International Security and the Evolution of Security Studies: Between Mutual Influence and Autonomy

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Introduction

As a field of research, international security studies (ISS) has evolved considerably since its emergence in the period following the end of the Second World War. As Barry Buzan and Lene Hansen (2009) clearly establish in their seminal book *The Evolution of International Security Studies*, developments in the field have concerned both its object of study and the theoretical and analytical lenses through which it is approached[1]. Generally seen as a subfield of International Relations (at least in its present form), ISS has not escaped some of the latest theoretical debates which have marked the evolution of the broader discipline, and theoretical innovations (and divergences) more specific to ISS have accompanied them (Cavelty and Mauer 2010).

In this chapter, I examine to what extent some aspects of the evolution of international security studies can be observed in the pages of the journal which is widely recognized as the most influential in the field: *International Security*. Evidence of the journal's influence can be found in a 2009 survey of 2724 IR scholars, which saw *International Security* rank second in two categories: "journals in IR that publish articles with the greatest influence on the way IR scholars think about international relations" and "journals that publish the best research in your area of expertise" (Jordan et al. 2009 – *International Organization* finished first in both categories, but it does not belong to the specific field of ISS). With an impact factor of 2.739, *International*

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[1] Like Buzan and Hansen, I use the name "international security studies" to include work produced under labels such as "strategic studies", "security studies", "international security", "peace research", etc.

Security was also ranked second in the "International Relations" category in Thomson Reuters' *Journal Citation Report* for 2012 (again behind *IO*)[2]. In addition, Bruce Russett and Taylor Arnold (2010) recently included *IS* among the journals at the core of what the authors identified as the (loose) network of journals characterizing the field of ISS. Since the editors of *International Security* stated in the Foreword to the journal's first issue in 1976 that they hoped its contents would "contribute to the disciplined discourse that distinguishes a profession" (*International Security* 1976: 2), it is clear that this objective has been met.

As Jean-Frédéric Morin and Ramona Coman explain in the Introduction to this book, looking at relevant academic journals can be particularly fruitful for a researcher interested in the study of the intellectual production of a given field of research. This view has been echoed by several International Relations scholars. In his well-known article "The Sociology of a Not So International Discipline", Ole Wæver (1998: 696-697) argues that scientific journals constitute a prime example of the sources one can turn to in order to look for patterns in a discipline. Indeed, according to him, journals are "the most direct measure of the discipline itself"[3]. Breuning, Bredehoft and Walton (2005: 447-448) similarly defend the merits of the analysis of journals in their own study of the field of IR, including the methodological advantages that journals come out regularly and that the data set is easy to identify. As mentioned by Wæver (1998: 697) in his article, however, journals are more than useful reflections of a discipline, since they actively contribute to shaping the discipline itself. In that respect, he sees them as "the crucial institution of modern sciences": it is largely through the articles published in journals that the field of IR itself is constituted. Goldmann (1995: 247) speaks of the *gatekeeping function* of journals: they "determine what will be widely read and hence what kind of research will be socially rewarded". In *The Evolution of International Security Studies*, Buzan and Hansen (2009) draw on this argument and integrate it into their model of the five forces that drive the evolution of ISS. According to them, the ISS literature is influenced by *great power politics* (i.e. changes – or the lack of change – in the way power is distributed among states), by the *technological imperative* (i.e. how new technologies available to decision-makers impact existing strategic relationships between political actors), by *events*, by the *international dynamics of academic debates* (since there is no agreement on the scientific model to be used) and by *institutionalization*. This last force, which is obviously not particular to ISS, is used by the authors as an umbrella for a series of variables: organizational structures (e.g. university departments and programs), available funding, research networks (e.g. visiting positions) and dissemination of knowledge (e.g. conferences, books and journals). Because top journals have rigorous reviewing procedures, the articles they publish are "what becomes considered, and institutionalized, as legitimate research" (Buzan and Hansen 2009: 64). In this perspective, examining the scientific journals recognized as those most influential in a discipline is in itself extremely interesting for the researcher who wishes to understand how the discipline

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[2] Thomson Reuters, *Journal Citation Report for 2012*, http://thomsonreuters.com/journal-citation-reports/.

[3] Wæver also asserts that "for practitioners, the field exists mostly in the journals".

evolves. The two views of journals presented here are, of course, complementary. As Buzan and Hansen explain, journals are not the only pathway to institutionalization, let alone the only driving force behind the evolution of a discipline – which means that they both *influence* and *reflect* this evolution.

Given the significant role played by *International Security* in ISS intellectual production, my objective in this chapter is to examine the evolution of the journal since its creation, and how it compares to the evolution of international security studies itself. I will do so by looking at *who* publishes in *International Security* and *what* type of content is featured in the journal. The *who?* question pertains to the professions of *IS* authors (in particular whether or not they work in academia, and if so to which scientific discipline they belong) and to where they conduct their research (in the context of what some have identified as a US-Europe divide within ISS). The *what?* question refers to the policy- and/or theory-oriented character of the articles published, and, where relevant, to the types of theoretical approaches that are studied/used/commented on by the authors [4]. As we will see below, these two questions are central to the evolution of the discipline, and they are also very much interlinked. One's professional background and affiliation can play a significant role in determining what one considers to be legitimate or "relevant" research in a given field. Similarly, research traditions prevalent in particular geographical zones can contribute towards restrictions on the scope of what is studied and/or how it is studied by researchers. Given the debates and changes which have marked international security studies in terms of its object(s) of study, purpose(s) of research and disciplinary foundations, exploring the "who?" and the "what?" of *International Security* will allow us to reach a better understanding of its place in, and its impact on the general evolution of ISS.

I will start by presenting some comments on methodology, in particular with respect to the data used in the study. In the second section I will examine the authorship of *IS*, and put its evolution in perspective, showing how the initially heterogeneous professional backgrounds of the authors involved in ISS have gradually given way to a preponderance of contributors working in academia and political science. In the third section, I will examine the types of articles published in *IS*, and how the rise of theory-driven articles occurred as part of the theoretical debates in ISS and IR found on the North American side of the Atlantic. Finally, I will present some concluding remarks on the results obtained. More specifically, I will argue that the evolution in the content and authorship of *International Security* has accompanied, and been influenced by, several of the trends and changes that have marked the history of the broader ISS, but that it has also been the result of editorial choices which have, in particular, separated the journal from certain currents of research within ISS.

1.   Methodology and preliminary comments

A few remarks regarding both the methodology adopted and the data are in order. First of all, it was beyond the scope of this study to analyze the entirety of the articles published in *International Security* over the chosen period of 1976-2012, for practical reasons. The journal being a quarterly, I decided to examine all four issues published

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[4] I will, however, not examine the types of policy topics studied in the articles.

during a year, every three years. I therefore selected the years 1976 (two issues), 1979, 1982, 1985, 1988, 1991, 1994, 1997, 2000, 2003, 2006, 2009 and 2012, reviewing a total of fifty issues (each containing between five and eleven articles) and 325 articles. Review articles were included in the sample (as well as articles described as "commentaries"), but correspondence was not[5].

For the second section, I collected data pertaining to the country of residence of the authors, understood as the country in which was/is located the institution where the authors were conducting their research/work at the time they wrote their articles, either directly from the journal itself or through additional research[6]. I chose to categorize authors by their country of residence rather than by their country of origin because this chapter tackles some of the general tendencies in terms of the types of content produced on each side of the Atlantic, which means that my interest lies with the scientific community the authors under study belong to rather than with their nationality[7]. When an article had several authors, I included them all, which brought the total number of contributors to 386 (those who published several articles in the pages of *IS* appear as many times in the total). In the first half of the third section (in which I study the contents of the articles published in *International Security*), the following article categories are used: "policy-oriented", "theory-oriented", "both" and "other". Articles are qualified as "policy-oriented" when they address policy concerns, contain or seek to provide possible guidance to policymakers, and do not engage in theoretical work. Those articles classified as "theory-oriented" seek instead to develop/comment on/examine theories and theoretical approaches, and do not include recommendations for policymakers or comments on what would constitute optimal policy with regards to a given issue. The articles included in the "both" category combine theoretical work with policy concern and possible guidance[8], while those in "other" do not qualify for any of the first three categories (they include, in particular, contributions by historians and atheoretical essays about various foreign-policy- and defence-related topics which do not engage in policy recommendation)[9]. Categorization of the articles was carried out by me. Since abstracts were not always available and were not detailed enough for the purpose of this research, I read part or all of each article in order

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[5] Official documents published in the journal, such as the "White House Tapes and Minutes of the Cuban Missile Crisis" (*International Security* 10(1), 1985), were also excluded from the sample.

[6] When available, the location of the first institution listed for each author was used.

[7] See also Wæver (1998) who argues that American dominance over the field can be seen in, and reinforced by, the phenomenon of scholars being attracted to North America and moving there for their research.

[8] These articles often contained theoretical analyses which were followed by a section – sometimes in the conclusion – covering "policy implications". See for example Mastanduno (1997).

[9] Of course, not being classified as policy-oriented does not preclude an article from being potentially useful to someone thinking about policy. I examined whether the authors themselves decided to formulate policy recommendations/explore policy options/present possible policy implications of their findings. Since this typology risks obscuring some of the links between theory and policy, see for example Biersteker (2010) for a view on the interrelationships between theory and policy practices.

to determine the category I considered appropriate. The same is true of the second half of the third section of this article, in which I classify the theory-oriented articles according to the types of theoretical approaches that the authors use or comment on. Most of the time, these approaches were explicitly named by the authors, and when they were not, I analyzed the theoretical developments set out in the articles in order to carry out the categorization. When an article debated the merits of two or more approaches, it was counted once for each approach it covered. It is common practice to have two people carry out such classifications, to then compare the data sets and resolve discrepancies. This enables a reduction in potential errors of classification due to subjective judgment. Since the categorization was conducted by me alone, one has to be mindful of possible biases. My sample was however sufficiently large to reduce the impact of potential errors, since the aim was to uncover general patterns rather than to study precise numbers.

Data on the professions of the authors was shared with me by the editorial offices of *International Security*, and compiled by Wendy Leutert [10]. Contrary to the rest of the data presented in this chapter, it takes into account every article published in the journal over the 1976-2005 period, which brings the total to 975 authors (again, those who published several articles were counted as many times in the total) for this point of study.

Finally, I relied heavily on the work done by Barry Buzan, Lene Hansen and Ole Wæver on the history and evolution of international security studies. Since these authors are themselves part of the scholarly community which shapes ISS, some have argued that a history of ISS would look different if told from a different perspective within that community (see Miller 2010). Although this is a valid concern, I do not believe that this chapter suffers from its reliance on these authors, given that the general historical trends and changes in ISS which are studied here are relatively noncontroversial.

2. *International Security*: who publishes?

Although the origins of international security studies can be traced to the interwar period (Baldwin 1995), the emergence of ISS as a distinctive field of research can be dated to the period which followed the end of the Second World War (Buzan and Hansen, 2009: Ch. 1; Wæver and Buzan 2013: 395). One of the key aspects defining its emergence was that topics which largely related to military issues were now being studied through civilian expertise as well (Wæver 2010a: 651-652). This civilian expertise was provided by individuals with widely-varying professional backgrounds, both academic and non-academic. Scholars came from mathematics, natural sciences (in particular physics and chemistry), psychology, sociology, economics, political science, sociology, etc. (Wæver and Buzan 2013: 399). Hugh Gusterson (1999: 320) described the initial development of ISS by using the concept of a *trading zone*, referring to an intellectual space "developed by people from different disciplinary backgrounds who nonetheless share a set of thematic interests around which they interact from their different disciplinary vantage points". The interdisciplinary

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[10] I sincerely thank them for their help.

character of the field was recognized by its members as one of its key aspects (Nye and Lynn-Jones 1988: 6). Gradually, however, political science confirmed itself as the principal overarching discipline to ISS, firstly because of the increasing proportion of political scientists among ISS scholars, then in terms of the diffusion of the perception of ISS (and, in particular, of security theory) as a subfield of International Relations and, more broadly, of political science (Nye and Lynn-Jones 1988: 6; Jervis et al. 1986; Wæver 2010a: 654-655; Wæver and Buzan 2013: 399). This is despite the fact that ISS has been influenced by several disciplines, and that the view remains that it retains its specificity with regards to the broader IR (Buzan and Hansen, 2009: 16-19). Nevertheless, certain specific characteristics of ISS, which differentiate it from IR in terms of institutionalization, have to be highlighted: while the United States and Western Europe saw university-based research become the major (albeit not single) driving force in IR relatively early in the development of the field (Wæver 1998: 714; Kahler 1993: 398-402) [11], the role that private institutes, research centres and think tanks still play in the production of international security studies output is far from negligible (Buzan and Hansen 2009: 60-65).

How does *International Security* compare to ISS in terms of the professional backgrounds of its authors? In the Foreword published in the first issue of the journal, the editors stated that their objective was to allow "varied professional experiences" to contribute to what was to be an "interdisciplinary journal". The targeted professions of contributors included "scholars, scientists, industrialists, military and government officials, and members of the public" (*International Security* 1(1), 1976: 2). In a review article published for the twenty-fifth anniversary of the journal, Steven Miller (then editor-in-chief) likewise asserted that the editors of *IS* still made "a serious effort to publish articles that reflect the diversity of the field, including history, technology, political science, and policy analysis" (Miller 2001: 8).

The evolution of the professional sectors represented among the authors published in *International Security* is displayed in Figure 6.1. As can be clearly seen, the pattern which rapidly emerged was that of a dominance of academia among the different groups of authors. The proportion of academic contributors particularly increased towards the end of the Cold War, and never dropped below 70% in the years which followed 1990. Overall, the second group in terms of importance was that formed by authors working in research institutes and think tanks. Their numbers, however, remained significantly lower than those of academic contributors throughout the entire period (with the exception of the first three years, during which their numbers were only slightly lower). The absolute and proportional weight of authors working in research institutes and think tanks even decreased over time, with the key shift also occurring in 1990. Other groups scored even smaller numbers on average, and likewise followed a downwards trend.

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[11] See also Breuning et al. (2005: 457-458) for a look at the overwhelming preponderance of academic authors in the most prestigious IR journals.

Figure 6.1: Professional sectors of *International Security* authors
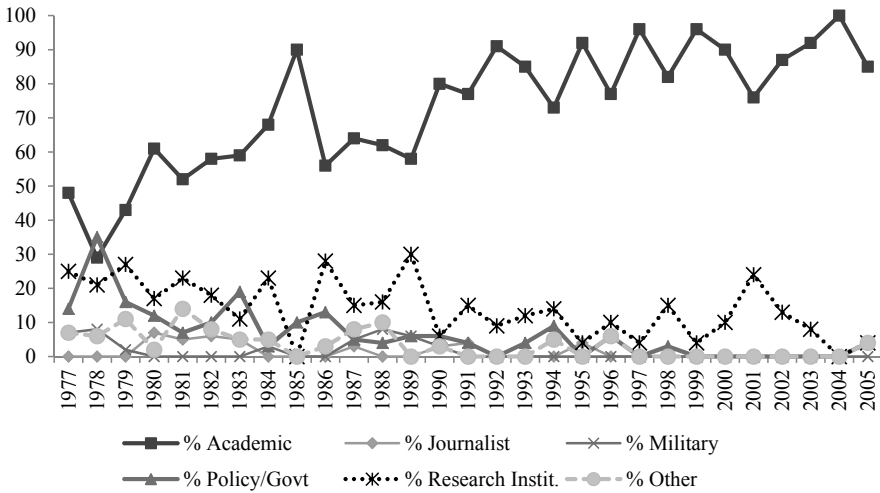
As Figure 6.2 illustrates, not only did academic authors gradually come to dominate the output of the journal, but the distribution of the disciplines of the authors from the academic sector also changed over time. Although academics with a background in natural sciences (mostly physics and chemistry), economics, history and other social sciences were initially represented in sizeable numbers, the proportion of political scientists rose rapidly. It stabilized at around 80% in the 1980s and early 1990s, and then increased even further to stabilize again at around 90%. Academics from other disciplines still occasionally contribute to *International Security*, but political scientists outnumber them by a wide margin.

Figure 6.2: Disciplines of *IS* academic authors
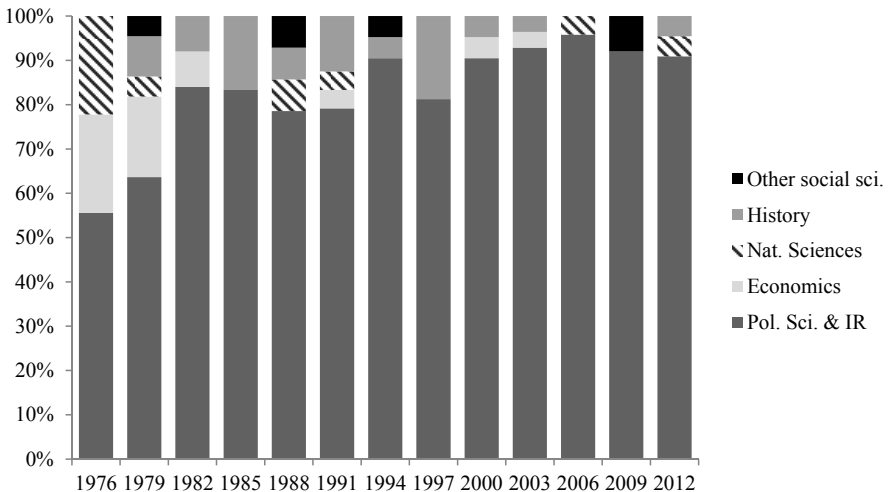
In both cases, the numbers presented here are broadly consistent with the evolution of the field of international security described earlier. The initial relative heterogeneity of the professional occupations of the contributors to *International Security*, and to ISS in general, gradually gave way to predominance of academia (Walt 1991: 219-220), and, within academia, of political scientists. This hegemony of academia can also be found in IR; indeed, Breuning et al. (2005: 457-458) found similar results for the three IR journals they studied – in fact, in comparison, *International Security* seems to have featured more articles, proportionally, from authors affiliated with think tanks and private research centres. This is consistent with the more important role played by think tanks in ISS than in IR, even though the space they occupy in *International Security* may be smaller than in the field of international security studies as a whole.

In his seminal 1977 article on the discipline of International Relations, Stanley Hoffmann (1977) argued that it was largely an "American social science" – one of the reasons being that the vast majority of prominent IR scholars worked in the United States. Since then, numerous authors have examined the reasons for this supremacy, as well as its consequences (Holsti 1985; Jarvis and Crawford 2001; Smith 2002). In his in-depth study of six IR journals (three American and three European), which I mentioned earlier, Wæver (1998) similarly concluded that the discipline of International Relations was characterized by American hegemony, and that American journals, in particular, overwhelmingly published articles by American contributors (see also Goldmann 1995, and, in the present book, Marie-Catherine Wavreille's chapter on non-American scholars engaging in the study of American politics). The same predominance of American authors can be observed in the field of international security studies (Nye and Lynn-Jones, 1988: 14-15). Of course, this certainly does not mean that the United States is the only source of scientific production in IR and ISS, or even that significant theoretical innovations do not appear in other regions. Wæver (2010b: 305) described the IR world as "a mix of a US/global system and national/regional ones with varying degrees of independence", and we will see that, in international security studies, many of the theoretical challengers to the traditionalist approaches to security emerged outside the United States (Buzan 2009; see also the contributions in Cavelty and Mauer 2010).

How does *International Security*, an American journal, compare with the aforementioned IR journals in terms of the countries of residence of its authors, and has the situation evolved over time? Unsurprisingly, as Figure 6.3 indicates, the overwhelming majority of *IS* contributors are based in the United States [12]. *International Security* does not seem to have become more "international" over the years – in fact, since 1997, the proportion of American authors has been slightly higher on average than in the previous period. The journal's authorship therefore points towards, and contributes towards reproducing, American predominance in the field.

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[12] Authors working in Canada were included in the "other" category.

Figure 6.3: Countries of residence of *IS* authors
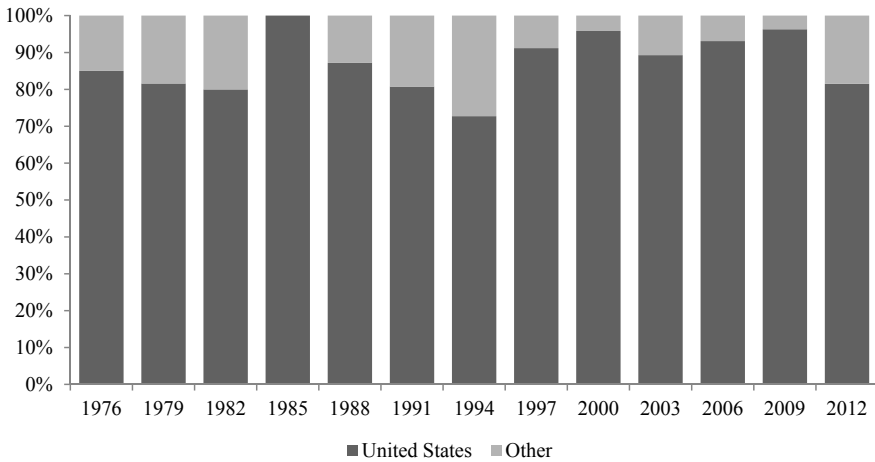
What do these results concerning the attributes of *International Security* contributors tell us about the journal itself and, beyond that, the discipline? A first important point is that the tendencies identified with regards to the professional sectors of the authors have to be considered in light of Buzan and Hansen's analysis of the fifth force driving the evolution of the field, namely its institutionalization. If a certain type of authors are published and therefore receive credit and gain prestige for their work, this fosters the growth of a community which "self-identifies as, for example, security scholars" (Buzan and Hansen 2009: 60), through the mutual recognition of these authors. In our case, the predominance of academic contributors, and of political scientists, certainly played a part in the gradual absorption of ISS into IR and political science. This, in turn, is linked to a second important point, namely the impact of the attributes of the authors on the type of output of the field. As Buzan and Hansen (2009: 60-63) argue, academic institutions tend to have a less explicitly political agenda than think tanks, and the latter tend to put significantly more emphasis on policy-oriented research – this became especially true for ISS after leading think tanks such as the RAND corporation progressively turned away from theory and towards the production of policy guidance that could answer the needs of decision-makers (Wæver and Buzan 2013: 399). In addition, chemists and physicists (for example) can be considered less likely to engage in the type of theoretical analysis that is a central feature of political science (Miller 2001: 33). According to Wæver (1998: 714), the growth of university-based research was a key factor in International Relations as a discipline, reducing its emphasis on policy concerns. This is not to say, however, that ISS scholars have abandoned policy-oriented research, or that the theoretical analyses produced are never formulated with policy concerns in mind (Wæver 2010a: 654-655). The point is simply that the changes we highlighted in the typical professional background of *IS* and, more broadly, ISS authors, brought with them noteworthy implications for the development of the field itself, both in terms of its institutionalization and in the

general tendencies marking its intellectual production, a matter I will explore further in the next section [13].

The geographical situation of authors can likewise be considered to play a role in the type of output they put forward. The scope and focus of the theoretical analyses and debates produced in the field, in particular, have since the end of the Cold War been significantly different in North America and in Europe. Schematically, and as we will also see in the following section, the American ISS institutional setting favours rationalist approaches, and theoretical discussions closely follow those found in the broader US-based IR (Wæver 1998: 701-703), with relatively little attention paid to European schools of thought (Wæver 2012). The latter follow a more reflectivist research agenda, with critical reflections on the concept of security itself at the core of the development of the field (Buzan 2009: 57; Wæver and Buzan 2013: 407). This leads me to the second question explored in this chapter, namely that of the types of content found in the pages of *International Security*, as compared to ISS as a whole.

3.   *International Security* articles – between policy and theory

At its inception, international security studies mainly tackled topics linked to military capabilities and issues, and to East-West relations (Nye and Lynn-Jones 1988: 6). Within the context of the beginning of the Cold War, ISS authors largely produced policy-relevant research. Indeed, ISS literature was, at the time, "driven by the policy problems facing mainly the US, and to a lesser extent those of its allies" (Buzan and Hansen 2009: 99). There was a particular focus on long-term strategy, especially nuclear strategy. The policy-oriented nature of much of the intellectual production at the time did not, however, preclude the emergence of theory (Wæver and Buzan 2013: 396). In fact, as Betts (1997: 14) points out, "Nuclear war spurred theorizing because it was inherently more theoretical than empirical: none had ever occurred". Policy and theory were therefore particularly intertwined – theories of deterrence, for example, were formulated in particular because it was deemed important to determine which path should be taken by the United States in its Cold War with the USSR. Although the field continued to be characterized by the duality of policy and (mainly policy-relevant) theory throughout much of the Cold War, albeit with fluctuations, a more distinct division of labour between think tanks and universities occurred when, as mentioned earlier, the former ceased to engage as often in theoretical thinking towards the end of the 1960s (Wæver and Buzan 2013: 397-401). In the early 1970s, ISS suffered from a degree of theoretical fatigue, and there was a turn towards more

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[13] I do not examine the topic of the gender of the contributors to *International Security* in this article, but it is interesting to note that, even though the percentage of women among published authors has increased since the early years of the journal, male authors still make up the overwhelming majority of contributors. Indeed, data compiled by Wendy Leutert for the period 1976-2005 (and shared with me by the editorial offices of *IS*) indicates that the percentage of female authors per volume only crossed the 10% mark on two occasions during the first fifteen years of publication, and that this percentage oscillated between 13% and 19% for the volumes published in the 2001-2005 period. For a more extensive look at the representation of women in IR journals, see for example Breuning et al. (2006: 458-459).

empiricism (Buzan and Hansen 2009: 88). Still, a "dual demand from political and academic rationality" was a key feature of the field (Wæver 2010a: 654).

In the period which preceded the end of the 1980s, international security studies witnessed a debate between scholars favouring a widening of the concept of security and others committed to a traditionalist state-centric and military view of the concept (Buzan and Hansen 2009: 162-163). The debate was accompanied by a theoretical relaunch which saw the development and adoption of new approaches, some of which did not necessarily concern themselves with immediate policy relevance (Wæver and Buzan 2013: 402). Since ISS had essentially become accepted as a subfield of International Relations, several of these theoretical approaches came to ISS from IR, and many ISS scholars engaged in theoretical discussions with the broader IR discipline. Before delving deeper into the nature of the theoretical developments themselves, it is sufficient at this point to underline that theoretical thinking gained traction at the time, and that security theory further developed as a subfield of ISS (Buzan and Hansen 2009: Chapter 7).

How did the relationship between policy and theory evolve in the pages of *International Security*? In the first issue of the journal, the editors underlined that it offered "a combination of professional and policy-relevant articles", and that their intent for future issues was to "balance articles of assessment and opinion with those of analysis and research" (*International Security*, 1(1) 1976: 2). Hugh Gusterson (1999: 325) explains that *International Security* was launched in reaction against the style of other journals in the field (such as *Foreign Affairs*), since the aim was to "[deal] with policy issues in a more scholarly way" than other publications. Reflecting on the journal in 2001, Steven Miller (2001: 37) wrote that there was "still a mix of theory and policy", even though the balance had shifted in favour of more theory. Nevertheless, he remarked that the authors of theoretical articles were still encouraged "to address the policy implications of their analyses". As Figure 6.4 shows, this evolution of the balance between theory and policy can be clearly observed in the changes in proportions of policy-oriented and/or theory-oriented articles.

Figure 6.4: Types of articles published in *IS*
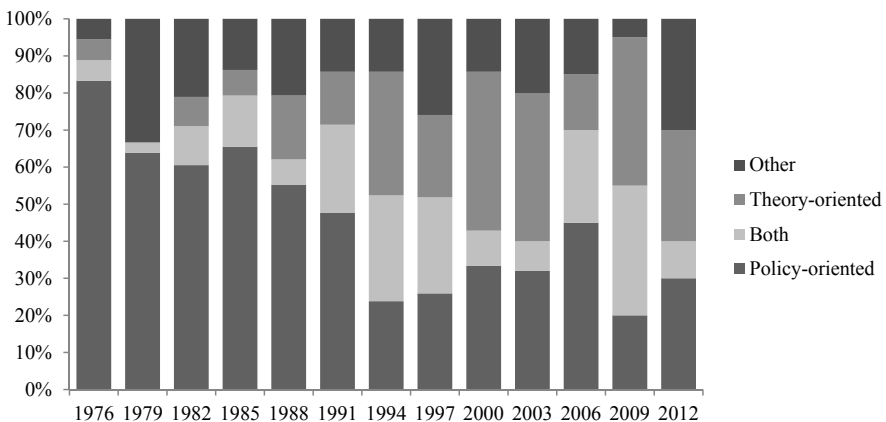
Several comments are in order here. First, a decline in policy-oriented articles can indeed be observed from 1976 to 1991-1994, but the proportion of purely theory-driven articles only came to occupy significant space in the journal after 1991. Although one can observe some degree of fluctuation over the last fifteen years in the number of articles which are both policy- and theory-oriented, these now make up between about ten and thirty per cent of total articles. The proportion of strictly policy-oriented articles, meanwhile, stopped declining in the early to mid-1990s, and has remained relatively steady since then. Overall, these findings are consistent with the theoretical relaunch which happened in ISS around the end of the Cold War, although the increase in the number of articles which include theoretical developments is in this case particularly substantial due to the relative lack of space devoted to theory-oriented articles prior to the 1990s. Nevertheless, the attention given to policy-oriented research, and to the links between policy and theory, still remains a significant characteristic of much of the content published in the pages of the journal.

Another interesting piece of data can be found in Figure 6.5, which shows that the increase in articles featuring theory after 1991 came virtually exclusively from academic authors. In fact, non-academic authors almost never made use of theoretical approaches for the years under review. To go back to my earlier comments on the links between professional sectors and types of output, we can see that the former indeed appears to be a key factor in the type of content published, even though it is not the only variable to be taken into account: academic contributors turned to theory considerably more often after 1991 than in the previous period. In addition to the fact that the theoretical relaunch only began in the discipline in the 1980s, a possible explanation for the proportionally low number of theory-oriented articles published by academics in the journal before the 1990s could be, of course, that the editors themselves favoured allocating relatively limited space to theory-oriented articles.

Figure 6.5: Types of articles by academic and non-academic authors
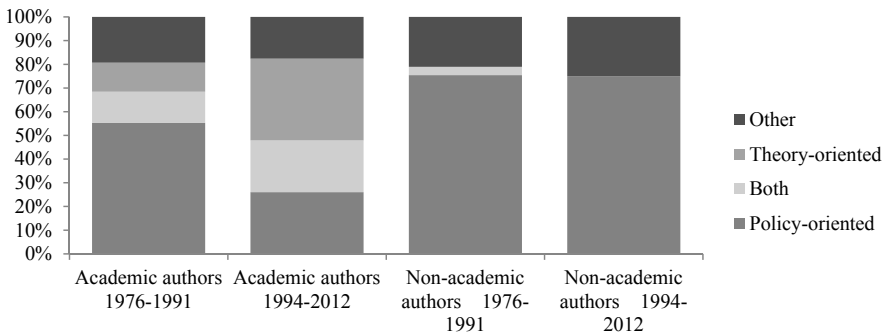
The renewed interest in theory within ISS which accompanied the end of the Cold War, however, went beyond simply putting more emphasis on the kind of theoretical analyses that had been formulated in the past. Indeed, ISS theory had until then been marked by a relative absence of epistemological debates, and international security studies almost uniformly followed a "deeply positivist" epistemology (Gusterson 1999: 321). In reaction, many of the new approaches which emerged at the end of the

1980s challenged the positivism of the traditionalist literature. As stated previously, several of them reached ISS through International Relations, in which a similar debate pitting positivism/rationalism against post-positivism/reflectivism had begun (Kurki and Wight, 2010).

The positivist/rationalist epistemological stance is based on the assumptions that there exists a social reality which can be discovered and observed by social science, that social phenomena can be explained through causal relations, and, in an IR context, that the foreign policy of states can largely be explained "by reference to goal-seeking behaviour" (Fearon and Wendt 2002: 54). This stance underpins a variety of theoretical approaches, in particular different strands of realism (notably classical, structural, neoclassical, offensive and defensive realism – see Wohlforth (2010) and Elman and Jensen (2013)) and liberalism (Rousseau and Walker 2010; Navari 2013), formal rational choice theory and game theory (which has itself informed realist and liberal research – see Zagare (2013)) and much of the research done in foreign policy analysis [14]. On the other side of the spectrum, the post-positivist/reflectivist epistemological standpoint is, instead, that social science cannot pretend to observe reality "from the outside" since reality itself is also shaped and constructed by the lenses through which we look at it, and by the very output of social science research. Authors which defend this stance generally reject the idea that causal relations can be identified in social reality (Kurki and Wight 2010). Post-structuralism, feminism, post-colonialism, critical security studies, the Copenhagen school, critical constructivism and post-modernism are examples of approaches and theoretical schools which embrace this position (Buzan and Hansen, 2009; see also the contributions to Cavelty and Mauer 2010 and Williams 2013). They have notably engaged, among various other research agendas, in the questioning of the "nature and scope" of the very concept and idea of security, and of its use by practitioners and scholars (Mutimer 2013). Finally, conventional constructivism is generally described as a sort of "middle ground" between the two stances, in particular because many conventional constructivists tend to combine a positivist epistemology with a post-positivist ontology (putting ideational factor such as ideas, beliefs, identities and norms at the centre of the analysis) (Fearon and Wendt 2002; Fierke 2010; Battistella 2012).

As mentioned earlier, however, this theoretical clash took very different turns in the North American and European academic communities. IR and ISS production in North America has remained overwhelmingly rooted in rationalism, even though a significant (albeit smaller) part of the literature is characterized by the use of conventional constructivism (Smith 2000) [15]. As explained by Wæver and Buzan (2013: 402), "cause-effect statements backed up either by statistical data or more

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[14] Note that the production of researchers working with FPA models and theories which do not consider actors as fully rational, such as those related to bounded rationality, poliheuristic theory, and organization theory, is included in this positivist/rationalist category. See Fearon and Wendt (2002).

[15] This is certainly not to say, of course, that North American scholars who embrace a post-positivist/reflectivist epistemological stance cannot be found. They are simply very much in the minority with respect to the rest of the American field.

often by historical case studies" constitute the predominant form of knowledge produced and seen as legitimate in North American ISS (see also Wæver 1998, 2012; Buzan 2009). On the other side of the Atlantic, meanwhile, the theoretical agenda is more reflectivist. European debates between theoretical approaches have been driven by discussions over the concept of security itself, and individual schools of thought – such as the Copenhagen school – developed from within ISS rather than the broader IR (Buzan 2009: Chapter 7; for an analysis of the editorial line of a prominent European ISS journal, *Security Dialogue*, see Krystel Wanneau's chapter in the present book). Although Europeans do tend to keep themselves informed about theoretical developments which originate in North America, this is less the case for American scholars with regards to European security theory (Waever 2012).

On which side of this divide does *International Security*, an American journal, fall? Despite insisting that it welcomes a multiplicity of point-of-views, *IS* overwhelmingly publishes articles with theories which belong to the rationalist side of the debate. Indeed, as Figure 6.6 shows, a positivist/rationalist approach (the various types of realism and liberalism, formal rational choice/game theory, and positivist/rationalist foreign policy analysis) was adopted or discussed in the vast majority of the articles which featured theory. The other type of theoretical approach included in articles was conventional constructivism (sometimes through the lenses of foreign policy analysis), with the proportion of articles using (or commenting on) the approach remaining relatively stable since the mid-1990s. Only a single article in the sample mentioned reflectivist theory, namely feminist security studies, but this was merely to state that the authors would *not* adopt a post-positivist stance (Hudson et al. 2009). Overall, the journal only reflected, and participated in, the theoretical debate which dominated the North American part of the field [16].

Several conclusions can be drawn from these results about the types of content published in the pages of *International Security*. In both cases (the policy/theory balance and the types of theories featured), the journal was simultaneously influenced by the development of the broader discipline and followed its own path. Although the interconnection between theory and policy which has been an integral characteristic of the field of ISS can be found in *International Security* as well, the journal initially placed significant emphasis on policy-oriented articles, following both its own editorial philosophy and the empiricist trend of part of the 1970s. Later on, after the theoretical relaunch which occurred in ISS towards the end of the 1980s, *International Security* followed suit and put significantly more emphasis on theory, albeit without abandoning policy-oriented articles and policy relevance in general. This turn towards more theory can essentially be seen as a reaction to the evolution of the field rather than as a proactive change initiated by the journal. With regards to the kind of theoretical stances featured in *IS*, one can both identify a strong influence from the general American institutional setting and community, which is resolutely on the rationalist side of the rationalist/reflectivist divide, and assume a conscious choice by the journal itself, given the virtual absence of articles featuring critical theory.

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[16] It is, however, interesting to note that only a very small number of articles used formal rational choice modelling (in 1982, 1988 and 2003).

The pages of *International Security* have still hosted and continue to host theoretical debates, but on the positivist/post-positivist spectrum, these do not go beyond discussions between positivists/rationalists and conventional constructivists. In this respect, *IS* has chosen to embrace, and contribute to, the debates which characterize mainstream IR as well, rather than the more recent developments in security theory which have been particularly studied in Europe.

Figure **6.6**: Theoretical approaches featured in *IS* articles
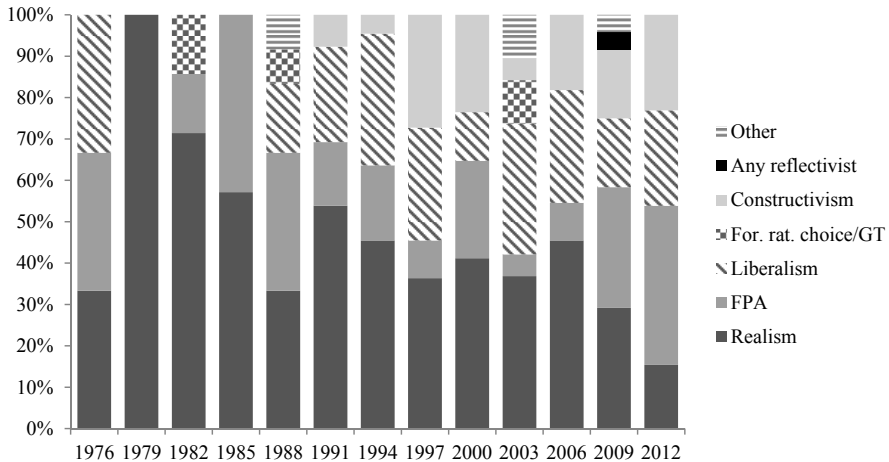
Included in the sample are only the articles which were theory-oriented or both theory-oriented and policy-oriented. Theories in the "other" category included democratic transition theory and economic analyses (belonging to the positivist/rationalist end of the spectrum).

Conclusion

This chapter's aim was to document and examine patterns of change and stability in the pages of *International Security*, and to compare them to the broader evolution of international security studies. In this regard, it is useful to examine in conjunction, rather than separately, the answers to the *who?* and *what?* questions with which I looked at the journal. One of the trends which *IS* followed was a transformation from a platform for authors of varied professional backgrounds to publish mostly scholarly work, into a space occupied essentially by academic contributors, political scientists in particular. In this, it followed the already ongoing evolution of international security studies authorship as a whole, which took part in the process through which ISS became recognized as a subfield of International Relations. This relatively rapid predominance of academics in *IS* was not, however, the result of (or synonymous with) a theory-oriented editorial line. Although the empiricism which marked the early 1970s probably played a role in influencing the content of the journal after its creation in 1975, *International Security* had its own philosophy which was clearly centred on policy-oriented/relevant output produced through scholarly analysis. Yet, especially because of the integration of international security studies within the broader discipline of International Relations, starting towards the end of the 1980s the former underwent

a theoretical relaunch which was partly inspired by the IR debate between positivism/ rationalism and post-positivism/reflectivism. *International Security* reacted to this development by shifting towards a greater emphasis on theory (a transition which was made easier by, and was consistent with, the fact that its authorship was already dominated by academia), and embraced its place as an influential platform for mainstream ISS-IR theoretical debates, publishing articles by positivist/rationalist and conventional constructivist authors. The interest in policy-relevance did not disappear, however, and the journal chose not to explore the development of less mainstream and more reflectivist theoretical approaches (which, it is worth mentioning, were generally less interested in, or were directly critical of, the possibility of establishing causal relationships in social phenomena). *IS* therefore sided with most of North American academia, which continues to publish in its pages, while these approaches grew and found a proportionally more interested audience in Europe. To sum up, *International Security* authorship and content have, to a significant extent, evolved in conjunction with international security studies as a whole, yet the particular attention paid by the journal to policy relevance, and its ignoring of developments in post-positivist theory, can be traced back not only to this mutual influence (more distinctively, in this case, to some of the tendencies characterizing the American field) but also to deliberate choices made by the editors with regards to the aims and identity of the journal.

A few final words are in order. This chapter's look at *International Security* remains modest in scope; I have tried to identify patterns at a relatively macro level, and a more in-depth investigation of the policy topics touched upon in the articles featured in the journal would undoubtedly yield very interesting results with regards to how *IS* positions itself in the field. It would also allow for a better understanding of the relations between the different structuring forces of international security studies highlighted by Buzan and Hansen (2009). Indeed, using the journal to study the attention given to *current events* and *global politics*, for example, would surely shed additional light on these forces' influence on *academic debate*s and on *institutionalization*, and more broadly on the evolution of the discipline itself. Looking in more detail at the individual authors who publish in *International Security*, the institutions they belong to, and the networks they constitute, would also be likely to prove a very fruitful way of answering Wæver's (2010a) call for a more sociological analysis of ISS, which would notably provide valuable insight into the aforementioned theoretical divide between the United States and Europe, as well as into the exceptions to the rule. Since the evolution of international security studies is obviously far from over, these various avenues of research offer promising possibilities for further exploration of the inner workings of the field.