

PREFACE

Theorizing is among the most important activities that take place within scientific disciplines, and theories make one of the constituent parts of a discipline. Scholars therefore routinely talk about the discipline of IR and its theories, and because scholars cherish theoretical knowledge, they prime students with the contents of IR 101 syllabi. Over time, theories crystallize in schools of thought, strands of theorizing and theoretical traditions. This introductory book and the seven volumes that will follow focus on the origins and trajectories of theoretical traditions.

We are situated in Europe, and it is thus the origins and trajectories of European theoretical traditions that are on our agenda. It seems to us that, somewhat strangely, no such comprehensive overview of theoretical traditions has been published before. Appraisals or reappraisals of theoretical work do exist, but they are scattered and thus miss the integrative reconstruction feature that we aim at.

The project is bound to be controversial. Calls to silence European IR are as frequent as American hegemony is deplored. Assertive statements about IR not being a discipline accompany claims that history is bunk. We open space to explore how Europeans reflect theoretically on the twentieth century, and we thus have an interest in both intellectual history and contemporary forms of theoretical knowledge. We claim that American hegemony to some degree is more imagined than real and contemplate which function(s) the imagined might have. *Vis-à-vis* the idea that International Relations is not a discipline, we claim that it

depends on how discipline is defined. In any case, numerous practices contribute to validate the existence of IR, and as a social fact, it is consensual agreement that counts for existence.

This book and the book series is a framework that took off during one of EISA's Exploratory Symposia in Rapallo, Italy, in November 2013, and we are grateful to EISA for enabling this project to be thoroughly discussed. We would like to thank Arslan Asif for research assistance during the final phases, Sarah Roughley at Palgrave for the necessary patience while we were bringing this collective work into existence, and the anonymous reviewers of our book series proposal and this volume.

London, UK
Aarhus, Denmark
Giessen, Germany
Coventry, UK
Sheffield, UK,
September 2016

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Reappraising European IR Theoretical Traditions

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2017, VII, 130 p., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-3-319-58399-0