International Political Sociology (IPS)

IPS evolved within the academic discipline of International Relations (IR). The original *intellectual projects* focussed primarily on opening space for scholarship probing the categories defining IR by connecting political theory and sociology. As IPS successfully *institutionalized*, the space it opened radically expanded. IPS became an umbrella term. It now covers a *diversity* of approaches and foci. The related diffusion is *shifting the core* of IPS away from I P S.

Intellectual Projects
IPS began as an intellectual project that brought together a wide range of 'constructivist', 'poststructuralist', IPE and feminist scholars including Albert, Enloe, Graz, Guzzini, Jabri, Kratochwil, Lawson, Lapid, Leander, Messari, Onuf, and others. They all shared a commitment to problematizing the fundamental distinctions on which IR rested and in the politics of separating the International, the Political and the Social as Bigo and Walker who carried the initiative, framed it in their editorial launching the journal IPS in 2007. They did so following their own research traditions. Underpinning and carrying the IPS project forward were therefore a range of ambitions and approaches as diverse as the range of scholars backing it. IPS was neither an approach, nor a theory, nor even a distinctive mode of inquiry. It was an open invitation

Institutionalization
The institutionalization of IPS consolidated this plurality of projects that also shifted in time. Establishing an IPS 'section' of the *International Studies Association* made it possible to found an 'association journal' with a wide distribution. IPS scholars were further exceptionally active in organizing doctoral research workshops, early career events, networks and connected initiatives across a wide range of contexts. The winter schools at the Institute of International Relations, PUC, Rio de Janeiro are a case in point. The community of scholars recognizing themselves as working within 'IPS rapidly expanded and the diversity present from the inception became more pronounced. A series of handbooks, programmatic statements, platforms, new journals (such as PARISS ─ *Political and Anthropological Research on International Social Sciences*) and authoritative histories of the (still nascent) IPS were 'fracturing' its ambitions and not only IR. But the diversity also spurred an imaginative and productive scholarly agenda.

Diversity
The diversity of IPS has resulted in a diffusion of scholarship. The range of scholars recognizing themselves within IPS is steadily widening, as is the variety of approaches and problems IPS accommodates and incorporates. The implication is that the core project of pushing the boundaries of International Relations by connecting political theory and sociology is also evolving. Some (non-exhaustive) examples of this help make the point. Focus on '*practices'* of diplomacy, security, expertise or scholarly reflexivity (Alder-Nissen, Abrahamsen, Littoz-Monnet or Alejandro) has connected IPS more closely to 'ethnographic' research. Analogously, a focus digital *technology* including its infrastructures, algorithms, and ethics (de Goede, Aradau and Amoore) has brought IPS scholars closer to science and technology studies. Third, an interest in politics beyond language as taking place in and through emotions, visuals, art or design (Hutchinson, Bleiker, Sylvester or Austin) is bringing IPS closer to approaches centred on *affect* and resonance. Finally, IPS has accommodated *critical* approaches to history, race, gender, temporality, ethics, migration and more (Sarakol,

Grovogui, Kunz, Hutchings, Zehfuss, Tazzioli) extending its reach into the cognate disciplines and approaches exploring these issues. This non-exhaustive exemplification of extensions testifies to the liveliness, movement and intellectual openings IPS invites. The consequence of this diversity is continuing controversies about what is ─ or should be ─ the core of the IPS project as well as over whether such a core is necessary or even desirable.

Shifting the Core

From its inception, IPS has been characterised by an open discussion about where the core is or should be. Scholars self-identifying as working under the umbrella term would advocate for their interpretation and weighting of each term. When Lisle began editing the journal, she was 'waiting for IPS' to fill the expectations she had for its 'political theory' potential. When Bigo concluded his editorship of the journal with a special issue on Bourdieu, he was consolidating the 'sociological' potential of IPS. When Jabri introduced Foucault's analytics of war to the journal, she did so to direct attention to the specificity of the 'international'. At present, the controversies over the core projects no longer centre on these terms. Instead, with the success and growing diversity the original core terms ─ Politics, Sociology and the International ─ are receding into the background. Instead, scholarship focussed on 'practices', 'technologies', 'devices', 'affects', 'critique' and beyond 'moves', 'transversally' across them. Such scholarship transgresses and incorporates the I P S terms in its inquiries. However, the focus is elsewhere and mostly on the 'concept work', 'methodologies' and politics. This shift of the core of IPS is ironically ambivalent in its implications. It testifies to the lively openness and creativity of an IPS that enthusiastically pushes its own boundaries to create a thriving area for innovative research *and* to the prospect that precisely this pushing may eventually dissolve IPS altogether. While boundless knowledge is appealing, it is also vulnerable to invasion, take over, subjection and disciplining. Continuing the discussions and disagreements about the core is therefore crucial if IPS future is to have a future. If it does, that future will necessarily be that of an evolving IPS, differing from the one introduced here.

References

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