

Waever, Ole. 1998. "The Sociology of a Not So International Discipline: American and European Developments in International Relations." *International Organization* 52, 4, pp. 687-727.

Note: Waever's article is a meandering and disjointed discussion of the sociology of IR, publishing patterns, and differences between national fields. I ignore his comparative sociology of IR and focus solely on the characterization of US IR and the future of the field. I ignore a lot so I'd recommend reading and picking out important details from the rest for yourself

Quick summary: *IR is conducted differently in different places. The internal social and intellectual structure of American IR is two-tiered, with relatively independent subfields and a top layer defined by access to the leading journals. 'Great debates' serve an important function by letting lead theorists focus and structure the whole discipline. IR in France, Germany, and the UK has historically been structured differently, often with power vested more locally. The turn to rational choice in American IR integrates it with the rest of political science (American IR turns from global hegemony to national professionalization) but moves it away from European IR which is generally closer to sociology, philosophy, and anthropology. This weakening of American IR 'hegemony' and the simultaneous development/strengthening of independent research communities at the national and European level is likely to make IR more pluralistic.*

What are the central questions?

Why does IR develop as it does in different societies and what accounts for American dominance in the field? Why do some American theories travel and others do not? Will rational choice become as dominant in Europe as it has in the U.S.?

What is the central argument?

The evolution of IR

The main factors explaining national variation in the study of IR can be organized on three levels: societal-political features of the country, the standing and structure of social science in general in the country, and the internal intellectual and social structures of the IR discipline (including theories and forms of debate). Waever explores the evolution of IR in Germany, France, the UK, and US. (traditionally localized in Europe – especially Germany – with power still largely vested in professors)

The form and content of IR

IR is and has been "an American social science." An American hegemony in IR exists and influences the theoretical profile of the discipline. The 'great debates' define IR and are also expressions of coherence: the great debates orient the minor ones and there is translatability across issues. American IR is a two-tiered discipline. To get into the lower tier, scholars have to manage the functional dependence within a subfield and become accepted as competent in it. Scholars gain top positions and make it to the top tier by publishing in the leading, all-round journals (and doing theory...). Debates ensure that theorists remain central but empirical studies important. Without recurrent debates, empirical work would break off, and scholars would simply apply the accepted theory without a continuous need for following developments among theorists. Debates are possible in the U.S. because the discipline is more unified than in Europe.

American IR: from global hegemony to national professionalization.

American IR is overwhelmingly turning towards rational choice approaches (noncooperative game theory, in particular) in an effort to establish IR on a more solid theoretical foundation as part of a general scientific breakthrough in political science and in the social sciences in general. Maximizing its integration into political science as a unitary discipline weakens the basis for continued global hegemony.

American IR is building increasingly on a 'liberal', Anglo-American philosophical tradition. Current theory is less applicable to continental Europe and most other parts of the world. Rationalist and methodology-based (behavioralism and rational choice) theories do not travel well. Europeans are now unlikely to follow American developments and will likely lead to a de-Americanization of IR elsewhere. IR in Germany, France, and the UK has started to break the very local (single university, subdisciplinary, or informal, personal) power structures and is heading toward a larger academic market (national, linguistic, or even European). IR is likely, therefore, to be increasingly pluralistic (relative American abdication and larger academic communities forming around their own independent cores in Europe).