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'Home and away': the international and its 'publics'

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The paper explores how the academic study of International Relations (IR) seeks out and develops its 'publics' and how these serve to propagate the discipline's founding purpose. The history of the founding of IR, in the immediate post-First World War years, is discussed. Using a social constructivist approach, the article then tracks how the idea of the 'international' emerged in two separate (but closely linked) approaches to understanding social relations at this level of organisation, viz., International Law and International Relations. Throughout, the argument stresses that those who founded IR understood that it was essential to enlist the interest of the 'public' if they were to succeed in the founding purpose. Intermittently, references to the discipline's South African life form are made.

Several decades after the critical theorists confirmed that the professional was political, feminists pointed out that the personal is political.[1] This article, which begins with a confession, explains my own journey towards the same conclusions in a discussion of the field of International Relations (IR), the arena in which I served a happy (though, as will become plain, not always intellectually fulfilling) academic apprenticeship.

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1   In 2013, I delivered the 29th E.H. Carr Lecture at the University of Aberystwyth, Wales. This essay is a version of my Inaugural Lecture of the same title that was delivered at the University of Johannesburg on 22 August 2013.

My frustration with the sclerosis which seemed to be offered by the field began during the struggle over apartheid. Trapped by the Manichean logic of the Cold War, the formal study of international relations seemed to offer very little to South Africa's embattled people beyond the tortuous debate over sanctions and the long chain of policy questions which it spawned – would they, could they, should they be used against the apartheid regime?

A full 20 years after the ending of apartheid, there is still no agreement on whether or not sanctions helped or hindered in bringing apartheid to its knees. At present, most conversations on this topic are marked more by mythology than by any factual evidence and sound logic. This helps, surely, to explain why the ongoing tragedy over the fate of the Assad regime in Syria, which entered its third year as this piece was published, continues with no end in sight. For all its genuflections towards the lessons of history and normative thought, IR, like most other policy-centred disciplines, is mainly ahistorical in its approach to understanding and explaining the world notwithstanding its humanistic claims.

I will pause to make something clear. One of the peer reviewers of this article baulked at the idea that IR could be called ahistorical claiming that realism in IR was "strongly historically anchored". It is not my intention to question the integrity of the reviewer, but I need to point out that the majority of critical scholars in the field, of which I include myself, believe that mainstream IR suffers from "tempocentric ahistoricism" – a mode of analysing "that takes a snapshot of the present ... [international] ... system and then extrapolates this back through time" (Hobson 2008: 368). The effect of this is that historical ruptures and continuities are distorted, and that history appears to operate within the tempo of the present.

My critical view of these matters also accounts for the personal tone of these early paragraphs. In a field of knowledge not known for its sensitivity to reflexivity, it is important to stress the value of not only referring to oneself, but also acting upon oneself in the process of making new knowledge – to intentionally use one of the great clichés of this age. This deals with a second concern of the more valuable of the two reviews of this manuscript.

If my distress over the paralysis in IR was one thing, any expectations I had of better things from the discipline were dashed by the mindless decision of 'new' South African politicians and bureaucrats – backed by the growing authority of think-tankers – to invade the country's micro-neighbour, Lesotho, in September 1998. Let me be clear: on this occasion, I am not interested in the reasons for South Africa's invasion of Lesotho – an issue that I have addressed in great detail elsewhere (see Vale 2003: 118-23).

Until the invasion, I had argued for a re-negotiation of southern Africa's political architecture by questioning the centrality of the idea of sovereignty in

its affairs in the hope that – with both foresight and fortitude – the very idea of "southern Africa" could be conceived anew (Vale 2003).

But the closed policy-centred discourses of IR, where sovereignty is at once both a commanding and a very slippery idea, drove matters in a different direction. The Lesotho invasion took place against the backdrop of the break-up of Yugoslavia and the growing chorus of specialist knowledge – which claimed 'expertise' – which insisted that every global troubled spot should be bombed into a kind of democratic peace in the name of human rights. This, it was argued, was an acceptable solution to the two perennial problems of interstate relations, namely global conflict and world order. It was as if the cumulated knowledge of IR – which, as we will presently see, was inspired by the highest ideals – had little effect on a global episteme which was determined to exercise the oldest rule of power politics, 'might is right'. The result was the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)'s intervention in the Balkan War, the rise of the United Nations (UN)'s doctrine of the responsibility to protect and, ironically, the increasing call from those who once considered themselves Marxists, that imperialism, if done in the name of human rights and free markets, was a responsible idea (Ignatieff 2003). I believed and still do that to accept this thinking was counter the Enlightenment project of rationality and reason which aimed at emancipation.

Believing other forms of understanding were possible, I set out to seek other ways to understand and negotiate the social world, both international and other. This journey has taken me on several detours and in new directions – towards social theory, intellectual history, sociology, and literature – "to arrive", as T S Eliot famously put it in his poem *Little Gidding*, back "where we started. And know the place for the first time".

1.   What is the issue?

The high-minded goal of the study of the relations between nation states was – and remains – "to save subsequent generations from the scourge of war" – as it is famously put in the opening sentence of the UN Charter. The formal establishment of the discipline, known generically as International Relations, predates this great document by nearly 30 years.[2] It might, therefore, be suggested that the founding of the UN was one of the great achievements of the establishment of, what we might call, a 'global public good' by an academic discipline.

Its founding was linked to a particular set of historical circumstances and, in particular, to an appreciation that knowledge informed by rationality – science,

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2   It has several monikers besides, like International Politics and International Affairs.

if you prefer – can solve intractable human problems. This was at a time, as Karl Marx had argued three decades earlier, which believed that human-centred issues could be "scientifically analysed and predicted with as much certainty as Newtonian scientists could predict the movement of the planets" (Howard 2000: 63). In the discipline's case, these ideas were brought together in the establishment of an Academic Chair of "International Politics" at the University College of Wales, Abersytwyth. The year was 1919.

In any book, and at any other moment in modern history, there could scarcely be a more ambitious reach towards 'the public' than the bold idea to teach and research on a 'real world' – especially one which had recently so devastatingly touched the lives of nearly every living person. Indeed, if ever there was a leap of faith based on bringing humanism, reason and morality into the public sphere, the establishment of the Chair was the exemplar. The 'social problem' it addressed, of course, was the experience of the First World War which meant, as will presently be evident, the challenge towards which the nascent discipline reached was nothing, if not audacious!

This brings me to an important explanatory question in this article: given these high-minded goals, how would – indeed, could – the citizenry be mobilised to support the idea? What techniques help to drive the message home that war was destructive and that peace was a preferable condition for humankind? This required the nurturing and cultivation of dedicated publics to carry the message and, hopefully, mobilise in favour of its message. These publics, of course, would carry the message home about events abroad – and this, of course, explains the article's title.

The man behind the establishment of the Chair was David Davies, the grandson of a rich Welsh industrialist of the same name. The younger David Davies was both a Member of the British Parliament and a "belligerent proponent of peace".[3] As a supporter of the work of the League of Nations, which was established at the Versailles Peace Conference, Davies had once claimed that he was prepared to go to war in the cause of peace and he tried, on one occasion, to raise a private air force to bomb states that committed aggression into peace! In the face of this evidence, we should, perhaps consider his intervention in the establishment of the Chair at Aberystwyth as one of his more controlled efforts to fulfil his passion of securing international peace.

His commitment to making the world more peaceful through scholarship was certainly within the spirit of both mourning and renewal that marked the immediate

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3   E mail exchange with Professor Ken Booth from Aberystwyth University, 21 December 2011.

post-First World War years, because there were many such interventions across the world. For instance, the Memorial University in Newfoundland was established in 1925 in memory of those who had perished in the First World War as, six years earlier, had the University of Leicester, my *alma mater,* with its pointed motto, *Ut vitam habeant* – 'that they may have life'.

It is also worth remembering that the impact of the memorialisation of the ending of European hostilities in 1918 continues nearly a century later. The gathering of war veterans at cenotaphs, across the world, especially at the Armistice Day parades on 11 November, is an annual reminder of the solemn undertakings, made in 1918, to end all wars and build a more enlightened civilisation.

The establishment of the Chair was a call to nations of the world (at that time, for all intents and purposes, the United States and Europe – with Britain in the lead) to listen to the voice of 'rationality' and 'reason' rather than to follow their own nationalistic instincts. What was happening, in fact, was that governments with long military traditions, who possessed the most advanced technologies of war, were being called to order by a professor – in this case, a Chair named for America's 28th President, Woodrow Wilson – who would argue that science could silence guns and end centuries of battlefield destruction which had been caused by anger, ambition and avarice. Moreover, the discipline's founders hoped that the peoples of the world – again circumscribed by a limited geographical understanding of what constituted 'the international' – would both temper their antagonistic identities and march in tempo towards a global utopia.

The choice of this problem for research (and, ultimately, for teaching) was, of course, extremely idealistic, but it is easy to understand the sense of despair that lay under its founding moment and the sense of idealism concerning the project itself.

Not for nothing was the First World War (1914-1918) called 'the great war', or 'the war to end all wars': these appellations were certainly supported by facts, whether in individual episodes or taken together; the war was an appalling experience. Consider a few statistics: 8.5 million soldiers were killed on all fronts and over 21 million were wounded, while civilian deaths ran between 12 and 13 million. Quite correctly, the war was described as a 'world war'. Its geographical spread, which had been refracted by the impact of colonialism, was on a front far wider than what had ever been previously experienced. Apart from its cockpit in Europe, the fighting involved Russia, Japan, Africa, both the Near and the Far East, and, ultimately, the United States. However, its near neighbour, Canada, which was a British colony, entered the war on 5 August 1914, only a day after Britain declared war on Germany. Other distant places were also touched in various ways. India, for example, paid GBP 146 million towards the war effort and, consequently,

suffered inflation and shortages (Wilson 2005: 131). Although Africa was, to a large extent, spared the worst of the impact, it was deeply affected: over two million Africans were drafted into various forms of 'forced labour' during the four years of fighting – of these, some 400.000 died mostly of disease and exhaustion (Hochschild 2011: 347-50).[4] In addition, the magnitude of social disruption caused other forms of social fallout. Quite ironically, most of the 73 incarcerated British conscientious objectors who died during the four years of fighting perished from the influenza that had swept across the world – a development which has been ascribed to the war rather than the failure of public medicine (Hochschild 2011: 347-50).

These pages will not traverse the tragic story of the First World War, because the Centenary of the War is upon us, and this will surely provide an occasion for a deep discussion on how it all came to pass. Neither will these pages rehearse the history of the discipline that begins with the dramatic unfolding of the story of the Woodrow Wilson Chair and the expansion of the discipline, first, to the London School of Economic and Political Science (LSE) and, later, elsewhere in the UK and, in the aftermath of the Second World War, to the US and Europe. But, one note can be added to the history of the discipline in South Africa where an academic Chair, named for the two-time prime minister of the Union of South Africa, Jan Smuts (1870-1950), was established in 1962. This Chair was sponsored by the South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA) which had itself been established in 1934 as a platform to promote international understanding. A more critical eye on this development must suggest that SAIIA's role was to domesticate the emerging polity called South Africa into the international system – but, the public was only the country's ruling minority.

In the late 1950s, in partnership with the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, SAIIA – through a shell organisation, The Smuts Memorial Trust, which enjoyed the support of mining capital – set about constructing a memorial to Smuts which, simultaneously, would house the activities of the Institute and the academic Chair which would function out of the university. It was called 'Jan Smuts House' and its neo-classical architectural features, which included fluted Greek columns, was intended to symbolise the work of "Smuts the Humanist" (Bostock 1970: 36).

As will be evident, the central interest of this article lies in an ancillary direction as suggested in its title. How did this new field of study (IR) seek out

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4   Incidentally, this mortality rate was higher than that experienced by British forces on the war's infamous 'western front' in France and Belgium.

and develop publics and what purpose do these publics serve? This question intersects with three puzzles that occupy my present research agenda, namely, "What is the international?"; "How does it interact with the academic discipline called International Relations?", and "How did the international come to South Africa?". These questions suggest an interest in epistemology which is, more generally, known as the 'knowledge question'. Periodically, this interest strays into an analysis in the form of a think piece or, more conveniently and certainly more simply, as essential ground-clearing for a wider project.

To succeed, however, an explanatory note is required. Theoretical debates in IR have become quite dense, as any reading of the specialist journals will confirm. In what follows, I characterised some of the epistemological debates in the field, because my interest, in the current exercise, is to explore the issue of the publics.

2.   The public

Like so many other terms in modern thinking, the idea of "the public" has its origins in a form of knowing, the Classics, which was "dominant in western education and letters for centuries and ... [has now] ... apparently been abandoned" (Eyres 2013). This occurred because the study of the Classics is judged to be of no practical use in times in which utilitarian forms of knowledge are prized above all others. However, it is salutary to remember that the study of the Classics underpins most of what we know in every conceivable academic discipline. Thus, reasserting the link between the study of the Classics and the unfolding idea of 'the public' reinforces the profound loss that all forms of knowledge face when Classics Departments at universities close down – as they will do, if serious-minded people do not speak about what is at stake in their closure.

It is also intended to draw a direct line between the study of IR and Classics. Many of the most influential writers in the field – including E H Carr (1892-1982), the Woodrow Wilson Professor of International Politics at Aberystwyth from 1936-1947 – were trained in the Classics – Carr at Cambridge. But the most intimate link between the Classics and IR is to be found in a particular account of the Peloponnesian War (431-404 BC), as presented by the Greek historian Thucydides, which was fought between the Greek city states of Athens and Sparta. The Melian Dialogue, as it is called, has become a classic IR text, because it is said to describe a 'realist' view of international politics with its unilateral and Hobbesian eye focused permanently on the issue of state security in a world characterised by anarchy. Thucydides, the Athenian General, expresses this as follows: "the strong do what they have the power to do and the weak accept what they have to accept" (Thucydides 1972).

More practically, links have been drawn between the study of the Classics and IR and these, as the historian A N Wilson (2005) points out, are linked to a fateful First World War event, the failed allied invasion of Turkey. The iconic beach Gallipoli, an area considered sacred to all Australians, because over 8.000 of their troops perished there, borders on the world of classical Greece (Wilson 2005: 138-9). Despite IR's reach for modernity, the study of the discipline remains embedded in, and inspired by knowledge of the Classics – and this spreads far beyond its founding place, as the decision on the architecture of Jan Smuts House in Johannesburg suggests.

If this link with antiquity underscores its claim as a site of knowledge, the idea of 'the public' is located in the disputed interpretations concerning who constitutes "rightful members of polities" (Bennett et al. 2005: 282). In other words, who makes up 'the public'? This immediately gives rise to a series of conceptual problems which begin with this question: Who is it that has the claim to 'rightful' membership? A historical tension persists between general access of all to membership – do all citizens constitute 'the public'? Or is the claim to 'rightful' membership to be controlled by race, class, gender or age? Conflicts over this question, of course, have been the site of many social and political struggles, and these four particular sites of conflict are entangled with South Africa's own history – central to the struggle over apartheid were claims over race; currently, there are ongoing conflicts over women's (and by extrapolation, gender) rights in the country, notwithstanding the nominal equality of all before the law, and the question over the voting age, which was most famously raised by Nelson Mandela in May 1993 when he floated the idea that 14-year-olds should be given the right to vote in South Africa's first democratic election (SAHO 2013).

Understanding what constitutes 'the public', and even where it may be found, is intricately tied up with perspectives on, and approaches to individual interpretations of the social world. Central to a definition (offered by Jürgen Habermas, the most pre-eminent writer in the field) is the fact that the "public sphere [is part of] civil society" – it incorporates "adults who have gained maturity and intellectual autonomy" and it is "oriented to forming rational-critical opinion on matters of universal interest to citizens, and through this to informing state policy" (Calhoun 2010: 302). This places 'the public' outside the direct purview of the state, but binds them to how they are governed. This firmly positions the idea of 'the public' in what is currently known as 'civil society', a category that enjoys voice both in the context of wider society and, importantly, in the multifarious debates on what constitutes democracy and, indeed, on what constitutes policy in a democracy.

Two closely linked notions of the idea of 'the public' run through the argument in this article. The first explains and understands a process whereby publics are mobilised, registered and performed by particular kinds of interest. In seemingly distinctive ways, this has been one of the ongoing preoccupations of IR in the near-century of its life. It has entailed the building of discreet constituencies around, and within which to promote the discipline's founding message and the exploration of a range of broadcast platforms – often borrowing from, and working alongside other disciplines. These have helped to expedite the idea that IR constitutes a unique scientific field with a distinctive social purpose, but have also made it captive of a specific vocabulary that is increasingly, as noted, technical in its form and direction.

This runs alongside the second – and complementary – notion that is of more immediate interest to my own work on the knowledge question. This begins with the understanding that interpretations of the social world are never static nor, indeed, stable. The reason for this is that the world is 'made' as we try to understand and explain it, which is the kernel idea of social construction – an approach to theorising the social world which, from the early 1990s, has made a great impression on theorising in IR. As a way of thinking about the international, social construction has challenged the dominant realist paradigm in the field, introducing it to the idea that issues of knowledge – what it is, how it is made – are central to the study of IR and its social mission (Sending 2003: 11).

We must pause to ask, what is social construction? The French theorist, Pierre Bourdieu, provides an unambiguous notion of this in his book, *Science of science and reflexivity*:

> a constructivist vision of science has to be combined with a con structivist vision of the scientific object: social facts are socially constructed, and every social agent, like the scientist, more or less successfully constructs and seeks to impose, with more or less strength, his individual vision of reality, his 'point of view'. That is why sociology, whether it wants to or not (and mostly it does), is an actor in the struggles it seeks to describe (Bourdieu 2004: 88).

The relevance of this to the argument in this article follows upon a thread suggested by Hannah Arendt, namely, that communication in, and to 'the public' includes the idea of 'world making'. Thus, in the very act of speaking about the social world, we make it. For example, those who draw up constitutions literally 'make' countries in the same way that they 'make' publics who live within these same constitutions. Similarly, those who seek to 'make' the international through speech and action create and foster the idea that there is a condition called 'the international'. In this way, the international is constantly being constructed by

the creation of public spaces which deliberate, *inter alia*, upon the idea, and in the field of IR. These spaces can be located in various institutional settings: the university, the public square, the generic or specialist think-tank, or in purpose-built forms such as institutes for international relations or councils devoted to the study of foreign relations.

The disciplining imposed on, and by knowledge – its theorising, its ordering, its broadcasting – construct the very audiences or communities who consume the distinctive knowledge of its deliberation in purpose-built institutional settings.

The blossoming and deepening power of Economics is a good example of how a discipline establishes itself through performative activities in the public domain. As Johan Heilbron suggests, the invention of Economics followed upon the separation of the modern social conceptions of 'state' and 'law'. After 1615, "[t]he management of wealth was no longer the preserve of independent households; it was now defined as a public affair, acquiring knowledge on it was the objective of a new intellectual genre: political economy" (Heilbron 1995: 5). From an early and modest role as a single measure of the national household budget, Economics has emerged as the single most important (read influential) field of social knowing, because Economics "has stepped out of the groves of academe into the world of law, national policy making and international organisation" (Basu 1998: 184). Certainly, and on this we must be clear, this was the product of a myriad important conceptual shifts in thinking.

It was, of course, a long road from humble beginnings to the rise and, perhaps, the fall of the Chicago School which have marked Economics in our own age. But this journey involved its inclusion in the university through credentialed courses, the establishment of academic journals in the field, the founding of specialist bodies to deliberate in the field, and its emergence into public debate. Cumulatively, this suggests that, far from being inanimate objects living in the netherworld of the ivory tower, academic disciplines – in the social sciences, in particular – can live out social – and often very political – lives of their own. They make and re-make themselves in the face of the changing social fashions that both determine, and are determined by their increasingly public personas.

As a result, the social sciences live in the world of 'the public' and they do this especially through the idea of policy which brings the academic discipline into the public domain on a regular basis. However, it is discourse and policy action within the domain of 'the public' that determines the weighting of individual disciplines.

These scattered thoughts offer essential background from which to explain the international and the public life of IR.

3. Constructing the international through law

States are mainly artificial constructions and are, to a large extent, the product of historical and social contingency. Recognising this is one thing, another is appreciating this against the notion that 'geography is destiny' – the idea that where states are geographically located has a direct influence on all aspects of its life and being. Appreciating this suggests, however, that, for all the policing paraphernalia concerning passports and visas, social life does not end at the borders of a country, but is continuous and continuing. Like the proverbial statement about love, the social world invariably will find a way. The sharp truth for the study of IR is that social processes are not captured by the borders which are erected around states – even if these are concrete walls or barbed wire fences. Evidence of this is to be found everywhere, historically, and long preceded the intrusion of the notion of globalisation – a world without borders – which was said to mark the rise of post-'international' thinking after the fall of the Berlin wall.

What are we to make of the idea of the 'international'? In this instance, etymology is helpful, if only partially so. The serviceable idea of the 'international' – meaning the cross-border relations between nations, states and peoples – was introduced into academic discourse by the utilitarian English philosopher and social reformer, Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832). The word first appeared in his treatise on law called "An introduction to the principles of morals and legislation", published in 1789, and the only major work written by Bentham to appear in his lifetime. Bentham, whose mummified body remains on display at University College, London, was a utilitarian thinker who was responsible for the introduction of several other terms into the lexicon of the social sciences which still remain in use. These include 'codification', 'maximise' and its antithesis, 'minimise'.

His intention with the neologism, 'international', was to dislodge the phrase, 'the law of nations', by capturing the idea of many nations in a single word. In so doing, however, Bentham helped to redefine the spatial dimension of politics – moving it from the sovereign-bound idea of the national to another bound idea, the _inter_national. He accomplished this by shifting political thinking around the idea of space, even though, strictly speaking, the word was first used as an adjective in the phrase, 'International jurisprudence'. Therefore, the use of the word 'international' was a recognition that the social world could not be corralled by political borders but, and this was equally central, it implied that the social world could be controlled by law.

By positioning the idea at the frontier – as it were – between the 'domestic' and its other, and by linking it originally to law, the idea of the 'international' watered the development of two separate – though closely intertwined – academic

disciplines. The first was called "International Law" which refers "to the system of rules that are regarded as binding on states and other agents in their mutual relations" (Evans & Newnham 1998: 261). This approach to the international was intended to create a Kantian world which relied on diplomacy and multilateralism, which, at its centre, prized the rationality and reasonableness of codified behaviour in the form of law. It is essentially a norm-setting exercise which flows from the interaction of nation states – and other international – actors who are prepared to supplicate themselves to the idea of the binding effects of law.

As is well established, law is constantly in flux and open to interpretation, of course. The idea of Empire carried the implication that, although located in different parts of the world – and geographically considered as 'international' – many parts of the world, legally, fell under the sovereignty of colonial powers. The people of India – which was often known as "the Jewel in the (British) crown" – were considered to be subjects of an Emperor who was also the British Sovereign. Great symbolic significance had been added to this understanding of their place in, what we might call, the 'imperial/international' by the 1911 Great Coronation of Delhi Durbar of George V and his wife, Mary, as the Emperor and Empress of India (Wilson 2005: 129-31). However, these particular (which would currently be considered peculiar) understandings of sovereignty were not permanent and, in the next 20 years, white-settler countries which were considered to be British Dominions came to enjoy an increasing degree of 'independence' from the British crown. One of these, of course, was South Africa; others were Australia, Canada and New Zealand.

Social mores towards the international and, in particular, approaches towards international law were changing rapidly. European international public law, which had bound Europe to, and in, its imperial reach, was bending in accordance with changing interpretations and understandings of the social – even across countries. This was to provide the legal sanction for the independence movement which, in Africa, commenced with the Ghanaian independence in 1957; this ended a singular "European-dominated globality" (Cooper 2005: 105).

Understanding this is crucial. Although the idea of the international appears to be stable and even, perhaps, fixed, it is in constant flux, especially in a field such as law.

This said, a great deal of the political conversation over the relationship of nation states with international law is bound up with a simple indisputable fact: there is no single body to enact and enforce compliance with this form of law, Therefore, there can be no universal implementing force and, it follows, (seemingly contra-Bentham) that there can be no universal jurisprudence.

Does this mean that international law as an idea and a way of ordering the world, as many IR realists claim, has failed? The answer is, no. The rise of international organisations, such as the UN, which aim to secure a more peaceful world turns on the understanding that, even if not strictly binding in law, the moral force of international understandings can cut and cross frontiers and bring about forms of behaviour which approximate law and can deliver order – this, of course, is Kantian logic. Even if states jealously protect their sovereign rights, they can promote the cause of a more peaceful world by adhering to international law. To expedite this end, specialist institutions were established – the International Court of Justice (ICJ), for instance, is the principal judicial organ of the UN Organisation.

A second UN court, the International Criminal Court (ICC) – established in 1998 – reflects the shifting preoccupations of international law, especially after the Second World War. This was a period marked by an increasing concern with the rights of individuals across the world. Indeed, this cross-border concern for rights and emancipation drove the highly successful international campaign to end the apartheid system. This thread of international law was inspired by the Enlightenment ideals of emancipation and the rights and duties of individuals, and finds its most expressive modern form in the idea of human rights. By bringing individuals to 'international justice' for the four international crimes under its purview, namely genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and crimes of aggression, the ICC reflects a moment in which violations of human rights are punishable by law, independent of the immediate authority of national sovereignty. Although partially effective, the central weakness of the ICC remains that it relies, like all international law, on voluntary compliance and that the US, the world leading power and once a major protagonist of the ICC, has not signed its protocols.

The twin of International Law, the field known as International Relations (IR), is positioned at the same border. It views the international primarily as a political as opposed to a legal process; as a way to understand and explain the social world which is located at, and between the borders that separate one sovereign state from another.

4. How International Relations makes its publics

To succeed in their goal of building a more peaceful world, those who established the academic chair in the field of IR suggests that they understood that it was essential to enlist the interest of 'the public'. The location of the Chair, in Aberystwyth, Wales, was perhaps unfortunate, because this place itself was remote from the sources of power which, especially in IR's applied end, were located in London, the site of both politics and diplomacy. It was also the focal

point of Britain's Empire which, though long past its zenith, nevertheless carried an enormous symbolic importance. However, Britain had a free press and enjoyed what we would currently consider to be an active civil society, and early IR drew on this to seek out its publics.

To understand the importance of this, our attention must be drawn to the manner in which IR creates what is effectively its own public sphere – it does this in two ways. First, it draws on Hannah Arendt's idea that public communication is a process of world-making. Thus, the grammar and vocabulary of the discipline constantly live in the public sphere: its ebb and flow is determined by the immediate policy environment of the international which it creates and re-creates. This world has, to a large extent, been constructed and sustained by Realism, with its dependency on sovereignty as the central organising/founding principle of the social world and its deep pessimism on human nature which is caught in Thomas Hobbes's famous quote that "the life of man [sic] ... [is] ... solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short". At particular moments, this core idea has used different discourses to carry the point. The international system is characterised by anarchy with states, and their defence of sovereignty, as the primary units or actors in analysis.

During the Cold War, for instance, IR's metanarrative was based on two notions that have a long history in both politics and the explanation of the relations between nations. The first of these was the idea of 'terror' which has its roots in the French Revolution, and the second, 'balance', which was the central notion in the 19th Century Concert of European Powers. Understanding IR during the Cold War – with its reliance on binary logic – turned on the notion of the 'Balance of Terror': the idea that a nuclear strike by either of the superpowers could destroy the planet. Unsurprisingly, both sides of the divide were 'terrified' to resort to this as a means of waging war.

Balance of Terror - signalled something else, besides. This is the urgency attached to every exchange dealing with the idea of the international. Scarcely is there a conversation in this regard that is not an emergency - so, to talk about the international is literally to signal grave danger which is drawn from the headlines of the day. We need to be clear on something: the nuclear threat was and remains a serious one, as, of course, does every current conversation on the tragic civil war in Syria. These are 'wicked problems' – to borrow a phrase from the social planning literature, but to frame every conversation as an emergency closes off the possibility of a free, unfettered exchange of ideas within the public sphere. This set of circumstances is compounded, because very often the setting in which international problems are cast are shrouded in secrecy, as the recent brouhaha

over American whistle-blower Edward Snowden showed, or caught in technical jargon, as this has emerged in negotiations over international trade.

Given the permanent spirit of 'emergency', it is not surprising that the same analytical features, and often the very words that made them, return to the discourse of the international again and again. This was certainly so in the aftermath of the attacks on the US, known by the generic term, 9/11. At one end of this particular construction, those who committed the atrocities were instantaneously branded as "terrorists"; at the other, the sense of emergency (and the closing of open-ended public conversations) led the US (with the assistance of its allies) to successively mobilise the idea of 'international security' by invading Iraq and Afghanistan under the broad rubric that the maintenance of international order relied on the US leading a 'war on terror'. The latter term, of course, returns the debate on the emergency to a series of well-worn understandings that terror is the gravest of all threats to the idea of the international.

The circulation – or, rather, recirculation – of these particular tropes were fostered by the disciplinary gatekeepers who are located in an array of institutions – called Institutes of International Affairs or, in the American case, Council of Foreign Relations. Their particular roots are planted in the same post-First World War soil as the Woodrow Wilson Chair, and their purpose – to promote peace – purportedly parallels its concerns which were to further and foster the understandings that underpinned the peace agreements reached at Versailles after the First World War. These were aimed, especially, at securing peace in Europe and at ordering other corners of the world that had been touched by the conflict of 1914-1918. Its spirit was captured in Woodrow Wilson's famous Fourteen Points Speech of January 1918 which laid out a series of liberal policy goals intended to bring order following the First World War. The speech included a doctrine of free trade, open agreements between states, the goal of democracy and the ideal of self-determination.

At one level, these 'conversation chambers', as we might conveniently call them, were considered to be the public custodians of the universal desire of peace. But, and this follows the work of Pierre Bourdieu, they were certainly not objective councils on the great issues of war and peace. For one thing, and this is to draw randomly, the gender attitudes of the time determined that participation in these conversations were confined to men. They were also selective on who could speak and on what: this meant that their connections – their idea of the 'international' – were geared towards the "civilised", the "Christian" (Cooper 2005: 110).

These institutions also organised a social life – an ensemble of meetings, study groups, publications and other forms of public deliberation. These enabled both

national and international networks of expertise "to cohere and prosper" (Kendall 2004: 72). However, this work was not without a self-interest of its own, because it was increasingly supported by corporate interests or directly supported by governments. As a result, these places must be perceived for what they were, are, and remain: they are knowledge brokers, a corps of interested – even, self-interested – participants in ongoing conversations over the international and, following Hannah Arendt, favouring a particular form in the process of 'world-making'. The advocacy role envisaged in their original position, involving efforts to order the social world, increasingly becomes one of circulating and re-circulating a liberal interpretation of IR and circulating an accepted grammar for world order under controlled conditions. As knowledge-brokers, institutes and councils both created and carried the words that conformed and, later, stabilised the vocabulary of the discipline both in – and in the making of – the world of the international and in the way it has been ordered.

The claim of these traditionally peace-centred councils, especially in the post-Cold War period, is that they constitute a strain of think-tank that draws them towards a deeper form of intimacy both with the state and the development of policy. This can happen in several ways but, most frequently, especially in the US, in the movement of personnel, who share 'value interests' between these 'chambers', and also through direct participation in government.

This suggests that, rather than operating as part of 'the public', they are integral to what the organisational theorist, Ernst Haas, has dubbed as an "epistemic community", a "network of professionals with recognised expertise and competence in a particular domain and an authoritative claim to policy-relevant knowledge within that domain or issue area" (Sending 2003: 29). This strips them of their claim to be fully fledged participants in civil society – notwithstanding their many protestations to the contrary.

Operating rather as think-tanks – a classification and an image to which they increasingly lay claim – the work of these institutions, particularly in the Global South, increasingly relies on the funding of foreign governments. In this instance, liberal international policy agendas, especially in pos-Cold War era, have played a decisive role. Thus, the freedom of Southern think-tanks to represent the interests of their publics has been curtailed because their concerns "reflect both funding and media exposure opportunities" (Asher & Guilhot 2010: 341) which are based in the Global North. This certainly does not provide them with the necessary political autonomy that is traditionally viewed as central for the making of impartial judgements. It explains why a paucity of critical interrogations of the liberal framing of an 'international system', which is dominated by the US, has emerged since the fall of the Berlin wall.

The question before us, especially in the context of this article, is this: Do knowledge-brokers who operate in this fashion constitute 'the public', or are they a public which has been fashioned to serve the interests of the discipline and its interested sponsors?

As noted earlier, these interests might not necessarily be the same as those of 'the public', especially in the sense that knowledge – again following Bourdieu – is not objective. Rather, knowledge is self-interested and, as a result, is deeply interested in both politics and its derivative, policy-making. Ernst Haas puts the same issue in this far-stronger formulation by drawing a direct link between science and the making of the political and, it logically follows in the context of this argument, the international. "Science", he writes, "influences the way politics is done"; it is "a component of politics because the scientific way of grasping reality is used to define the interests that political actors articulate and defend. The doings of actors can then be described by observers as an exercise of defining and realizing interests informed by changing scientific knowledge about man and nature" (Haas 1990: 11). This confirms that IR is a deeply political act notwithstanding its social science-centred claim on objectivity.

Was this not always so? Did the very founding of the discipline, notwithstanding its institutionalisation in the academy, not take place at a moment which was political, and profoundly so? Was its search for a public not a recognition that the issues at stake could not be objective despite the claims on 'science' which drew, *inter alia*, on Marx's claims on the centrality of science as a way to understand social relations?

As will be clear, I have returned to IR wiser, though no less idealistic nor less worried than I was when I set out on the voyage that took me beyond its disciplinary borders. If anything, I am more pointed in my criticism of the discipline and the role it plays both within the academy and, naturally, in society itself. But I am more hopeful than ever before that more focused critiques of IR, based on understandings offered by historical sociology, the history of ideas, the sociology of knowledge, and the interconnected genealogies which link them both to the discipline and elsewhere, can bring better understandings, if not quite the peace, which the discipline once bravely promised to deliver to the world.

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