

No-Constructivists' Land: International Relations in Italy in the 1990s



INTRODUCTION

THERE IS ONE COUNTRY IN EUROPE WHERE CONSTRUCTIVISM HAS NEVER TAKEN ROOT: ITALY. Although Constructivism in its various forms has been the most popular theoretical approach on the Continent, the Italian peninsula has remained surprisingly immune to this “epidemic”. This situation is even more interesting if we take a closer look at the Italian International Relations (IR) literature only to discover a certain predilection for the classics and for multi-disciplinary philosophically-embedded theory. What then is the reality of Italian IR? What are its main features and the reasons underlying them?

In this article, we investigate IR theory in the peninsula of the Continental IR archipelago that has been the most successful in keeping secret its vices and virtues. We thus wish to contribute to the larger debates on Continental European IR (Jørgensen 2000) from a national perspective and to the European challenge to the hegemonic role of American theory in the discipline.¹

We claim that in a large part of Europe IR communities benefited from the political and academic change triggered by the end of the Cold War to reopen

theoretical debates that were frozen in time and provided the discipline in their respective countries with more strength and visibility. In Italy, however, this opportunity seems to have been lost. No significant theoretical shift in the discipline has taken place. Italian scholars have failed to make themselves more visible in public debates in Italy and to participate more fully in theoretical mainstream debates at the international level.

We suggest that the puzzle of the post-Cold War “missed opportunity” calls for an account that goes beyond the traditional purely “external” explanation of IR developments in a given community, and that also draws on the cultural-institutional context, namely, on (i) the organisational characteristics of the research environment (*i.e.* mainly the university system), (ii) the habits and attitudes of interaction among national professionals and between them and the external market, and (iii) the political culture of the country.

It is therefore our aim to provide an insight into the realm of IR in Italy by means of both analysing the characteristics of the literature produced, and describing the socio-intellectual environment in which research is conducted.² We

claim that the two aspects are strongly interrelated and are at the same time both significantly grounded in the Italian context.

We show that Italian IR tends to produce few efforts at “theory-building” and more efforts at “puzzle-solving”, that some recent theoretical developments never reached the peninsula and that Italian IR suffers from a substantial detachment from broader IR trends in terms of both “imports” and — far more — in terms of “exports” of literature. We claim these characteristics, albeit somewhat common to other Continental European countries, involve reasons that are specifically Italian. More specifically, we find that IR in Italy is weak “at home” in the first place, both numerically (with few academic positions to allow a vibrant debate), and organisationally (with insufficient interaction among scholars in the field). As a consequence, Italian IR also suffers from modest research funding from Italian and international sources. The limited size and funding are clearly linked to the discipline’s weak position in the academic context — the environment in which IR is mostly produced. To gain its place in academia, IR first had to fight the battle of Italian Political Science at large against the dominance of historicism on Italian intellectual life and the highly ideological character of the latter. Subsequently, it has fought to draw attention to international affairs in a country that for historical (the absence of a recent and at least partly successful “imperial” past) and structural (Cold War constraints on foreign policy) reasons was not particularly interested in international politics.

The article has two main chapters and a short conclusion. Chapter One deals with the chief characteristics of current IR theoretical production in this country

(the analysis is limited to works appearing in the 1990s),³ its main themes, theoretical referents and some of the central arguments. It does so by first sketching the main themes and substantive issues of research, then analysing the main positions *vis-à-vis* some of the main schools of thought and approaches in IR, and the position of Italian IR against the broader IR community. The latter, in terms of both theories/approaches imported and the presence of Italian literature in international IR Journals or IR papers at international conferences. It should be underlined that we focus on IR literature that has a specific theoretical aim either in the sense of producing theory, deliberately applying theory to case studies with a view to developing and/or testing theory, or introducing foreign theoretical literature in the Italian debate. This choice implies neglecting the wide branch of IR literature that deals with geographical area studies and policy analysis. Such studies may well use theoretical concepts, but do not aim to contribute to developing theory. Rather, they provide policy analyses that could be useful for policy-makers and international practitioners. This type of research is mainly produced in the context of private research institutes. The reason for neglecting this branch of literature (wider and more diversified than the theoretical one) has nothing to do with our judgement on the quality of these studies: it instead reflects a desire to isolate what we believe is a distinct area of investigation — the theoretical one — far less known at home and especially abroad. The only exception to this academic focus is a brief description of a loose set of studies usually referred to as “new geopolitical studies”, not because they are theoretically informed but because they give an idea of the cultural climate seen in

NO-CONSTRUC-
TIVISTS’ LAND:
INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS IN
ITALY IN THE
1990S

the 1990s, and indirectly confirm the problematic features of IR.

With the aim of offering the reader an introduction to the social context in which IR research occurs in Italy, and on the assumption that the characteristics of the socio-intellectual environment in which research is done eventually influence the outcome, Chapter Two introduces to the academic position of the discipline of IR, the pattern of interaction amongst domestic scholars and between them, and the external community and domestic factors that influenced the current shape of the country's IR production. Finally, the concluding section sums up the main arguments and looks at the potential for development in the field.

SONIA
LUCARELLI
AND
ROBERTO
MENOTTI

THE ITALIAN LITERATURE: CHARACTERISTICS AND PUZZLES

THERE ARE MANY WAYS OF PROVIDING AN OVERVIEW OF IR LITERATURE IN ITALY IN THE 1990S. We chose to provide a description of the state of the art in terms of the most recurring issues under investigation, some of the main theoretical arguments developed by Italian scholars, and the degree of interaction between Italian IR and the mainstream debate.

It should first be clarified that this literature presentation seeks to identify themes, approaches and methods more than authors, and therefore does not account for the work of every scholar working in the field of IR in Italy. Our data are drawn from a variety of sources: direct observations of books, articles on Italian reviews and on a relevant selection of foreign specialised journals; a questionnaire we initially submitted to most Italian and some foreign scholars in the field; and, as far as bibliographical

research is concerned, a direct request to most authors mentioned here for a list of their publications with theoretical contributions.

THEMES AND SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

One way of analysing the literature and its orientation is to identify the key substantive IR themes studied by Italian scholars. The most common themes include:

- EVOLUTION OF THE POST-COLD WAR INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM. Here, specific theoretical hypotheses for conceptualising the system are scrutinised, such as a new balance of power, unipolarity (Colombo 1995; 1996), variants of the "Clash of civilisations" (Menotti 1994; 1995; Ragionieri 1996; Fossati 1998a). Less studies deal with the related theme of long-term historical trends (the *long durèe*) and their interpretation (Bonanate, Armao and Tuccari 1997; Santoro 1998).⁴ A significant portion of this type of literature is of the "review" type, yet it also contains original reflections and contributions.

- NEW CONCEPTIONS AND MEANINGS OF INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AND CONFLICT (Cerutti and Ragionieri 1990; Stocchetti 1993; Ragionieri 1994; Portinaro 1996; Cerutti and D'Andrea 2001) are often related to the effects of globalisation and/or fragmentation and the evolving distribution of power (Jean 1995; Santoro 1995a). Conflict analysis or "war" as such are an important sub-field (Armao 1991; 1994; 1999; Bozzo and Simon-Belli 1997; 2000a; 2000b; Bonanate 1998; Fossati 1998b), that is also increasingly incorporating conflict management, peace-keeping and more generally "peace-support" issues (Cappelli 1999; Gori 1999; Lucarelli 1999; Andreatta 2000). This field used to be more precisely defined as "strategic studies", but is now a less clearly circumscribed area with the inclusion of

issues of identity, non-state security risks and threats, such as terrorism (Bonanate 1994b; Gori 1996b) or Mafia (Armao 2000). There are also direct links to more policy-oriented analyses like those conducted primarily by independent research centres (Bonvicini *et al.* 1998). Work on public opinion and security policy has been conducted by Isernia (1996).

- **IDENTITY** is a recent yet successful area of study in which some scholars from other disciplines have made a contribution to IR theoretical studies (Cerutti 1993b; 1993c; Cerutti and D'Andrea 2000; Cerutti and Ragionieri 2001; see also Donatucci 2000). This could clearly become the core around which an Italian approach to Constructivism could develop.

- **DEMOCRACY** as a variable (independent or intervening) in determining foreign policy and the outcome of state interaction (Bonanate 1994a; 1996a; 1996b; Papisca 1995; Panebianco 1997), but also as the aim of foreign policy. Work on democratisation that even included the role of external actors in democratisation is much more developed by comparativists (Bartole and Grilli di Cortona 1998; Morlino 1998), but is also attracting the attention of sole internationalists. Bonanate (2000), for instance, published a book of democratic transitions in the 1989-1999 period, while Ragionieri (2001; 2002) has worked extensively on the meaning and reality of democracy in the Middle East.

- **ETHICS AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**, especially associated with Bonanate (who connects this "horizontal" theme or approach with key theoretical concepts such as anarchy, order, conflict, war and peace, evolution of the state; 1992; 1993) and Papisca (1995); ethical aspects of international relations have also been discussed by Cerutti (1993a) and Toscano (2000).

- **(FORMAL) INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS**, sometimes connected with broader trends toward institution-building (Attinà and Longo 1996; Colombo and Lanzalaco 1998) ranging from existing international regimes (Clementi 1994; Fossati 1997) to international institutions/organisations (Clementi 2000) or to the analysis of the impact of institutional membership on member-states' behaviour (Lucarelli 1997; 2000).

- **EUROPEAN INTEGRATION**. Studies on various aspects of the European integration process are now appearing in several fields.⁵ Among the "IR people", those who have worked on European Union (EU) issues definitely include Attinà (1992; 1998; 2000), Longo (1995), Mascia (1996), Bardi (1997; Bardi and Ignazi 1999), and Natalicchi (1998; 1999). Although the degree of attention to European issues compared to other typical state-focused issues of Political Science is still deemed insufficient (Giuliani and Radaelli 1999) and is clearly of recent interest, we believe this area can be regarded as particularly promising for the development of inter/multi-disciplinary research projects that finally overcome the internal-external divide, still so clear in Italy. In fact, this field of study is today attracting the attention of economists, lawyers, sociologists, political philosophers, and political scientists.

- **GLOBALISATION, FRAGMENTATION AND FORMS OF GLOBAL GOVERNANCE**. The relationship between globalisation and regional integration (especially the latter) is mostly researched by Telò (2001) who, however, has not worked in Italy for many years. Other studies on the political aspects of globalisation are being published (Parsi 1997; 1998; Loretoni 2000; D'Andrea 2001) or are under preparation. There is work on inter-

SONIA
LUCARELLI
AND
ROBERTO
MENOTTI

national-global governance and the possible evolution of institutional mechanisms (Caffarena 1998a), both in a “globalistic” WOMP (World Order Models Project)-like perspective (Archibugi 1992; 1993; 1995; see also Papisca 1995), or in a critical perspective (Zolo 1995; 1998). Several works also examine the post-Cold War international order (Bonanate 1995; Fossati 1999a). Another branch of studies on governance forms has concentrated on federalism relative to the European integration process (Zagrebelsky 1994; Bardi 1997; Loretoni 1998).

• NATIONAL INTEREST AND THE “NEW GEOPOLITICS”. The post-1989 years saw growing interest in the traditional concept of the “national interest” and renewed attention to geopolitics. These issues have mainly been treated with little use of theoretical tools, with the exception of *e.g.* works by Santoro (1995a; 1995b; 1998; 1999) and Portinaro (1996). For other theoretically informed analyses of Italian foreign policy, see Bozzo (1998), Fossati (1999b) and Coralluzzo (2000).

On the other end of the spectrum, the journal *Limes — Rivista italiana di geopolitica* (founded in 1993) has managed to become an editorial success proposing policy analyses allegedly a-theoretical in nature and constructed around a relatively unclear and open concept of geopolitics, used as an attractive label rather than a rigorous conceptual device consistently applied by the review.⁶ A peculiar and contradictory element is that, on one hand, proponents of this brand of “geopolitical” analysis frequently argue that political events should be observed “on their own merit” (thus without wearing any theoretical straight-jacket), on the other hand their “geopolitical” analyses and prescriptions are strongly biased in favour of a competitive, conflictual, and broadly Realist view of international relations. Similarly, the

“geopolitics” associated with Jean (1995) tends to have policy-analysis as its main goal — therefore leaving theoretical choices quite far away in the background — but at the same time describes Realism as the only reliable framework for analysis.

Next to the previous substantive issues, a few studies discuss paradigms or review a given cluster of theoretical approaches. This is the case, for instance, of Cesa’s (1995b) long article on the theories of alliances. Debate on paradigms or a direct contribution to the IR Great Debates is a rare occurrence and reveals striking “holes” to be investigated in the next section.

Even at first glimpse, it is thus clear that several issues finding fertile ground in recent years for theoretical discussion in the Anglo-Saxon world have not been a matter of great concern in Italy. This can be said, for example, of the notion of “co-operation under anarchy”, general game theory (with the minor exception of Lucarelli 1992) and its ramifications, “offence-defence theory”, relative *versus* absolute gains, and, most of all, the Rationalism-Reflectivism pistemological debate.

FEATURES AND TRENDS

Three general criteria may be useful to help locate Italian IR literature in relation to the discipline as a whole:

- a) its level of abstractness;
- b) its position *vis-à-vis* certain major schools of thought and/or approaches; and
- c) its relationship with the broader IR community, in terms of both imported theories/approaches and the presence of Italian literature in international IR Journals or IR international conference panels.

The Level of Abstractness

The first criterion proposed to describe the IR theoretical literature is to

identify the level of abstractness of the analyses and studies by Italian scholars. To this end, we will adopt the categorisation proposed by Leggold (1998:43-62). He argues that 'there appear to be four major groups of literatures and professional activities in the field [of IR]:' general theory, issue-oriented puzzles, case-oriented explanations, policy-making. He further explains that general theory 'aims to subsume under a coherent explanation a broad array of empirical phenomena; it is typically not attached to specific categories of issues, time periods, or geographic regions' (1998:47). The second group analyses 'particular classes of puzzles that are tied to specific categories of issues, temporal domains, and spatial domains' (1998:48). CASE-ORIENTED EXPLANATIONS offer generalisations derived from case studies, although the focus is on the specific event/case rather than on the theoretical generalisation based on it. The last type of literature, labelled POLICY-MAKING, looks even more directly at a particular POLICY problem, *i.e.* decision-making issues. The former two groups belong to the broad category of THEORY-BUILDING, while the last two are within the category POLICY APPLICATIONS.

Most studies on international issues are produced by study centres in Italy, and they display a strong tendency to focus on "policy-making" or — less frequently — "case-oriented explanations". Both "issue-oriented puzzles" and "general theory" tend to be confined to academic departments that are seriously constrained by limited funding and a lack of a "critical mass".

Within the broad category of theory-building, a review of the theoretical literature, especially of the "classics" of grand theories is very common. Less frequent are issue-oriented puzzles and attempts at theory-building.

A recurring approach is to identify a specific puzzle and link the analysis of the puzzle to a chosen theoretical framework. The primary goal is not to refine or modify the theoretical framework, but to use it as an interpretative tool. This is more than a legitimate use of theory but, in "theory building" terms, these studies tend to have a limited genuinely theoretical scope because the efforts focus on the puzzle itself as a substantive issue or on the empirical cases selected to solve it. For instance, Panebianco (1997) argued very persuasively that democratic governance within states alters the way in which they conduct their external relations; however, he did not go so far as to explicitly promulgate a modified version of Realism or Liberalism (the only theoretical approaches he deemed relevant in terms of explanatory power). Instead, he called for a combination of both to explain and understand the puzzle he set out to solve (democratic responses to the dual pressure of the anarchical international system and domestically-driven interests).

There are indeed cases in which theory-building is attempted, but these are more rare and represent a marginal component of the overall work of each scholar. Among exceptions here are contributions as diverse as the "internal critique" of Neorealism set out by Bozzo (1999), the updated version of geopolitics advocated by Santoro (1998) (largely as an open challenge to the established parameters for evaluating theory), and the framework developed by Bonanate (1992; 1994a; 2000) to address the possible evolution of the state and international anarchy in some of his works. A recent work deserving specific mention is Toscano's (2000) study of ethics and international relations.⁷

However, the prevailing trend is to refrain from systematic theory-building

SONIA
LUCARELLI
AND
ROBERTO
MENOTTI

in favour of much more specific concerns or with a strong focus on cases. Thus, case-oriented explanations are more numerous than issue-oriented puzzles. These attempts to provide explanations to specific cases are closer to foreign policy analysis than to theory-building, as in Santoro's study of Italian foreign policy (1991) which adopts a broad geopolitical framework and a more detailed decision-making model. In other instances, even when the subject matter appears to be at a high level of abstractness (or theory-intensive), as in the case of Jean's "geopolitics" (Jean 1995; Savona and Jean 1995), the ultimate intent is clearly policy-oriented rather than centred on theory-building *per se*.

In order to support our point here, we looked at the Italian reviews that host IR articles and feature theoretical contributions. Reviews fall within three large categories: (i) journals of Political Science (not specifically devoted to IR) with

specifically theoretical interests — *Teoria Politica*, *Quaderni di Scienza Politica*, *Rivista Italiana di Scienza Politica*; (ii) journals of Political Science (also not specifically devoted to IR) which at times publish articles with a theoretical approach (including those in the IR field) — *Il Mulino*; (iii) journals of IR which at times publish articles with a theoretical approach — *Relazioni internazionali*, *Politica internazionale*, *The International Spectator*, *Europa Europe*. The criteria we have adopted lead us to exclude those IR journals that explicitly lack any interest in theoretical contributions — such as *Limes*. The choice to take into consideration journals, instead of other kinds of publications, in search of an empirical backing for our ideas is due to the conviction that, as argued by Waever (1998:697), 'journals are the most direct measure of the discipline itself. The sociology of science ... has pointed to journals as the crucial institution of modern sciences.'

TABLE I: THEORETICAL AND NON-THEORETICAL IR ARTICLES IN MAJOR ITALIAN JOURNALS, 1998-2000¹

REVIEW	TOTAL NO. OF ARTICLES	NO. OF IR ARTICLES (% OF TOTAL) ²	NO. OF THEORETICALLY-INFORMED IR ARTICLES (% OF ALL ARTICLES; AND % OF ALL IR ARTICLES)	NO. OF IR ARTICLES BY FOREIGN AUTHORS (% OF ALL IR ARTICLES)
Europa Europe	204	193 (94.6%)	4 (1.9%; 2.1%)	44 (22.7%)
Il Mulino	275	46 (16.7%)	5 (1.8%; 10.9%)	5 (10.9%)
Politica Internazionale	215	194 (90.2%)	6 (2.8%; 3%)	37 (19%)
Quaderni di Scienza Politica	40	9 (22.5%)	9 (22.5%; 100%)	1 (2.5%)
Relazioni Internazionali	97	95 (98%)	0	35 (36.8%)
Rivista Italiana di Scienza Politica	29	5 (17.2%)	5 (17.2%; 100%)	1 (20%)
Teoria Politica	95	17 (17.9%)	17 (17.9%; 100%)	0
The International Spectator	116	113 (97.4%)	0	69 (59.4%)

NOTES ON TABLE I: 1) ONLY ARTICLES ARE INCLUDED (NOT BOOK REVIEWS OR THE LIKE). 2) THE CATEGORY IS LARGE AND INCLUDES STUDIES FROM EU ISSUES TO THE ANALYSIS OF ORDER IN WORLD POLITICS.

The data refer to the 1998-2000 period and only include articles. The table presents the total number of articles, the share of IR articles out of the total, the number of IR articles (which correspond to the vast category of “theory-building” mentioned above), the number of those theory-building articles written by non-Italian authors. The results are found in Table 1.

Position as Regards the Main Schools of Thought or Approaches

A second useful indicator of the “location” of Italian IR works is the relationship of the Italian production with respect to the main recognised schools of thought in IR. The “Realism *versus* Liberalism” divide remains a useful starting point. In this perspective, there is a hard core of IR literature in Italy that can clearly be placed in the Realist camp. More precisely, a classical Realist school is well established, while only few authors lean toward the Neorealist version of the Realist approach. It is less clear that there is a comparable hard core that fits easily into the Liberal camp: it is not so much that the Realist production is quantitatively predominant but rather that the “non-Realist” or openly “anti-Realist” production is quite diverse and does not clearly gather around a coherent body of works. There is, for instance, the Liberal approach of Bonanate (1992; 1994a) and the “dissenter” Santoro (1998; 1999) — as aptly labelled in a recent survey of Italian IR (Friedrichs 2001).

Works falling largely within the classical Realist tradition include authors such as Cesa, Portinaro, Bozzo, Colombo (1999), and only to some extent Panebianco (leaning towards a Realist-Liberal synthesis) and Santoro (leaning decisively towards a rejection of established theoretical approaches). Cesa (1992; 1999) is probably closer to a full-

fledged defence of traditional Realism, which he regards as by far the richest tradition, being more sophisticated than critics and even some proponents often believe. The same can be said of Portinaro (1993; 1999).

Authors like Bozzo and Colombo do not feel entirely comfortable with Morgenthau’s version of Realism and are not constrained by its confines, yet they do adopt the basic concepts and logic of classical Realism in most of their analyses. Bozzo (1999) advocated a “rethinking” of Realism to incorporate not so much Waltz’s (1979) version of neorealism but the post-Waltz “structural realism” set out in particular by Buzan, Jones and Little (1993), as well as Snyder’s (1997) contribution to the analysis of choices and outcomes beyond systemic constraints.

Colombo discussed in a 1994 book on the future of the Euro-American alliance the central role of shared external threats in encouraging inter-state co-operation. More broadly, Colombo argued for an approach to alliances and co-operation that is based on systemic factors as the key determinants of state behaviour. His thesis openly challenged institutionalist analyses and the entire theoretical construct of the “democratic peace”. Even so, Colombo’s embrace of Neorealism is never wholehearted, as also appears from his other works (Colombo 1997).

Other works belonging to this wide literature can be labelled “modified Realism”, especially to the extent that some authors — including Panebianco (1997) and Parsi (1998) — deliberately challenge or refine significant items in the classical Realist “toolbox”, although they still consider Realism as a necessary theoretical framework or at least an irreplaceable starting point for theoretical analysis.

SONIA
LUCARELLI
AND
ROBERTO
MENOTTI

Jean and Santoro reflect two different outcomes of a common fascination with geopolitics: the former views geopolitics as a flexible analytical tool allowing for the incorporation of “spatial” but also technological, “geo-economic” and identity-related factors into an essentially traditional Realist framework (Jean 1995); the latter veers away from (Anglo-Saxon) IR and develops a theory based on geographical metaphors that only shares certain aspects with Realism. Santoro’s (1998) approach is indeed hard to label, except by noting what it stands against: it is anti-Liberalist and anti-institutionalist, critical of approaches based on economic analogies and anti-globalist. The latter aspect is shown by his insistence on identity as a fundamental category of political and social analysis. Interestingly, this approach also contains (implicit) Constructivist elements, for instance in the definition of the concept of “the West” as primarily a discourse (Santoro 1998:25). Santoro ultimately dismissed most established theoretical and interpretative categories as just the offspring of a United States-centred ideology, which in turn is the result of unique historical conditions that no longer apply.

If we set to one side the Realism-Liberalism divide to look at works reporting on, or taking part in, the recent metatheoretical debate (Rationalism *vs.* Reflectivism), we discover that the debate that filled the pages of most leading international IR journals has barely reached the Italian peninsula. Not only are so-called Reflectivist approaches not extensively applied, but no Italian scholar has actually taken an active part in such a debate. It is true that Italians did not make a distinctive contribution to the neo-neo debate of the mid-1980s to mid-1990s (Neorealism-Neoliberal institutionalism), as can be gathered by the absence of typical rational-choice themes

from the list in the previous section, but this was less striking since the type of issues under concern in that case were removed from the historical-philosophical approach of a significant number of Italian scholars. What is more striking is the nearly complete absence of Constructivist works so popular in Continental Europe and possibly quintessential to a Continental European theoretical sensibility.⁸

A further characteristic of Italian IR is that the strongest theoretical links and references for Italian scholars are to classical authors. A recurring feature of Italian IR production appears to be the analysis of a concept, as defined by a well-known author or school of thought, which introduces a broader discussion of the concept itself. This is the case, for example, of Kant’s political thought (Bonanate 1992; 1994a; 2000), Schmitt’s notion of a “world civil war” (Portinaro 1996), or Mackinder’s geopolitical view of the world (Santoro 1998). The same is true of analyses done by Cesa (1990; 1994; 1995a) of the thinking of major Realists (both in the classical and “neo” traditions). In this type of works, the author — or school of thought — under consideration typically belongs to the classical tradition, which reinforces the close links to philosophical studies and the analysis of political thought, sometimes to the detriment of contemporary authors. Most Italian scholars would probably subscribe to the argument advanced by Thompson where he equates ‘the most recent propositions by relative newcomers to the study of international relations with the ideas of major thinkers whose writings have survived the test of time seems questionable on its face.’ Thompson (1996:xii-xiii) then concluded that (only) traditional schools of thought and approaches ‘constitute a coherent body of thought that has both empirical and logical validity.’ We have not tested our pro-

position by submitting this quote to Italian theorists, but the theoretical orientation of most existing literature seems to point in this direction.

University textbooks and the pattern of books translated from foreign languages seem to confirm this image (albeit not without exceptions). University textbooks are especially revealing as they are designed for students or non-specialists and should therefore be characterised by an effort to provide as broad and comprehensive a picture as possible. Instead, they frequently concentrate on the Realism/Neorealism/Liberalism debate and only briefly touch on other “alternatives to Realism” or more specific sub-fields which are or have been central to the discipline (Panbianco 1992b; Bonanate 1994a; Scartezzini and Rosa 1994).

In addition to the “Classical mood” puzzle, there is a further puzzle concerning the somewhat paradoxical tendency to dismiss most Italian classics: the re-discovery of some of these authors often takes place outside of Italy while at the same time we observe, in countries like France and Germany, the emergence of heated debates on national traditions such as those of Raymond Aron and Jürgen Habermas. We claim that both patterns (the preference for the Classics and little interest in Italian classical political authors) can be explained by looking at the Italian cultural/institutional context; thus, Italy only partly shares this feature with other Continental European countries.

Italian Scholars and the International IR Community

Looking now at the relationship between the Italian IR community — and its products — and the broader IR community, a certain apartness of the former can be detected in various ways.

The first way of looking at this relationship is by looking at the “imports” side of the coin. One aspect, a strong chronological gap between relevant publications in foreign languages and their translation into Italian, clearly emerges if we look when major works were translated and published in Italy. Robert Gilpin’s *War and Change in International Politics* originally published in 1981 appeared in Italy in 1989, Kenneth Waltz’s *Theory of International Politics* of 1979 was published in Italian in 1987 and *Man, the State and War* of 1959 in 1998, Hanns Morgenthau’s *Politics Among Nations*, first printed in 1948, was translated as late as 1997. Exceptions to this rule exist: for instance, Bertrand Badie’s *La fin des territoires* (1995) and *Un monde sans souveraineté* (1999) were timely translated (1996 and 2000, respectively), as was Ulrich Beck’s *Was is Globalisierung? Irrtümer des Globalismus* (1997, published in Italy in 1999) — although we wonder to what extent the latter is regarded as an IR scholar by the Italian IR community. In a country where most people continue to have problems using a foreign idiom, the lag in the appearance of major IR works is relevant.

As for other indicators of the timely reception in Italy of innovative or provocative international contributions (through direct reference/quotations, book reviews, other articles specifically commenting or refining a given foreign contribution), the evidence is mixed: some book reviews are published in a punctual fashion, particularly by the journal *Teoria Politica*, and book bibliographies show a certain attention to developments in the discipline. However, in general the flow of foreign works is selective, somewhat arbitrary and incomplete. It is also relatively slow in the sense that only few theoretical contributions are fully “digested” in real time

NO-CONSTRUCTIVISTS' LAND: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS IN ITALY IN THE 1990S

SONIA
LUCARELLI
AND
ROBERTO
MENOTTI

to promptly become an integral part of the current debate in Italy. As already mentioned, the most notable example is that of the Constructivist and Reflectivist literature which has hardly been incorporated within the existing Italian IR mainstream to the same degree as in other European countries (the Scandinavian area and Germany in particular). There is evidence of a significant — often indirect — influence on some Italian works (which may also grow over time due to a generational effect), but the fact remains that the impact on the bulk of recent Italian works has so far been very limited. Given the simple fact that the “language barrier” is still a major factor inhibiting the broad circulation of international works, especially among undergraduate students, the limited reception of foreign literature in Italian works tends to be eventually transmitted to new generations of students who are usually assigned only texts written in Italian for their exams.

We now turn to the “exports” side of the relationship between the Italian and broader IR communities. We do so by looking at two ways in which the Italian IR community could export its theories and ideas: (i) by taking an active part in international conferences, and (ii) by publishing articles in international journals.

As for the first indicator, on average the number of IR scholars participating in international IR conferences, such as the those regularly organised by the British International Studies Association (BISA), the International Studies Association (ISA), the European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR), and the latter jointly with the ISA⁹ is very low — in any case much lower than the Italian demographic and cultural “potential” would lead one to expect. For example, at the First Pan-European Conference in

International Relations (Heidelberg, 16-20 September 1992), only one panel convenor out of 31 was Italian, and only two out of 240 papers presented were written by Italians based in Italy. At the Third Pan-European International Relations Conference and Joint Meeting with the International Studies Association (Vienna, 16-19 September 1998), two panel convenors out of 140 were Italians based in Italy, and only 11 papers out of 922 were written by Italians based in Italy.

The second indicator also reveals that the level of interaction of the Italian IR community with the broader IR community is lower than one might expect — especially given the nature of the discipline. In fact, the number of articles published in IR reviews and written by Italians is very low. Overall, access to some of the key IR journals in English is indeed extremely limited: Italian authors (meaning those working in Italy on a regular basis) are virtually absent from those publications that can be regarded as the core periodicals of the discipline. This can easily be confirmed by scanning the index of some key IR journals between 1990 and 2000 (see Table 2): looking at 17 journals over 10 years we found just 12 articles written by Italians working in Italy, three of them not dealing with IR and two of the remaining nine having no theoretical content.

Since we believe that a dynamic and influential national IR community can only exist within the broader (and highly competitive) context of the “international community of scholars”, this basic quantitative finding is very significant.¹⁰

Therefore, looking at the Italian literature from the viewpoint of the broader IR community, the picture is more that of a detached world that finds it difficult — and perhaps unattractive — to establish and maintain a systematic

TABLE 2: ARTICLES PUBLISHED BY ITALIANS IN INTERNATIONAL JOURNALS IN THE 1990-2000 PERIOD¹

Review	No. of articles written by Italians working in Italy
Cooperation and Conflict	None
Daedalus	1 (a-theoretical: Cavazza 1992)
European Foreign Affairs Review	2 (Missiroli 1999; Di Felicianantonio 1999)
European Journal of International Relations	1 (Archibugi 1995)
International Affairs	None
International Organization	None
International Security	None
International Studies Quarterly	None
Journal of Conflict Resolution	None
Journal of European Public Policy	4 (3 non-IR, 1 review article: Giuliani and Radaelli 1999)
Journal of Peace Research	1 (Archibugi 1993b)
Millennium	None
Political Science Quarterly	1 (a-theoretical: Andreotti 1994)
Review of International Studies	1 (Archibugi 1992)
Security Dialogue	1 (Greco 1998) ²
World Politics	None
Zeitschrift für Internationale Beziehungen	None

NOTES ON TABLE 2: 1) DATA REFERS TO THE 1990-2000 PERIOD AND ONLY INCLUDE ARTICLES (NOT BOOK REVIEWS, FOR INSTANCE). IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT VARIOUS IR SCHOLARS OF ITALIAN ORIGIN (AND NAME) PUBLISH IN INTERNATIONAL REVIEWS AND ARE NOT COUNTED IN THIS TABLE (CLAUDIO CIOFFI-REVILLA, STEFANO GUZZINI, GIANDOMENICO MAJONE, MARIO TELÒ, TO NAME BUT A FEW). THE REASON IS THAT THEY DO NOT WORK IN THE ITALIAN RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT (AT LEAST IN THE PERIOD EXAMINED) AND THUS CANNOT BE COUNTED IN A REVIEW OF IR IN THIS COUNTRY. 2) PLUS A BRIEF COMMENT BY CAPPELLI (1997).

NO-CONSTRUCTIVISTS' LAND: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS IN ITALY IN THE 1990S

link with the outside. On the other hand, this link to the “outside” would also be useful for the development of an actual Italian contribution (or contributions) to current IR debates and for the achievement of stronger international recognition.

The current detachment is even more surprising given the broad scope of current IR debates, a scope that should meet the interests of Italian scholars who always regarded the Rationalistic turn in IR as too limited in scope and disciplinary sensibility. On the contrary, current debates — open to multi-disciplinarity and more receptive to historical-philosophical thought — should attract the interest of several Italian scholars. Panebianco (1992a:13-4), for instance, in his introduction to the Italian version of a

collection of writings by Aron, points out that the French author, in spite of his sociologist background, should be seen as a ‘political scientist’ in the broadest meaning of the term — *i.e.* the meaning it had in the 17th and 18th centuries as opposed to the narrow definition it was given in the 20th century. Beyond the particular case of Aron, many Italians in the IR field would be glad to be placed in a similar category to this French scholar and indeed often have a background that allows them to draw from various disciplines.

Thus, the cultural conditions would seem to be ideal for active participation to current (particularly European) IR debates in which the scope and research agenda have become much wider. In other words, the alleged narrowness of

the Anglo-Saxon IR world, which several Italian scholars have indicated as the reason for their own separation from the mainstream, should no longer be an obstacle in today's more open theoretical environment.

To conclude with a metaphor, Italian IR scholars have the intellectual means to contribute to "global dialogue", but have so far missed the opportunity to do this in a systematic way, instead preferring the formation of small islands of theory which often lack bridges to each other.

SONIA
LUCARELLI
AND
ROBERTO
MENOTTI

THE ACADEMIC AND CULTURAL CONTEXT OF INTELLECTUAL PRODUCTION AND (INTER)ACTION

WE HAVE SO FAR TRACED CERTAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF ITALIAN IR THEORETICAL PRODUCTION AND DESCRIBED THE RELATIVE APARTNESS OF ITALIAN SCHOLARS FROM THE BROADER IR COMMUNITY. A significant part of the puzzles that emerged in the previous section find clues — if not full answers — in the academic and cultural context of intellectual production in Italy. As the theoretical literature is mainly produced by academia and far less in the context of private research institutes, we will deal basically with the socio-intellectual conditions of research and to some extent the career paths in the Italian academia."

The first IR course was held at the *Facoltà*²² of Political Science Cesare Alfieri in Florence in the 1968/1969 academic year, that is 50 years after the first IR Chair was created in the United Kingdom at the University of Aberystwyth. However, it was not until 1973 that three courses of IR were run in Italian Universities and not until 1975 that the first three IR Chairs were created and the first three Full Professors appointed

(Umberto Gori, Antonio Papisca and Luigi Bonanate).

To date, five full professors have been nominated, namely Fulvio Attinà, Luciano Bardi, Marco Cesa, Angelo Panebianco and Carlo Maria Santoro; twelve associate professors (Franco Casadio, Filippo Andreatta, Fabio Armao, Luciano Bozzo, Anna Caffarena, Giorgio Carnevali, Pierangelo Isernia, Francesca Longo, Marco Mascia, Alessandro Colombo, Giorgio Natalicchi, and Vittorio Emanuele Parsi); and three "researchers" (Carlo Belli, Marco Clementi, and Valter Coralluzzo) working — though not all primarily — on international relations.

To these we might add several academics in other disciplines who have more than an interest in IR and contribute to the production, such as Rodolfo Ragionieri, Pier Paolo Portinaro, Rita di Leo, Gian Enrico Rusconi, Riccardo Scartezzini, Raimondo Strassoldo, Marco Revelli, Alberto Gasperini, Furio Cerutti, and Danilo Zolo. Yet, the Italian IR-Political Science community comprises a relatively small number of individuals.²³ Again, we focus on production more than teaching as such. There are more courses on international issues than there are individuals actually engaged in theoretical research, of course.

However, even the number of IR courses offered was not high before the 2001-2002 academic year. In fact, until 2001 (when reform of the university system started), out of some twenty *Facoltà di Scienze Politiche* that offer a two-year specialisation course in international studies, only about a quarter offered a course of IR.

To complete the list of those involved in IR research in Italy, however, we should add those enrolled in or completing a Ph.D. programme with an IR dissertation and who have continued to do (freelance)

research. However, given that the Doctorate of Research (Ph.D. programme) in IR was established in Italy only in 1983 (and since then no new IR Ph.D. courses have been created in public universities) and the Ministry of Education, University and Research (*Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca* — MIUR) provides only three scholarships for Ph.D. students per year, the number of IR Ph.D.s obtained in Italy so far cannot be very high. To this number we should add a very small portion of those Ph.D. students who wrote their dissertation on IR issues in the context of other Ph.D. programmes such as the *Dottorato in Scienza Politica* of Florence and in the *Dottorato di Diritto, storia e teoria delle relazioni internazionali* of Padua, as well as a group of Italian IR students who obtained their doctorate at the European University Institute of Florence and abroad.

Access to an academic career occurs through national competitions, or *concorsi*, and the official competition (which a state law says must be announced in the national state law bulletin *Gazzetta Ufficiale*) is indispensable to move up from one career level to another (*Ricercatore, Professore Associato, Professore Ordinario*). IR belongs to a broader disciplinary group that includes all Political Science disciplines (the so-called SPS04 group — which in May 2002 included 158 academically enrolled people). This implies that IR is just one of the many disciplines within the wide group of Political Science and surely not one of the strongest given both its recent establishment in Italian universities and a national culture that is traditionally less interested in international politics than domestic affairs. It is a widely shared conviction that Italy has long avoided making foreign policy at the national level, in part deliberately and

in part for objective external and internal constraints.

THE FOUNDING YEARS

The Difficulties of Early IR as a Political Science Discipline

For a long time the predominance of history and law in Italy obscured a political analysis of the socio-political reality. Part of the phenomenon can be explained by the strong and lasting impact of the historicist approach of the philosopher Benedetto Croce on Italian culture (Bobbio 1969; Morlino 1991), part of which can find its causes in the Italian political culture (highly ideologised at the time) and political history (fascist legacy).

The publication of *Elementi di scienza politica* by Gaetano Mosca (in 1896) marked the beginning of Political Science in Italy, but it is only between the 1940s and the 1950s that the foundations were laid for the new Political Science attempting to establish itself as an autonomous discipline *vis-à-vis* political philosophy, history and law. However, as Morlino (1991) convincingly argued, Political Science encounters major difficulties in establishing itself as an anti-utopian and anti-ideological viewpoint on politics for at least three reasons: (i) the understanding of politics as “ancillary” to other more crucial fields of human activity, (ii) the academic resistance to any possible new (academic) United States imperialism, and (iii) the ideological nature of both mass and elite culture in the post-war years.

Firstly, the conceptions of social reality and history that prevailed in Italy during the first half of the 20th century, both in the Marxist and Croce traditions, denied an autonomous role to the political realm, regarding it as the changing product of economic (Marx) and spiritual (Croce) factors. This

NO-CONSTRUCTIVISTS' LAND: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS IN ITALY IN THE 1990S

“ancillary” view of politics (Morlino 1991) indirectly denied the existence of a space for the new science that made politics its central object of study.

Secondly, as for the academic world, the new discipline met the opposition of well-established disciplines based on history and law, but also faced the reticence of other Political Sciences (the plural is deliberate here) which feared a possible predominance of a “made in the United States” approach, a sort of cultural imperialism threatening any plurality in favour of a specific epistemological choice — a strongly positivist or neo-positivist view of science.

Thirdly, a further obstacle to establishing Political Science in Italy was the markedly ideological character of the dominant political thought in the country (which continued throughout the Cold War), both in its Marxist and Catholic manifestations. The ideological-cultural divide inevitably hindered the development of a science claiming to rely on rationality and the abstention from moral judgement.

To these factors we need to add the difficulty of building a discipline which had to be untainted by the Fascist past: as emphasised by Spreafico (1964), the Political Science departments had been founded by the Fascist regime. Thus, the new Political Science was hard pressed to keep its distance from some of the founding fathers, which of course did not facilitate its consolidation (Morlino 1991:96).

These initial obstacles were gradually overcome in the course of the 1970s with the transformation of the political and scientific culture of the country and the rise of a less ideologically-driven and more epistemologically neo-positivist climate. It is in the 1970s that we see the first empirical research programmes and the formation of an academically-based community of political scientists.¹⁴

In addition to this hostile environment shared by IR with all Political Sciences in their formative years, IR then had to fight its own battle for an autonomous status in the family of Political Science disciplines.

The Weaknesses of Early IR as an International Discipline

When Giovanni Sartori, the founding father of Political Science in Italy, worked for the establishment of a course of IR in Florence, the political and cultural climate was especially inhospitable for a discipline focusing on international politics. In the first place, Italy lacked historical conditions that frequently — although not inevitably — create in the country the preconditions for public attention to international affairs. Firstly, Italy lacked a recent and at least partly successful “imperial” past. Secondly, Italy did not have the experience of very active foreign policy since its limited experience in the field gained before World War II was biased by the fascist regime and in any case frozen in the Cold War years, when the room for manoeuvring of the country was largely limited by the bipolar logic. Finally, the highly ideological debate that took place during the Cold War did not encourage the development of a “scientific” political discipline. The history of the country in the first half of the 20th century and during the Cold War, therefore, seriously influenced (together with the mentioned cultural factors) the possible success of a discipline that made foreign and international politics its main object of research.

As Pasquino (1977) argued, the circumstance that Italy was “a country with no foreign policy” during the Cold War has significantly dampened the demand for international affairs scholars and practitioners and, consequently, the

SONIA
LUCARELLI
AND
ROBERTO
MENOTTI

career opportunities available to internationally-oriented political scientists — which has been labelled the “Pasquino-Hoffmann law” (Friedrichs 2001). Further, the ideological overtones of the debate on Italian foreign policy (and on international politics in general) damaged the cause of an “ideologically neutral” discipline.

Bonanate (1990:18) made the objection that the “Pasquino-Hoffmann law” would not apply in the case of France, given the fact that its imperial past and great foreign policy tradition since the country has not developed particularly strong internationalist studies. This criticism, which we find partly acceptable, does not fully take into account at least four important factors: (i) the strong development of policy-oriented internationalist studies in France; (ii) the unique “encyclopaedist” culture in France, which produces international affairs literature with distinctive French features (and is thus often ignored in other cultural contexts); (iii) the significant theoretical tradition in the IR field attached to Aron (1962); and (iv) the fact that linking a weak internationalist discipline to a weak foreign policy is just one of several explanations that should be placed within the broader context of “national” causes.

Further, it should be generally underlined that the “Pasquino-Hoffmann law” does not say that IR is inevitably better off in countries with an active foreign policy past, but it claims that when there is such a past and it is perceived in positive terms within the political and intellectual community of that country, then the tradition this past creates and the demand for policy responses it poses create the conditions for the easier flourishing of IR as a recognised discipline. Clearly these elements are not sufficient to explain the

strength or weaknesses of IR in a given country, but they help provide some explanation. It is here claimed that these factors influenced the founding years of the discipline. Other factors, then, help explain the current, persistent, relative weakness of IR as an academic discipline.

CONTEMPORARY STRUCTURAL SOURCES OF WEAKNESS

Beyond the conditions that made the establishment of IR difficult in Italy, other aspects of the cultural and institutional environment have kept it relatively weak and affected its features. Three types of fragmentation still contribute to this relative weakness: (i) the divide between the academic and non-academic world (the study centres); (ii) the separation between academic research and policy-making; and (iii) the structure of the discipline as islands of theoretical production.

First of all, research with a significant theoretical content tends to be conducted within universities, while more policy-oriented studies are mostly pursued in non-academic contexts. There are exceptions to this general rule such as CeMiSS (the Ministry of Defence *Centro Militare di Studi Strategici*), which sponsors intense research activity, and ISPI (*Istituto per gli Studi di Politica Internazionale*), both of which contract several academics on an *ad hoc* basis (Lucarelli and Menotti 2002).

In spite of this, the policy analysis circle and the academic circle remain quite separate due to the invisible line dividing those who consider and those who do not consider IR theory as an indispensable tool in understanding international politics.

The second type of fragmentation is between the academic world and that of policy-making, critically affected by a tradition that lacks any *osmosis* — quite

NO-CONSTRUCTIVISTS' LAND: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS IN ITALY IN THE 1990S

SONIA
LUCARELLI
AND
ROBERTO
MENOTTI

visible in the United States — between thinkers and practitioners. The so-called think-tanks are not a European phenomenon and certainly not an Italian phenomenon. When the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs commissions researches, it relies mostly on private research centres rather than academic institutions. There is indeed a strong reluctance to view the IR scholar as one of the “prince’s advisers”, partly as a legacy of the dominant historical-legal background in the diplomatic profession. This is clearly demonstrated, for instance, by the circumstance that the competition to enter the diplomatic corps does not include international relations theory as one of the main subjects.

The third aspect of fragmentation, this time within the discipline itself, is represented by the existence of islands of research that hardly interact with each other. Although there has been an academic community of political scientists at least since the 1970s (in 1981 it became an institutionalised *Società Italiana di Scienza Politica* — SISP), the IR field has much less to show in terms of a tightly knit community. There is no IR equivalent to the SISP but, more substantially, there is no sign that a professional community is in the making: for instance, it is more common to see joint research projects between Italian university centres (and researchers) and foreign counterparts than similar projects linking various Italian institutions to each other. No doubt, some of the problems are budgetary, given the scarce resources available to Italian institutions in the field, and this encourages a search for connections with better endowed foreign partners. Yet, the Italian situation here appears to be particularly serious precisely when compared with IR communities in countries like Germany or the relatively small Denmark (McSweeney 1996; Risse 2000).

In the first part of this article we underlined that other weaknesses of Italian IR involve the substantial apartness from current theoretical developments occurring outside the country, an apartness that takes the form of low participation in international conferences, a poor record of publication in major international IR reviews, a relative detachment from mainstream debates (both in terms of engagement in the debate and assimilation of the relevant literature within the Italian literature). The first two aspects of the “problem” (little visibility at conferences and in reviews) have a similar institutional explanation. Next to the obvious fact that few scholars have less possibility to be visible, there is another structural explanation. The academic system does not provide an incentive for efforts to write papers and articles in a foreign language, nor to take up the cost of participating in international events. If the United States is a large job market in which publications in leading journals is the main way to advance one’s career, this is not the rule in most Continental European countries and certainly not in Italy. What Waever (1998:719) described as the situation at the end of the 1990s in Germany applies quite well to Italy: ‘One’s career depends more on one’s relationship to the local professor (or local faculty ...) than on some national competition.’

A second structural constraint on greater international visibility is the persistence of a “linguistic barrier” that makes it even less attractive to write in English (a *conditio sine qua non* to bring papers to conferences and publish in major journals). A few more words on the persistence of this linguistic barrier are worthwhile. Italy is a country in which the introduction of English as a widespread means of communication and production of culture is relatively new.

Until fairly recently, the most widely used foreign language was French. This also has a negative “trickle-down” effect on younger aspirant scholars in the field: even today many Italian undergraduate students read only materials in Italian in preparing for their exams (with the obvious handicap of encountering English-language literature only when they have to write their dissertation — *Tesi di Laurea* — at which stage a good knowledge of English suddenly seems required and actually taken for granted). This implies that most students are not appropriately trained in reading and studying foreign-language IR literature by the time they should be achieving some academic maturity. Further, it is not very common for young researchers to be introduced into the broader international IR community by their elder colleagues and mentors, either through direct contacts with foreign colleagues or through support for their participation in international conferences and events (something that would enhance their knowledge of the discipline and, even more importantly, test their competence and skills and ultimately stimulate their self-confidence). This state of affairs tends to perpetuate the substantially closed character of academic IR, while hindering even the development of a functioning Italian IR community.

On the other hand, in terms of “exporting” IR literature in Italian the linguistic barrier again crops up. Italian is not a widely spoken language — certainly not as widely spoken as English, Spanish, French or German. Further, there is a certain resistance on the part of the mainstream Anglo-Saxon IR community when it comes to incorporating theoretical inputs from other cultural traditions, especially (and perhaps understandably) when foreign contributions are simply unavailable in English.

The third aspect of Italian IR apartness (the little updateness with theoretical developments — however with significant individual exceptions) can also be explained in institutional and cultural terms. Here, the lack of a “critical mass” coupled with the academic mechanisms for selection and career again provide the main explanation. Again, the few involved cannot fully take part in a debate as large as the “global” one. As we have seen, like in various other Continental European countries the academic system mechanisms do not encourage high rates of publication, nor participation in current debates. If we couple this structural aspect with the generalised preference for the Classics, it is quite easy to understand the relative reluctance of Italian IR to take part in contemporary debates. This preference for the Classics, however, deserves further investigation as it is not the simple result of a cultural attitude.

If one combines the preference for the Classics and the fact that in Italy rational choice theories have not found as much success as in the Anglo-Saxon world, one might think that Italian IR shares with Continental IR the simple fact that the Behavioralist revolution never happened there (Jørgensen 2000). However, this is only partly true because Italian Political Science, and consequently Italian IR, has a double soul: a Sartorian United States-founded Behavioralist one, and a Bobbian Traditionalist one (taking their names respectively from their founding fathers, Giovanni Sartori and Norberto Bobbio). The two souls produced different schools with a different conception of science and theorisation: the first influenced by the Behavioralist revolution, with the second keeping a strong philosophical foundation. It is for this reason, we believe, that next to the Florentine school’s predictive studies and use

NO-CONSTRUCTIVISTS’ LAND: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS IN ITALY IN THE 1990S

rational choice approaches¹⁵ we find Bonanate's studies on ethics and IR and more generally his philosophically-informed "Turin school" of International Relations. Some of the main members of this school are Portinaro, Caffarena, Armao, and Coralluzzo.

It remains to be explained, however, why there is a general tendency to avoid links to Italian classical philosophers. We believe that this mostly involves the origins of social sciences in post-fascist Italy. Italian social and political scientists after World War II faced the need to found their disciplines on theoretical grounds that could not be seen as "contaminated" by the highly ideologised political debate of the '20s to '50s. Great figures of 20th century Italian political thought such as Gramsci (1977; 1978; cf. Gill 1993), Croce (1980; cf. Cingari 2000; Monanari 1987) or Gentile (1975; cf. Zarone 1990) were then avoided and a sort of de-linking to classical Italian political thought took place. This can explain why an author like Gramsci was rediscovered by IR/International Political Economy (IPE) scholars abroad and at some point could then be re-imported (in a mediated form) into the Italian IR debate.

What could be the possible impact of the university reform on Italian IR?¹⁶ The Italian university system has been in a continuous process of reform since 1990, when the *Laurea breve* (2/3 years) was introduced. The "old" structure currently under reform was very centralised and rigid. The new system introduces a two-level structure that includes (a) a 3-year *diploma di laurea* and (b) a 2-year (after the first 3) *laurea specialistica*. After the *diploma di laurea*, it is possible to leave university, continue with the *laurea specialistica*, attend a course of specialisation (at least 2 years), or attend a 1-year Master's course. After the *laurea specialistica*, it is possible to do a Ph.D. Can this new system affect

the IR community of scholars and their production? It surely will, but it is difficult to evaluate the net effect. According to the new rules, IR is compulsory in all the Political Science *corsi di laurea*. This will mean that many universities that so far have IR courses should establish one and should look seek professors to teach there. This simple fact combined with the proliferation of courses of various types that will be activated in order to attract students will create significant demand for expertise in IR issues. This, however, might simply lead to a proliferation of people teaching IR subjects at university on a contract basis, having no academic status and no access to research funding for academics. In other words, although the reform will surely increase the number of students studying IR and the number of people working in the field — broadly speaking — it will provide no guarantees regarding the actual amount or quality of research being conducted, nor will it directly impact on the relative separateness of Italian academia in this field.

SUMMING UP

THE MAIN CONTEMPORARY (META)-THEORETICAL DEBATE THAT FILLED THE PAGES OF INTERNATIONAL IR JOURNALS — RATIONALISM VS. REFLECTIVISM — VIRTUALLY NEVER REACHED THE ITALIAN PENINSULA. The approach that emerged from that debate most forcefully — Constructivism — has not attracted much interest from Italian scholars. How can it be that Italian scholars have chosen to ignore the most important contemporary theory of IR? We have asked ourselves how the characteristics of the Italian academic literature and environment (institutional and cultural) might help explain this first puzzle.

SONIA
LUCARELLI
AND
ROBERTO
MENOTTI

We conclude that despite a cultural approach that would tend to prioritise a multidisciplinary and philosophically embedded attitude to IR theory (such as Constructivism), Italian IR remains cut off from the broader IR community in various respects. The number of articles written by Italian scholars in international journals is small, as is the level of interaction among Italian scholars and (albeit to a lesser extent) between Italian and foreign scholars. The first, simplest explanation for this relative isolation involves the fact that there is only a small number of Italian IR scholars. However, this observation needs to be placed in a broader context. Why are there so few IR scholars in one of the world's most integrated and economically developed Western countries? We relate the weakness of the discipline at home to a number of international and — most of all — domestic factors.

There is, on one hand, the fact that IR is generally weaker in Continental Europe compared to the United States and the United Kingdom, and that for decades it has been “an American Social Science” (Hoffmann 1977). However, there are also specifically national constraining factors that make Italian IR even weaker than in other European countries. These involve the structural features of the Italian university system and the discipline's location within the Political Science *Facoltà* and the broad group of *discipline politologiche*. It also has to do with specific Italian historical (lack of recent “imperial” experience) and cultural circumstances (long predominance of ideologies that hindered the development of “scientific” approaches to the study of politics). A combination of these factors has contributed to marginalising IR studies, with the work of a few scholars constituting the bulk of the Italian production. However, there are a number

of factors that seem to point in the direction of an expansion of the discipline and — almost equally important — a deliberate call for such a development.

In fact, a growing number of Italian IR scholars are participating in international conferences and are ready to publish in foreign journals. In addition, the upcoming (and long overdue) reform of the Italian university system might contribute to making the academic system more flexible and possibly more oriented to both the international context and domestic constituencies that “produce” and/or “consume” IR studies, but this cannot be taken for granted. A more important favourable condition for the development of IR studies in Italy is the shrinking importance of ideological political thought in the country and the many challenges to Italian foreign policy decision-making posed by the evolution of post-Cold War international politics (especially in the Balkan region and South-eastern Europe).

Further encouraging signs are visible. First, an embryonic IR community is gradually developing (although it still faces some of the same difficulties that frustrated similar trends in the past) which, on the whole, may benefit from more regular and intense contacts with the international IR network. Second, even amid structural professional problems the growing demand for IR expertise in ever more diversified subfields (from regional studies to transnational crime, from the EU's “third pillar” to information technology in strategic studies) is stimulating stronger supply. At times, the problem seems to be the limited capacity of existing research institutions to absorb and cultivate the available pool of new human resources (coming out of university with a partial level of specialisation), rather than a lack of adequate human resources.

NO-CONSTRUCTIVISTS' LAND: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS IN ITALY IN THE 1990S

The pressure exercised on the country by external events and Italy's growing international activism can still make a decisive difference. In this context, it is no accident that Ettore Greco — Deputy Director of the *Istituto Affari Internazionali* — contributed to the journal *Security Dialogue* an analysis on an issue of central importance to the restructuring and re-orientation of Italian foreign policy in the 1990s — the Italian participation in *Alba* Operation in Albania — combining an interpretation of the specific event with some relevant steps towards theory development (Greco 1998). This might be symptomatic of a significant change towards a more theoretically informed research also within the circuit of research institutes (traditionally leading more towards policy-analysis than theory development). A consolidation of this trend — from case studies to theory development — may well offer good prospects for the growth of IR in Italy beyond academia.

The second trend that should be consolidated is clearly that oriented towards pure theory development, in connection with theoretical debates/discourses in Continental Europe. We claim that the failure to take part in contemporary debates is mainly due to the domestic weakness of the discipline and the lack of incentives (if not constraints) provided by the institutional context of intellectual production. If these weaknesses are progressively overcome, we will probably witness a more active theoretical debate and the more direct participation of Italians in international discussions. Part of the solution could be purely institutional (a major reform of the university system), part of it could be linked to theoretical trends calling for more interdisciplinary work and the abolition of the domestic-international divide in Political Science

(whereby Political Science would start again to conceive itself as a full-fledged discipline dealing with the intimately connected national and international political systems). The latter change, which Bonanate (2001) strongly advocated in a recent article on *Teoria Politica*, would not only respond to contemporary developments in the realm of politics throughout the academic world, but would also strengthen the position of Italian Political Science both at home and abroad.

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1 At the beginning of the 21st century it is still hard to counter Hoffmann's (1977) famous assertion that International Relations is an American discipline. The lion's share of articles published in American and European IR journals are still written by Americans (Waever 1998:696-701), theoretical developments in the discipline mainly involve reference to theoretical debates (so-called Great Debates) that have only seldom taken place in Continental Europe (Jørgensen 2000) while, finally, the pattern of citation and theory-borrowing reflects a seriously unbalanced relationship between American and Continental European IR. However, more than a rebirth has taken place in the last decade, also triggered by the end of the Cold War which provided a significant impetus for political studies. Recent works investigating the up-to-dateness of Hoffmann's statement today include Smith (2000), Crawford and Jarvis (2000), Jørgensen (2000), and Waever (1998).

2 Combining internal and external factors for understanding theoretical debates is also a central point in Stefano Guzzini's account of Realism in IR/IPE (1998).

3 In the pre-1990 period, we recommend the very informative overviews by Bonanate (1990) and Attinà (1989). For the much broader discipline of Political Science, we recommend the insightful contribution of Morlino (1991) and Graziano (1991).

4 Santoro argued for a cyclical theory of long-term historical trends, while Bonanate leans toward a mixed pattern of repetition and progress (measured by the reduced frequency of violent conflict over time).

5 Research institutes have over the years provided the bulk of studies on these issues, with the *Istituto Affari Internazionali* (IAI) playing a prominent role as an institution founded by one of the founding fathers of the project of European integration, Altiero Spinelli. Today, nearly all research institutes

that deal with international relations, but also those in the international economy and law, have an EU studies branch (Lucarelli and Menotti 2002).

6 *Limes* has only offered a limited forum for an open discussion on theory, with three articles (Santoro 1996; Antonsich 1997; Bonanate 1997).

7 Toscano sets out an original synthesis cutting across various theoretical traditions and attempts to fully incorporate the changes in the international system and society produced by the end of the Cold War.

8 This approach may have provided inspiration for recent works by Ragionieri (1997a; 1997b; 1999), Caffarena (1998b), Stocchetti (1998; 2000) and a few others, but thorough analyses (book length) are almost absent and the Italian mainstream has not fully incorporated these. Reference to Reflectivism in its various forms, then, is nearly completely missing.

9 This was the case with the Pan-European Conferences that took place in Heidelberg (1994), Paris (1996), and Vienna (1998).

10 According to Holsti (1985:102), 'A model of an international community of scholars would include at least two related characteristics: (1) professional communication between researchers residing in different and separate political jurisdictions; and (2) a reasonably symmetrical pattern of "production" and "consumption" of theories, ideas, concepts, methods, and data between members of the community, ... a mutual acknowledgement and acceptance of the results of inquiry.'

11 A list of research institutes working in the field of IR as of 1990 can be found in Bonanate (1990:12-3). An updated work on the institutes and departments where contemporary international politics, law and economics are studied was undertaken in 2000 by the same authors of this article (Lucarelli and Menotti 2002). Acknowledged research institutes dealing with international affairs include the *Istituto Affari Internazionali* (Institute for International Affairs, Rome), *Centro studi politica internazionale* (Centre for the Study of International Politics, Rome), *Forum per i problemi della pace e della guerra* (Forum on the Problems of Peace and War, Florence), *Istituto di politica internazionale* (Institute for International Politics, Milan), *Centro studi*

NO-CONSTRUCTIVISTS' LAND: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS IN ITALY IN THE 1990S

militari e di sicurezza (Centre for Military and Security Studies, Rome).

12 As Attinà (1989:356, footnote 13) aptly described it, 'the *Facoltà* is the main structure in the Italian University system. Each University is divided in a number of *Facoltà*, which assemble the research structure (Departments and Institutes), organise teaching and courses, and award the *Laurea* (a degree equivalent to MA). Each Professor holds a Chair in a *Facoltà* (where he/she gives one course of lessons a year) and is affiliated with a Department (or Institute) where she/he conducts research.' This system is under reform, as we illustrate at the end of this second chapter.

SONIA
LUCARELLI
AND
ROBERTO
MENOTTI

13 See the list of enrolled SPS academics at: http://php3.sp2.cineca.it/murst-dae/pers_docente/ricerca_docenti.php3 (10 May 2002).

14 For detailed analyses of these steps, see Spreafico (1964), Bobbio (1969), Morlino (1991), and Graziano (1991).

15 Prevision in IR was introduced in Italy by Gori (1969, 1996a). Today, the "Florentine school" has kept the tradition (Simon-Belli 1998) and produced applied studies.

16 On the Italian university system, see also Capano (2000).

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