Proposal for IDSS Workshop: “What do transformations of post-Westphalian political space mean for knowledge production in International and Global Studies?”

**Description**

It is no secret that the discipline of International Relations has been governed, at least in part, by the normative and spatial assumptions of the Westphalian state system, through the end of the Cold War. The organization of academic disciplines regarding diplomacy, interstate relations, international law, political economy, war (including ethics and the laws of war), and area studies, with their respective norms of knowledge production, were constituted by the practices of the Westphalian system of sovereign territorial states. There is considerable literature tracing out the role of geopolitics of the Westphalian order and the formation of academic international studies, for example, Hoffmann (1977), Schmidt (1997), Chomsky and Katzenelson, et. al. (1997), and R.B.J. Walker (1995).

This workshop proposes to study the implications of the transformations of post-Westphalian political space (shifts to mobility and networks of transversal relations, pluralisation of sovereignty beyond/beneath the state, erosion of state control of territory, the move away from Western-centric models of power, the growing reach of non-state actors, and the importance of virtual social and political space) for the norms and structuring of knowledge production (considering teaching an element of knowledge production). How is the discipline of IR, and more generally the knowledge of international politics, changing in light of the dispersal and disaggregation of sovereignty, new forms and sites of authority, new transversal and global practices of governing, and the collapsing of the spatio-temporal boundaries between peace and war (in privatization, as well as new forms of intervention and technologies of warfare). One significant issue each participant will be asked to address is the significance of “interdisciplinarity” in the construction of academic knowledge, including the implications for teaching and otherwise communicating norms of knowledge about global politics.

**Organization**

We propose four panels during a day-long workshop: 1) transformations of Area Studies; 2) the study of war and peace in the construction of knowledge(s); 3) global civil society and the production of academic knowledge; 4) the globalization of academic norms: new scientific cosmopolitanism or neo-colonialism?

Papers prepared by a select group of participants will be distributed to all workshop invitees at least one month prior to the workshop, and all attendees will be expected to read all of the papers prior to the workshop. Panels will proceed with brief presentations by the commentators to be followed by brief author responses. This will leave ample time for discussion by all participants.
I. Area studies.

Area studies have always dovetailed with national government funding priorities, often having to do with national security. To some degree, of course, this continues to be the case. However, how is the knowledge production of the local shifting as locales, states and regions become more deeply embedded in ever-denser networks and assemblages of political, social and economic relations? As transversal networks and social movements take on greater importance in global politics, what does this mean for the production of knowledge of regions and local political and social spaces?

To what degree can “Area Studies” remain focused primarily on states or regions? The contours of place in social and political life seem to be changing. For example, should the new focus on global cities be more fully integrated into global studies? On what basis? What is the political basis and implications of doing so? How should we understand the spatialization of inequality, such as in new divides between rural and urban as population concentrates more and more in urban areas? Or, new distributions of populations in neighborhoods and the asymmetrical and unequal governmentalization and securitization of them? Another critical dimension relates to evolving conceptions of citizenship regimes. Current understandings of the content, acquisition of and entitlements attached to citizenship status are reflective of an era in which legal rules, human mobility and technological development were of a very different nature. How do recent human mobility and technological developments affect existing theories and practices of citizenship and, in particular, redefine governance structures and the nation-state system? What about the emergence of hybrid economic zones that are morphing into large semi-sovereign areas, a new version of the city-state linked into global networks of trade and communication in which state regulation is loosened, unenforced or non-existent? Finally, what about the impact of climate change on the spatialization of life and the creation of new populations increasingly subjected to global forms of governance?

How might a re-envisioned Area Studies address these issues? Given that Area Studies have always been interdisciplinary, is the mix changing? Are we moving from “multi-disciplinarity” to more integrated forms of “inter-disciplinarity”? If so, what does this mean both for academic studies and teaching? This includes the analysis of the increasing importance of international education and the ways it is tied to post-Westphalian configurations of power.

II. The Study of War and Peace

From its inception, International Relations has been centrally concerned with issues of war and peace. IR becomes a professional discipline within the context of the two world wars, which structures the dominant epistemological and ontological claims of the discipline. This was clearly influenced by the perceived needs of powerful states that provided funding for relevant knowledge for making war, avoiding war, and seeking more permanent forms of peace. One consequence is that International Relations became more and more a part of Political Science, increasingly focused on “empirical procedures
of verification,” as opposed to its classically-oriented affinity to disciplines such as philosophy, law and history (Bull, 1966). It also influenced the significant role of “think tanks” (RAND, Hoover, CIA at Harvard) and established some universities as dominant in producing and normalizing the discipline of International Relations around state-centered concerns, knowledge practices (including pedagogies), and empirically-oriented paradigms.

The age of total war and especially nuclear weapons entailed certain interdisciplinary developments that had wide influence on academic international relations, not merely on issues of war and peace, but in other areas as well: mathematics and statistics in game theory, cybernetics in systems theory, and various economic and organizational theories for example. Some realists appealed to anthropological theories of aggression and violence. In the United States, the Vietnam War drew heavily on the emerging discipline of behavioural psychology in order to develop “new” counter-insurgency warfare.

The advent of nuclear weapons and Vietnam also introduced more critical discourses into academic IR. Some drew on traditions of International Law that Realist and behavioural IR dismissed, for example in the World Order Models Project (WOMP) that dovetailed with the sub-discipline of International Organization. Other critical analyses introduced theories of imperialism, which introduced richer historical and post-colonial perspectives that drew from a number of disciplines. The reliance on nuclear weapons and deterrence strategies led to the critical introduction of scientists producing both bodies of knowledge detailing the effects of nuclear weapons and promoting arms control. Anti-nuclear activists, along with some critics of the Vietnam War further introduced concerns with the larger interpolation of “domestic” and “international,” producing a body of knowledge on the military-industrial complex and more generally on war and industrial policy. Many of these critical discourses drew funding from sympathetic philanthropic organizations (the MacArthur and Ford Foundations for example), as well as from international organizations and non-governmental organizations, including the UN and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).

The novel assemblage of weapons, strategies, tactics, and purposes of war provides challenges and changes that affect the interface of war and the discipline of IR.

How has the new strategic environment for so-called “new wars” affected academic disciplines, as, for example, funding shifts from “national security” to “human security”? How do new conditions of warfare including autonomous weapons, the increasing intersection of the war and policing in military missions, the privatization of core military functions, the globalization of technologies of surveillance, or the transversal character of warfare generate new forms of academic discourse regarding war and change older ones? What is the impact of the introduction of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into multiple levels of warfare, and the way AI breaks down the boundaries between peace and war? Furthermore, where do we draw the boundaries between war and peace in light of the growing militarization of law enforcement and the expanding reach of
peacebuilding programs? How have those disciplines that emerged and depended upon defense spending and consultancies in the Cold War changed in the ways they approach research and teaching about global and international politics and power?

III. Global Civil Society and the production of knowledge.

Critics of the behavioural turn in political science/international relations in the 1960’s and 1970’s introduced the concept of “international society.” Most prominent was what would become the so-called “English School”: Martin Wight; Hedley Bull; Adam Watson, and RJ Vincent among others. In their conception, “international society” was still a “society of states,” although they pointed out how the norms that constituted international society were in essence Western and liberal. Epistemologically, they introduced the history of the states-system into the discipline of IR and placed emphasis on inductive theorizing in the discipline.

As funding and the utilization of academic knowledge shifts from national orientations toward global funding sources and distribution networks in which academics play a part, how is the structure of knowledge production in academic global studies affected? What does the increasing importance of multiple civil society actors such as human rights and humanitarian NGOs, social justice advocacy networks, philanthropic organizations, and faith-based institutions imply for the norms and disciplinarity of academic global and international studies?

IV. The globalization of academic norms.

In this panel we ask scholars from various countries and regions outside the United States to address the internationalization of the discipline of IR.

The ISA is emblematic of the globalization of knowledge in international and global studies. The papers on this panel will examine the impact of the globalization of knowledge production and distribution in the fields of international studies. Do emerging disciplinary norms, approaches and paradigms that easily cross borders challenge or reinforce dominant centers of power, or help to constitute new forms of cosmopolitanism in knowledge production? What is the academic reach and resonance of counter-hegemonic discourses (e.g. Post-colonial Theory, Third World Approaches to International Law II, Neo-Gramscian approaches to IR) and how do they affect the prospects of validating alternative modes of knowledge production?

Participants

The workshop seeks to engage scholars from various academic disciplines including but not limited to political science, geography, anthropology, sociology, history, law, area studies, and philosophy. We look to establish a dialogue between more traditional scholars in global and international studies with scholars from emerging areas such as urban studies, mobility studies, citizenship regimes and securitization. We anticipate two papers, a chair, and two commentators for each panel for a total of 20 participants.
Proposed Outcomes

We anticipate several collections coming out from this workshop and one or more follow-up panels at the next IDSS conference tentatively scheduled for summer 2019. We anticipate a special issue of a journal and/or edited collection on “Knowledge Production in Academic Global Studies Beyond Westphalia.”

Submit your proposal to George Andreopoulos at chrights@jjay.cuny.edu.