

International relations studies in China: history, trends, and prospects

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Abstract

International relations (IR) studies in China have developed considerably over the past three decades. The field is now well established with 49 degree-granting institutions, as well as a series of ‘think tanks’ that produce policy-related analyses of international issues. Recent survey research of publication trends in the field reveals a significant new diversity of research subject areas, with an increased emphasis on topics associated with Western ‘liberal’ IR theory and international political economy, while at the same time revealing a tenacity of ‘realist’ topics such as major power relations. While the quantitative dimensions of the field have grown dramatically – institutions, faculty, publications – the overall quality of research remains very uneven across China and generally weak when compared internationally. This article surveys the historical development of the field, summarizes the current state of the field, and identifies challenges and opportunities for future development.

1 Introduction

This article provides an overview of the state of international relations (IR) studies and research in China in 2010 – past, present, and future. The author bases the analysis and judgments primarily on information collected while conducting research in China during 2009–10, hosted by the Institute of World Economics and Politics (IWEP) of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. During this time, the author was able to interact with a number of leading IR scholars and analysts in China's universities and research institutes (think tanks), collect published materials on the state of the field, and update knowledge from previous assessments he had undertaken (Shambaugh and Wang, 1984; Shambaugh, 1987, 1991, 2002). It also builds on previous assessments by other Western scholars (Chan, 1997, 1999; Wang, 2001a; Gill and Mulvenon, 2002; Glaser and Saunders, 2002) and utilizes some recent domestic assessments undertaken by Chinese scholars (Yang, 1993; Wang and Yu, 2006; Wang and Dan, 2008a). The article offers some historical context concerning the evolution of the field over the past three decades, but concentrates on providing an up-to-date 'snapshot' circa 2010, identifies key institutions and trends in research, and offers some observations about the future development of the field.

2 Overview of the evolution of IR studies in China

2.1 *The first 30 years*

While the field of IR studies today has developed almost from scratch during the reform era (1978–), it has been shaped by its antecedents in the pre-reform era (1949–78). International studies (and all social sciences) during this period were heavily affected by the impact of domestic Maoist politics on higher education; needed intelligence analysis for the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and government; Marxist–Leninist ideology; and the influence of the Soviet Union. IR studies suffered along with the rest of the social sciences during the 1950s–70s. Most departments of political science and IR were closed in 1952 during the reorganization of higher education under Soviet influence. During the years 1952–64, Renmin (People's) University did establish a government department in 1954, which included some international studies. The First Foreign Languages Institute (一外), established in 1941, continued

to operate after the founding of the People's Republic. The College of Diplomacy (外交学院) was established in 1955 with a branch (外交学院分校) that became the autonomous College of International Relations (国际关系学院) following the Cultural Revolution. Also during the late 1950s, the Foreign Ministry and Investigation Department of the CCP established their own institutes to provide intelligence analysis: the Institute of International Studies (国际问题研究所) and the Institute of International Relations (国际关系研究所), respectively. The Shanghai Institute of International Studies (SIIS) was also established in 1960 under the Shanghai municipal government. The Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) also sponsored a World Economics Institute and subordinate world politics section under its Division of Philosophy and Social Sciences, and in 1961 separate institutes for the study of Latin America and Asia–Africa were established under CAS auspices (in the latter case jointly with Peking University). In 1964, following Premier Zhou Enlai's return from Africa, IR studies received a big boost as Chairman Mao endorsed Zhou's proposal to establish a network of institutions to train young diplomats and researchers. Fudan, Renmin, and Peking universities were instructed to establish international politics departments (to concentrate, respectively, on the capitalist, socialist, and developing worlds). After the full establishment of international politics departments at these three universities in 1964, nine other regional studies institutes were opened in provincial universities (Jilin, Nankai, etc.). This was essentially the institutional landscape prior to the Cultural Revolution (1966–76) when all were terminated again (except a fledgling intelligence team in the CCP Investigation Department and a small research group on the world economy at Fudan University). Scholars and researchers in IR were packed off to 'May 7th Cadre Schools' in the countryside for 're-education'.

Needless to say, the field of IR studies was severely stultified during its first three decades – by domestic political turmoil, the ideological impact of Marxism–Leninism, the impact of the Soviet Union (pre- and post-split), and China's general isolation from the outside world. IR theory, such as it existed, did so only in the Marxist–Leninist–Maoist context. Serious research, to the extent it was done, was carried out only in government-sponsored research institutes and essentially for intelligence purposes. Except for the handful of universities noted above, no others were permitted to work on international affairs. These three programs

were only beginning to get underway when the Cultural Revolution erupted and they were closed for more than a decade. IR research institutes were reopened slightly earlier, largely out of the government's need for intelligence on the Soviet Union and the United States, and the need to know about countries with which China was now beginning to interact. For example, the Foreign Ministry's Institute of International Relations was reopened in 1973 and was renamed the China Institute of International Studies (CIIS). In 1977, the China Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) was established with IWEP brought over from the Academy of Sciences. In 1981, a series of regional studies institutes (United States, Japan, Western Europe, Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, Asia-Pacific, Latin America) were established within CASS. The China Institute of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR) was similarly restaffed and renamed as such in the late-1970s. CICIR remained under the Central Committee Investigation Department until it was moved under the new Ministry of State Security in 1982.

Thus, the first 30 years of IR studies in the People's Republic of China must be considered poorly developed at best. Domestic politics impacted the field very negatively. Moreover, China's general isolation in the world meant that those individuals who worked on IR had no contact with foreigners outside the Soviet bloc. Physical isolation begot intellectual isolation.

2.2 The next 20 years (1979–99)

The field only began to recover from the above traumas in the early 1980s, after Deng Xiaoping returned to power and initiated far-reaching reforms. In reality, the field was built for the first time. Of course, this coincided with China's more general opening to the outside world and establishment of diplomatic relations with foreign countries. IR studies resumed initially at Beida, Renda, and Fudan universities, as well as at the College of Foreign Affairs. In 1983, Beida was the first International Politics Department to open its doors to foreign students, and the author was the first foreign student permitted to study there.

The development of the field during the 1980s was aided to no small extent by the US Government and American philanthropic foundations. The Ford Foundation was particularly instrumental. In addition, the Rockefeller Foundation, Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Luce Foundation,

John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation also contributed significant funds and played important roles. With the exception of the Asia Foundation, which benefited from Congressional funding and ran its own individual grants program for Chinese diplomats, the above-mentioned foundations joined together in a consortium to support an oversight organization known as the Committee on International Relations Studies with the People's Republic of China (CIRSPRC),¹ which was later renamed the Program on International Studies in Asia and more recently changed its name again to the Partnerships for International Strategies in Asia (PISA).² In addition to these foundations that participated in the CIRSPRC consortium, other US foundations contributed individually to sponsoring policy dialogues and other IR related activities: the Kettering Foundation, the Stanley Foundation, W. Alton Jones Foundation, and Carnegie Corporation. During the years 1984–92, CIRSPRC sought to contribute to developing IR studies in China mainly through building up area studies (particularly American studies) and studies of major power relations (大国关系) in Chinese research institutes and universities. This priority dovetailed with Chinese institution's own developmental priorities. Other areas of early emphasis were arms control and disarmament, regional (Asian) security, and international economics.

CIRCPRC operated from 1984–92 and invested \$4 million in IR studies in China (Geithner, 2001). The Ford Foundation invested half of this amount, with the other consortium members contributing the balance. Most of this was spent on fellowships for 102 Chinese scholars to go abroad for postgraduate training, of which 38% were supported for Ph.D. degrees, 21% for M.A. degrees, and 40% for short-term research visits abroad (Geithner, 2001).

Many of the leading scholars in the IR field in China today were once CIRSPRC/PISA grantees (although many never returned to work in China). Other CIRSPRC expenditures went toward sponsoring policy dialogues, academic conferences, book translations, and library

1 In addition to CIRSPRC, two other similar committees were established at the initiative of the Ford Foundation in the fields of law and economics. Only CIRSPRC survived beyond the 1980s.

2 PISA continues to operate to this day, based in the Sigur Center for Asian Studies at George Washington University, but has shifted its priority and focus almost exclusively to Vietnam in recent years. See <http://www.gwu.edu/~pisa/about/index.cfm>.

enhancement. Once PISA succeeded CIRSPRC and broadened its remit to Vietnam and potentially other Asian countries, all of these categories of funding were wound up and replaced with a more singular focus on in-country teaching and policy research workshops (run at Renmin, Nankai, Fudan universities and the Foreign Affairs College) during 2006–07. These in-country workshops were both cost-effective and reached a broad range of young faculty from across China. As PISA converted to this new in-country format, it was decided to discontinue funding scholarships for degree training in IR abroad, given the low return rate of individuals after they were awarded their graduate degrees.

The events of 1989 had a negative impact on IR studies, as well as American philanthropic activities, in China. As the Chinese government hunkered down in a paranoid period following the Tiananmen suppression and subsequent collapse of communist party-states across Eastern Europe and former Soviet Union, American foundations were suspiciously viewed as subversive *agent provocateurs*. IR studies also reflected the trends of the time: a re-emphasis on Marxism–Leninism, studies of US ‘hegemony’, and the causes of collapse of the East European and Soviet party-states. CIRSPRC and a handful of other international exchange organizations (such as the British Academy and Economic and Social Research Council in the UK) took the politically sensitive and difficult decision to remain ‘engaged’ in the field of IR with China during these difficult days, but the Chinese side was not in a very responsive mood during the 1989–92 period.

Following Deng Xiaoping’s ‘southern sojourn’ (南巡) in 1992, the conservative cloud that had hung over China since June 1989 began to lift in a number of policy areas. This included IR studies. As Wang Jisi notes in his 2001 survey of the field, the period 1992–98 witnessed a minor blossoming of new research topics, as Chinese IR scholars began to study the world around them: the trend of ‘peace and development’ in the world, multipolarization, economic globalization, strategic partnerships, international organizations and regimes, international political economy (IPE), international security, the Asian path of development and Asian values, human rights and international intervention, the ‘clash of civilizations’, ‘democratic peace’ theory, and comprehensive national strength (Wang, 2001b). These topics were conceptually noteworthy as they began to erode the ‘primacy of sovereignty’ in the IR field. They also did much to dilute and replace Marxism–Leninism as a dominant

paradigm. In addition to these topics, the 1990s were also notable for some ‘hearty perennials’ in Chinese studies of IR: bilateral relationships, major powers’ foreign policy (particularly the United States), and ‘hot spot’ (热点) regional crises.

However, the most recent decade (1999–2009) in Chinese IR studies has demonstrated even further intellectual diversity in the field. Previous conceptual constraints – ideological and political – have been significantly eased, and Chinese scholars of IR are exploring an unprecedented range of new topics (both theoretical and policy-related).

3 Emphases on Chinese IR research, 1999–2009

There are different measures of popular topics of IR research in China over the past decade. In their 2001 study, Professors Wang Jisi and Alastair I. Johnston each noted different emphases. Wang identified nine topics of new interest to Chinese IR scholars: ethnic relations and tensions, the role of religions, party politics, crisis management, domestic sources of foreign policies, human rights diplomacy, the role of the media, mutual images and perceptions, and global governance. Both Wang and Johnston undertook surveys of leading IR journals during 1996–2001. Wang’s survey found that 49% of published articles dealt with area studies, 17% with international organizations, 11% with national/international security, 11% with sovereignty and ‘humanitarian intervention’, 5% with great power relations, 4% with international organizations, and 1% each for IR theory, international regimes, and IPE (Wang, 2001b, p. 113). Johnston ran several keyword searches in the China Academic Journals Database to ascertain Chinese writers’ interest in different topics. By far, on aggregate, the vast majority were concerned with questions of polarity and globalization. All other topics Johnston searched for (democratic peace theory, feminism, non-traditional security, global governance, interdependence, ethnic conflict, identity, crisis management, psychology, international organizations, IPE, multilateralism, and regional organizations) produced relatively few numbers of articles.

In order to ascertain more recent trends in IR journal publishing for this article, I undertook 50 keyword searches of article titles and abstracts in China’s 10 leading IR journals in the China Academic Journals Database during the period 2005–09: *Heping yu Fazhan*

(Peace and Development, published by the Peace and Development Research Institute of the People's Liberation Army General Political Department), *Shijie Jingji yu Zhengzhi* (World Economics and Politics, published by IWEP of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences), *Guoji Wenti Yanjiu* (International Studies Research, published by CIIS), *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* (Contemporary International Relations, published by the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations), *Guoji Zhengzhi Yanjiu* (International Politics Quarterly, published by the School of International Studies of Peking University), *Waijiao Pinglun* (Foreign Affairs Commentary, published by the China Foreign Affairs University – CFAU), *Dangdai Shijie* (Contemporary World, published by the International Department of the CCP), *Guofang* (National Defense, published by the National Defense University), *Guoji Guancha* (International Survey, published by Shanghai Foreign Studies University), and *Guoji Zhanwang* (International Perspective, published by SIIS).

There are two important caveats concerning this survey. First, I have chosen to only evaluate IR journals that cover the whole world, and hence have not included the main area studies journals in the survey (European Studies; American Studies; Asia-Pacific Studies; Latin America Studies; South Asian Studies; West Asia and African Studies; Russian, Central Asian, Eastern Europe Research; Russian Research; and Japanese Studies) as they would inevitably skew the sample in favor of regional topics. Nonetheless, I have included several keyword searches on the major powers. Second, readers should be aware that this limited sample of 10 leading IR journals was selected from more than 200 journals in the China Academic Journals Database. Thus, this sample *is not* to be construed as an illustration of what is being written about IR across all Chinese academic journals, especially if one includes area studies journals. Nonetheless, this survey provides an excellent window into the topics of primary research in China's IR community between 2005 and 2009.³ To render the 50 individual keyword searches digestible, I have aggregated the data into eight separate clusters – each of which clusters together similarly related topics.

3 I am most grateful to Dr Jamie Reilly of the University of Sydney for his assistance in this research.

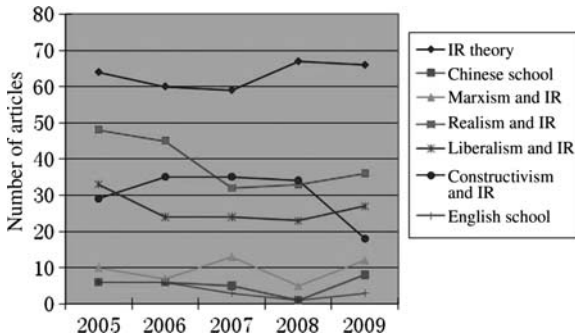


Figure 1 Articles on IR Theory.

Figure 1 shows the prevalence of articles concerning IR theory in general and individual theories in particular. It shows a generally high and consistent level of articles on IR theory (60–70 per year) over time, revealing a growing and strong interest among Chinese scholars in theory (although subsequent figures show an even greater interest in many non-theoretical topics). Among individual IR theories, realism ranks first, followed by liberalism and constructivism – whereas articles on Marxism, the so-called Chinese School of IR, and the ‘English School’ all register negligible results. Although the time period measured is different, it is interesting to note that these findings are somewhat at variance with a survey conducted by Professor Qin Yaqing of CFAU in which he categorized 1124 articles in five leading IR journals from 1978–2007. Qin found that articles with a Marxist orientation predominated before 1990, but articles with realist, liberal, and constructivist orientations have been more or less evenly divided (liberal articles had a slight edge) (Qin, 2008).

On aggregate, Chinese IR writers remain overwhelmingly consumed with the US–China relationship. While I did not run a separate keyword search for articles about the United States, a recent study on American studies in China indicates that the United States continues to hold pride of place in Chinese area studies (Lautz, 2009). Another study of 10 leading IR journals in 2006 revealed that one-half of all articles published concerned foreign regions or countries (Editorial Group, 2008, p. 73). China’s relations with Russia and Europe attract considerably less attention (although there are considerably more articles published in the CASS specialist journals on these subjects). Even concepts such as

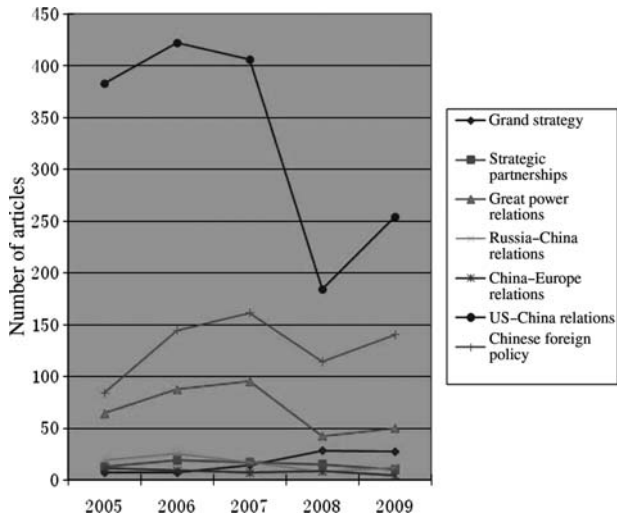


Figure 2 Articles on Major Power Relations.

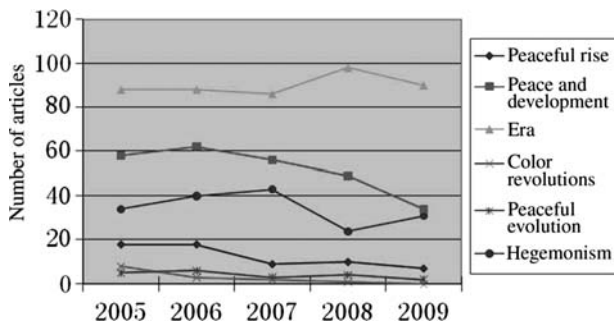


Figure 3 Articles on IR Concepts.

‘grand strategy’ and ‘strategic partnerships’ attract surprisingly minor attention. This is apparent in Fig. 2.

In terms of concepts that are popular in the Chinese IR discourse, we find in Fig. 3 that the concept of ‘era’ (*shidai*, 时代) remains a key concept. Perhaps as a result of their Marxist training, which emphasizes stage theories of historical development, Chinese scholars and politicians like to characterize broad historical epochs. Most agree that the era of ‘peace and development’ (Deng Xiaoping) has replaced the era of imperialism and war (Lenin, Stalin) and revolution (Mao). The concept of hegemony continues to attract attention in this survey, while peaceful evolution, peaceful rise, and the color revolutions are surprisingly few.

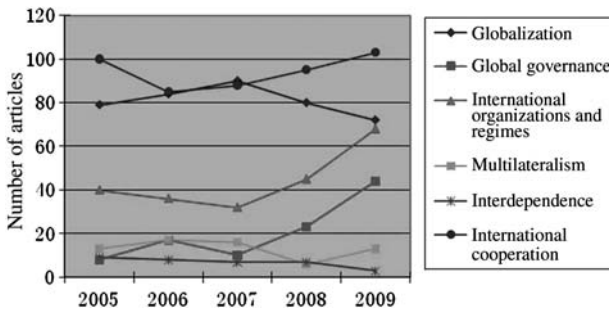


Figure 4 Articles on Liberal Topics.

Interestingly, we see Chinese IR scholars evince an increasing interest since 2007 in concepts associated with Liberal IR discourse – globalization, global governance, international cooperation, interdependence, multilateralism, and international organizations. This is reflected in Fig. 4. Given both the upward trend and the aggregate number of articles in this category, this is a significant finding and shows that exposure to Western IR has had an impact. While there has been a surge of interest in more liberal IR topics, it continues to contend with traditional realist topics and a growing interest in social constructivism (Qin, 2008). Interestingly, however, rising interest in these liberal concepts does *not* translate into Chinese government support for the liberal postwar order (although China has been a beneficiary of it) (Ikenberry, 2008). There continues to be deep-seated suspicion of the liberal order and particularly American calls for China to be a ‘responsible power’ and ‘responsible international stakeholder’, as many Chinese commentators see it as another trap laid by the United States to retard China’s growth (see Shambaugh, 2010; for a somewhat different Chinese view that stresses Chinese recognition of ‘international responsibility’ and embrace of liberal IR, see Zhu, 2010).

As Fig. 5 indicates, topics related to international security in aggregate are large (around 80 per year), but specific articles about arms control, non-proliferation, outer space, ethnic conflict, military transparency, and non-traditional security are remarkably few – suggesting that Chinese scholars are more inclined to embrace the liberal economic agenda but not the liberal security agenda.⁴ There is an expected spike in articles on

4 More than half the articles on non-traditional security (NTS) appeared in *Guofang*, the journal of the PLA National Defense University. The PLA has begun to show increased interest in NTS in recent years, usually referring to it as ‘military operations other than war’.

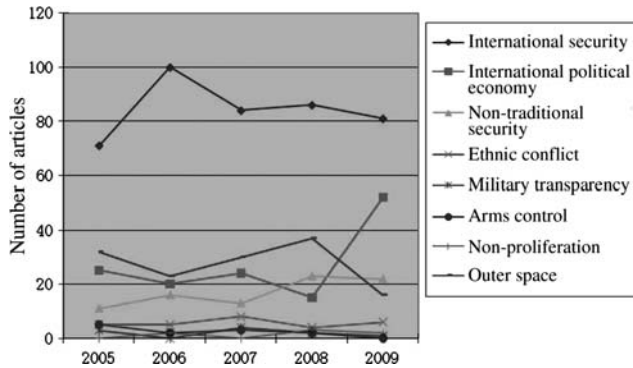


Figure 5 Articles on Security.

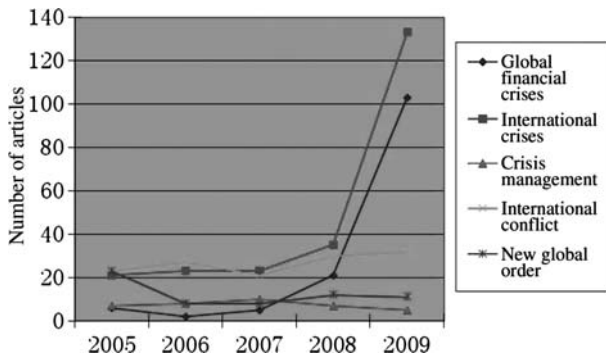


Figure 6 Articles on Crisis and Conflict.

IPE following 2008 and the global financial crisis (this is true in book publishing as well; see, for example, [Zheng, 2008](#)). We see further evidence of this in Fig. 6, which shows a strong surge in articles on the global financial crisis, while more traditional concepts like creating a ‘new global order’ have declined over time.

In terms of other key concepts in IR, Chinese writers reflect a realist orientation by publishing many articles concerning international structure (国际格局). Many Chinese IR scholars are like geometers – constantly trying to identify and measure the structures of IR (see, for example, [Yang, 2006](#); [Yu, 2008](#); [Qin, 2009](#)). Surprisingly, though, this does not translate into many writings about multipolarity in this survey. Even the notion of the ‘democratization of international relations’ (a codeword for multipolarity) reveals few articles. One would also have expected more writings on sovereignty. There was a constructivist surge

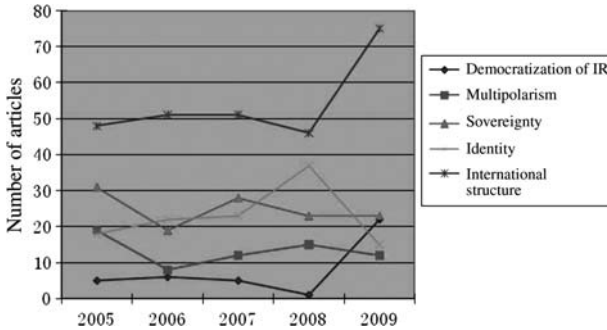


Figure 7 Articles on Constructivist Topics.

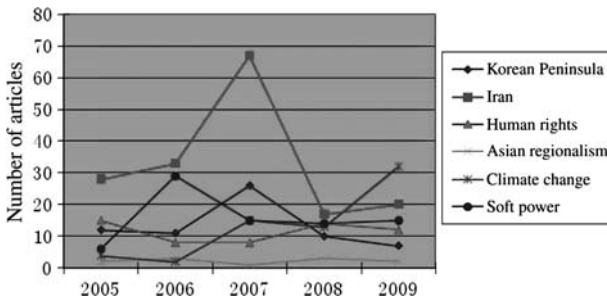


Figure 8 Articles on Current IR Issues.

in writings about national identity in 2008, but it was short-lived and tailed off in 2009. These are all reflected in Fig. 7.

Finally, in terms of attention paid to ‘hot spot’ (热点) global issues, we see in Fig. 8 an expected spike in writings about climate change in 2008–09 around the time of the Copenhagen Conference. We also note a sharp spike in writings about the Iranian nuclear issue in 2007 but then an inexplicable sharp drop in 2008–09. Given the sensitivity of the North Korean nuclear issue for China, it is not surprising that this issue scores low. Human rights, Asian regionalism, and soft power also record few articles in these IR journals (soft power is, however, a very popular topic in other journals and newspapers).

In sum, these keyword searches reveal that *increased diversity* of subject matter is its most notable development over the past decade. To be sure, there still remain ‘no go zones’ – such as critically analyzing China’s own foreign policy, human rights, or humanitarian intervention – but Chinese scholars are otherwise embracing a much broader menu of research subjects.

4. The institutional landscape of IR studies

The field of IR studies has proliferated across China in recent years. As Table 1 indicates, the field had grown to include 46 degree-granting institutions (this table was originally compiled in 2003 but is updated to 2010 where data are available) (Wang and Dan, 2008b; note: for some inexplicable reason, CFAU and Jilin University were not included in this original list, but have been added to the table by the author. I have also undertaken to update information to the present as best as possible). Another recent article indicates that, in 2007, there were 42 universities offering degrees in IR, 85 in political science and public administration, and 7 in diplomacy (Chen, 2010). Thus, if IR and diplomacy degrees are combined, this constitutes 49 *degree-granting institutions* in China today (political science and public administration departments tend to concentrate on domestic/comparative politics). The Ministry of Education (MOE) lists IR studies as one of 21 ‘branches’ (学科分类) or ‘specialization’ (专业) of social science, but not on a par with political science, economics, or history as a stand-alone discipline (学科) (Editorial Group, 2008, p. 75). The field cannot even agree on common terminology – in some institutions, it is called ‘international relations’ (国际关系), in others it is ‘international studies’ (国际问题), in others it is ‘international politics’ (国际政治), and in yet others it is called ‘diplomacy’ (外交). The following table lists all degree-granting institutions, using these terms.

While the number of institutions has proliferated across China, the above table makes clear that only a handful of these institutions offer comprehensive B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. degree programs. The only ones that do are Peking, Fudan, Renmin, Tsinghua, Wuhan, Yunnan, Shandong, Huazhong Normal, Jinan (in Guangzhou), Shanghai Foreign Languages, and China Foreign Affairs universities.

Of these institutions, Beida, Renda, Fudan, and CFAU remain the cream of the crop. Tsinghua University has also made significant advances in recent years to join the elite. These five universities boast the strongest faculties, broadest and deepest curricula, best student bodies, and most extensive international exchanges. A ‘second tier’ of strong, but not as comprehensive, institutions includes Beijing Foreign Studies University, Shanghai Foreign Studies University, Nankai University (Tianjin), East China Normal University, Jinan University (Guangzhou),

Table 1 Degree-granting institutions in IR studies

Institution	B.A.	M.A.	Ph.D.
Beijing University	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fudan University	Yes	Yes	Yes
Renmin University	Yes	Yes	Yes
Nanjing University	No	Yes	Yes
Tsinghua University	Yes	Yes	Yes
China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations	No	Yes	Yes
PLA College of International Relations	Yes	Yes	Yes
Chinese Academy of Social Sciences Graduate School	No	Yes	Yes
University of International Relations	Yes	Yes	No
Shanghai Institute of International Studies	No	Yes	Yes
Shanghai Jiaotong University	Yes	Yes	No
Central Party School	No	Yes	Yes
Hebei Normal University	No	Yes	No
Liaoning University	Yes	Yes	No
Academy of Military Sciences	No	Yes	Yes
Beijing Normal University	Yes	Yes	No
Lanzhou University	Yes	Yes	No
Wuhan University	Yes	Yes	Yes
Yunnan University	Yes	Yes	Yes
Nankai University (Tianjin)	Yes	Yes	No
Shandong University	Yes	Yes	Yes
Huazhong Normal University (Wuhan)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Zhongshan University (Guangzhou)	Yes	Yes	No
Jinan University (Guangzhou)	Yes	Yes	Yes
National Defense University	No	Yes	Yes
Northeast University (Shenyang)	Yes	No	No
Zhejiang University	Yes	Yes	No
Xiangtan University (Hunan)	No	Yes	No
PLA Foreign Languages College (Luoyang)	Yes	Yes	No
Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences	No	Yes	No
East China Normal University (Shanghai)	No	Yes	No
Shanghai Foreign Languages University	Yes	Yes	Yes
Nanjing Political College	Yes	Yes	No
Yanshan University (Hebei)	Yes	No	No

Continued

Table 1 Continued

Institution	B.A.	M.A.	Ph.D.
Beijing No. 2 Foreign Languages University	Yes	Yes	No
China Foreign Affairs University	Yes	Yes	Yes
Shandong Normal University	No	Yes	No
Beijing Broadcasting College	No	Yes	No
Beijing Foreign Studies University	Yes	Yes	No
Xiamen University	No	Yes	No
Tongji University	Yes	Yes	No
Sichuan University	Yes	Yes	No
Zhongnan Finance, Economics, Politics, and Law University (Wuhan)	Yes	No	No
Jilin University	Yes	Yes	No
Zhengzhou University	No	Yes	Yes
Qingdao University	Yes	Yes	No

Zhongshan University (Guangzhou), and the University of International Relations (Beijing).

Peking University's School of International Studies (SIS) was established in 1996, growing out of the former Department of International Politics. The inaugural dean was former foreign minister and state counselor Qian Qichen and is now leading IR scholar Wang Jisi. The School has three departments: the International Politics, Diplomacy and Foreign Affairs Management, and IPE. In addition, SIS sponsors three research institutes and several centers: Institute of International Relations; Institute of Afro-Asian Studies; and the Institute of World Socialism. SIS has 51 full-time faculty members, including several internationally known ones (Wang Jisi, Wang Yizhou, Jia Qingguo, Pan Wei, and Zhu Feng). The School enrolls over 1,300 students at all levels. The B.A. program includes three degree concentrations, seven M.A. concentrations, and five Ph.D. concentrations. SIS also publishes the respected journal *International Politics Quarterly* (国际政治研究) and sponsors the prestigious book series 'Studies on World Politics', published by Peking University Press. The department is also deeply involved in international scholarly and student exchanges – including an innovative joint Masters in International Studies with the London School of Economics and Political Science. The SIS teaching curriculum and faculty research foci

are very broad. The International Politics Department includes ‘main research directions’ (主要研究方向) and classes as including: theories of international politics, history of IR, international organizations, comparative politics, the Taiwan issue, Hong Kong, Northeast and Southeast Asian political economy and diplomacy, survey of international politics, history of modern IR, postwar IR history, post-Cold War IR history, Western IR theories, IPE, international structure and international organizations, foreign political systems, Third World development studies, arms control, ethnic problems in world politics, international politics and the human rights issue, international strategy, etc. (Editorial Group, 2008, pp. 83–84). SIS dean Wang Jisi stated that the School’s current priority is to build up the study of comparative politics as well as China’s own foreign policy, rather than area studies *per se*, and to move from an area studies approach to a more ‘interactive approach’ to the study of China and the world (Interview with Wang Jisi, 16 July 2010).

Fudan University’s School of International Relations and Public Affairs (SIRPA) is one of the oldest and probably the second strongest academic program in IR studies in China (after Beida). SIRPA has two postdoctoral programs, six doctoral degree programs and seven master’s degree programs. It is sub-divided into three departments: Political Science, Public Administration, and International Politics. The latter department has 16 faculty members and offers more than 50 courses at B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. levels. In addition, SIRPA sponsors 14 research centers: Center for Global Governance, Center for Grassroots Society and State Building, Center for Religion and International Relations Studies, Center for China and International Organization Studies, Center for Chinese Government and Politics Studies, Center for Public Policy, Center for Crisis Management Studies, Center for E-Government and Administration Studies, Center for American Studies, Center for European Studies, Center for Russian Studies, Center for Japanese Studies, Center for Korean Studies, and a Latin American Research Office. SIRPA has 45 full-time faculty, including a number of internationally respected scholars: Ni Shixiong, Shen Dingli, Wu Xinbo, Chen Zhimin, Ren Xiao, Tang Shiping, Zhu Mingquan, Pan Zhongqi, Pu Xingzu, and others. SIRPA probably constitutes the strongest IR faculty in China today.

Renmin (People’s) University’s School of International Studies was established in 2001. It currently has four constituent departments:

International Politics, Diplomacy, IPE, and Political Science and Public Administration. It also hosts four research institutes on Chinese Politics; World Socialism; East Europe and Central Asia; and European Studies. Renda's B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. curricula in international studies offer various courses in the three departmental concentrations noted above, but largely falling into the areas of IR theory, the world economy and IPE, Chinese foreign policy, domestic Chinese politics, comparative politics and area studies (primarily United States and EU), 'scientific socialism', and the international communist movement. Renda also runs a highly successful M.A. program in Contemporary China Studies for foreign students in English (<http://www.chinastudies.cn/>). The Departments of International Politics and Political Science have 14 full-time faculty members each, while the Department of Diplomacy has 12, and the newer Department of IPE, an unknown number. Recently, however, Renda has suffered from the loss of faculty to other universities (six faculty defected during the 2009–10 academic year alone). The SIS dean is Chen Jian, former ambassador to the United Nations, and executive vice-dean is Chen Yue, who also serves as chairman of the National Higher Education International Politics Research Association (全国高校国际政治研究会). The associate dean Jin Canrong is one of China's leading America specialists. Other notable faculty members include leading IR historian and theorist Shi Yinhong, soft-power specialist Pang Zhongying, and Chinese domestic politics scholar Yang Guangbin.

Tsinghua University has a Department of International Relations and an Institute of International Studies (IIS) in the School of Humanities that jointly enrolls students for B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. degrees. Much newer and smaller than its counterparts at Beida, Renda, Fudan, or CFAU, Tsinghua's program is growing under the energetic leadership of Professor Yan Xuetong, a well-known 'realist' and strong nationalist IR scholar, who directs both the institute and the department. Curriculum concentrations are in international security and strategy, arms control and disarmament, economic diplomacy, Chinese foreign policy, IPE, theories of IR. M.A. courses include Chinese language and culture, Contemporary Theories in International Politics, International and Comparative Political Economy, Research Design in International Studies, History of International Relations since 1648, Arms Control and International Security, Theory and Practice of Chinese Foreign

Relations, American Studies, International Organization and Global Governance, Public Diplomacy, Seminars on New Directions of International Studies, Comparative Politics and Government Administration, Politics and Government in China, and Chinese Practice of International Law. The IIS is developing a specific competence in IR methodologies. The IIS has 15 faculty members at present. The IIS sponsors the publication of three journals: *Guoji Zhengzhi Kexue* (国际政治科学), *Arms Control Research and Prospects* (军备控制研究与展望), and *Chinese Journal of International Politics* (published in English by Oxford University Press). In addition to Tsinghua's IIS, the university's Political Science Department is gaining strength and recruiting well-known new faculty, such as Sun Zhe from Fudan University and Song Xinning from Renmin University. Sun Zhe has initiated a dynamic new Center for US–China relations (<http://www.chinausa.org.cn/en/>), and Song Xinning is expected to do the same with a new China–Europe Center. The School of Public Affairs also includes leading IR scholar and American foreign policy specialist Chu Shulong. Tsinghua has also partnered to host Washington's two leading think tanks: the Brookings–Tsinghua Center for Public Policy and the Carnegie–Tsinghua Center for Global Policy.

CFAU (外交学院) is China's premier diplomatic training institution, directly under the Foreign Ministry, although its graduates also pursue careers in international journalism and other fields. CFAU now enrolls 1,600 students in seven departments: Department of Diplomacy, Department of English and International Studies, Department of Foreign Languages, Department of International Law, Department of International Economics, School of International Education, and Institute of International Relations. It grants eight degrees: B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. in International Relations; Bachelor of Law (B.L.) and Masters of Law (M.L.); and B.A. and M.A. in International Economics. CFAU also has a number of research institutes and regional studies centers (including one of the few for the study of Chinese foreign policy), hosts the secretariat of the China National Association of International Relations, is the designated Chinese partner in the East Asian Think Tank Consortium, and publishes the highly regarded journal *Waijiao Pinglun*. CFAU's 170 faculty members include a number of leading IR scholars, including (executive vice president) Qin Yaqing, (vice president) Zhu Liqun, Wang Fan, Su Hao, Gao Fei, and others. Qin Yaqing has been a leading national figure in building IR studies in China.

Finally, the University of International Relations (国际关系学院) is not a nationally top tier of IR institution, but it merits mention. Located near the Summer Palace in Beijing, UIR has long had ties with the Ministry of State Security and the affiliated China Institutes for Contemporary International Relations (CICIR) (See discussion in Shambaugh, 2002), although the university's website claims it is under MOE (<http://www.uir.cn/index.php?id=127>). Other Chinese sources say it is linked with the People's Liberation Army General Political Department and trains students in different aspects of military diplomacy, international security and strategic studies, and foreign languages – but this asserted link with the PLA/GPD is doubtful (Wang and Dan, 2008c). This source also claims UIR has 180 faculty members. The school publishes the journal *Dangdai Guoji Guanxi Yanjiu* (当代国际关系研究), formerly entitled *Guoji Guanxi Xueyuan Study Journal* (国际关系学院学报). Given the university's close linkages with CICIR, many of its staff publish in the *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* (现代国际关系). UIR has very limited contacts with foreigners, reflecting its linkages to the state security establishment and international reputation as China's 'spy training academy', although occasionally the university invites foreign scholars for lectures. No foreign students are permitted to enroll in the university. The university's website indicates that it has eight departments: English, International Politics, International Economics, Culture and Communications, Law, Information Science and Technology, Sports and Aesthetics, and Public Management. The Department of International Politics has 11 faculty, but the curriculum offered is unclear.

4.1 Government-affiliated research institutions

In addition to universities, several leading IR 'think tanks' exist in China (mainly in Beijing). These are all government-affiliated research institutes, providing current intelligence assessments and longer policy analyses for different ministries, Communist Party, and military institutions. The Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR), CIIS, and SIIS are the best known and longest established (for elaboration of each, see Glaser and Saunders, 2002; Shambaugh, 2002). In addition, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences has IWEP and eight area studies institutes. The CCP has the Strategic Studies Institute at the Central Party School

(Shambaugh, 2008), as well as an international research department affiliated with the CCP's International Department (Shambaugh, 2007). The Chinese military (People's Liberation Army) also conducts IR-related research at the Academy of Military Sciences, National Defense University, a large number of military academies and staff colleges, and the China Institute of International Strategic Studies and China Foundation for International Strategic Studies (both linked to PLA intelligence) (Gill and Mulvenon, 2002). With the exception of IWEP (which is more theoretical in orientation), all of these institutes mainly conduct policy-related, strategic studies, and area studies research. Theoretical research remains primarily the preserve of university-based scholars.

The quality of CASS institutes is highly uneven. Generally speaking, the eight area studies in CASS (United States, Japan, Asia-Pacific, Europe, Russia and Central Asia, West Asia and Africa, Latin America, and South Asia) continue to have the largest and most comprehensive concentrations of country and regional specialists in China, but the quality across institutes is highly uneven and has been negatively impacted as a result of retirements of senior scholars and the departure of middle-aged scholars to the universities, as well as politics within CASS. CASS has never really politically recovered from the events of 1989, as CASS remains a heavily politicized and doctrinal Marxist institution. The creation of a Marxism Academy (马列学院) in 2007 is symptomatic of the direction of CASS. The higher CASS leadership all comes from Communist Party administrative backgrounds (primarily the CCP propaganda system, of which CASS is still administratively and financially affiliated).

As a result of the intense political atmosphere in CASS, and other factors, working conditions in CASS are not good. Most institutes only require their staff to come to the office one day per week – mainly for political study and administrative meetings. CASS has a demoralized staff, who largely stay at home, travel the country attending meetings (and abroad if they can), and spend their time looking for consulting opportunities. Consequently, many of the 'best and brightest' CASS IR scholars and economists have left the Academy for the academy, i.e. for universities. CASS has tried to prevent these departures, by withholding permission to transfer work units, but many have left nonetheless. Many economists have gone into consulting. Other leading IR scholars – like Wang Jisi, Wang Yizhou, and Niu Jun – have left for Beida. Jin

Canrong went to Renda. And so on. One has the sense that if CASS would permit others to leave, and opportunities presented themselves, the institution would be quickly depleted of intellectual talent.

Nonetheless, the size and breadth of CASS' area studies institutes remains its strength. It is the author's judgment after interacting with all of these eight institutes over the past year that the European Studies Institute, under the robust leadership of Director Zhou Hong and Deputy Director Jiang Shixue, is the cream of the crop at CASS. Its scholarship on Europe is now at a world-class level. The Latin American Studies is also strong although relatively small. But it must be said that all the other area institutes have declined in stature and quality in recent years. The America Institute and the Russian/Eurasian/Eastern Europe Institute are shadows of their former selves. The Asia-Pacific Institute (API) has also declined ever since Zhang Yunling stepped down as director (he was replaced by Zhang Yuyan). CASS' one non-area studies IR institute, IWEP, has also declined over the past year, largely as the result of the transfer of Zhang Yuyan from API. The retirement of long-time director Yu Yongding and the departure of leading IR scholar Wang Yizhou for Beida in 2009 have hit the institute hard. Both were very well regarded domestically and abroad, and they created a real *esprit d'corps* in the institute. This has been badly fractured since their departure, as the new leadership has imposed a strong bureaucratic and more doctrinaire imprint on the institute. Staff morale is poor and many scholars are looking to leave. Even the IWEP journal *World Economics and Politics*, long the leading journal in the field, has begun to decline in quality. And the treatment of visiting foreign scholars is abysmal (the author experienced this first-hand during 2009–10). Even the main CASS library was closed to foreign scholars for six months during 2009–10. All in all, IR research at CASS has been in steady decline for many years (with the exception of European and Latin American studies), and the trend is only accelerating.

The China Institutes of International Relations (CICIR) remains China's premier IR think tank. Attached to the Ministry of State Security and under the leadership of President Cui Liru, CICIR has rebounded strongly over the past decade – recruiting many new staff, opening a new building, and publishing many excellent books. Today it has 380 staff, including 200 researchers. The CICIR journal *Contemporary International Relations* (现代国际关系) is the premier

policy-related contemporary IR journal in the country. CICIR is also extremely well-networked internationally, participating in a wide range of dialogues and exchanges with foreign IR specialists, governments, and think tanks around the world. In reflecting on CICIR's research foci, President Cui Liru observed: 'CICIR always does current affairs (时事) with a policy impact. Area studies have also long been our strength. But, increasingly, we are dealing with transnational and interactive issues—our government increasingly asks us for studies of interactive relationships, such as the United States in Africa, and we are focusing much more on transnational functional issues. So we are also recruiting young people with expertise on issues (问题) and are trying to integrate them together with our regional specialists. Over the next five years, our research priorities will remain three: U.S.-China relations; globalization problems and transnational issues; and regional “hot spot” problems, especially on our periphery' (Interview with CICIR president Cui Liru, 16 July 2010, Beijing).

CIIS, attached to the Foreign Ministry, remains strong but its stature has probably declined somewhat compared to a decade ago. Under its last president, former ambassador Ma Zhengang, CIIS concentrated primarily on current issues and carried out many international exchanges. Unlike CICIR, which concentrates on research and intelligence analysis, CIIS has increasingly assumed a primary role as a 'Track II' exchange mechanism. The analytical depth of its publications seemed to have declined as a result, as the quantity of CIIS activities has had a deleterious impact on the quality of research. The new CIIS president, Qu Xing, was appointed in late-2009 and is the first president to come from an academic rather than ambassadorial background. It remains early, but it will be interesting to see if CIIS begins to regain its previous analytical reputation.

SIIS has always operated a small but high-quality and independent think tank. Physical distance from Beijing has always been an asset for SIIS. So have been its ties with former president Jiang Zemin, former premier Zhu Rongji, and former mayor Wang Daohan. Presently, the current president Yang Jiemian is the younger brother of Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi. As a result of these and other traditional ties, SIIS has always had a 'back channel' to the senior party and state leadership in Beijing. President Yang Jiemian is a dynamic and energetic leader, who is moving to broaden the institute's global exchanges and footprint

(see [Shanghai Institute of International Studies \(2010\)](#)). SIIS has also been recruiting a number of new and younger scholars to its staff – what Yang describes as a ‘brain gain’. SIIS now has 80 full-time researchers. SIIS also offers an independent M.A. degree and a Ph.D. program in collaboration with Shanghai Foreign Studies University and East China Normal University (both leading IR institutions in China). SIIS has six research centers (Institutes for International Strategic Studies; Global Governance Studies; Comparative Economic Studies; Foreign Policy Studies; Data Processing Studies; Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macao Studies). SIIS publishes the respected annual volume *Survey of International Affairs*, as well as *Global Review* (国际展望). All in all, SIIS has a proud past and an even more promising future.

4.2 National associations

China’s IR institutions are networked together in the China National Association of International Studies (中国国际关系学会), or CNAIS.⁵ The association was established on 16 December 1980 and was given official approval with its current name as a legally registered NGO by the Ministry of Civil Affairs on 25 April 2003. As of 2008, CNAIS had 74 participating institutions. Governance includes a standing committee of representatives from 45 institutions, a secretary general, and a deputy secretary general. CNAIS has three principal activities every year: an annual conference (not open to foreigners), a standing committee meeting, and a doctoral student meeting. The secretariat of the association is at CFAU.

In addition to CNAIS, two other national IR associations have been established. On 20 October 2003, Beida initiated the National Higher Education International Politics Research Association (全国高校国际政治研究会), chaired by Beida SIS dean Liang Shoude, who was succeeded by Renmin SIS executive vice-dean Chen Yue. It too holds an annual meeting. In December 2008, Tsinghua University established the Political Science and International Relations Scholarly Network (政治学与国际关系学术共同体). This organization has individual rather than institutional membership and claims to have linkages to the

5 This is the English title the association prefers, although its Chinese title is ‘China International Relations Association’.

International Studies Association. There is also a Chinese Association of Political Science, established in 1980.

5 Net trends in the field

The field of IR studies in China today has developed considerably over the past 30 years. This is evident by any number of indices: number of degree-granting institutions, growth in faculty and students, volume of journal and book publications, quality of research, and interaction with government policy makers (Jakobson and Knox, 2010). The field is well established now. Certain key universities have strengthened their faculties and enriched their course offerings in recent years (most notably Beida, Renda, CFAU, Tsinghua, University of International Relations, Beijing Foreign Studies University, Nankai University, Fudan University, Jilin University, Shanghai Foreign Studies University, East China Normal University, Nanjing University, Xiamen University, and Zhongshan University). Judging from the author's lectures at these and other universities during 2009–10, the quality of the IR undergraduate and graduate student audiences is very impressive: interested, inquisitive, open, generally well informed, and eager to learn. Yet, despite the internet and all the various sources of information available to them about international affairs, these students also frequently evince a rather doctrinaire and government-inspired interpretation of many subjects (particularly those concerning China).

Other universities outside of this 'top tier' have also initiated IR programs in recent years, but the quality among them remains very uneven. Those that have visionary and strong university presidents and deans who are willing to commit resources to strengthening IR departments and schools do much better. Jilin University, Beijing Foreign Studies University, and Jinan University in Guangzhou are examples of those that have moved up the rankings of IR institutions through such efforts. MOE's support for international studies has also been a significant boost for development in many universities, especially the 'keypoint' (重点) schools. A recent development is that MOE is inviting institutions to apply for the status of 'base' (基地) of a certain branch of IR studies. Receiving such a designation provides access to more financial resources and the right to submit their best research through internal (内部) channels to the government. For example, Fudan University's Center for

American Studies, Lanzhou University's Center for Central Asian Studies, Xiamen University's Center for Taiwan Studies, Jilin University's Center for Korean Studies have all qualified for 'base' status, and Peking University's School of International Studies is about to do so in strategic studies.

Research institutes ('think tanks') also continue to occupy an important place in China's IR community. Privileged by ministerial funding and strong links to the central government, party, and military in Beijing (and SIIS in Shanghai), these bodies continue to recruit many of the 'best and brightest' graduates. They also continue to produce the best analyses of IR – still considerably better than the product produced by university-based scholars (in my opinion). Publications of CICIR, CIIS, CISS, SIIS, and CASS are 'must reading' domestically and abroad, while university journals and books lag far behind in analytical quality, timeliness, and policy relevance. This is good news for China's government, party, and military policymakers – as they are the beneficiaries of these products. To be sure, what appears in these institute's open publications (公开发行) is a window into the restricted circulation internal (内部) and classified (保密) analyses done within government channels. While some of these journal articles have a distinct quasi-journalistic or current affairs intelligence quality to them, rather than a scholarly quality, they are nonetheless informative – whereas many university publications are oblique and display a detachment from real-world issues.

As the survey of key IR journals above demonstrated, there is now remarkable and increasing diversity in research subjects evident in China's IR community. Many of these topics, particularly those associated with transnational issues and globalization, would not have registered just a few years ago. While we noted that realist topics, such as US–China relations and international structure, continue to be predominant in China's IR discourse, the journal keyword searches showed a sharp spike in topics associated with Western IR liberalism and constructivism: identity, interdependence, multilateralism, transnationalism, international cooperation and organizations, and global governance. IPE has also shown increasing popularity, particularly and predictably in the wake of the 2008–10 global financial crisis. Overall, perhaps the principal trend in the field has been the distinct *diversification* of topics since the Johnston–Wang study of 2001. As leading IR scholar Wang Yizhou of Peking University observes in his survey of IR studies from 1995–2005,

‘International relations studies in China looks like an old tree—after experiencing some frustrations it is now blooming with many new branches’ (Wang and Yu, 2006, p. 14). But Professor Wang goes on to lament the development of an autonomous identity in Chinese IR studies: ‘We must conclude that China’s international relations studies lack self-consciousness. ... Who are we? ... China’s international relations studies lack rational reflection, normal academic criticism, and a sound disciplinary grounding’ (Wang and Yuan, 2006, p. 6).

This trend toward diversification is encouraging and shows that China’s IR community is expanding, becoming more experimental, and to some extent is increasingly converging with the research foci in the international IR community. But, at the same time, the convergence with Western IR theory and research topics concerns many Chinese IR specialists – who believe that China should not be so reactive to the field abroad but should try to find its own research agenda and develop a ‘Chinese School’ of IR theory. Discussions of a ‘Chinese School’ date back to the late-1980s, as originated largely by Professor Liang Shoude (the then chairman of the International Politics Department at Peking University), and there have been many calls for such subsequently from various quarters (for an excellent review of this discourse, see Zhao and Ni, 2007; Ren, 2008). These Chinese scholars advocate the ‘indigenization’ (本土化) of Chinese IR research, i.e. to ask uniquely Chinese questions and utilize distinctly Chinese philosophical concepts and research approaches, not merely copying Western methods. This reaction is, of course, rooted in a deeper Chinese sense of greatness as a civilization and the frustration of having to interact in a world where the ‘rules of the game’ originate in the West. Says Wang Yizhou (who has been one of the greatest skeptics of the notion of developing a ‘Chinese School’): ‘In theoretical terms we need to develop a new IR methodology and theory—to go beyond realism, liberalism, and constructivism. In the past, we focused mainly on learning and adaptation—in the future we need to come up with our own priorities’ (Interview with Wang Yizhou, 30 January 2010, Beijing). Yan Xuetong of Tsinghua University, a hard realist and proponent of Western quantitative IR methodologies, argues that: ‘I oppose this concept (a Chinese IR School) because those who call for it have already named the baby before the baby is born! They need to focus instead on the content of theory before calling it the Chinese School’ (Interview with Yan Xuetong, 22 January 2010). When

asked about what is specifically unique about Chinese IR theories, scholars often reply that it is the philosophical underpinnings – most notably the concepts of harmony (和谐), ethics (德), and benevolence (王道) – of China’s worldview. While Chinese scholars are grasping for uniqueness, most ‘schools’ of IR theory (e.g. the English School, Copenhagen School, etc.) actually are transnational rather than purely national – thus it is highly questionable whether China will spawn a school of IR studies that has transnational appeal.

The domestic debate about the ‘Chinese School of IR’ is but one dimension of an increasingly diverse discourse inside of Chinese IR circles. Unfortunately, while Western concepts have penetrated deeply into the Chinese domestic discourse, the opposite is not evident. Chinese scholars have little voice or impact on the international IR studies community. China’s *actions* as a country and state certainly do, and more and more global IR scholars are bringing China into their research. But the Chinese domestic discourse remains a highly insular one – cut off from the rest of the world. Part of this relates, of course, to linguistic barriers – but Chinese scholars make no effort whatsoever to publish in English or other foreign language journals and newspapers abroad.

This problem extends even to the global discourse on China’s rise – which increasingly preoccupies global scholarship, foreign policy, and media discourse – where a Chinese voice is conspicuously absent by its silence. What the world mainly gets is propaganda pabulum about concepts like ‘peaceful development’ and ‘harmonious world’ – which are no substitutes for serious intellectual and policy discussion. Only a relatively small handful of China’s IR scholars have been approved by the government to attend international meetings and who speak English with a fluency that enables them to participate on the international conference circuit, and these roughly two dozen individuals dominate China’s presence in international policy and scholarly forums. Unfortunately, they frequently slip into government ‘propaganda speak’ and fail to offer fresh insights into the problem at hand. They frequently lack intellectual depth or sophistication. They are also frequently put into the position, unfairly, of having to speak for ‘China’ and find themselves on the defensive and trying to explain Chinese government positions that they do not fully understand and often disagree with. Moreover, even these individuals rarely contribute *in print* to the Western or global discourse about China and international affairs. For example, one 2007 study noted that

55 foreign scholars published articles in Chinese IR journals during 2006, but not a *single* mainland China-based scholar published a *single* article in four of the main Western IR journals (*International Organization*, *International Security*, *Foreign Affairs*, *European Journal of International Relations*) (Editorial Group, 2008, p. 71)! While some scholars like Wang Jisi, Yan Xuetong, Zhu Feng, Shen Dingli, Wu Xinbo, and Zha Daojiong do occasionally publish newspaper ‘op-eds’ in the foreign media, they rarely publish in peer-reviewed journals and book publishers.

As a result of these factors, China’s voice is not heard in global IR circles. However, they *are heard* domestically in China – as there is a huge demand for media (TV, radio, and print) commentary on international affairs. Many of the same 25–30 individuals who travel the world to conferences double as media pundits and spend an enormous amount of their time in television studios, answering cell phone inquiries from journalists (often several times per day), writing op-eds for Chinese newspapers, etc. Some are also active in politics (both in Communist Party and in other ‘democratic’ parties). I would observe, though, that time spent on these activities is time not spent on serious thinking or research. Precious few of these individuals have actually produced lengthy and original scholarship in recent years.

In sum, IR studies in China have come a long way – but still have a long way to go. The quantity is high but the quality remains relatively low. In terms of quantity, IR publications in China dwarf any single other Asian or European country. Despite qualitative progress over time (notably a decline of Marxist–Leninist analyses), the overall quality of the vast majority of Chinese IR writing remains largely descriptive, not very theoretical, not particularly deep or sophisticated, not very disciplined or well organized. Of course, there are exceptions to these rather critical generalizations, but having read a great deal of this literature (in books and journals) my conclusion is that it continues to lack intellectual sophistication. In no way does it compare qualitatively with IR studies in the United States and still lags some way behind the quality found in the UK, Australia, South Korea, Singapore, Japan, Germany, Scandinavia, and Canada – but generally better than that found in India or Russia and anywhere in Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, or Southeast Asia.

What can improve the state of the field over the next decade plus? Five factors may be important.

The single greatest boost would be if large numbers of foreign-trained IR scholars returned to China from abroad (not likely but possible). Most of the mainland Chinese scholars who have received doctorates in political science and IR abroad over the past 30 years remain in academic and other professional positions around the world. Beida, Fudan, and Tsinghua have begun to selectively recruit some of these individuals to return in recent years, but the overall numbers remain low. I speak here of individuals who have earned a Ph.D. abroad, *not* those who have gone abroad on one or another type of visiting scholar exchange program. Today, *most* IR faculty in universities and think tanks have spent some period of time (up to a year, sometimes more) abroad. These individuals have foreign exposure, but they lack foreign *training*. All too often they are simply left alone by their host institutions – they may carry out their research projects (many do not) but they are exposed to little, if any, intellectual rigor while abroad.

A second impact is the growing trend toward meritocratic promotion assessment in Chinese universities. Faculty – especially younger ones – are increasingly being subjected to benchmark criteria of publications in order to be promoted up the academic ladder. Even IR faculty in institutions such as Xiamen University and Qingdao University are now subject to such criteria (although it is unclear how rigorous they are or how well they are enforced). While some Chinese IR journals are beginning to introduce blind peer reviewing, it remains an unpredictable process where connections (关系) with the editor count for more than the review. But there is no serious encouragement to publish abroad, particularly in peer-reviewed disciplinary journals (many scholars are afraid to submit articles to Western peer-reviewed journals for fear of being rejected and the ‘losing face’). As noted above, not a single China-based scholar published in the main Western IR journals in 2006–07. One related positive development is the post-2007 publication of the *Chinese Journal of International Politics*, under the editorship of Professor Yan Xuetong at Tsinghua University and published quarterly in English by Oxford University Press, which is intended to bring the Chinese IR voice to the world (<http://cjip.oxfordjournals.org/?code=cjip&.cgifields=code>).

A third factor is related to publishing. Fortunately, IR students in China today have exposure to a wide range of published books and

journals, even if the overall quality – as noted above – is not particularly deep. It may not be deep but it is broad. That is, students are exposed to textbooks and specialized studies to a wide range of Western theories and works in translation. Information garnered over the internet from abroad increases what is available domestically exponentially. These sources are inevitably having an intellectual impact on the younger generation.

A fourth factor is the role that IR scholars play as policy advisors to government institutions. This has been increasing in recent years. It takes place both in an *ad hoc* as well as in a systematic fashion. The Foreign Ministry Policy Planning Department convenes biweekly sessions with scholars, and the ministry established a Foreign Policy Advisory Council in 2004 and expanded it in 2008 to include the leading IR scholars Cui Liru (CICIR), Qin Yaqing (CFAU), Wang Jisi (Beida), Wu Jianmin (former ambassador and former president of CFAU), Yang Jiemian (SIIS), Zhang Yuyan (CASS/IWEP), and 12 retired ambassadors (see description of this group in Jakobson and Knox, 2010, p. 36). The more ‘real world’ policy exposure Chinese IR scholars have, the better. Beijing University’s School of International Studies journal *Guoji Zhengzhi Yanjiu* recently carried a symposium of articles on the interaction of scholarly and policy communities in Chinese IR.

A fifth factor has to do with pedagogy in the classroom. To date, Chinese students of IR – as in virtually all fields – are still largely taught in the traditional fashion of lectures and examinations. Lectures are intended to transmit orthodoxy to the student rather than to build critical skills, while examinations are largely based on prescribed questions and answers rather than essay-based modalities. Critical thinking is not encouraged or rewarded. Faculty infrequently assign research papers and hardly ever use other teaching formats such as group role simulation, forecasting, or oral argument. PISA attempted to contribute to changing this by convening two-week intensive workshops in China during 2006–07 on ‘Active Learning in International Affairs’. Unless teaching and learning methodologies evolve and include Socratic methods that emphasize critical thinking, the evolution of the field will be intellectually constricted. The lack of critical thinking is also a major constraint on developing the field among faculty, as there is a cultural predisposition against criticizing people by name or specifically for their ideas. Chinese academe generally lacks such analytical toughness and critical thought –

which retard the development of the social sciences (including IR studies). Chinese scholars are aware of this weakness, but it is deeply culturally rooted and difficult to change (see, for example, the discussion in [Editorial Group, 2008](#), pp. 77–78).

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