. Thomas Biersteker (2009) calls it the 'the parochialism of hegemony', echoing Brian Schmidt's (1998: 13) similar observation. Steve Smith (2002) joins the choir: "U.S. IR explains a narrow range of world political events and does so from a U.S. perspective". But he agrees with scholars like Ole Wæver (1998) that theorizing the experiences of a hegemonic power obviously receives more scholarly attention than theorizing the experiences of say Switzerland. "Hegemonic country, hegemonic discipline", Smith (2002) subtitles his article. Kees Van der Pijl (2014) moves the argument one step further by showing that the very creation of IR is a result of "the rise of a transnational Anglophone society and ruling class".

This argument is about the setting of a research agenda and it is mirrored in other disciplines. It is based on the assumption of communication among scholars on relevant questions and approaches; on an exchange of views and facts across the scientific community. David Fernández-Quijada argued that the majority of scholars in the field of communication use their native language and not necessarily English. After having analysed 1,182 articles published in Spanish journals on communication (in 2007, 2008 and 2009), he found that 92% of the articles were written in Spanish, with Catalan as a second and English as the third language. In these articles 71% of the citations were to Spanish sources, and just over 25% were citations to publications in English. His conclusion is that there still exists a pretty strong border between scholars in communication science in Spain and the international scene (Fernández 2011: 99-101). Among sociologists that publish in English the same phenomenon exists as among scholars in IR. Sociologists from the US and UK cited in 99% articles written in English, while those articles account for approximately 70% of international literature in their field (Archambault 2006).

The market structure is well-served by a global *lingua franca*. It creates an economy of scales. With a few exceptions (such as Elsevier and Springer) the academic publications market is dominated by publishing houses in the UK and the U.S. The American scholars Glenn McGuigan and Robert Russell (2008) describe the unusual business model on which academic publishing relies: “There are three important participants in the industry: (1) faculty scholars who write the journal articles and provide editorial services [generally for free], (2) the publishers who act as a ‘middle man’ by vetting, publishing and distributing the scholarly content of the journals, and; (3) colleges and universities that purchase the journals usually through their library systems.” They then focus on the financial strangulation of libraries by the publishers. Publishers developed their commercial interest in academic journals in the 1960s and 1970s, and discovered a highly profitable market. So far, they have survived and adapted to the shock of online publications. They now offer (expensive) online packages to the libraries. Even in times of crisis there is a worldwide guaranteed minimum sales: a substantial number of libraries around the world buy almost every academic publication written in English. This makes the demand fairly inelastic, and due to the *lingua franca* status of English, the market is truly global.

Some scholars argue that the U.S. dominance is related to the native language advantage. This would also explain why the UK comes second. But, as one of our students, Sabine Dankbaar, explains: “... the IR and History reviews show that although Canada and Australia have the third and fourth largest populations of native English speakers respectively, few articles were written by authors from these countries. Other countries with large populations of native English speakers are the Philippines, Nigeria, India, East and Southern Africa. The amount of contributions of these countries to the journals is around zero in the researched period.” (Dankbaar, 2012). That language skills are not the issue is supported by the U.S. dominance in other fields of science than IR and History, most notably the natural sciences and to some degree economics. In contrast to the social sciences and humanities, high command of English is less of an issue in natural sciences, where mathematics is the crucial ‘language’. The Dutch IR scholar, now retired, but working in Britain, Kees van der Pijl provides a more comprehensive explanation in *The Discipline of Western Supremacy* (2014). He argues that the entire development of academic disciplines and universities is serving the wider hegemonic agenda of the liberal international economic order. In spite of his detailed argumentation, this conclusion should not be stretched too far. French and German philosophers, sociologists and historians (like Foucault, Derrida, Deleuze & Guattari, Habermas, Beck, the Frankfurter Schule, Braudel, Bourdieu, etc.) have had a major impact across all disciplines within the social sciences and the humanities. This can still be interpreted as Western supremacy, but less easily as serving its hegemonic (read: American) agenda. Obviously, the same goes for the work of Western scholars like Van der Pijl himself.

If one takes on board the relatively big influence of European migrants to the USA during the Interbellum period, U.S. IR is even less American. Theories and philosophies have followed European history and politics rather than American politics. In quite different ways this is well-illustrated by Torbjørn Knutsen and Maghan Nayak & Eric Selbin (see also: Holsti, 1985; Friedrichs, 2004). In one of the best introductory texts on IR, Knutsen (1997: 4) traces the explicit “emergence of the basic concepts of its discourse” back to the “long sixteenth century”, i.e. the Renaissance. Nayak & Selbin (2010) call it Western

hegemonic thinking and convincingly emphasize the need to end the North/West dominance in IR. (They are less convincing in describing how this can be achieved.)

Moreover, also among American universities competition exists. One of our students in the project, Lieuwe Jongsma, introduced an interesting innovative approach to tracing origins of authors and editors. He has made heat maps based on the scores of institutions rather than national states.<sup>1</sup> This provides a much better picture of where the action is. The USA all of a sudden is reduced to small parts of its two coastlines; the rest of the country scores in similar ways as the rest of the world. Similarly, a bit depending on the journal, UK IR centres on London.

Anglo-American dominance is also the result of a vicious circle, at least in IR: the canon of IR is based on its most cited works. Students of IR have to reproduce and hence will reify the existing hegemonic practice when they write 'state of the art' chapters in their theses and dissertations, or when they prepare for basic IR exams. This practice might change, but overall, the citation culture in IR will prolong the dominance of Anglo-American IR for a long time. It is telling that many classics are getting Asian language translations, notably Chinese, which will reinforce their dominance.

### The (lost) beauty of monographs

History had a different development than IR. For long, the majority of historians wrote history as a national narrative in a national tongue in monographs. Of course there were some interesting exemptions, like Arnold Toynbee, Fernand Braudel and Oswald Spengler. These were engaged in a version of world-history, 'universal history' in Toynbee's words. He wrote a grand narrative of the rise and fall of some 25 civilizations, led by small minorities and elites, with a time horizon of over 6,000 years. Spengler wrote a kind of cultural world history in an almost social Darwinist perspective, originally published in German. Their gross generalizations are seen as rather speculative now (Iggers, 2008: 387-388), but they had an impact across the West. Braudel wrote about the Mediterranean World in the Early Modern era, an inspiring book that became translated into the major European languages, including English (Bédarida & Aymard, 1995: 206).

Nowadays, a majority of historians still see the monograph as the ultimate scholarly outlet in their field. In a survey among some 1,416 historians in the United States in 2004 (as a part of the debate about the crisis of the scholarly monograph) 88% thought a book had the most profound impact on their careers. They advised junior scholars to publish books. But they also noticed the rising importance of the article, especially for scholars more advanced in their careers, and that publishers tended to have more commercial restraints in publishing books (Dalton, 2008: 210-217). These are opinions, there is not much research done on the relative position of books among the citations by historians. But the impression is strong that books and dissertations are still very important. Several tests on what type of publications of historians are cited often on the site of *Publish or Perish* do confirm the solid position of books. This is also concluded in a similar analysis made by Peter Webster (Webster, 2013).

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<sup>1</sup> See his review on the MHIR programme's website.

In the past, most historians wrote monographs on national history, and for long this history was a book. Even the first periodicals started as a kind of book series, with lengthy contributions on national history by different authors. The first journals were annuals, like the one published by the Verein für Geschichte und Altertumskunde Westfalen since 1825 or the the *Annuaire-Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire de France* (1863). At that time the classic format of the Historical Journal was established by the *Bavarian Historische Zeitschrift* (1859) and the *Revue Historique* (1876) (Stieg, 1986: 39-68). This was soon followed by other journals with fixed frequency of appearance, a number of scholarly articles and a section on book reviews. Around the turn of the century *The English Historical Review* (1886) and *The American Historical Review* (1895) started to be published by the national historical associations. Other European countries followed soon: "... a look at the 2000 edition of *Ulrich's International Periodical Directory* yields an estimated 3,500 titles that treat some manner of history", Goedecken reports (2001: 41). Nisonger (2001: 79-80) found over 4,000 titles in *Ulrich's* dealing with political science, but is silent about the percentage of this dealing with IR.

A new tide of History Journals appeared shortly after the Second World War. Journals like the English *Comparative Studies in Society and History* and *Past & Present* (both starting in the 1950s) were a kind of Anglophone answer to the French *Annales. Economies, Sociétés, Civilisations*. This journal became generally accepted as the exponent of the major renewal of the discipline, not just because of the large international congress of historians took place in Paris in 1948. The *Annales* counted in its editorial board historians like Marc Bloch, Lucien Febvre, Fernand Braudel and many others, who all were famous because of their books (Iggers, 2008: 265-262). These new journals were far less dedicated to national history. Their topics were strongly thematic; social, economic, cultural or philosophical in character. Some of them being Marxist (*Past & Present*) others more oriented to modern American Sociology (*Journal of Interdisciplinary History*) or the social sciences in general. The new approaches that were published in the articles added to the significance of the journal as a medium amongst (at first the younger) historians. Political history remained an important theme in the historical discipline, but slowly lost its national orientation.

Since the 1970s a new type of historical journal emerged. These journals were more specialised and addressed much smaller audiences among historians. The topic of these journals were for instance maritime or medical history, quantitative history, contemporary history; technique, media, music, theatre, gender, Marxist, working class, Renaissance, 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> century or whatever other historical theme or period one could think off. The start of a new journal became relatively easy and cheap. New generations of historians met at seminars, workshops and thematic conferences. They started a new association or organisation and this society published a journal. These became important new outlets in almost every national language. New knowledge, new results and new approaches were published by PhD-students and Postdocs in these journals, where senior and mid-career historians still published books, sometimes for a wider audience. Iggers stresses the role of the combination of an ever growing number of students and teaching staff, new technologies (especially the personal computer and internet), plus the accompanying digitalization of sources. This has changed the scope of history and opened up for a truly world history, a global debate and a global modern historiography (Iggers, 2008: 13-16).

These developments inspired historians to take up new topics and also to address a more international audience. In the last decade in most west-European countries national journals started to publish articles in English. Their editorial boards were supplemented with English speaking, 'native speakers' mostly from the UK or USA. This development seems to be part of a new phase of internationalisation of academia. It provides new chances for English writing scholars in existing journals and new journals. These journals and their content receive a wider English reading audience. In this broadening academic world, reputation and quality assessment becomes more and more important. Readers want the quality of the published materials guaranteed. This has led to peer-review and bibliometrics, with huge consequences on the journals, even on the historical journal.

Examples of historical journals that are restyling are easy to find. The Dutch *Bijdragen en Mededelingen betreffende de Geschiedenis der Nederlanden* (BMGN – originally from 1877) calls itself since 2012 *BMGN: The Low Countries Historical Review*. More importantly it has adapted its editorial proceedings, has a peer-review process now and is inviting submissions in English. An example from Italy is the Florence based journal, that started in 1968 with the title *Il pensiero politico: rivista di storia delle idee politiche e sociali*. In 2011 it established an international advisory board, added English summaries to Italian articles and published some articles in English since. It also started to assess the quality of articles by a “doppio cieco da referee anonimi” as the website states (<http://www.olschki.it/riviste/11> accessed 08-November 2015). It is interesting to see a really Francophone interdisciplinary journal as *Cahiers d'études Africaines*, completely dominated by French scholars (as editors and authors – just a third of the authors is from Africa), publishing in its post-2008 editions more and more articles in English. The trend in historical journals is unmistakably there.

In IR, stronger than in History, publishing journals in relatively small languages, like Dutch, is hardly profitable. The specialized IR-circles are fairly small, whereas the wider circle of academics (mainly in political science and international law) and professional groups like diplomats, international civil servants and journalists are hardly interested in the scholarly debates. They want to read about applied science in concrete issue-areas and regions. Monographs in IR are mainly written as PhD-dissertations (mostly in English). Some of them make it to the expansive hard cover book series of mainly UK-based publishing houses (especially Routledge). But there is a growing practice to get a PhD by publishing peer reviewed articles.

The political science journal *Acta Politica* originally appeared in Dutch but managed to survive by turning to English and finding a British publishing house: Palgrave Macmillan. In contrast, the Dutch peace research journal *Vrede & Veiligheid: Tijdschrift voor internationale vraagstukken* disappeared in 2011: insufficient subscriptions and lack of interest by potential authors because the articles do not count as peer reviewed. The *Internationale Spectator* (housed by the Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael and published by Van Gorcum) still survives, because it is widely read in diplomatic circles. It is a foreign policy journal rather than IR. The Flamish-Dutch journal *Res Publica: politiek-wetenschappelijk tijdschrift van de Lage Landen* [political science journal of the Low Countries] appears also in Dutch and is peer reviewed. It covers political science rather than IR. The other Belgian-based journal, *Studia Diplomatica: The Brussels Journal of International Relations*, originally published in French (since 1948),

nowadays contains mainly articles in English, and occasionally in French and Dutch. In general, however, most academics in IR in the Netherlands publish in English. The Netherlands witnessed, according to the Scopus database, between 1996 and 2011 the fastest growth in article publications in the English-language. Italy and Russia were second and third, according to this database (Weijers 2012).

## Peer power

There is a continuous call for quality assessment. Internationalisation makes more publications accessible to an ever larger audience, who has to decide on the value of these scholarly products before they actually start reading these. So reputation of scholars and the prestige of journals in which they publish have become increasingly important. Also in the assessment of individual academic performance, scholarly impact has become more and more important, at least for some administrators, and is feared by some colleagues (see for this fear: Worton, 2011). Eugene Garfield, generally seen as the founder of the Science Citation Index in the late 1950s, calls these arguments the major advantages of bibliometrics in reply to his critics (Garfield, 2006: 90-93). However, discussion remains about what the 'impact factor' actually means, and on what it is based. The number of citations as an indicator for scholarly impact sounds simpler than it is, especially in a field where different publication cultures (books, monographs) exist and publications in different languages appear. So the humanities and the social sciences also are problematic fields to apply these kinds of statistics to.

There are different rankings, based on different methods, metrics and databases. The classic, by Eugene Garfield founded, ISI citation indexes and its derivatives (like the Web of Science and its Arts & Humanities Citation Index) are bought by libraries and still used, but there are important questions about their reliability when it comes to the humanities and the social sciences. There is a substantial amount of literature on these problems (e.g., Harzing and Van der Wal, 2008; Archambault and Larivière, 2010; Larsen and Von Ins, 2010). The most important disadvantages mentioned are the low number of articles compared to the number of monographs, the underrepresentation of monographs in most existing databases, the underrepresentation of non-American journals, and the even larger underrepresentation of languages other than English. A connected argument is the global or national relevance of output in the social sciences and humanities. Is a publication meant for a global market always more valuable than one that addresses a more specific regional audience? And what about alternative outlets, outside the classical journal, are these less relevant? These types of publications (web-blogs, videos, exhibits) are especially popular in new fields in the social sciences, humanities and arts.

There are more problems addressed in the literature, some really technical about the reliability of references as a base for citations, the temporal windows used to count citations, the different speeds in which publications age, and some more principal, about the relevance of a quality assessment based on quantitative methods, or the question if the humanities and social sciences share enough concepts and approaches to have a real debate that leads to citation-cultures similar to the natural sciences, etc. For some disciplines their transdisciplinary character is a problem. IR is so close to various other disciplines, most strongly Political Science, but also History, International Law, European Law, Sociology, Economics, Geography, Peace Research, Strategic Studies, Diplomatic

Studies, Public Administration, Development Studies, Ethics and Philosophy that ranking is problematic. Although there are dozens of IR journals, ranking these mostly boils down to ranking a sub-category of political science journals which does no justice to the richness of the field (Nisonger, 2001). Kyle Grayson provides a nice concise overview of considerations on his blog "Journal Ranking Lists in Politics and International Relations" (Grayson, 2010). He draws no conclusions, but among the various ranking sites there is no agreement on what qualifies as A, B or C journal, although the variance is not huge.

However, the discussion did result in improvements and alternatives. The use of Google in addition to existing databases is seen as an improvement. Scopus and Publish or Perish are using Google Scholar and claim to have a better coverage when different languages and different types of media (articles, blogs and books) are involved (Archambault and Larivière, 2010; Harzing and Van der Wal, 2008). This improvement has given rise to more intense debates about the quality and meaning of ranking. Scholars, librarians and administrators are tempted to use the different ranking systems for their subsequent goals, just as we did for educational reasons. Recently, a similar use of rankings was made by a group of Princeton graduate students in the humanities and social sciences as part of their course. They provide ranking information on 44 Journals in cultural and literary studies published in the USA. Their project was intended to answer the question where has a young scholar the best chances to publish, and with the highest impact (Belcher, 2014). However it was impossible for them to provide a clear cut answer because of the enormous diversity of research themes and accompanying outlets.

Another approach to listing relevant journals in specific fields was attempted by professional librarians at the end of the last century. In their Journal of the Century project they wrote essays reflecting on the most relevant journals in a specific field, including modern history and political sciences & international relations. These essays were published in a volume (Stankus, 2002). The authors were not very explicit about their criteria for selecting journals, but a reviewer of the volume in a medical journal detected the following ones: "... historical influence, current dominance, citation analysis, review of published lists of core journals, faculty or colleague surveys, journal reputation, journal longevity, inclusion in significant indices, and the authors' own subject expertise and experience" (Jacoby, 2003). She, not surprisingly, observes that "[t]he listed journals are almost exclusively English language – with exceptions in the chapters on music, art, history, and mathematics – and are biased toward U.S. and Western European journals."

More specific on European journals, was the attempt by the European Science Foundation (ESF) to establish a list of relevant European Journals in different fields, including social sciences and the humanities. This European Reference Index for the Humanities (ERIH) started in 2007 and selected some 50% of the existing 14,000 scholarly journals in Europe. Its main ambition was to put these journals more in the spotlights, says Michael Worton, one of the members of the ERIH Steering committee (Worton, 2011). The first 2007 list mentioned three categories: A) high-ranking international journals, B) standard international journals, and C) publications with "important local/regional significance". In 2011 these were replaced by three categories indicating different types of audience: a "national" academic audience (Nat) or a worldwide, "international" audience (Int). These International journals are then split into Int1 and Int2 journals. In 2014 the responsibility for the humanities list, now called ERIH-plus, was transferred from the

ESF to the Norwegian Social Science Data Services and also included social sciences now (ERIH-plus, 2016).

In 2011 the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences noticed another problem typical for IR and History, and almost absent in natural and social sciences. Its Interim report by the Committee on *Quality Indicators in the Humanities* concludes that “From the point of view of practice, the existing databases provide entirely insufficient coverage of publications in the humanities” (KNAW, 2011: 10) and are not relevant for research that is intended to address societal problems and primarily searches to valorise scholarship. They propose a quality assessment based on peer review, which has to be organized nationally since “[a]n initiative at a European level (ERIH) for classifying humanities journals was a failure” (KNAW, 2011: 12).

### Western white-male hegemony

In our project we did not rank the journals but looked at their ranking as one of the qualifications a journal could have. Sabine Dankbaar’s analysis of IR & History journals covers the journal reviews about the period 2005-2011. Lieuwe Jongsma’s report covers the reviews about the period 2010-2014. As Jongsma shows, not all of the data in the various reports has been collected according to the strict methodological requirements of comparative research. The students in the project had considerable freedom to develop their own approach for analysing 5 volumes of the journal they selected. Their research had to be beneficial to their specific thematic development also. This was part of the learning objectives of the course. Still there is sufficient similarity to allow for a qualitative comparison, as well as generating some overall statistical data. Dankbaar puts her analysis in the broader IR debate about U.S. dominance in this discipline. The journal reviews support the conclusion earlier drawn by other scholars that IR is essentially an American and male dominated discipline. She interprets and enriches various existing explanatory hypotheses by adding insights from the analyses of History journals as well as secondary literature on other disciplines. The pattern in those studies is identical to those in IR. As a consequence, authors focusing on IR only need to control their often speculative conclusions against this wider context: there is nothing peculiar about IR that makes it ‘an American discipline’, to paraphrase Stanley Hoffmann’s 1977-article on the subject. All disciplines are American disciplines – be it with major trans-Western input.

So far we mainly focused on explanations of U.S. dominance. The other pattern is male dominance. This dominance is even more general and overwhelming than the geo-academic imbalance. Some editorial boards do have a significant number of women (some a third or even half), but the percentage of female authors is very low. Male contributors ranges from 80 percent in the *European Journal of International Relations* to 60 percent in *Human Rights Quarterly*. And in History from some 70 percent of male authors contributing to the *Journal of Comparative Sociology* to an almost balanced gender division in the *Journal of Global History*.

Typical, the IR literature focusing on the nature of the discipline hardly worries about gender imbalance, but mainly about U.S. hegemony. Apparently gender imbalance is taken for granted or is not noted as problematic. Obviously, male dominance is merely an indicator (for positivists) or a signifier (for constructivists) of gender inequality. It

fits the first wave of feminist literature, highlighting the marginalized position of women in the field. Interestingly, the majority of our undergraduate students in the BA degree programme International Relations & International Organization (IRIO), as well as the BA in History are female; often up to two-thirds of the overall 800-1,000 students studying IR, and 500-700 students studying History in Groningen. Where do they go? At PhD-level they already start to be outnumbered by their male colleagues.

Later waves in feminist literature are looking for explanations by pointing out and analysing masculinities in IR. The 2013-edition of Jill Stein's *Gender and International Relations: Theory, Practice, Policy*, addresses these debates. In History, similar work is done by various European scholars exploring gender and scientific personae. Given the wider societal context in which IR and History exist, it comes as no surprise that the journals reflect and reify the construction and reproduction of gender as it occurs in and by society's dominant institutions, notably schools, media, films, books, national myths, and religions. Our data will not be surprising for those familiar with the WomanStats Project of Brigham Young University, which uses 280 variables to study the position of women in 174 countries (see: [www.womanstats.org](http://www.womanstats.org)). The point is how to explain the imbalance and how to assess its consequences for improving our insights in IR and History.

The racial dimension is even less documented or discussed. Is tallying colour more controversial than tallying gender? It turned out, in our students' reports, that ethnicity is more difficult to assess than gender: names reveal gender more easily than racial identity. The discourse about race and discrimination is structured differently than the discourse about gender and discrimination. In feminist literature there is acknowledgment that feminine and masculine qualities differ. Both women and men share most of these qualities, but are socialized stereotypically into Barbie & Ken (if not Rambo). Societal institutions follow this pattern. The discourse nowadays is about finding the optimal mix of these societally estranged positions. In practice, and quite superficially, this mainly boils down to the imperative to hire more women in leading functions. This is reflected to some extent in the composition of editorial boards, but not yet in the published articles. The deeper cultural layers will not be changed by IR-scholars or Historians.

The discourse about racial discrimination is different in character, and is, as far as we could trace, almost absent in the discussions on academic publishing. This may change. In 2015, Robert Vitalis published the Sussex International Theory Prize-winning book *White World Order, Black Power Politics: The Birth of American International Relations*, which challenges the historiography of IR's intellectual history fundamentally. He reveals, e.g., that the present journal *Foreign Affairs* originates from the *Journal of Race Development*. Among the main missions of the journal, and of IR, was to study how to preserve white racial dominance in a world of global interdependence. "International relations meant race relations", Vitalis (2015: [.]) observes. Recall that legal racial segregation in the USA was only abolished in 1964.

The book stirred some unrest among reviewers. Gideon Rose in *Foreign Affairs* (March/April 2016) praises Vitalis for filling a void, but labels his conclusions about the racist nature of IR a political bias. Quincy J. Swan (2016) is more positive, but also asks rhetorically: "Is there still a racist and structural bias toward historically black schools and their faculty in terms of foundation funding, academic prestige, and disdain of the Africana activist-scholar tradition?" In her review, Susan Pederson (2016: 24) gives the

answer: “The 1960s would bring ‘race’ back into the academy – but mostly through new African-American studies programmes, not political science or international relations. Black undergraduates today are very unlikely to study or pursue advanced degrees in political science; those few who do are taught a history of the discipline of international relations that is partial if not fictitious.” We didn’t trace a similar debate among historians, but judging from our students’ reports there is little reason to expect a different practice.

It is slippery ground to treat racial discrimination as a mirror image of gender discrimination. Whereas gender balance nowadays is about balancing normative biases and qualities, it is unclear what racial balance would imply beyond addressing the shared bias in social-economic and cultural practices. Normative stereotyping as known from gender studies could easily create a revival of scientific racism, even if positive discrimination is intended. Still it is clear that ethnicity correlates with chances of success in an academic career. The problem is far from American. Various Dutch universities have so-called Diversity Commissions to address the problem of underrepresentation of ‘non-Western students’ in academia; a problem well-analysed in a broader societal context by Gloria Wekker (2016).<sup>2</sup> Part of the discussion is central in the debate about non-Western IR, but then in geopolitical terms (see, e.g., Nayak & Selbin, 2010; Acharya & Buzan, 2007). ‘We’, Western disciplines, want more dialogue, but still ‘we’ want to survive the debate. There has been some lip service to equality: IR textbooks, for example, tend to link the development of Dependency theories with Latin American assertiveness about economic imperialism, pointing at the Argentinian economist Raúl Prebisch. But, acknowledging Postcolonialism and Orientalism, this hardly offers an alternative view of world society based on the perspectives from the Global South. In support of that critique it is worthwhile to mention that almost all authors in the *Journal of African History*, assessed in our project, come from the West or study there.

### In Conclusion: The Journal Review Project

Dankbaar wrote her analysis on the basis of the reviews made up to 2012. We continued the project till 2014, with a small extra sample in 2015, covering more diverse and lower ranked, but mostly English language journals. There were a few remarkable results. The geographical bias in lower ranked journals is increasing. Editorial teams of American journals are made up of editors affiliated with an American university. In Europe the editorial boards of European journals are becoming more diverse, meaning the number of members with connections to American and British universities is increasing. This is also the case with journals with a specific regional focus, in our case Africa and Eastern Europe. Whereas North-American authors dominate publications in the *Journal of Peace Research* and of the *Journal of Development Studies*, the editorial teams are mostly made up of Norwegians and Brits respectively. Another interesting observation is that whereas the *Journal of International Relations and Development* aimed to feature more authors from Central and Eastern European countries, a minority of the editorial team comes

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<sup>2</sup> In 2016, the Diversity Commission of the University of Amsterdam published the report *Let's Do Diversity*. Here a ‘non-Western student’ means that “at least one of their parents was born in a ‘non-Western’ country” (p. 5, 31). The statistics in the Report show that this definition is restricted to Dutch citizens coming from the Antilles & Aruba (part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands), Surinam, Morocco and Turkey. With some regret the authors accept that “Japan and Indonesia are formally labelled ‘Western’ countries” (p. 31).

from that region. Non-Western countries are still largely underrepresented. There is no real difference in what is happening to the editorial boards as to the authors of the journal articles.

Striking is that the same development is visible in the historical Journals: scholars from non-Western countries are underrepresented in all the History journals, as are the authors from the other two large English-speaking countries, Canada and Australia. An interesting observation is the fairly good representation of Dutch scholars: especially in the *Journal of Global History* and *History and Theory*, a relatively high amount of articles is published by Dutch scholars. In addition, there is a deep gap between Anglophone scholarship and non-Anglophone scholarship, which becomes clear for journals with articles in French, Italian or Dutch only. There seems to be hardly any communication between Anglophone journals and articles published in languages other than English. This could be seen as a double warning. The majority of American and British scholars miss a lot of what is published. In this context it is interesting that a new IR journal tries to disclose non-English original work to an international audience. The *European Review of International Studies* (ERIS) has been set up in 2010 to review books published in any European language save English, it has a peer review process involving the various national IR (or IR-related) communities, and publishes articles from the non-Anglophone world in English.

All reviews by students who agreed to publish them online can be found in the files on the MHIR programme's website. We did not edit them heavily. These are research papers, which we of course graded, but which represent the views of the individual authors. For most of them this was the first encounter with journals in this way. Students are generally not made aware of the craftsmanship and economics behind publications. As a result, some of their observations may look naive from a professional academic point of view; yet others profit from the fresh look of an outsider. Often they asked additional information from the editorial staff of the journals. Some editors were very cooperative and open, some explicitly refused any form of contact, while others never took the trouble to answer to the replies, as you can read in the reports.

The reports are written in 'international English'. It differs from 'British English', 'American English', 'Australian English', 'Indian English', 'African English' et cetera. 'International English' is a working language and hence less rich than the various native languages of us and our students. We disagree, however, with people arguing that this has a negative effect on nuance and precision – although there are frequent debates about this within our universities and in society at large. We doubt that academics who practiced Latin as their working language had similar concerns. Conservatism and chauvinism provide better reasons to protest against this aspect of globalisation than fears for loss of quality.

IR and History as we know it today are an expression of Anglophone hegemony and the Liberal International Economic Order established by the West, combined with the gender imbalance in all corners of world society. Even the approaches that intend to expose and change these dominant structures, such as Postcolonialism and Gender Studies, are captive of this practice. Traditionally, the Historical discipline is less dominated by research agendas written in English. Nevertheless, in Europe and elsewhere, the process of

internationalisation has made international, hence English-language journals extremely relevant.

Projects and reports like ours intend to contribute to the historiography of our disciplines as disciplines. With economic hegemony moving to Asia, chances are bigger that the number of Asian scholars publishing in leading History and IR journals will increase. Due to low costs, they are printing most books and journals already. Why not start writing them too? That could be a next stage in the *longue durée* of studying and writing about world history and world politics.

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List of reviewed journals – and authors:

Note: not all the students gave us the permission to publish their reports on the website.

- 01 *Comparative Studies in Society & History* – period: 2006-2010 – by Fenna Plaisier
- 02 *European Journal of International Relations* – period: 2006-2010 – by Stefanie Holz
- 03 *Foreign Affairs* – period: 2007-2011 – by Yuri van Hoef
- 04 *Global Society* – period: 2007-2011 – by Yara van 't Groenewout
- 05a *History & Theory* – period: 2006-2011 – by Guido van 't Haar,
- 05b *History & Theory* – period: 2006-2011 – by Marijn Parmentier
- 06 *Human Rights Quarterly* – period: 2006-2011 – by Anouk Baron
- 07 *International Relations* – period: 2008-2012 – by Andrei Cazacu
- 08 *International Review of Social History* – period: 2006-2010 – by Tess van den Heuvel
- 09 *International Security* – period: 2008-2012 – by Anna Buch
- 10 *International Studies Quarterly* – period: 2006-2010 – by Martin Duchac
- 11 *Journal of African History* – period: 2008-2012 – by Amisah Zenabu Bakuri
- 12 *Journal of Cold War Studies* – period: 2007-2012 – by Jack Michelmores
- 13 *Journal of Common Market Studies* – period: 2006-2010 – by Hedwich van der Bij
- 14a *Journal of Global History* – period: 2006-2010 – by Daniela Tenger
- 14b *Journal of Global History* – period: 2006-2011 – by Bernard Slaa

- 14c *Journal of Global History* 2009-2013 Bob Castelein
- 15 *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* – period: 2006-2010 – by Maarten Draper
- 16 *Journal of International Relations & Development* – period: 2006-2010 – by Yuliya Fruman
- 17 *Journal of Peace Research* – period: 2007-2012 – by Amarins Hielkema
- 18 *Journal of the History of Ideas* – period: 2006-2010 – by Germa Greving
- 19 *Journal of Urban History* – period: 2006-2010 – by Raymon R.J. Middelbos
- 20a *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* – period: 2001-2005 – by Marit de Lange
- 20b *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* – period: 2006-2010 – by Christian Pfenninger
- 21a *Past & Present* – period: 2006-2010 – by Nynke Dorhout
- 21b *Past & Present* – period: 2007-2012 – by Phil Heaton
- 22 *Terrorism and Political Violence* – period: 2007-2011 – by Erika van Leeuwen
- 23 *The Journal of African History* – period: 2006-2010 – by Abel S. Knottnerus
- 24a *World Politics* – period: 2005-2010 – by Richard Sonneveld
- 24b *World Politics* – period: 2006-2011 – by Tim Star
- 25 *Security Dialogue* 2010-2014 Thomas Behrndt
- 26 *Memory Studies* 2010-2014 Lieuwe Jongsma
- 27 *History of Political Economy* 2009-2013 Bart Hoogeboom
- 28 *Theory and Event* 2009-2013 Tania Rosales Moreno
- 29 *South African Historical Journal*, 2009-2013 Lisanne Coolen
- 30 *Modern Italy* 2009-2013 Rients Verschoor
- 31 *Journal of Contemporary History* 2009-2013 Jan Ybema
- 32 *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 2009-2013 Jaco Stoop
- 33 *Environment and Development Economics* 2009-2013 Pedro Miguel
- 34 *Continuity and Change* 2009-2013 Homer Wagenaar
- 35 *Il pensiero politico* 2010-2014 Chiara Ziletti
- 36 *European History Quarterly*, 2010-2015 Wesley Reynolds
- 37 *The Iron Game Sport History*, 2007-2011 Alexandra Stelzig
- 38 *Mariner's Mirror Nautical History*, 2010-2014 Donald Laskey
- 39 *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, 2010-2014 Logan Lake
- 40 *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 2008-2013 Benedikt Bäther
- 41 *Cahiers d'études Africaines* 2008-2012 Elisa Tuijnder
- 42 *Journal of Africa Studies* 2006-2010 Abel S. Knottnerus
- 43 *Journal of comparative sociology* 2008-2012 Patty Huijbers