

# **Theory Makes Global IR Hang Together.**

## **Lessons from Citation Analysis**

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### **Abstract**

This paper asked two interrelated questions through citation analyses of both WoS- and – for the first time – seven non-WoS publications from Latin America, Africa, and Asia: 1) What is the state of IR theory in various journals? 2) To what extent is IR theory global rather than confined to transatlantic IR? We find that IR theory is alive and kicking everywhere. There is little evidence for continued paradigmatic warfare as experienced during the late 1980s and early 1990s. The two main clusters of the 300 top-cited sources represented in our WoS dataset are both engaged in theory-building, one with regard to one substantive issue-area in world politics, namely international security, the other more generally devoted to theorizing from a variety of substantive perspectives. As to the non-WoS journals in our sample, a similar picture of non-paradigmatic theory use emerges. However, while IR theory is referred to everywhere, it is definitely not global. Our top-300 WoS cited sources have been exclusively published in the U.S., the UK, and (Western) Europe. Highly cited theory sources in our dataset of non-WoS journals do not contain references to non-Western IR scholarship either. There are few theory citations in non-WoS journals referring to scholars of the particular region or country, but these cites do not travel beyond the individual journal. In sum, we can observe a core-periphery structure of global IR whereby a strongly interconnected transatlantic core community faces a periphery that only connects through common references to the core.

## Introduction

A lively debate has emerged among International Relations (IR) scholars about what constitutes our discipline, what role “grand theorizing” plays in this regard (Dunne et al., 2013).<sup>1</sup> More recently, this debate has profited from a growing amount of empirical research on these issues using content analyses of IR publications (e.g. Kristensen, 2015b), citation analyses (e.g. Saideman, 2018), or survey data among IR scholars in many countries (particularly the “Teaching and Research International Politics” [TRIP] faculty surveys, see Maliniak et al., 2018). While some find that the days of grand theorizing in IR are over and that narrow-minded “hypothesis-testing” has taken its place (Mearsheimer and Walt, 2013), others argue that the big “isms” are well and alive due to their role of shaping communities of IR authors (Kristensen, 2018).

We disagree with both accounts:

1. It is IR theory that keeps the global IR world hanging together. However, while scholars still refer to the big “isms,” they use them around the globe in a synthesizing manner, without being wedded to one single paradigm, and to solve real puzzles in the real world of international affairs.
2. We identify two major IR clusters, one committed to cross-issue IR theory-building, the other one focused on security studies from a variety of perspectives. Global IR hangs together through references to the IR theory cluster consisting of North American and European authors who appear to define what IR theory is and who exhibit strong interconnected ties. Scholars outside the transatlantic area refer to this transatlantic IR theory cluster when engaging in theory-building.
3. Thus, the world of IR closely resembles a “discrete model” of a core-periphery network structure (Borgatti and Everett, 2000) whereby the core nodes are interconnected to each other and to some periphery nodes, while the periphery nodes are connected to the core, but not to each other. IR scholarship in the periphery – including non-English language scholarship in the transatlantic core – quotes the transatlantic theory cluster, but is not linked among each other, not even in one region.

To map a picture of the global IR world, we base our analysis on citations. Citations tell us something about whose work scholars deem significant for their own work and to which networks they refer. Highly cited scholarship then constitutes the discipline’s core and we can discern different IR communities by whom they cite.

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For the first time and in addition to the “usual suspects” of Web of Science (WoS) journals, our analysis includes seven North as well as Latin American, European, Asian, and African IR journals that are not included in the WoS. We have analyzed 337 articles with more than 16,000 references from these journals, all published between 2011 and 2015. As to the WoS, our contribution is based on more than 30,000 papers with references (incl. more than 5500 book chapters) published in 127 IR journals (plus books) between 2011-2015. From this sample, we took 300 top cited sources (with altogether more than 34,000 citations). More than 6400 articles and book chapters cite at least two of these top sources together (more than 30,000 citations). We conducted a cluster analysis of their references to the top sources to describe the world of IR scholarship and, thus, to discern overlapping research communities.

Our article proceeds in four steps. We begin with a short review of the relevant literature highlighting our contribution. Second, we describe our method of co-citation and cluster analysis as well as the dataset. Third, we discuss the results with regard to the WoS and non-WoS datasets of IR articles. We conclude with summarizing our findings in light of the debates about IR theory and global IR.

### **Global IR and the “End of IR Theory”**

With this article, we add to the discussion about “the end of IR theory” (e.g. Dunne et al., 2013) by linking it to the global IR debate (e.g. Acharya, 2014; Peters and Wemheuer-Vogelaar, 2016). The latter basically claims that there is an increasing strive for diversification and a rising confidence of IR communities around the globe to play a more active role in IR, while criticizing that IR as it currently operates is Western- or Eurocentric at its core (Tickner and Waever, 2009; Tickner and Smith, 2020; Hobson, 2012). One central argument of the debate concerns the division of labor, where scholars based in the West are engaged in theorizing, while those in other world regions provide raw data and local expertise, at best and are caught in the role of passive consumers at worst (Ergin and Alkan, 2019; Tickner, 2013; Kristensen, 2015a; Aydinli and Mathews, 2000). Some authors support a view of the U.S. IR community as a “benevolent hegemon” of the IR discipline (Mearsheimer, 2016). Others see this much more skeptically, providing warnings about an overall intellectually impoverished discipline (Acharya, 2014; Tickner and Blaney, 2013; Smith, 2002), as well as an increasingly parochial U.S. community losing its touch with the rest of the discipline (Turton, 2015; Wæver, 1998; Biersteker, 2009). One major problem of the Global IR debate is a lack of empirical and comparative data (for exceptions see Turton, 2015; Kristensen, 2015a, b; Colgan, 2019). Our article contributes to closing this gap.

The other debate to which we contribute concerns the state of IR theory. Two groups can be distinguished here. The first one proclaims the end of IR theorizing, with Mearsheimer and Walt as the most prominent voices (Mearsheimer and Walt, 2013). They argue that the craft of theorizing gets increasingly ignored by IR scholars and substituted by what they call “simplistic hypothesis testing” (p. 428). Instead of creating and refining theories, IR scholars increasingly engage in discovering “well-verified empirical regularities” (p. 442). However, a big caveat in Mearsheimer and Walt’s work is that they build their argument solely on data from the TRIP survey. Oren, a second proponent of the end of (grand) IR theorizing hypothesis (Oren, 2016), went another route by exclusively addressing American IR. He argues that there is no longer a central conversation in IR around a few key paradigms but rather a proliferation of research where scholars do not engage each other.

The second group disagrees and finds that IR theory is still alive and kicking. Kristensen (2018) found that “grand theories” serve as a strong factor in giving the discipline its distinctive “sociological structure” (Kristensen, 2018, 257). His citation network analysis showed that IR scholars who have contributed to the discipline’s three big “isms” (realism, constructivism, and liberal institutionalism) can be identified as members of separate but closely intertwined communities. Consequently, Kristensen’s outcomes suggest, on the one hand, that the grand theories are still alive and play a key role in shaping the discipline. On the other hand, the “isms” are not as incommensurable as the narrative of the big debates suggests (Lake, 2011). Kristensen’s analysis suffers from two methodological problems: First, his network analysis does not include individual scholarly works, but authors (who are then identified as representing paradigms). While this might be true for iconographic authors such as Keohane, Waltz, or Wendt, there are many other prominently quoted scholars whose work cannot be easily boxed into a single paradigm. Moreover, Kristensen cannot distinguish between “drive-by” citations whereby paradigmatic authors are mentioned once and then ignored, on the one hand, and a substantive engagement with scholarly work, on the other hand. We try to correct both shortcomings.

Saideman’s contribution is more in line with our own findings (Saideman, 2018). Building on TRIP data, he shows that there still is – and always has been – a considerable amount of “grand-theorizing”. However, he argues that this iconic type of IR scholarship only ever took center stage in a brief peak in paradigm-centered publications in the mid-1990s (p. 686). Saideman then suggests - and we agree – that only a small group of (transatlantic) scholars contributes to “grand theory”-building whose publications are then widely received. In a similar vein, the editors of the 2013 EJIR special issue on “The End of IR Theory” concluded that IR draws its strength from being a “theory-led” and “theory-concerned” discipline (Dunne et al., 2013: 420). While the “great debates” may be over, theorizing is not and even less so is the interest in theoretical contributions.

The question arises, though, whether the interest in theory work is confined to the transatlantic area or whether this is a world-wide phenomenon in IR. This is where the debates on global IR and on the state of IR theory connect. With regard to highly-cited theoretical scholarship which is, therefore, deemed highly relevant by the various IR communities, to what extent are voices outside the transatlantic core visible in global IR, that is, both in the core itself and outside of it? Here, the majority of authors suggests that those who have been contributing to the theorizing and those who are members of theory-driven communities are typically well-connected U.S.- and European-based scholars (Kristensen, 2013; Turton, 2015). IR scholars around the world convey substantial respect for US scholars, journals, and research by referring to them in TRIP's global faculty survey (Maliniak et al., 2018: 22). Furthermore, when asked in a survey experiment, the majority of IR scholars around the world (with the exception of respondents based in China, Taiwan, and Brazil) agree with the assertion that IR is an American dominated field (Wemheuer-Vogelaar et al., 2016). Last not least, when writing the history of IR with a view of making visible voices outside the transatlantic core, Acharya and Buzan argue that IR as a discipline has become a lot more pluralistic over time, both with regard to theoretical orientations and concerning geographical scope (Acharya and Buzan, 2019). But are these voices being heard (and quoted) – either in the transatlantic core or in the periphery? Our analysis suggests that neither is the case. Theory-building is perceived as the business of authors located in the transatlantic core – both by scholars in the U.S. and Europe and by those working in other regions of the world. This is what we show in the following.

## **Methods and Data<sup>2</sup>**

### *Methods*

We understand a topic as scientific knowledge shared by a number of researchers (Havemann et al., 2017). We assume that topics manifest themselves in clusters of highly cited sources representing theoretical, methodological or empirical knowledge. The usual method to obtain clusters of highly cited sources in citation networks is co-citation analysis. It was independently proposed by Marshakova, 1973 and by Small, 1973. This method rests on the assumption that two sources that appear together in reference lists of many papers are relevant for a specific topic. Small, 1978 then introduced the notion of concept symbols represented by highly cited sources.

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<sup>2</sup> Our supplemental information is made available at Zenodo, <http://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.4183468> (Havemann, Frank. (2020b). Topics in Research on International Relations 2011-2015: Results from Clustering of Citation Links (Version 1.0.0). Zenodo.)

Our citation analysis is distinct from Kristensen in two aspects (cf. e.g. Kristensen, 2018). First, our units of analysis are publications, not authors. This way, different publications by the same author may appear in different clusters of highly cited sources. To quote just three examples from our list of 300 highly cited sources in the appendix (see below): Huntington 1968 and 1991 appear in the same cluster (“security,” see below), while Huntington 1996 is located in the “theory” cluster (see below). The same holds true for Putnam 1988 (“theory”) vs. Putnam 1993 and 2000 (“security”), or Russett 1993 (“theory” and “security”) vs. Russett/Oneal 2001 (“security” only). Second, we include some measurements to discern whether scholarship is cited merely as “concept symbols” (e.g. Waltz 1979 for neorealism, or Wendt 1999 for social constructivism) or whether authors substantially engage the highly cited sources. Both measurements allow us to get a better grip on how authors engage IR theories.

We discuss clusters of highly cited sources by applying a new method implemented as the PsiMinL algorithm (see Havemann, 2020c; Havemann et al., 2017 for details). We have chosen PsiMinL because usual co-citation clusters of concept symbols miss two main properties of research topics. First, topics are local in the sense that they are primarily topics to the researchers who contribute to them. Second, topics can overlap because publications can address different topics. PsiMinL is a local link-clustering algorithm. It delivers locally determined and overlapping clusters of citation links which induce overlapping clusters of citing papers and of cited sources (Havemann et al., 2017).<sup>3</sup>

Link clustering was introduced by Evans and Lambiotte, 2009 and by Ahn et al., 2010. In both approaches graph partitions of disjoint clusters of links are constructed which result in overlapping clusters of nodes. In contrast to these global methods, PsiMinL evaluates each link cluster in a local manner independently from other clusters. It can therefore produce clusters which overlap each other pervasively, i.e., not only in their boundaries but also in inner links and nodes.<sup>4</sup>

Clusters or communities in networks are considered as highly cohesive subgraphs that are well separated from the rest of the network (Fortunato 2010). There are cases where these

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<sup>3</sup> A link cluster is given as a set  $L$  of citation links between papers and sources. Each link cluster  $L$  induces a cluster of citing papers and a cluster of cited sources: The paper (source) cluster contains all papers (sources) that have citation links in link cluster  $L$ . A citation link is in  $L$  or is not but for papers and sources we can define a membership grade by relating the number of citation links in  $L$  to the number of all citation links of the paper or the source, respectively.

<sup>4</sup> PsiMinL is an evolutionary algorithm which searches for local minima in a cost landscape which correspond to well separated link clusters. Each possible link set  $L$  corresponds to a place in the cost landscape, the height of place  $L$  is given by the cost function normalised node-cut  $\Psi(L)$  of link set  $L$ . A lower value of  $\Psi(L)$  signals a better separated link set  $L$ . For details see the original paper by Havemann et al. (2017) and the report by Havemann (2020).

two features of communities cannot be maximised at the same time. Like several other algorithms, PsiMinL delivers clusters that can have low cohesion, i.e., they can easily be split into two or more sub-clusters (Havemann et al., 2019). An argument for favouring well separated clusters is the hierarchical structure of sets of topics. A topic can have sub-topics, i.e., the splitting of its cluster should not be too difficult.

As a methodological caveat, it should be noted, though, that the algorithms applied here construct a specific set of (overlapping) clusters and do not reflect some sort of “objective thematic structure.” A different method might have resulted in different clusters. At the same time, we employed our best judgements to yield results that made sense from an IR and a sociology of science perspective, and that we could actually interpret.

## **Data**

### *Web of Science (WoS)*

For the bibliometric analysis of IR literature, we downloaded papers in the WoS from 2006–2015. We started with 119 journals indexed in the WoS-category *International Relations* and added four journals from *Political Science*. In the following, these 123 journals are referred to as IR journals. We also searched for records in the Book Citation Index of WoS that are categorised as *International Relations*. We automatically identified references of 71,210 downloaded records. From these references, 300 highly cited sources were selected (for the bibliographic data, the list of journals, and details of data processing see Havemann, 2020c; the 300 sources are listed in the appendix, not in the bibliography of this paper).<sup>5</sup>

For the citation analysis presented here, we restricted the set of citing papers to the period 2011–2015. In 2011–2015 there are 30,925 papers with references. 10,075 (33 %) of them quote any of the top-300 cited sources. As an input to the clustering algorithm we selected those 6,494 papers which co-cite at least two of the top-300 sources. All other papers do not link any of these sources.

### *Seven Non-WoS journals*

For seven IR journals not indexed in WoS we analyse references of papers published in 2011–2015 (see Table 1). These journals include two Latin American and one African publications, as well as one French-, German-, Chinese- and Japanese-language journal. These more than

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<sup>5</sup> Experiments with clustering smaller numbers of concept symbols revealed that approaching 300 highly cited sources only peripheral topics were added and the central topic clusters had become stable.

16,000 references had to be manually coded, and this coding included their meta-data, their language, and the translation status.

**Table 1: Seven IR journals not indexed in WoS with numbers of papers and numbers of citing papers (with coded references)**

journal	abbr.	language	citing papers	cited references
<i>Estudios Internacionales</i> <sup>6</sup> (Chile)	EI	Spanish	50	1831
<i>Études Internationales</i> (Canada)	EI_F	French	20	1105
<i>Foro Internacional</i> (Mexico)	FI	Spanish	35	1611
<i>Kokusai Seiji</i> (Japan)	KKSJ	Japanese	30	559
<i>South African Journal of International Affairs</i> (SAJIA)	SAJIA	English	55	2497
<i>World Economics and Politics</i> (China)	WEP	Chinese	81	4589
<i>Zeitschrift für Internationale Beziehungen</i> (Germany)	ZIB	German	66	3950
<b>sum</b>			<b>337</b>	<b>16142</b>

## Results: The World of IR (Theory) and Core-Periphery Relationships

### *Clusters in the Core: IR Theory and (Quantitative) Security Studies*

#### *Overview: The Transatlantic IR Core*

We start our analysis with the cluster analysis of WoS data. Figure 1 below presents the results from the almost 6,500 papers in the WoS published from 2011-2015,<sup>7</sup> which cite at least two of our 300 top cited sources (see list in the appendix). Two main clusters on the left and the right of Figure 1 emerge, separated by a vertical line that goes through so-called bridging sources. These are the sources linked to citing papers in both clusters with more than 5% of its citation links in each cluster. All other citations have more than 95% of their links in one of the two clusters. In other words, the two clusters appear to form two distinct communities of IR

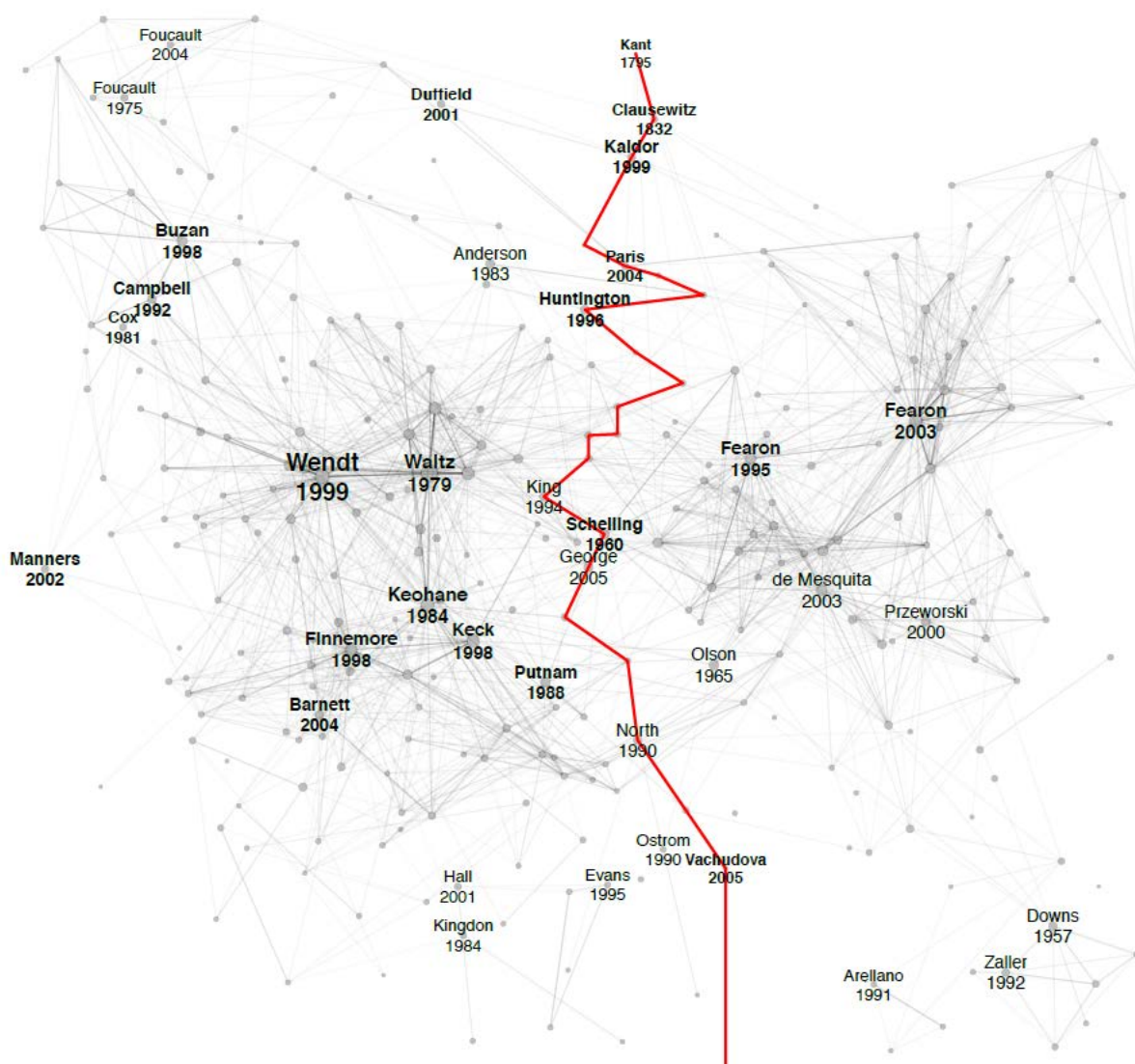
<sup>6</sup> EI (Chile) is listed in the WoS since 2013, but only 7 papers made it in the co-citation analysis of the highly cited sources.

<sup>7</sup> In the following, we use „papers“ as the generic term for both journal articles and book chapters.



scholarship, with only 22 bridging sources linking the two (see below).<sup>8</sup> The two clusters show little overlap in terms of common reference points. Only about 15% of the papers citing the top 300 sources quote sources in both clusters. In the most basic terms, there are two distinct worlds of IR with little overlap between them (for similar findings based on authors rather than scholarly works see Kristensen, 2018).

**Figure 1: Overview**



(For further details see Havemann, 2020b, c. The visibly cited sources are mainly illustrative).

But how can the two worlds of IR be distinguished as to their substantive content? Let us start with the cluster on the left. The following works are among the top 20 cited sources, starting with the No.1 source (Havemann, 2020b, table 1): Waltz, 1979; Wendt, 1999; Keohane, 1984;

<sup>8</sup> There are 58 first authors with (co-)authorship of more than one source in our dataset. Eleven of them have sources in both main clusters to the left and to the right.

Keck and Sikkink, 1998; Mearsheimer, 2001; Morgenthau, 1948; Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998; Bull, 1977; Gilpin, 1981; Buzan et al., 1998; Wendt, 1992; Keohane and Nye, 1977; Risse et al., 1999; Putnam, 1988. These works are rather diverse regarding their issue area or world region covered as well as methodology. What the highly cited sources and the remaining 151 sources on the left of figure 1 have in common is that they pay special attention to IR theories. In short, this cluster is representative of an IR community that is particularly interested in theory-building but uses a variety of empirical issues and world regions to make their claims – from security studies to IPE to human rights. This cluster can, thus, be labelled “IR theory.”

It is also interesting to note which publication channels feed into the IR Theory cluster (Havemann, 2020a, table 3, referring to all 10,075 papers citing at least one of the top-300 sources): 80% of the book chapters in the sample cite at least one of the major sources in the cluster.<sup>9</sup> As to the journals, the respective numbers are 99% for the *European Journal of International Relations (EJIR)*, 96% for the *Review of International Studies (RIS)* and for *International Politics (IP)*, 94% for *Millennium*, 90% for the *Review of International Economy (RIPE)*, 87% for the *Journal of Common Market Studies (JCMS)*, and 75% for *International Organization (IO)*. These are mostly general IR journals, except for JCMS and RIPE which deal with European integration and IPE, respectively. In contrast, only 37% of the sample papers published in the *Journal of Conflict Resolution (JCR)* and 25% of the sample papers in the *Journal of Peace Research (JPR)* cite at least one of the cluster’s major sources.

Our work-centered findings differ from Kristensen’s (2018, p. 251) author-centered co-citation network in that he found single paradigms as well as single empirical issues. With our methodology, we find that these smaller delineations are not as prevalent as the works’ theory-building nature, which draws them together into one big cluster. One could argue, though, that it is precisely theory (and methods) holding a discipline together (for a similar finding for astronomy see Havemann et al., 2017) as a result of which our theory cluster would not be particularly noteworthy. However and compared to many natural sciences, there is no unified theory in IR as a result of which we should see the various “paradigms” showing up in separate clusters which is not the case (with one exception, see below). Moreover, methods do not form a cluster in IR, and a second, separate cluster exists which is not held together by joint references to theory.

We now turn to this second cluster on the right of figure 1: The top 20 most cited works in this cluster include – among others and in ranking order - Fearon and Laitin, 2003; Bueno de Mesquita et al.; 2003, Fearon, 1995; Gleditsch et al., 2002; Collier and Hoeffler, 2004; Russett and Oneal, 2001; but also Olson, 1965; Przeworski et al. 2000; Schelling, 1966; as well as

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<sup>9</sup> “Major sources” have at least 95% of their citation links in the cluster.

Huntington, 1991 (Havemann, 2020b, table 2). With 107 cited sources, this cluster encompasses only about one third of our top-300 citation list. A closer look at this cluster reveals two themes: war and peace as well as democracy and development, and combinations thereof. The literature on the “democratic peace” is located in this cluster, as is the scholarship on civil wars and on violent non-state actors. A majority of the works cited here employ quantitative methodologies and rationalist ontologies, while we do not find much social constructivist work cited here. As a result, one might call the cluster on the right-hand side of figure 1 “(Quantitative) Security Studies.” The cluster also contains major works in comparative politics (see below), but most cited works belong to security studies, broadly defined. This is not to argue that the “(Quantitative) Security Studies” cluster is not interested in theory-building. Rather, theoretical work is cited here to solve concrete puzzles in the realm of international security, be it the “democratic peace” or be it civil war and post-conflict peace-building.<sup>10</sup>

The publication outlets for the citing papers in this cluster are rather distinct from the “IR theory” cluster (Havemann, 2020b, file: citing.journals.of.clusters.pdf): 97% of the papers citing any of the top-300 sources in the *Journal of Peace Research (JPR)* quote at least one of the major sources in the cluster, the respective numbers are 94% for the *Journal of Conflict Resolution (JCR)*, 90% for *International Interactions (II)*, 91% for the *American Journal of Political Science (AJPS)*, 83% for *World Politics (WP)*, 78% for the *American Political Science Review (APSR)*, 76% for *IO*, and 74% for *ISQ*, but only 58% for *International Security (IS)*, 27% for *EJIR*, and 16% for *RIS*. The predominance of quantitative security studies as well as general political science journals publishing a lot of large-n studies confirms our interpretation that this is a “(quantitative) security studies” cluster.

As argued above, the two clusters appear to form two distinct communities with little overlap between them. At the same time, the 22 bridging sources between the two clusters are also quite revealing (Havemann, 2020c, table 5):<sup>11</sup> Here, we find (qualitative) methodological work (George and Bennett, 2005; King et al., 1994), various theory-building IR scholarship (e.g. Huntington, 1996; Kaldor, 1998; Axelrod, 1984; Schelling, 1980; Russett, 1993), as well as general political science and sociological literature (e.g. North, 1990; Tilly, 1995; Von Clausewitz, 1980 (1832)). Kant’s *Perpetual Peace* also constitutes such a bridging source (Kant, 1795/1983). Note, however, that most of these bridging sources are heavily tilted toward one of the two clusters. Only few are quoted in a balanced way by authors from both clusters

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<sup>10</sup> While Mearsheimer and Walt might have had this type of work in mind as “simplistic hypothesis-testing” Mearsheimer and Walt, 2013, we cannot confirm that this is actually the case. At last the cited theoretical work here belongs to the most sophisticated one in IR in our judgement.

<sup>11</sup> “Bridging sources” have more than 5% of their citation links in either of the two clusters.

(e.g. Russett, 1993; Schelling, 1980). This indicates further that the two clusters constitute two rather distinct scholarly communities with little overlap among them.

At this point in the analysis, we can already confirm that there is no “end of IR theory,” as some have claimed. The two citation clusters identified here are both engaged in theory-building, one with regard to (international) security as a substantive issue-area of IR, the other with regard to international politics in general. We can also confirm what many other scholars also found (Kristensen, 2013; Maliniak et al., 2018; Colgan, 2016a): The authors of our top 300 citations teach or have taught almost exclusively at universities in the transatlantic area.<sup>12</sup> Scholars located in the U.S. constitute the vast majority, and those in Canada, the UK, and the rest of Europe (mostly Germans and some Scandinavians) as well as Israel run a distant second (see also Lohaus and Wemheuer-Vogelaar, 2020, for more details). With the exception of Michel Foucault, French authors are missing from the list. So are authors located in the Global South. Foucault’s work is also among the few cited of the top 300 that has been originally published in a language other than English (e.g. Foucault, 1975; Foucault, 2004). The same holds true for German philosophers and sociologists such as Ulrich Beck (1986), Jürgen Habermas (1992), Immanuel Kant (1795), and Max Weber (1921). Note that none of these authors has been an IR scholar proper. Moreover, the vast majority of journals and book publishers where the work producing the top 300 list has been published, are also edited in the transatlantic area. It is, therefore, safe to conclude that the two citation clusters constitute a “transatlantic IR core” which we further confirm below when dealing with journals from the “rest of the world” and published in languages other than English.

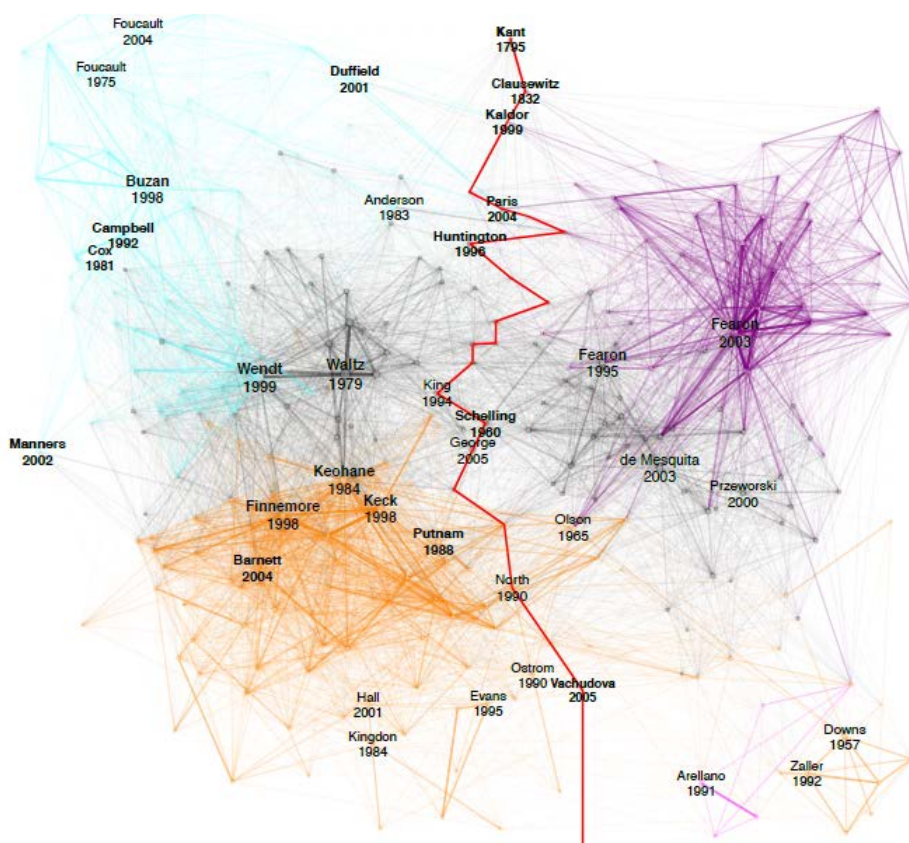
### *Overlapping Communities in the Core Clusters*

Beyond the divide between the theory and the security clusters, we find several clusters of different sizes (see figure 2 below). All clusters together form a poly-hierarchy. Some overlap with each other, some are sub-clusters of one or more larger clusters (Havemann, 2020b, c). We briefly discuss three of them.

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<sup>12</sup> Of course, this does not mean that all authors of the top 300 works have been born in the transatlantic area. Among the top 300 are, e.g., Acharya, 2004, Said, 1979, or Sen, 1999. Nevertheless, white male scholars clearly dominate the list (see appendix).

**Figure 2: Overlapping Communities Within the Core Clusters**



(For details see Havemann, 2020b, c. The visibly cited sources are for illustrative purposes only.)

On the bottom-left hand side of the theory cluster (orange nodes and co-citation links), we find a group of scholars indicative of an *institutionalist* community, as far as the cited sources are concerned. Among the top-cited sources are (ranked again according to the number of citations; see Havemann, 2020b, table 6): Keohane, 1984; Keck and Sikkink, 1998; Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998; Risse et al., 1999; Barnett and Finnemore, 2004; Haas, 1992; and Acharya, 2004; but also Putnam, 1988; Koremenos et al., 2001; Simmons, 2009; Krasner, 1983; and Moravcsik, 1998. Olson, 1965; North, 1990; and Downs, 1957 are non-IR sources in this cluster, which are nevertheless highly cited. This group also branches out into the security cluster on the right (e.g. Olson, 1965). The institutionalist link cluster comprises 108, i.e. one third, of our top-cited 300 sources, as many sources as can be found in the entire security cluster on the right-hand side of figures 1 and 2. Thus, it forms a large group of theory cluster L and stretches beyond its borders.

The institutionalist community covers a whole range of empirical issue-areas with a strong presence of work on human rights, but also international political economy (IPE). Methodologically, it is mixed, scholars cite quantitative as well as qualitative work (Havemann, 2020b, table 7). The same mix holds true for the journals which have published the articles citing these top

institutionalist sources, indicating that references to institutionalist work comes from IR scholars working on a large variety of issues and themes as well as employing many different methodologies (Havemann, 2020a, table 5). This institutionalist cluster combines both rational choice institutionalism and more social constructivist work and, thus, serves as a further indicator that IR theory is not only alive and well, but that citing authors are no longer wedded to the various “isms.”

A much smaller and more distinct community – *critical (security) theory* – is located on the top-left hand side of the theory cluster (see figure 2 above; turquoise nodes and citation links). The top-cites of this community refers to non-IR scholarship and even non-English sources (e.g. Anderson, 1991, Foucault, 1975, Foucault, 2004, Polanyi, 1944; see Havemann, 2020b, table 9, for details). Among the top 20 ranked IR sources are founding texts of critical theory (neogramscianism such as Cox, 1981), the English School (Bull, 1977), critical security studies (Campbell, 1992, Walker, 1993, Kaldor, 1998), as well as securitization theory (Waever, 1995, Buzan and Waever, 2003). But we also find standard texts from mainstream social constructivism and security studies (Wendt, 1992, 1999, Katzenstein, 1996, Adler and Barnett, 1998, also Deutsch et al., 1957). This community, thus, combines (critical) constructivist work with security studies. It appears to be considerably smaller than the institutionalist community, since only 57 sources make it in our top-300 list of citations (Havemann, 2020cHavemann, 2020cHavemann, 2020cHavemann, 2020cHavemann, 2020cHavemann, 2020cHavemann, 2020b, table 11).

Interestingly enough, work cited here has almost no citation links to the security studies cluster on the right-hand side. It almost appears as if the two communities do not know each other or mutually ignore each other. The latter would be a turn on Kristensen’s (2018, p. 251, based on Latour 1987) interpretation of “perfunctory referencing of the same socially prominent authors” per cluster: certain works are *not* being cited because they do not fit the fundamental assumptions (cp. results in Kristensen, 2018, p 253). The main publication outlets of the papers citing these sources are also rather distinct (Havemann, 2020a, table 6) and thus support the impression of a conscious separation from other security discourses: Apart from book chapters, we find particularly RIS, EJIR, *Millennium*, and *Security Dialogue* as the main journals contributing to the citations, while only 25% of the IO articles contribute to the top-citations.

Last not least, scholars studying *quantitative civil war* form a distinctive community within the security cluster on the right-hand side of figure 2 above (violet nodes and citation links) focusing on violent non-state actors such as rebel groups and terrorist networks, on transnational wars, as well as of peace-building. We find the following works among the top 20 cited sources (Havemann, 2020b, table 10): Fearon and Laitin, 2003; Gleditsch et al., 2002; Kalyvas, 2006; Collier and Hoeffler, 2004; Weinstein, 2007; Doyle and Sambanis, 2006; Walter, 2002; and

Collier et al., 2003. This community seems also to be rather small, since only 46 cites made it in our top-300 lists (Havemann, 2020b, table 13). Not surprisingly, most papers citing these sources have been published in specialized quantitative security studies journals such as JPR and JCR, but ...only 12% of the articles in EJIR citing any top source have citation links in this cluster (Havemann, 2020a, table 7).

Our link cluster analysis confirms, first, that IR theory is alive and kicking among the scholarly communities. Second, however, and in contrast to Kristensen, 2018, we find that the “isms” or the paradigmatic warfare is over in the 2010s (when the papers and book chapters in our sample have been published), thereby confirming Lake, 2011, and others. The clustering, therefore, suggests that IR authors cite combinations of these approaches in an eclectic fashion rather than sticking to a mono-paradigmatic approach. The *critical (security) theory* cluster on the top left of figure 2 probably comes closest to a separate group of IR scholars forming a paradigmatic community.

Last not least, the link cluster (*quantitative) security studies* is not held together by a theoretical paradigm, but by a common interest in a particular issue area of international affairs. Interestingly enough, security studies forms the only issue-oriented community in IR, which is visible as a link cluster among the top 300 highly cited sources in the WoS. We do not find IPE as forming a distinct community, let alone human rights or environmental studies. Major IPE work (e.g. Keohane and Nye, 1977; Keohane, 1984; Koremenos et al., 2001; Milner, 1997) shows up in the theory cluster, but the co-citation links are not strong enough to indicate distinct communities (Havemann, 2020b, table 7). The same holds true for human rights (e.g. Hafner-Burton and Tsutsui, 2005; Keck and Sikkink, 1998; Risse et al., 1999; Simmons, 2009). Last not least, there are no regionally focused IR communities visible in our study. Among the top 300 citations, only work on Europe and the European Union (EU) is quoted in a significant way (e.g. Checkel, 2001; Mattli, 1999; Moravcsik, 1993; Moravcsik, 1998; Schimmelfennig, 2001), and they are all part of the theory cluster.

#### *Top Citations: “Drive-by” or Substantive?*

So far, we have established that IR theory is alive and kicking in the (transatlantic) core, at least as far as the top citations are concerned. But what if the top theory citations discussed above are just concept-symbols, that is, authors quote them without further engaging the theories involved (so-called “drive-by” citations, see Hundley and Tierney, 2015; Kristensen 2018 refers to them as “perfunctory”)?<sup>13</sup> To answer this question, we looked more closely at the citations themselves. One indicator for substantive engagement with an author’s work is

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<sup>13</sup> We thank Mike Tierney for helpful suggestions on the following.

whether scholars cite it with page numbers or not, particularly books.<sup>14</sup> Figure 3 below plots the results for the 175 books in our top-300 list by comparing references with pages numbers (y-axis) to those without (x-axis). In other words, books located below the diagonal line are cited more often as mere concept symbols, while authors more substantively engage with the books above the diagonal line.<sup>15</sup>

On the one hand, only 33 of 175 books are located above the diagonal line and, thus, are mostly quoted with page numbers. On the other hand, many books are located close to the diagonal line indicating that they are quoted as “concept symbols” (almost) as often as authors engage substantively with them. Examples include Morgenthau 1948, Bull 1977, Wendt 1999, Krasner 1983, Schelling 1960, even Weber 1922, while Keohane 1984, Keck and Sikkink 1998, Ikenberry 2001, or Fukuyama 1992 are mostly quoted as concept symbols.

Most books in the top-300 list are located close to the diagonal line indicating that they are quoted almost as often with page numbers as without. There are also outliers in either direction: E.g., Weinstein, 2007 or Pierson, 2004 are quoted way more often with than without page numbers, while the opposite is true for, e.g., Olson, 1965 or Fukuyama, 1992, but also for Keohane, 1984 or Keck and Sikkink, 1998. Given that many of the 175 books in our top 300 sources list have achieved iconographic status in the field and stand for entire theories (as concept symbols), this finding further suggests further that authors take theory-building seriously.

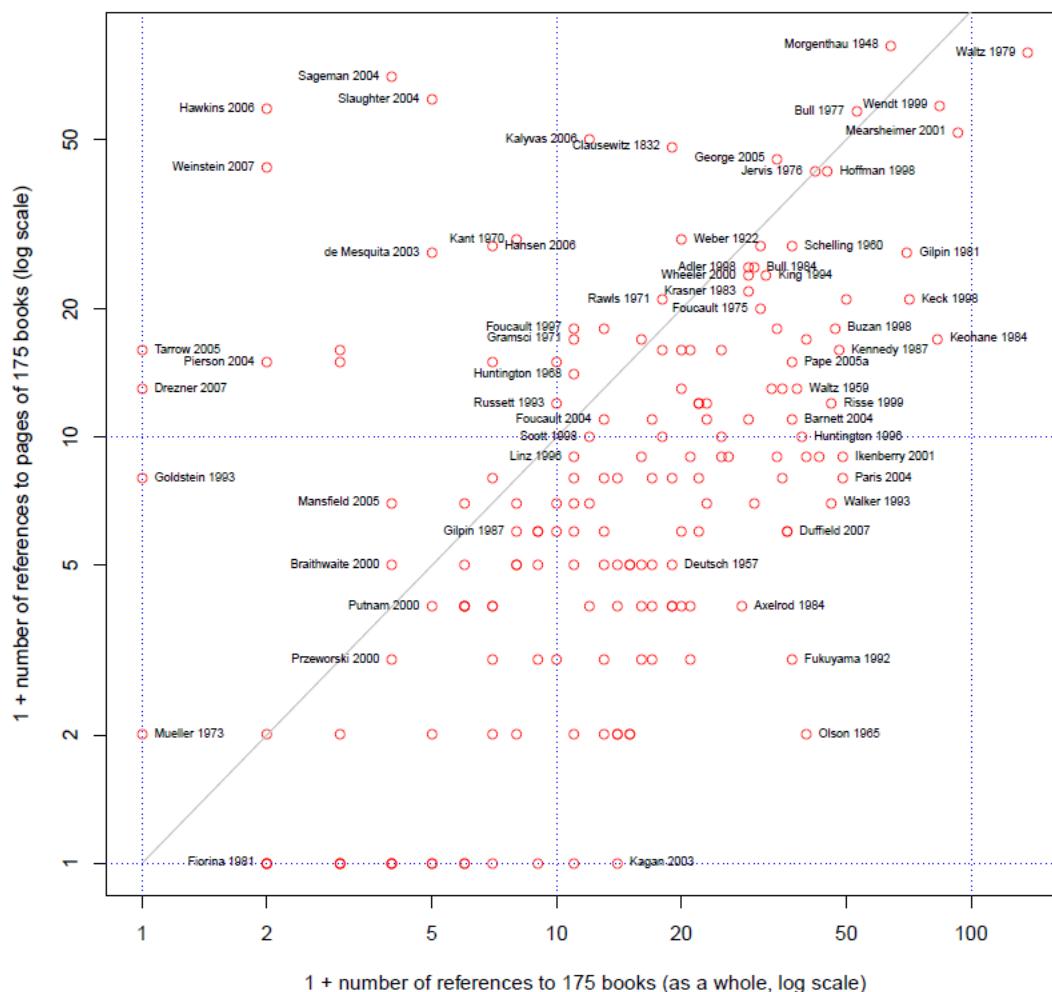
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<sup>14</sup> E.g., Waltz 1979 would be a mere concept symbol, while Waltz 1979, 45, would be a substantive quote.

<sup>15</sup> This plot is based on citations in 49 journals with references in footnotes, because WoS data do not allow to distinguish the two kinds of citations for journals with references collected in a bibliography at the end of the paper.



**Figure 3: Book Citations With and Without Page Numbers**



To further delve into this issue, we investigated through qualitative coding more than 250 co-citations of two iconographic books in IR theory, namely Waltz 1979 and Wendt 1999. Here, we wanted to know whether authors engage the two books substantively and to what extent the co-citations could be regarded as “love-hate” citations, whereby authors cite one work approvingly while rejecting the other.<sup>16</sup> Interestingly enough, two thirds of these cites entailed substantive engagement with the books by Waltz and Wendt, while only one third of the quotes were mere concept symbols (without page numbers). Moreover, we found more neutral than evaluative citations (70:64 in the case of Waltz 1979, 74:51 in the case of Wendt 1999).<sup>17</sup> Last not least, as many authors quoted the two books approvingly as cited them in a distancing way (33:31 in the case of Waltz 1979, 29:22 in the case of Wendt 1999). This more detailed analysis

<sup>16</sup> For research assistance in coding the cites we thank Linda Bachg and Paul Hollenbach.

<sup>17</sup> There is one caveat here: We did not code the entire articles, but only the immediate environment/paragraphs with the respective quotes. As Linda Bachg and Paul Hollenbach pointed out to us, some of the more neutral quotes were overshadowed by a more substantive positive or negative engagement with the two books later in the article.

confirms our general finding that theory is frequently cited in substantive terms even in cases in which the cited work stands for entire IR theories and can probably be found on every IR theory syllabus around the globe. Moreover, “love-hate” co-citations with regard to authors (e.g., pro-Waltz, but anti-Wendt, or vice versa) are rather rare in the field suggesting that the times of stylized theory-testing or paradigmatic warfare in IR are definitively over. Scholars engage in theory-building and –testing, but they do so in an eclectic fashion (Sil and Katzenstein, 2010).

We now take a closer look at the non-WoS journals in our sample.

### ***Findings from the Periphery: IR Theory Is Everywhere!***

#### *Links to the Transatlantic Core*

As our sample of articles from non-WoS journals is fairly small compared to the thousands of papers that went into our WoS analysis, the following analysis has to be taken with a grain of salt and as a first step toward analysing scholarly work outside the transatlantic area. We also opted for a more qualitative presentation of our findings. Table 2 below uses a fairly low threshold to pinpoint the top quoted sources in these journals, namely five citations in at least three different journals (insuring citations in more than one world region), with those shaded in gray cited at least ten times. This should nevertheless give us an idea what makes the IR world outside the core hang together.

**Table 2: Top-25 Cited Academic Sources in the Non-WoS Journals**

(cited at least five times in at least three different journals)

Source	Cita-tions	In Top 300	Cited in x non-WoS journals	Cited in journals x non-WoS journals
Waltz, 1979	21	yes	7	EI, EI_F, FI, KKS, SAJIA, WEP, ZIB
Morgenthau, 1948	20	yes	6	EI_F, FI, KKS, SAJIA, WEP, ZIB
Keohane, 1984	19	yes	6	EI_F, FI, KKS, SAJIA, WEP, ZIB
Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998	16	yes	5	FI, KKS, SAJIA, WEP, ZIB
Mearsheimer, 2001	15	yes	3	EI, SAJIA, WEP
Wendt, 1999	15	yes	5	EI, EI_F, FI, WEP, ZIB
King et al., 1994	14	yes	3	EI, WEP, ZIB

Risse et al., 1999	11	yes	3	FI, KKS, ZIB
Bull, 1977	9	yes	3	KKS, SAJIA, ZIB
Ikenberry, 2001	9	yes	5	EI, FI, SAJIA, WEP, ZIB
Keohane 1977	9	yes	5	EI, FI, SAJIA, WEP, ZIB
Buzan et al., 1998	8	yes	6	EI, EI_F, FI, SAJIA, WEP, ZIB
Gilpin, 1981	8	yes	4	EI, EI_F, KKS, WEP
Putnam, 1988	8	yes	4	EI, KKS, WEP, ZIB
Olson, 1965	8	yes	3	SAJIA, WEP, ZIB
Cox, 1981	6	yes	4	EI, KKS, WEP, ZIB
Hansen 2006	6	yes	3	EI, WEP, ZIB
Buzan and Hansen, 2009	5	no	4	EI, EI_F, ZIB, WEP
Almond and Verba, 1965	5	no	3	EI, FI, ZIB
Jervis, 1976	5	yes	3	FI, WEP, ZIB
Buzan 2004	5	yes	3	KKS, WEP, ZIB
Buzan and Waeber, 2003	5	yes	4	KKS, SAJIA, WEP, ZIB
Huntington, 1991	5	yes	3	EI, FI, SAJIA
Schweller, 1994	5	yes	3	KKS, SAJIA, WEP
Wendt, 1992	5	yes	4	EI, FI, KKS, WEP, ZIB

To begin with, all but two of the top-25 most cited sources can also be found in the top-300 list of our WoS dataset. The two sources not in the WoS top-300 list (Almond and Verba 1965 as well as Buzan and Hansen 2009) have also been published in the transatlantic IR core. This serves as a first indicator that we are observing core-periphery relationships here, with the periphery journals' most cited sources exclusively referring to the transatlantic core.

Moreover, all top-cited sources which are in the WoS top 300-list belong to the theory cluster (Havemann, 2020b, table 3). The (quantitative) security studies cluster is not represented at all in table 2 above. This might indicate that this type of work does not travel beyond the transatlantic core. However, our sample includes mostly general IR journals from the periphery rather than specialized security journals. Nevertheless, the global prevalence of security issues would justify a more intense discussion of the respective literature than is the case.

IR theory classics occupy a central position in the list, but no single school of thought dominates it. The grey part of Table 2 includes the concept symbols of the big theoretical strands in IR, namely (neo-) realism, neoliberal institutionalism, and moderate constructivism (plus

King et al., 1994 as the most cited methods book). The sources with fewer citations confirm this picture in terms of contributions to the IR theory canon. Interestingly enough, the “Copenhagen School” and, thus, the critical (security) theory cluster (see figure 2 above) is strongly represented in the top-25 list with six sources altogether (including Cox, 1981). The institutionalist group within the theory cluster (figure 2 above) is represented with seven sources in the top-25 list.

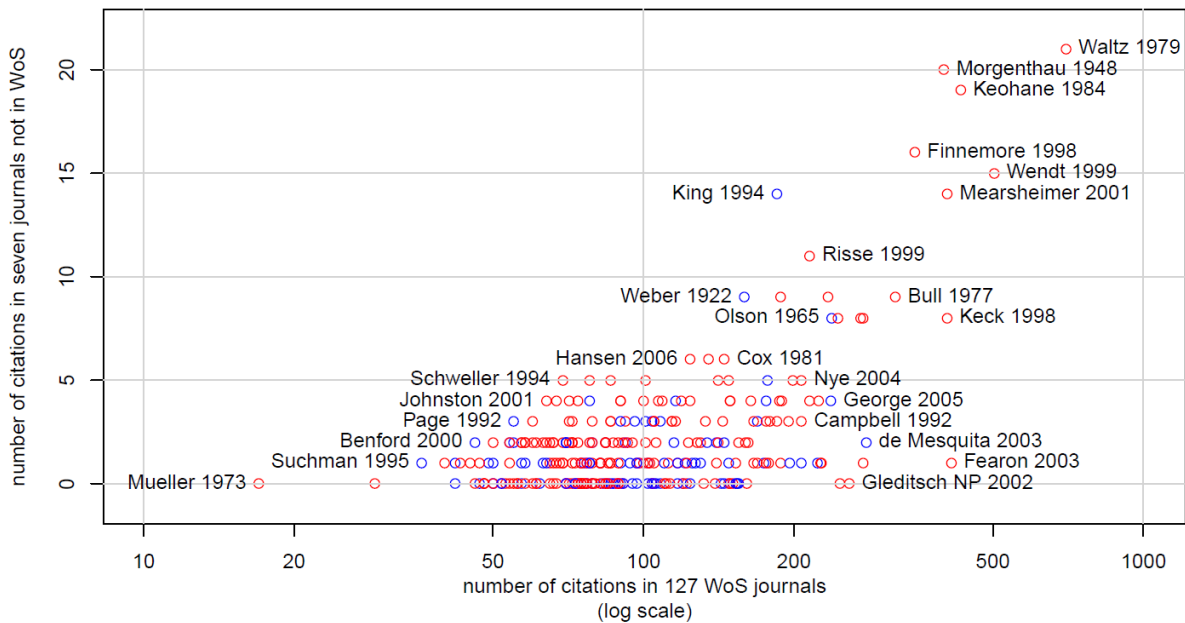
Our top-cited sources in table 2 above are widely quoted across world regions. In this regard, Waltz 1979 is not only the most frequently cited in our dataset but is also the most widespread. The book is cited in all seven non-WoS journals under study. The other highest cited sources vary between citations in three and six journals. These works are, consequentially, known to and applied by a large variety of IR authors across the world. Only four of the top-25 sources are cited in journals from just two world regions (Almond and Verba, 1965, Buzan 2004, Huntington, 1991, and Schweller 1994). All other works are cited in at least three world regions. This seems to indicate a scholarly consensus around the world that these are indeed top sources or concept symbols in IR.

There is also a considerable overlap between the non-WoS journals and the sources included in the WoS top-300. The overlap is 54% across all seven journals, meaning that more than half of all 337 non-WoS articles in our dataset cite at least one WoS top-300 source. As to individual journals, the variation is considerable. The Franco-Canadian journal *EI\_F* (75%) and the German *ZIB* (74%), followed by Chinese *WEP* (69%) show the highest degree of overlap with the WoS top-300 list. Chilean *EI* (30%) has the smallest overlap, followed by Japanese *KKS* (37%) and South African *SAJIA* (36%) and the Mexican *FI* in the middle-field with a 49%-overlap.

Figure 3 below takes another look at the overlap between highly cited sources in and outside of the WoS. The figure illustrates, first, that – except for King et al. 1994 - there are virtually no shared sources which are relatively highly cited in our non-WoS database but less so in the WoS. Second, the three sources (Waltz, 1979, Morgenthau, 1948 and Keohane, 1984) with the most citations in both datasets are outliers. A large bulk of sources forms a bubble at the bottom middle of the graph, indicating that they are hardly or not at all cited in the non-WoS journals. The upper part of this bubble, however, constitutes a sort of overlapping “middle field” across both datasets. This group consists primarily of contributions linking up to the institutionalist link cluster in the theory cluster (e.g. Acharya, 2004; Checkel, 2001; Keck and Sikkink, 1998; Risse et al., 1999; Wendt, 1999, but also Koremenos et al., 2001; North, 1990; see also figure 2 above). These institutionalist contributions appear to appeal to a wide variety of authors in different settings and with different topics.

**Figure 3: Relationship between Citations Inside and Outside the WoS**

(Note: the graph only shows sources included in the WoS top-300; red = IR, blue = non-IR)<sup>18</sup>

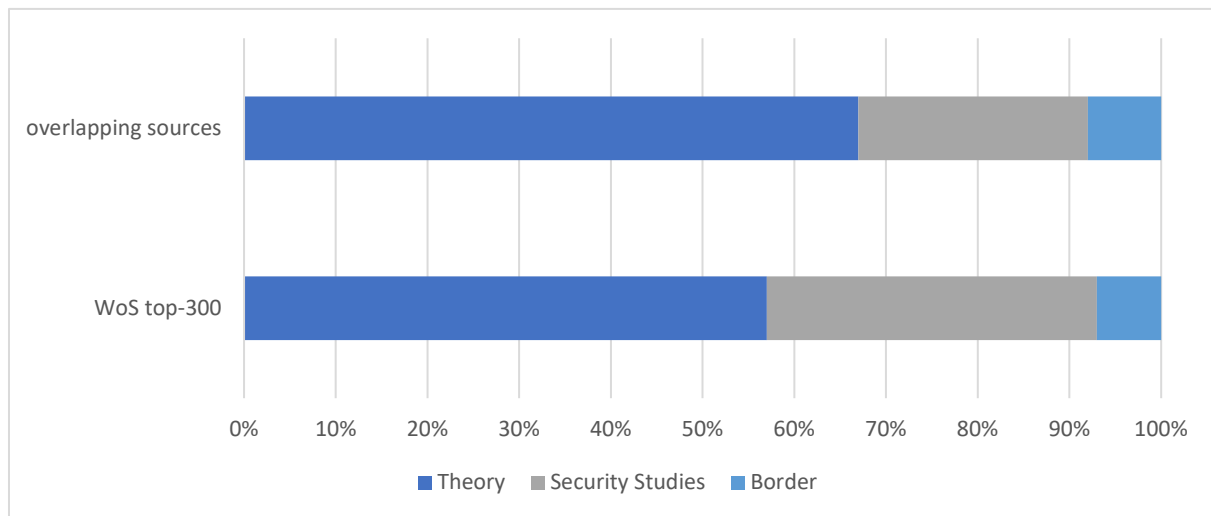


#### *Links to the Theory Core, But Not Across Peripheries*

With regard to the non-WoS journals, we have shown so far that they link up to the transatlantic core via the theory cluster with a strong representation of critical (security) theory and institutionalist work. IR theory appears to be alive and well outside the core, too. Moreover, the references to theory work in non-WoS journals seem to indicate a similar picture as the one in the transatlantic core, namely that theories are used to deal with concrete empirical issues, that they are combined in various ways, and that there are little signs of paradigmatic warfare. A closer look at all citations in the non-WoS journals confirms this picture. 204 cited sources constitute the overlap between our WoS dataset and the seven other journals. Figure 4 shows how these overlapping sources are distributed across the two main clusters and their shared border as shown in figure 1 above. Indeed, 67% of all overlapping sources are located in the theory cluster. Only a quarter is located in the (quantitative) security cluster. In contrast, the distribution among all top-300 sources in the WoS dataset is 57% for the theory cluster and 36% for the security studies cluster.

<sup>18</sup> The figure only displays first authors.

**Figure 4: Spread of Overlapping Sources in WoS and non-WoS Journals Vs. Spread of All Top-300 Sources in WoS Dataset**



These data confirm the finding that the non-WoS journals link up to the transatlantic core via the theory cluster. In the next step, we investigate the degree to which there are frequently cited sources in the non-WoS journals which cannot be found in the transatlantic core. Is there commonly cited work outside the transatlantic core to which journals in Latin America, Africa, Asia and non-English-speaking Europe refer? The answer is a resounding no! Each journal article in the non-WoS sample contains some highly cited work, which is exclusively cited in the respective journal, but not beyond. Apart from references to the top-300 list in the WoS, the Japanese KKSJ and the Chinese WEP have nothing in common, as far as citations are concerned. The same even holds true for the two Latin American journals in our sample, EI and FI, let alone journals like the South African SAIJIA, the German ZIB, or the Franco-Canadian EI\_F. We illustrate our point with regard to the German ZIB, Chinese WEP as well as Chilean EI und Mexican FI.

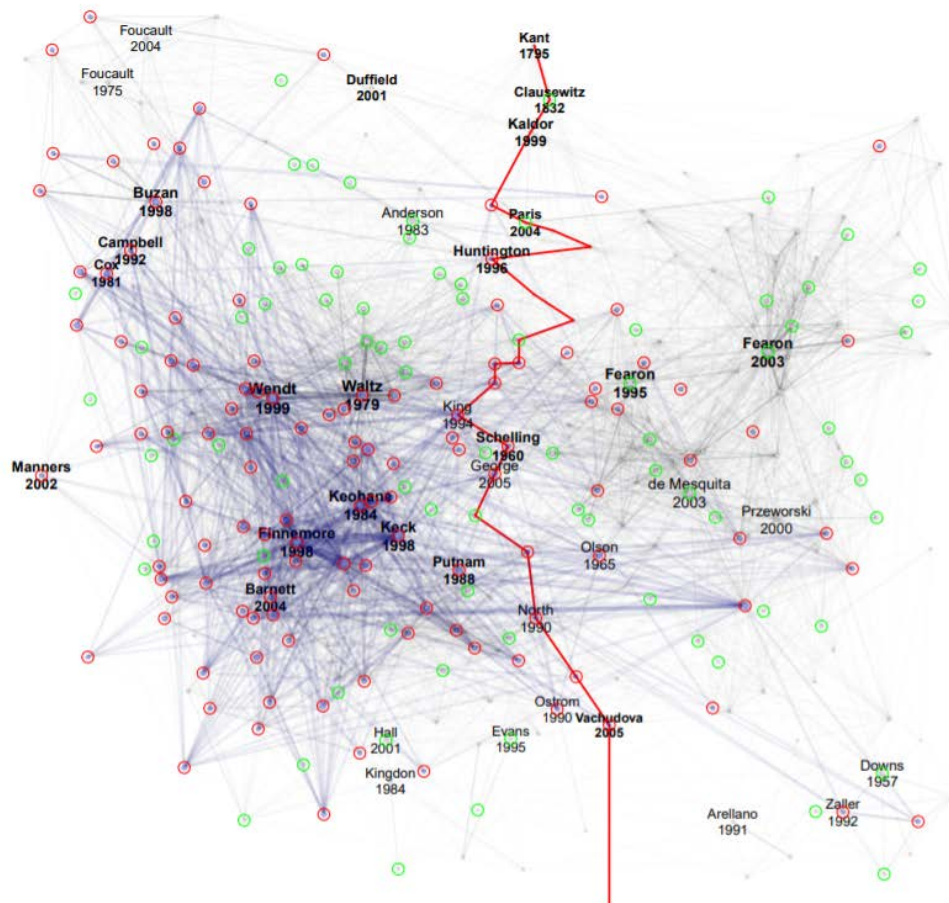
Figures 5 and 6 illustrate how those sources cited in the German ZIB and the Chinese WEP overlap with the larger network graph.<sup>19</sup> The red dots in these figures are those cited by the respective non-WoS journals, the green ones are part of the overlap between the non-WoS corpus and the WoS top-300 but not cited in the respective journal. Figure 5 confirms the observation that the sources cited in ZIB are nested in the theory cluster on the left. The sources with a red circle in that figure are those cited in ZIB as well as the WoS. The figure shows that the ZIB sources are stretched quite evenly across this bigger cluster, indicating that

<sup>19</sup> We have restricted the illustration in this particular form to these two journals because they are the closest in terms of number of cases and cite the most sources (see Table 1). WEP and ZIB are also the only two in our dataset with multiple sources being cited more than three times in the period under study.

authors in ZIB co-cite a broad range of IR theories. Furthermore, in ZIB the sources stretch far into the critical theory cluster in the top left corner as well as to the cluster's margins. There is, however, one undeniable focus in ZIB and that is on the constructivist classics located in the theory cluster, e.g. Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, Keck and Sikkink 1998, and Barnett and Finnemore 2004.

### Figure 5: Network Graph of Sources Cited by ZIB Articles and the WoS Dataset

(limited to the overlap with the WoS Top-300; red: cited in ZIB, green: part of the overlapping 204, but not cited in ZIB)

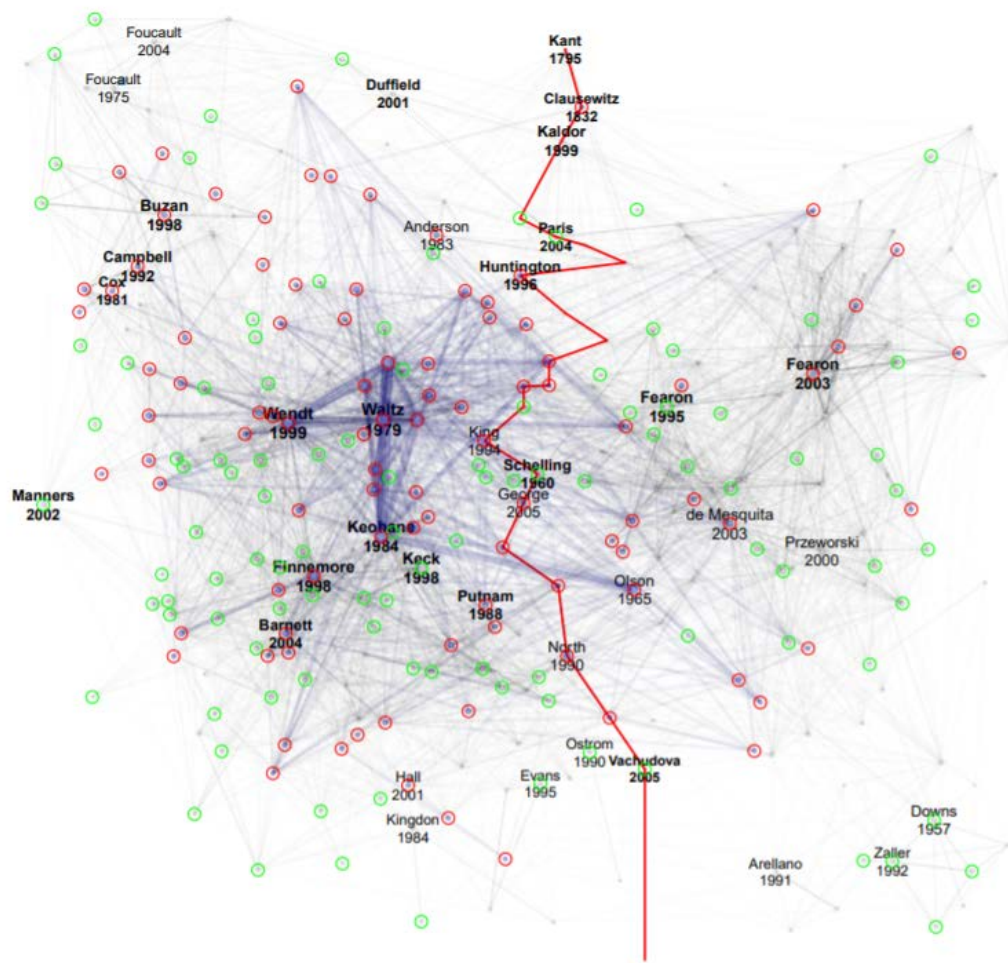


ZIB's cited sources are quite different from that of WEP, as can be seen in Figure 6: While WEP is also strongly connected to the theory cluster, authors in this journal primarily cite the "big names" in IR theory. There is an almost iconic triangle for WEP stretching between Waltz 1979, Wendt 1999, and Mearsheimer 2001 (who is located above Waltz 1979). Another very strong co-citation link in WEP exists between Keohane 1984 and Mearsheimer 2001. A link

between Keohane 1984 and Wendt 1999, as a bridge across the different institutionalisms, however, is not revealed by this figure.

**Figure 6: Network Graph of Sources Cited by WEP Articles and the WoS Dataset**

*(limited to the overlap with the WoS Top-300; red: cited in WEP, green: part of overlapping 204, but not cited in WEP)*



A comparison of figures 5 and 6 shows that both the German ZIB and the Chinese WEP link up to the top-300 WoS list, that there is some overlap between the two in terms of references to prominent "big names" in IR theory, but that the two journals have otherwise little in common with regard to cited sources, even concerning the top-300 list. Beyond the links to the IR core, the two journals most highly cited sources have little in common, as table 3 reveals. It also shows some often-cited sources which are exclusive for the respective journal. When zooming into the overlap between WEP and ZIB, one central finding of this article is highlighted: there is a lot of overlap between the journals when it comes to WoS top-300 sources (31.36%) and



almost none in regard to all other sources (1.12%). This is not too surprising for two journals in two different world regions with different audiences drawing their authors from separate pools of scholars. However, EI and FI, which both publish almost exclusively in Spanish and are both located in Latin America addressing regional issues, have an even smaller overlap: 17.54% when it comes top-300 sources and only 0.73% for all other sources. In other words, even two journals from the same world region publishing on similar topics are exclusively connected via the core. And even that connection is pretty weak. When taking all cited sources into account EI and FI share only 1.02% of their knowledge base. For WEP and ZIB it is 1.79%.

What is more, those sources shared by each pair perfectly fit into the pattern of two peripheries being connected by the transatlantic core. The shared Spanish-language sources cited in both EI and FI are linked to the US-core by their authors' educational and/or career paths (e.g. Tomassini, 1991; O'Donnell, 1973; Baeza, 2011). In addition, basically all of the commonly cited top-300 sources (e.g. Keohane 1984, Buzan et al. 1998) as well as much of the small shared body of other referenced works are theory-heavy contributions (e.g. Axelrod and Keohane, 1985; Olson and Zeckhauser, 1966; Hopf, 1998).

In sum, the overwhelming majority of top citations in the non-WoS journals in our dataset link up to the top-300 list of the WoS, particularly the theory cluster on the left-hand side of figure 1. It confirms our findings about the continued significance of IR theory, even when extended to journals outside the English-speaking transatlantic core. However, these links to highly cited theory work and iconographic classics is all that these journals have in common as far as citations are concerned. Beyond the highest cited sources, there are many more which are unique to the individual journals and these sources do not travel – neither cross-regional nor intra-regional. Thus, what we observe here is a particular core-periphery model of IR scholarship (Borgatti and Everett, 2000): The (transatlantic) core consists of highly interconnected nodes divided in two clusters with little connections between them. The periphery connects through nodes in the core but is not interconnected among each other. To the extent that at least five of our seven non-WoS journals represent “non-Western IR,” the latter only constitutes a community insofar as the citations link up to the transatlantic core, as we have shown with regard to the two Latin American journals EI and FI as well as the Chinese WEP.

## Conclusions

This paper asked two interrelated questions through citation analyses of both WoS- and non-WoS publications: 1) What is the state of IR theory in various journals? 2) To what extent is IR theory global rather than confined to transatlantic IR?

The good news is that IR theory is alive and kicking everywhere. During the 2010s – the time-period of our empirical analysis, IR scholars everywhere engage theoretical work. There is little

evidence for continued paradigmatic warfare as experienced during the late 1980s and early 1990s. Rather, scholars engage theories in an eclectic fashion and they often do so in substantive terms rather than “drive by” ways whereby concept symbols are quoted once and then forgotten about. The two main clusters of the 300 top-cited sources represented in our WoS dataset are both engaged in theory-building, one with regard to one substantive issue-area in world politics, namely international security, the other more generally devoted to theorizing from a variety of substantive perspectives. As to the non-WoS journals in our sample where we analyzed citations for the first time, a similar picture emerges. The list of highly cited sources could easily be mistaken for a syllabus of an IR theory class. There also seems to be a strong consensus about what these sources are, namely iconographic work in realism (Morgenthau 1948, Waltz 1979), institutionalism (Keohane 1984, but also Finnemore/Sikkink 1998), social constructivism (Wendt 1999), but also critical (security) theory (e.g. Buzan et al. 1998).

However, while IR theory is referred to everywhere, it is definitely not global. Our top-300 WoS cited sources have been exclusively published in the U.S., the UK, and (Western) Europe. Highly cited theory sources in our dataset of non-WoS journals do not contain references to non-Western IR scholarship. There are few theory citations in non-WoS journals referring to scholars of the particular region or country, but these cites do not travel beyond the individual journal. Thus, the composition of the sources cited outside of the WoS can be regarded as a consequence of IR’s global homogeneity in terms of theory education (Tickner and Smith, 2020; Colgan, 2016b; Hagmann and Biersteker, 2014). Non-Western scholars appear to engage Western IR theories produced in the transatlantic area, but their contribution to theory-building is not even recognized in the non-WoS journals.

Moreover, these journals have rather little in common, as far as citations are concerned – except for their references to the transatlantic theory core. It is noteworthy that the major contributions to the field of security studies are almost absent from the bibliographies of papers in non-WoS journals. This might result from our sampling of mostly general IR rather than specialized security journals. Moreover, the (quantitative) methods prevailing in the WoS transatlantic security cluster might be disconnected from the disciplinary practices of these IR communities who mostly publish qualitative work.

In sum, we can observe a core-periphery structure of global IR whereby a strongly interconnected transatlantic core community faces a periphery that only connects through common references to the core. IR theory-building in the core is rather pluralistic and includes almost everything from traditional realist thought to critical theory. Moreover, the transatlantic core appears to be split into two separate communities with little overlap, one engaged in theory-building proper, the other focusing on (heavily quantitative) security studies. Last not least, the transatlantic theory core is consensual, insofar as journal articles in the periphery quote these

sources regularly. In a way, this core-periphery structure of global IR resembles hegemony in the neo-Gramscian sense (Cox, 1987) whereby power, institutions, and leading ideas are aligned in the transatlantic core – and this core is consensual.

DRAFT

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