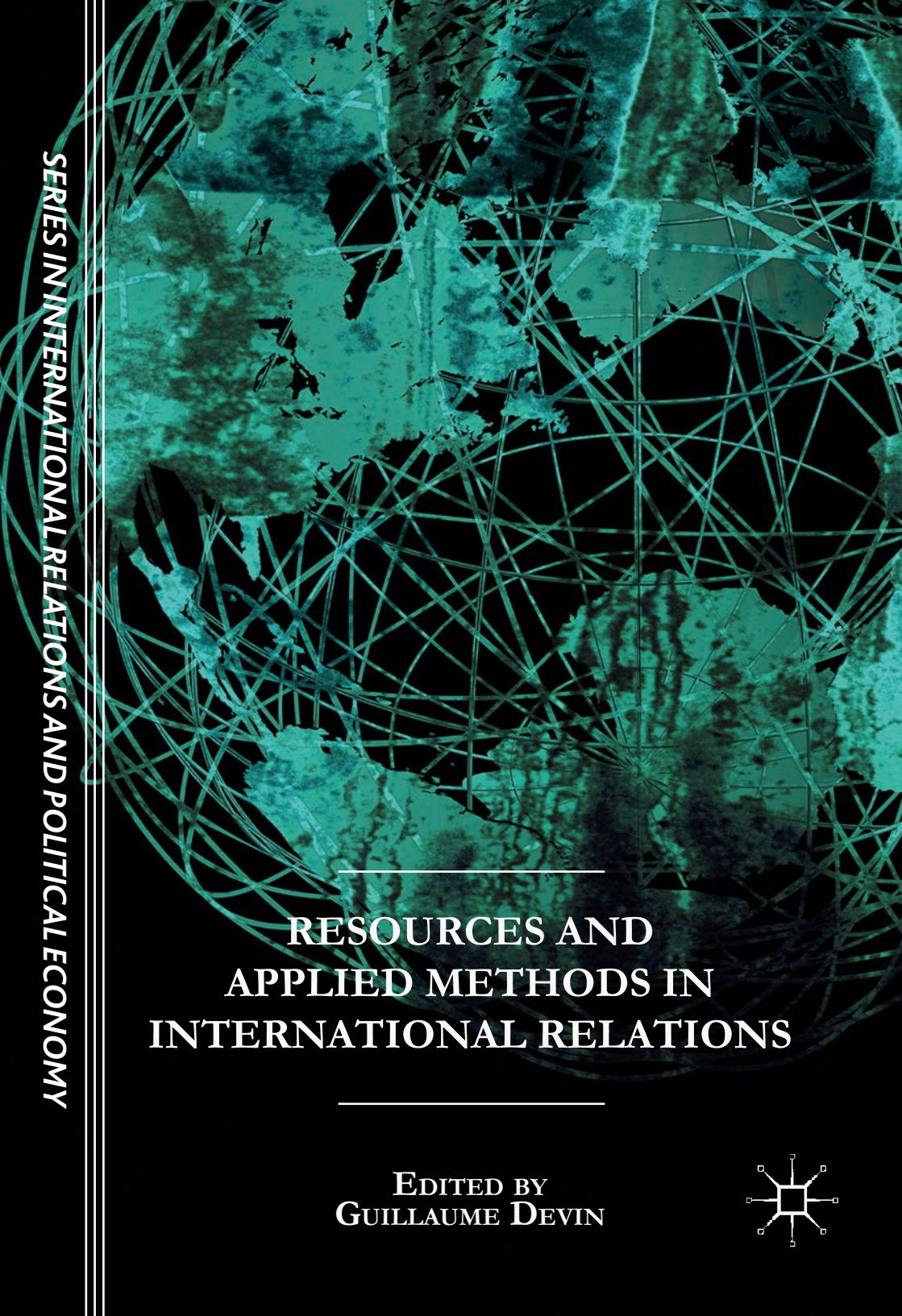


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RESOURCES AND APPLIED METHODS IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

EDITED BY
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Resources and Applied Methods in International Relations

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CERI Sciences Po
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Preface

The idea of this book corresponds to developments in what is commonly known as the sociology of international relations.[1] If one accepts that international facts are social facts, it is hardly surprising to submit them to a study using the tools of the social sciences. As Jacques Vernant said over 60 years ago in a forgotten text: "by acknowledging the connection that international relations studies have with sociology and the human sciences […] a field is opened up to sociology where the intrusion is justified by its methods and concern for thinking correctly, more in depth than on the surface, and for understanding."[2] This firmly and simply stated observation shows that a great deal of the discussion about what a "sociology of international relations" might or ought to be is a tedious and useless exercise. On the other hand, reflecting on sources and the issue of adapting methods deserves our full attention, whereas they have remained relatively neglected. Why are they so late in coming? Probably because theories in the field of international relations, mainly Anglo-American in origin, have always exerted a powerful influence on research by favoring inter-paradigmatic debate at the expense of empirical-deductive approaches. This does not mean that theories are not suggestive, that they are not based on a certain number of empirical observations, but they have wound up acting as pre-established frameworks for thinking, numbing scientific curiosity for anything not answering their general proposals. From this standpoint, arguing for more empiricism is not an anti-theoretical proposal, but a research program preceding theoretical development, or at least certain generalizations. Here, the study precedes conceptualization.

Frankly, this is the approach applied by many international relations researchers. Furthermore, there is a gap between the massive focus on major theories in teaching (realism, liberalism, constructivism, etc.) and the far more limited use of these paradigms in research.[3] And one might say that with the trend toward constructivism, both a theory and a research method, in-depth knowledge of the "field" will become increasingly necessary for international relations studies.[4] In any case, that is the conviction shared by the authors of this book.

The project consists in becoming acquainted with certain empirical research methods when the subject relates to international relations, understood very broadly as "*all* forms of interaction between the members of separate societies, whether government sponsored or not."[5] While the subject is "complex" (in the sense of being composed of multiple links and several levels of action that must be connected and considered together), it is no different from most social facts. We must then reduce its complexity by identifying the enigma to be solved in the research and by doing what is needed to carry out the study. Thinking clearly and having the ability to demonstrate it are not self-evident.

There is no blueprint. You do not start the research with an engineer's drawings. The adventure begins with trial and error: you describe, observe, collect, question, compare and interpret, trying to gradually give your questions a coherent and logical form. So it all starts with what looks at first like an experiment. In that sense, according to Claudio Magris' fine Hegelian formula, the method lies in constructing the experiment.[6] The path is steep. The first moments in one's research are not automatically comfortable from an intellectual standpoint (not to mention material conditions during research which can be trying). What stands out at first is the impression of being overwhelmed by one's research, of no longer knowing what its scope is, and even less, its outcome. If handled well, that uncertainty can turn out to be full of promise. You have to get lost to find your way. The apparently scattered readings and data enable one to begin again with new hypotheses. Opening up one's research (looking for comparable subjects and phenomena) or exposing it to the perspective of different disciplines is always a stimulating exercise. This decentering provides a way to keep active the principle according to which research must always strive to offer conclusions with a more general scope than those relating to the study's specific subject.

Research is an exercise in freedom: an appeal to imaginative intuition and critical curiosity. But contrary to essayism, intuition and curiosity are

controlled here by applying evidence obtained through a rigorous approach. Many international relations "experts" pay little attention to this. And yet we would like to know more often how they have constructed their interpretations: according to what method(s), and with what sources? It is to this approach that our book invites you, proposing after some preliminary reflections a panorama of resources and methods applied to international relations research.

The work as a whole does not pretend to be exhaustive. Applying quantitative methods to international relations studies and the debate around the triangulation of methods would fill up a large volume in themselves. And the book is not meant to be read as a lesson on what internationalists may not be doing or what they should explore. Our ambition is more modest, but the orientation is clear: empirical research on international relations is based, as Robert K. Merton would have said, on "disciplined eclecticism"[7] and should be gauged by the results.

Paris, France
June 2017

Guillaume Devin

Notes

1. Guillaume Devin (ed.), *Dix concepts sociologiques en relations internationales*, Paris, CNRS Éditions, 2015; Guillaume Devin, *Sociologie des relations internationales* (Paris, La Découverte, 2013), pp. 3–6; Bertrand Badie, *Quand l'histoire commence*, Paris, CNRS Éditions, 2013; Frédéric Ramel, "Sociologie," in Thierry Balzacq and Frédéric Ramel (eds.), *Traité de relations internationales* (Paris, Presses de Sciences Po, 2013), pp. 499–522.
2. Jacques Vernant, "Vers une sociologie des relations internationales," *Politique étrangère*, 17 (4), (1952): 232. Our translation.
3. In the 2009 TRIP survey on the field of international relations in ten countries (not including France), it appears that while 70% of introductory courses in international relations are devoted to presenting major paradigms, nearly 25% of those interviewed indicated not using these paradigms in their research. See Richard Jordan et al., *One or Many? TRIP Survey of International Relations Faculty in Ten Countries*, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg (Va.), 2009, available at: https://www.wm.edu/offices/itpir/_documents/trip/final_trip_report_2009.pdf (accessed on March 24, 2017).
4. A trend seen not only in work by political analysts, but also very prevalent among historians of international relations. See Pierre Grosser, "État de la littérature. L'histoire des relations internationales aujourd'hui," *Critique internationale*, 65 (2014): 173–200.

5. Kalevi Holsti, *International Politics. A Framework for Analysis* (London, Prentice Hall, 1992), p. 10.
6. Claudio Magris, *Danube* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008).
7. Robert K. Merton, *Sociological Ambivalence* (New York (N. Y.), The Free Press, 1976), p. 169, quoted in Arnaud Saint Martin, *La Sociologie de Robert K. Merton* (Paris, La Découverte, 2013), p. 58.

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List of Contributors

Mélanie Albaret is Associate Professor of Political Science at the Law School, University Clermont Auvergne (UCA). Her research interests cover international organizations, multilateralism, the UN Security Council and the foreign policy of Latin American actors. Her recent publications include *Puissances moyennes dans le jeu international. Le Brésil et le Mexique aux Nations unies* (2014, Presses de Sciences Po), "Multilateralism under transformation. International Organizations and 'clubs'," in Bob Reinalda (ed.). *Routledge Handbook of International Organization* (London, 2013); with Delphine Placidi-Frot and Nicolas Lemay Hébert, *The Most Important United Nations Security Council Resolutions Commented and Explained* (forthcoming).

Delphine Allès is Professor of Political Science at the University of Paris East (UPEC—Créteil, France) and an associate researcher at the Research Institute on Contemporary Southeast Asian Studies (IRASEC-Bangkok). She has recently published *Transnational Islamic Actors and Indonesia's Foreign Policy* (London, 2016).

Alice Baillat is a research fellow at the French Institute for International and Strategic Affairs (IRIS). She holds a PhD in Political Science and International Relations from Sciences Po Paris. A specialist of international climate politics, with a focus on the migratory and security consequences of climate change, as well as the specific situation and needs of the most vulnerable developing countries, she has conducted extensive fieldworks in Bangladesh. Baillat has published several articles and book chapters, and she also lectures in Sciences Po Paris.

Una Bergmane is postdoctoral fellow at the Mario Einaudi Center for International Studies, Cornell University. She holds a PhD from Sciences Po Paris with the highest distinction for her work on French and US foreign policy during the disintegration of the USSR. Her recent publications include articles in *Relations Internationales* and *Revue d'Histoire Diplomatique*, and book chapters on Baltic public diplomacy (in Louis Clerc, Nikolas Glover, Paul Jordan (eds.), *Histories of Public Diplomacy and Nation Branding in the Nordic and Baltic Countries, 2015*).

Corentin Cohen is a PhD candidate at Sciences Po's Center for International Studies (CERI). His research focuses on images of violence and their influence. Cohen discusses empirical evidences on the role of pictures in two cases, namely the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria and drug-related violence in Brazil. He has published various articles on violence, including "Violence Between and Within Political Parties in Nigeria: Statistics, Structures, and Patterns (2006–2014)," *Contemporary Readings in Law and Social Justice* 8(2) (2016): 30–47.

Milena Dieckhoff is a research associate at Sciences Po's Center for International Studies (CERI). She holds a PhD in Political Science, with a specialization in International Relations from Sciences Po Paris (2016). Her research is above all dedicated to international mediation, as visible in her thesis entitled "Mediation, mediations? Typology of a pacification activity in violent political conflicts in the post-Cold War era." Her publications include *L'individu dans les relations internationales: Le cas du médiateur Martti Ahtisaari* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2012) and "International Mediation: A Specific Diplomatic Tool for Emerging Countries?," *European Review of International Studies*, 1(2) (2014): 107–124.

Marie-Françoise Durand is a geographer and cartographer. She is one of the founding members of Sciences Po's Cartographic Workshop (Atelier de cartographie) which she directed between 1995 and 2015.

Fabien Emprin is an associate professor at the University of Reims (France) and deputy director of the Reims School of education and teaching profession (ESPE). A member of the Center for the study on employment and professionalization (CEREP) and of the research team on mathematics at primary school (ERMEL), Emprin has developed a classroom computer simulator for teachers in relation to the modeling of teaching practices, scenarios of teachers' training with ICT and training knowledge. His publications include Sabra, H., Emprin, F., Connan, P.-Y.,

Jourdain, C., "Classroom Simulator, a new instrument for teacher training. The case of mathematical teaching," in G. Futschek & C. Kynigos (eds), *Proceedings of the 3rd international constructionism conference*, 2014, pp. 145–155; Douaire, J. & Emprin, F. (2015). Teaching geometry to students (from five to eight years old), in K. Krainer & N. Vondrová (Eds.), *Proceedings of the Ninth Congress of the European Society for Research in Mathematics Education*, CERME9, 2015, pp. 529–535.

Auriane Guilbaud is Associate Professor of Political Science at the University Paris 8 (Institute of European Studies) and a member of the research center Cresppa-LabToP (CNRS, UMR 7217). Her research focuses on the role of non-state actors in international relations, international organizations and global health governance. Her recent publications include *Business partners. Firmes privées et gouvernance mondiale de la santé* (Presses de Sciences Po, 2015).

Simon Hug is Professor of Political Science at the University of Geneva (Switzerland). He holds a PhD from the University of Michigan. His research interests are at the intersection of comparative politics and international relations, focusing on decision-making processes, institutions and conflict resolution. His publications appear in various journals, among them the *American Political Science Review*, *Annual Review of Political Science*, *British Journal of Political Science*, *Comparative Political Studies*, *European Journal of Political Research*, *European Union Politics*, *International Organization*, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, *Journal of Peace Research*, *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, *Party Politics*, *Political Analysis*, *Public Choice*, *Review of International Organizations*, as well as in several edited volumes and books.

Delphine Lagrange is Associate Professor of Political Science at the University Paris 2 Panthéon-Assas and a researcher at the Center for the Study and Research of Administrative and Political Sciences (CERSA). She is a member of the research group on the sociology of governmental action of the European Center for Sociology and Political Science (CESSP). Her research focuses on France's foreign policy and multilateralism.

Thomas Lindemann is Professor of Political Science at Ecole Polytechique (LinX Research Centre) and University of Versailles Saint-Quentin. During the fall semester 2016–2017, he was a visiting professor at Columbia University. Lindemann is a member of the administrative council of the French Association of Political Science, and he has been elected

twice as a member in the CNRS "section 40." He is the author of six books and his numerous articles have been published in *Political Psychology*, *International Political Sociology, International Relations, International Theory*, and other leading journals. He has contributed to introduce the concept of recognition into the international relations discipline, with an emphasis on the antagonist and emotional aspects of the concept.

Marieke Louis is Associate Professor of Political Science at Sciences Po Grenoble (PACTE, CNRS) and a research associate at the Center for International Studies (Sciences Po, CERI, CNRS).

Lucile Maertens holds a PhD in Political Science. She is a Lecturer at the University of Lausanne (Switzerland) and a research associate at Center for International Studies (Sciences Po, CERI, CNRS).

Benoît Martin is a geographer/cartographer at the Atelier de cartographie de Sciences Po since 2006 and a PhD candidate at Sciences Po's Center for International Studies (CERI). His research focuses on how international statistics are built, their role in expertise and in multilateral negotiations through the case study of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). Co-author of the *Atlas de la mondialisation* (Presses de Sciences Po, 2013—six editions, translated into five languages), Martin has recently published the chapter "Les quantifications dans l'expertise des OI, le cas de l'UNODC," in A. Klein, C. Laporte, M. Saiget (eds.), *Les bonnes pratiques des organisations internationales*, Paris, Presses de Sciences Po, 2015.

Médéric Martin-Mazé is an Associate Professor at University Paris 8/CRESPPA-LabToP. His PhD (in International Relations from Sciences Po, 2013) focused on the professionals of security who assist Central Asian Republics in securing their borders. Between 2014 and 2016, he worked as a research assistant at the Department of War Studies, King's College London, and was in charge of mapping the institutions and professions of security in Europe for the EU-Funded SOURCE Project. His current research interests span international organizations and security aid in post-colonial states as well as the practices and effects of antiterrorist practices in Europe. His work has been published in *Journal of Common Market Studies*, *Cultures et Conflits* and *International Political Sociology*.

Delphine Placidi-Frot is Full Professor of Political Science at the Faculté Jean-Monnet, Paris-Sud/Paris-Saclay University and researcher at the Institut d'Etudes en Droit Public (IEDP). Her research focuses on international organizations and negotiations as well as French and Russian foreign policies. Her recent publications include *Négociations internationales* (co-ed. Franck Petiteville, Presses de Sciences Po, 2013). With Guillaume Devin and Franck Petiteville, she coordinates an international research group on multilateral action (*Groupe de recherche sur l'action multilatérale/GRAM*).

Frédéric Ramel is Full Professor of Political Science at Sciences-Po Paris and researcher at Sciences Po's Center for International Studies (CERI). He is also the Head of the Department of Political Science. Noted for his studies on international security, he investigates the connections between aesthetics and international relations.

Marie Saiget holds a PhD in International Relations from Sciences Po, Center for International Studies (CERI). Her research aims at understanding peace-building and social change dynamics, focusing on women integration in post-conflict societies. Her recent publications include Klein, Asmara, Laporte, Camille and Marie Saiget, (eds.), *Les bonnes pratiques des organisations internationales* (Paris: Les Presses de Sciences Po, 2015).

Charles Tenenbaum is Associate Professor of Political Science and specializes in the study of conflict resolution and international mediation. He is the Head of the Conflict and Development Program at Sciences Po Lille, and he teaches Peace Studies, International Mediation and Conflict Resolution at the graduate and postgraduate level along with courses on Diplomacy and International Organizations. His research interests focus on European Union and peacemaking, multilateralism and the influence of religious actors in international relations. From 2012 to 2015, he coordinated with Delphine Placidi-Frot the AFSP research group on multilateralism. He currently manages the research seminar on religious actors and multilateralism (Sciences Po CERI, GSRL-EPHE). In 2017, his publications include *L'Union européenne et la paix*, Presses de Sciences Po (with Anne Bazin).

About the Editor

Guillaume Devin is Full Professor of Political Science at Sciences Po, Head of the Research Master and of the PhD program in International Relations, École doctorale de Sciences Po, Paris. His recently published works include *Les Organisations internationales* (Paris, Armand Colin, 2016); *Dix concepts sociologiques en relations internationales* (Paris, CNRS Éditions, 2015); *L'évolution de la coopération internationale* (Paris, CNRS Éditions, 2014).

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PART I

Preliminary Reflections Open for Discussion

CHAPTER 1

Describing, Representing, Interpreting

Guillaume Devin and Marie-Françoise Durand

Abstract To describe is also to represent and interpret. All three concepts may stand one for the other. The object of this book is therefore to single out each of these moments of research, without providing any other meaning than a didactic one. Indeed, behind those three concepts (description, representation, and interpretation) are research practices that, however different they may be, are complementary and raise specific questions and difficulties. This chapter explores them and serves as an introduction to a careful research. The favorite approach is both empirical and inductive: it starts with fieldwork and then seeks to find a general logic. It strives to solve a specific puzzle without losing track of the matter of general interest it raises. The scientific debate is open to discussion and may hence go forth.

Describing also means representing and interpreting, and each of these terms can be confused with the other two. It is appropriate therefore to distinguish between these three phases of research as meticulously as

G. Devin (✉)
Sciences Po, Center for International Studies (CERI), Paris, France

M.-F. Durand
Sciences Po, Paris, France

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possible, while ascribing no more than a didactic value to their sequencing. Words (description, representation, interpretation) indeed mask different research methods which, while complementary, each raise specific questions and issues.

Description as a Phase of Research

In evaluations of research work by professors, description often has a pejorative connotation. In a Master's or doctoral thesis, description for its own sake, qualified as "autotelic" in scholarly terms (from the Greek *autos*, oneself, and *telos*, goal), teaches us nothing. A poem is referred to as autotelic to show that it (or any other artistic object) is only beautiful in itself, without any exterior references. But when applied to the social world (which international relations are part of), description must strive to instruct and give an account of reality. This is known as "analytical" description.

A Rich Tradition

There is a rich literary tradition around analytical description, well-illustrated by numerous nineteenth-century novelists, in particular Balzac (1799–1850), Flaubert (1821–1880) and Zola (1840–1902).[1] A wordy description (Balzac) gives a sense of reality, a restrained description (Flaubert) captures the main features of a situation or character, and a socially conscious description (Zola) makes a stirring plea for humanity.[2] In any case, description strives to apprehend reality as living matter.

This descriptive imperative can be found in a great deal of work in the social sciences from sociology to ethnology—designated as "sociography" and "ethnography" (from the Greek "graphy," writing) in the descriptive and analytical aspects of their field studies—as well as in geography and the École des Annales en histoire (Annales School).[3] Christian Delacroix, François Dosse and Patrick Garcia mention Michel Vovelle recalling Fernand Braudel's comments about certain applicants for the *agrégation* degree, criticizing them "with a touch of disdain for their reports not smelling enough like manure, just as Lucien Febvre had found fault with Marc Bloch's *La Société féodale*, saying that it didn't smell enough like dirt."[4]

From the early twentieth century, the Chicago School of sociology (George Herbert Mead, William Isaac Thomas, Robert Park and their

successors, Herbert Blumer, Everett C. Hughes, Anselm Strauss, Erving Goffman and Howard S. Becker[5]) laid claim to this descriptive work as a specificity of its empirical approach. Observations, data gathering and collecting "human documents" (firsthand accounts) would allow them to study human behavior and the resulting social order in an objective manner.[6] It is a perspective similar to that of a naturalist, "in other words one who collects information about the behavior of the subjects he's studying as systematically as possible, and by whatever means possible as long as the information is not altered through subjectivity."[7]

Description as Analysis

This is where the problems start. As Howard S. Becker has written: "The appropriate ratio of description to interpretation is a real problem every describer of the social world has to solve or come to terms with."[8] Indeed, you often see what you already know and are looking for. It is precisely this tropism that one must do everything to break with, in order to move closer to the most descriptive and least interpretive description possible. To be sure, there can be no description without prior knowledge—no "purely descriptive description"[9]—but conversely there can be no knowledge attained or unforeseen discoveries made without a thorough description to reveal details that appear to be unimportant or have not been fully appreciated.

As an exercise, description is therefore fruitful but difficult to carry out. First, it implies an appropriate level of analysis (empirical position). The research should not lend itself to a hypothetical subject that is too general. "International Relations in the Middle East," "Europe in the World," "China in Africa," "International Terrorism" and so on, are false leads that could result in impressionistic descriptions. Describing involves first of all deconstructing a research theme into a series of empirically identifiable objects. Description thus leads quite naturally to case studies (definition/selection, number/comparison[10]). Here, we shall keep in mind only that a "case" is a social fact (activity, conduct) that raises questions, contains an enigma or indicates a paradox, and belongs to a more general category of phenomena (such that a case study must always teach us more that the case itself).[11] Secondly, description requires as far as possible a suspension of judgment (axiological neutrality). In other words, it involves delaying interpretation for as long as one can. There are two pitfalls to avoid: observing preliminary experiences too admiringly (which perpetuates

prejudices)[12] and prematurely imposing already established scholarly knowledge (fixing description).[13]

As we have said, this is not an easy task. But a wealth of details and thorough description may lead to new ideas, to developing new categories for analysis, and to new or expanded concepts. "Massive description"[14] can be truly subversive in identifying what is not spoken of, what the actors disregard, deliberately or not, what conventional thinking deems secondary or of no importance; in short, results that one was not expecting by producing unexpected data.[15] Karl Weick gives some advice for not becoming judgmental and for sustaining the work of description the best one can: avoid using the verb "to be" in descriptions,[16] which generally consists in "turning people into activities," in other words thinking in practical terms.[17]

It is time we recognized that description cannot describe everything (methodological limits). Not everything can be seen (onstage vs. in the wings), what one observes is often unclear (confusion of roles; ambiguity in a person's behavior, statements or decisions), and at times it is simply impossible to explain everything in detail. In this respect, an excess of details is not always advisable. It might drown a description in a compilation or catalogue that takes one farther from the reality one is trying to grasp (an artistic method in painting—pointillism—or in literature—the *nouveau roman*—that strives to find a different way of representing or talking about things but becomes a stylistic exercise in itself, which isn't the purpose of social science research). Between excessive reduction and wordy description, one must be mindful of the "accordion effect" in descriptive work: "description can be stretched out or shrunk, inflated or deflated […] and that inflation and deflation may have an impact on meanings."[18]

Description as Practice

Analyzing through description involves a case study and corresponding research. Selecting the case or cases raises specific problems related to the question of the enigma being solved, or at the very least to the question of how an intriguing phenomenon is interpreted or explained.

As for the research, it requires a number of tools that will be discussed further in this book (in particular interviews, collecting data, analyzing texts and images, and using quantitative methods). The book will be limited to some indications regarding "participant observation" and forms of tracking directly associated with descriptive work in real-life situations. There are many applications in international relations, from analyzing a

negotiation or decision-making process to following up on a conference of the parties (COP), for instance.

First, as regards participant observation, there is its originality: one may observe without participating and participate without observing. Participant observation therefore introduces a combined practice in researching: observing while participating directly in the social reality one is studying. The term is thought to have been used for the first time by Joseph D. Lohman in 1937.[19] The technique implies the researcher's immersion in a social milieu which he is involved in just as the other members of the group or institution. This innovation is associated with the Chicago School, even though one of the first "participant observations" came out of a thesis presented at the University of Chicago but was originally from a Columbia University researcher, William Foot Whyte. In the book taken from his thesis, William F. Whyte relates the highly original position he has adopted. He decides to blend in with the groups that he is studying, in this instance the gangs in a neighborhood of Italian immigrants in Boston (renamed Cornerville), and fully participate in their lives in order to grasp the importance of relations between individuals and the weight of the group structure on the individual.[20] The work is carried out through note-taking and putting new ideas to the test (possibly discussing them within the research group), which then triggers new observations and so on until the conclusions seem well founded (or until forced to do so when research funds and time have been exhausted).

Tracking is an observation method endorsed by ethnomethodology, a trend in American sociology in the 1960s.[21] Because social phenomena do not preexist us, but are products of the constant activity of men and women, social reality is first of all a process of construction. To grasp it, one must track the actors, a bit like a detective, in order to show how they construct their activities. Tracking represents a form of participant observation that implies a familiarity with the milieu being studied, but not exactly immersion. The "tracker" retains a certain degree of externality and mobility with regard to the situations he is observing. Lastly, with nuances varying according to the objects studied, I would mention the different forms of tracing consisting in "tracking" a process, interactions or practices between actors in order to pinpoint their logic and dynamics.[22]

Representation Through Artifacts

This second phase of research is both a prerequisite and a recurrent position. Representations fall within the scope of international relations because they are social-political-transnational-globalized and concern groups and the

individuals within them. The question is then to know how to position one's research approach both within the scope of that knowledge and within one's situation as a producer of representations. As in the description phase, the representation phase involves deconstructing a research theme into empirically identifiable objects without foregoing the highly illuminating changes in scale for such empirical objects. This process of reducing complexity must also preserve disquiet, a critical shift and openness to the other social sciences. For example, any research on so-called Muslim societies or actors cannot be started before addressing social representations (on the one hand, stigmatizing trends, essentialism, culturalism, xenophobia and ignorance, and on the other hand, attributions and assertions involving identity, etc.) that draw on various social sciences, history in particular.

The second phase consists in "grasping" the subject under discussion. The simple question "Where are Muslims in the world?" already raises several issues. In addition to data collection (valid for all questions of religion and identity[23]), spatial representation answering the question "where?" (i.e., on a map) will produce two very different representations depending on how it is constructed. This is illustrated in Fig. 1.1.

The upper map dealing with absolute values shows that a majority of Muslims are Asian and many of them are minorities within their country, while the (lower) percentage map points to the fact that societies with a majority of Muslims are Arabic, Persian or Turkish.

The third phase consists in a change of scale (within a country), examining diversification within Islam (Sunnites/Shiites, etc.), articulation and involvement with other factors such as identity, economics, politics and social issues.

The concept of "social representation," growing out of Durkheim's sociological work on collective representations around religions and myths, was picked up again and reworked starting in the 1960s in psycho-sociology, psychoanalysis, linguistics, anthropology, history and political sociology.[24] A relative trans-disciplinary consensus defines the concept as a form of socially elaborated and shared knowledge that contributes to constructing a reality common to social groups with multiple functions: cognitive constructions, interpretive frameworks, guides for behavior and identity functions. These shifting and changing representations move around with increasing fluidity, emanating today from "specialists": teachers, the media, political discourse and marketing, entrepreneurs of identity, NGOs, whistleblowers, scientists in the social sciences and hard sciences, as well as more or less aggregated individuals using extremely powerful and intricate channels

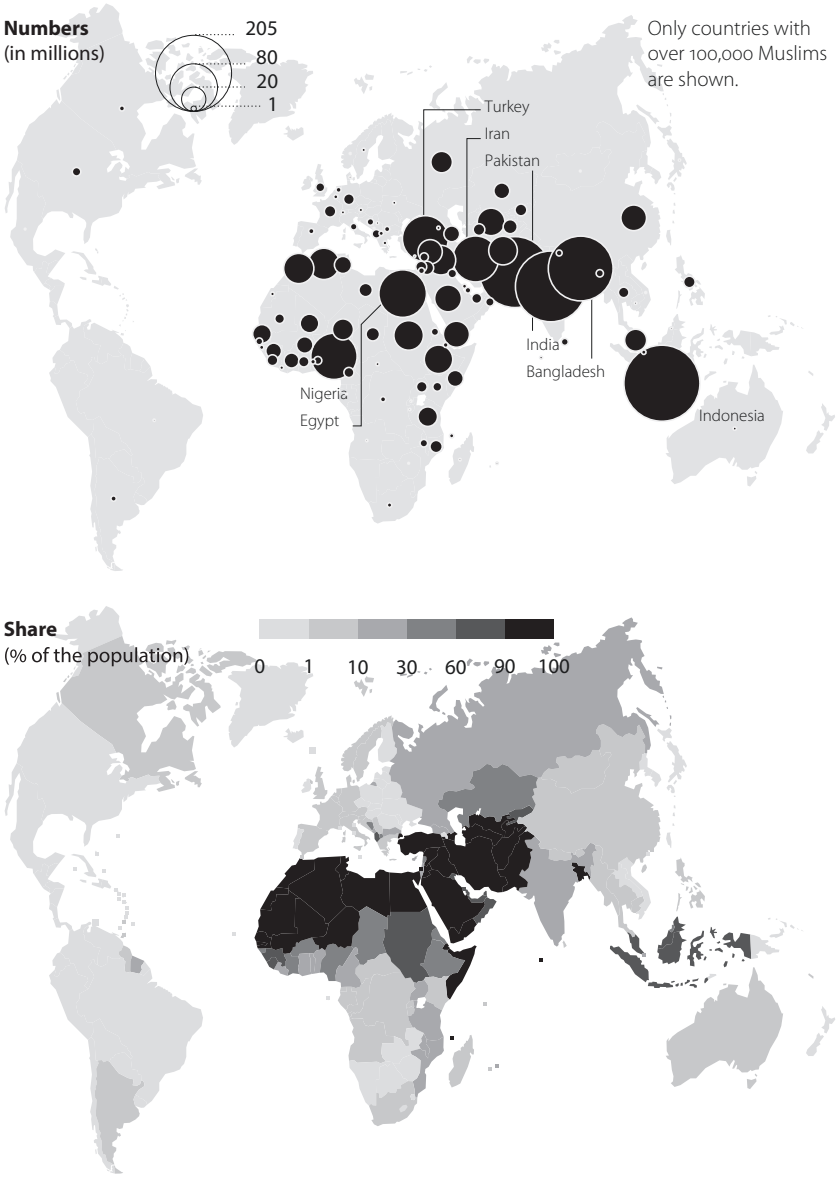


Fig. 1.1 Muslims in the world in 2010
Source: Pew Research Center's forum on religion and public life, *The Future of the Global Muslim Population*, January 2011. © FNSP. Sciences Po, Atelier de cartographie, 2015

for disseminating information. We are seeing an iconic flood of static images (paintings, posters, press photographs by "amateurs" and professionals, diagrams of all sorts, charts and maps) as well as moving images (videos, films and computer graphics).

These mobile representations—both local and global (glocal), massive, immediate, ubiquitous, with a high diversification of producers and receivers—have raised totally new issues and modified the researcher's position in every phase of his study, from investigation to analysis and writing. The use of the hashtag #JeSuisCharlie on Twitter—depicting the geography and rhythm of global mobilizations, with a corresponding response in the numerous demonstrations in Muslim countries—is a good example of these new sources that researchers can no longer ignore.

Just as it is important to be aware of the work that has been done on social representations, it is also a good idea not to overlook the categories of "space" and "time" underpinning the representations analyzed, interpreted and produced. One should be ever mindful of a Braudelian temporality where history almost stands still, moving at a slow pace or in short, jerky fluctuations, like historicity (the capacity of actors in a society or community to connect the present with history, a time that is not neutral and is meaningful[25]). One good example is Patrick Garcia's work on the bicentennial of the French Revolution and the social function of commemoration when, lacking a national narrative and plan, elements of the past are called upon to recompose a national image.

As for spatial representations, very common in France, they are still affected by a common understanding coming from geography over a hundred years old.[26] The Vidalian school overvalues territoriality over reticularity.[27] Although the epistemological crisis in the 1970s ushered geography into the social sciences and its death heralded by economists never occurred, reflections on types of distance—varying from zero (information overload) to vastness (places excluded from the entire globalization process)—metrics (topographical and topological) and the constant sliding of scales are little known. This is attested by the weight in editorial and media circles of "geopoliticians" who explain every crisis with a prepackaged cocktail regarding power/territories/resources/identities or with the amazement of European politicians at the acceleration of mobility and their inability to envision a form of governance for migrations other than a national vision involving territory and security. This overall deficit of social and scientific representations of generalized mobility is both an obstacle and an opportunity for international relations researchers.

The latter are therefore asked to have a command of the entire range of choices and tools governing the new language that informs the actors' imaginations and practices, in order to analyze them and use them in their own output. In their decoding work, they will need to rely on a culture of the semiology of images[28] seen and not read (with a very different way of functioning from speech or text) and on a culture of statistical data: knowing how to look for, compare, criticize, deal with and represent them. All this material collected and analyzed knowingly is a precious contribution to the research, opening up the case study to other comparable cases, better interview preparation and the reinforcement of demonstrative capabilities.

Interpreting

Through interpretation one can reconstruct the elements collected and selected during research into a meaningful whole. We see it as a third phase of research. It is a similar process to going beyond the juxtaposed images in a film in an attempt to understand its explicit and/or implicit plot. Every image (every element of research) reveals one or more meanings, but the whole has its own signification[29]: this is the task to which one must apply oneself.

Explaining and Understanding

The interpretive approach is different from research into causality. The latter corresponds more to the model of the natural sciences attempting to explain phenomena through universal laws. Quantitative methods come under this explanatory approach by identifying variables to be explained (dependent variables) and explanatory variables (independent variables that make dependent variables vary).

While the two approaches are not mutually exclusive (as we shall see later in this book), an interpretive approach may spontaneously appear better adapted to analyzing social phenomena (and international phenomena are social phenomena), because the latter produce meanings that remain full of subjectivity: a decision about foreign policy, diplomatic conduct, military action, an international statistic, and so on. We will therefore attempt to understand the phenomenon studied by attempting to reproduce the most plausible meaning(s).

For Wilhelm Dilthey (1833–1911), to whom we owe this distinction between explanation and comprehension—taken up by Max Weber

(1864–1920) in his "comprehensive" sociology—without this interpretive dimension the human sciences would be missing their subject.[30] The term "comprehending" (*Verstehen*), central in Weberian sociology, is presented by Raymond Aron with the utmost clarity.[31] As he points out, "in the case of human behavior, comprehension may be immediate: the teacher understands the behavior of the students attending his class, a traveler understands why a taxi driver stops at a red light. […] Social behavior is characterized by an intelligible texture which the sciences of human reality are capable of comprehending. That intelligibility in no way implies that the sociologist or historian understands behavior intuitively. Quite on the contrary, he reconstructs it gradually through texts and documents. For a sociologist, subjective meaning is both immediately perceptible and ambiguous."

Trying to interpret therefore leads to a preference for the question of how over that of why. The two questions are connected, but they take us in different directions, as Christopher Clark explains in his study on the start of the First World War: "The question of *how* invites us to look closely at the sequences of interactions that produced certain outcomes. By contrast, the question of *why* invites us to go in search of remote and categorical causes: imperialism, nationalism, armaments, alliances, high finance, ideas of national honour, the mechanics of mobilization. The *why* approach brings a certain analytical clarity, but it also has a distorting effect, because it creates the illusion of a steadily building causal pressure; the factors pile up on top of each other pushing down on the events; political actors become mere executors of forces long established and beyond their control."[32]

In other words, there is no predetermined course of events. At the most one could assert a likely orientation that as a result would require a full understanding of how the actors have validated, modified and neutralized it. Christopher Clark concludes on this point: "the aim is rather to let the *why* answers grow, as it were, out of the *how* answers, rather than the other way around."[33]

Meticulous Interpretation

It is not our ambition here to explore all the richness and complexity of a philosophical and epistemological tradition that has pondered over the art of interpretation (hermeneutics). All the human sciences are concerned, and for some of them, such as psychoanalysis, it is their "methodological

specificity."[34] At this stage we will settle for Paul Ricœur's comment that "to say something of something is, in the complete and strong sense of the term, to interpret."[35]

But you can see immediately that there are many ways to "say something of something" (texts, images, reports, etc.), and that interpreting is never unequivocal. It is a question of controlling the interpretive work in order to draw out the interpretation that seems the most convincing among all the possible interpretations. Here, international relations theories can provide a framework for interpretation.[36] But not necessarily; their paradigms may turn out to be too general. In that case, the empirical work should not be bound to them and ought to produce its own conclusions by proposing new concepts and challenging their theories.

There are rules that should go along with meticulous interpretation work:

Contextualizing. This requirement has already been seen in the description phase and becomes crucial here. It is important to understand that the phenomena observed do not exist outside the meanings the actors give them. Therefore, to quote the anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1926–2006), one must produce "thick description"[37] in order to reproduce the political, economic and social realities—national and international—that will make it possible to situate what the actors say and do within their environment at a given time. The study may combine the "micro" identification of contextual effects in the positions, decisions and actions of the actors concerned with a more "macro" consideration of the context as an acting force in international relations. On this last point, Gary Goertz proposes three "modes of context": the context may act as a "cause" (for instance, by triggering a war), as an "obstacle" (for example, by preventing war) or as a space in which meanings change, for instance, insofar as a certain level of military expenditures will be interpreted differently depending on the context in which they occur.[38]

Do not make any assumptions. This is a common methodological caveat, but which requires being doubly careful during the interpretation phase. No convention, practice or institution should be assigned a "preconceived" meaning.[39] The analyst must not prejudge what he observes but rather construct an interpretation based on the elements in his study that must be categorized and organized in a fully substantiated manner.

Avoid value judgments. This caveat, similar to the previous recommendation, cautions against normative judgments, articles of faith or moral opinions taken as objective arguments. The researcher must bear in mind the Weberian distinction between personal, subjective value judgment and

value reference, "a process of selecting and organizing in objective science."[40] It is probably mistaken and naively positivist to believe that one can compartmentalize the researcher's stance and the citizen's position in a watertight fashion. However, rigorous research work must strive to do so as far as possible. This does not preclude the researcher from mentioning his preferences, or from recommending specific actions, but only at the conclusion of research conducted under conditions and according to procedures that are as objective as possible.

In a broader sense, one should strive to produce a "creative interpretation,"[41] solidly founded on a particular case study but likely to lead to broader proposals. Indeed, the researcher must always ask her/himself why a reader not interested in their particular research subject might want to read his text. She/he will see that the answer lies in the fact that research produces something other than a solution to a particular enigma, offering leads for reflecting on other comparable cases or for questions of general interest to international relations studies.

In conclusion, we may bear in mind that among several possible interpretations, the one proposed is never definitive: it only provides reasonable answers (founded on reason and logic) to the questions asked. It is only "true" in that it adds a certain degree of certainty. It is open to discussion and rebuttal: scientific debate may continue.

Notes

1. Jessie Martin, *Décrire le film de cinéma. Au départ de l'analyse* (Paris, Presses Sorbonne Nouvelle, 2011), pp. 13–16.
2. Émile Zola: "I would define description as an environment that determines and completes man," and on Théophile Gautier (1811–1872), one of the supporters of the Parnassian "art for art's sake" doctrine introduced in the preface to his novel *Mademoiselle de Maupin* (1835): "there is nothing here but things, no voice, no human thrill arises from this dead land," "De la description," quoted in Philippe Hamon, *La Description littéraire* (Paris, Macula, 1991), pp. 157–158.
3. A trend in historical research started by Lucien Febvre and Marc Bloch in the 1920s around the creation of a review destined for a long life: *Annales d'histoire économique et sociale*. It had a pragmatic orientation "not through articles about methods or theoretical dissertation [but] through examples and facts," quoted in Christian Delacroix, François Dosse and Patrick Garcia, *Les Courants historiques en France*, *XIXe–XXe siècle* (Paris, Gallimard, 2007), p. 221.

4. Delacroix, Dosse and Garcia, *Les Courants historiques en France*, *XIXe–XXe*, p. 312.
5. Howard S. Becker was a student of Everett C. Hughes, who was a student of Robert Park, a student of Georg Simmel.
6. Nicolas Herpin and Nicolas Jonas, *La Sociologie américaine. Controverses et innovations* (Paris, La Découverte, 2011), pp. 21–33.
7. Pierre Tripier, "Une sociologie pragmatique," preface to W. I. Thomas and F. Znaniecki, *Le Paysan polonais en Europe et en Amérique* (Paris, Nathan, 1998), p. 27.
8. Howard S. Becker, *Tricks of the Trade, How to Think about Your Research While You're Doing It* (Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1998), p. 79.
9. The expression is from Erwin Panofsky who believed there is a practical impossibility to do formal descriptions, strictly speaking. Indeed, for him description departs from a purely formal sphere to reach a region of senses. Erwin Panofsky nonetheless grants that among stratas of subject matter or meaning, some are less interpretative than others. Furthermore, we may assume that, contrary to the social conduct that is our focus here, describing a work of art (which is Panofsky's aim) enters more directly into interpretation relative to the history of forms. Erwin Panofsky, *Perspective as Symbolic Form* (New York, Zone Books, 1975).
10. Donatella della Porta and Michael Keating (eds), *Approaches and Methodologies in the Social Sciences. A Pluralistic Perspective* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008), in particular Chap. 11 (Donatella della Porta, "Comparative Analysis: Case-Oriented versus Variable-Oriented Research," pp. 198–222) and Chap. 12 (Pascal Venesson, "Case Studies and Process Tracing: Theories and Practices," pp. 223–239).
11. Howard S. Becker, *What about Mozart? What about Murder? Reasoning from Cases* (Chicago (Ill.), Chicago University Press, 2014).
12. Description involves freeing oneself from opinions, seen here as "epistemological obstacles," Gaston Bachelard, *La Formation de l'esprit scientifique* (Paris, Vrin, 1972 [1934]), pp. 13–22.
13. We will follow Howard S. Becker's recommendation "to let the case define the concept," concepts being "empirical generalizations," *Tricks of the Trade*, pp. 123 and 128.
14. Becker, *Tricks of the Trade*, p. 83. Work similar to Clifford Geertz's "thick description," which opens up a wide variety of meanings and reminds us that the description-representation-interpretation sequence is neither compartmentalized nor mechanical.
15. A way of illustrating the "serendipity" analyzed by Robert K. Merton, *Éléments de méthode sociologique* (Paris, Plon, 1953), pp. 43–49: an unexpected discovery triggers the researcher's curiosity and leads to a new hypothesis through an unforeseen shortcut.

16. Karl Weick, "The Generative Properties of Richness," *Academy of Management Journal*, 50(1) (2007): 14–19, quoted by Hervé Dumez, "La description: point aveugle de la recherche qualitative," *Le Libellio d'Aegis*, 6 (2) (2010): 41.
17. Becker, *Tricks of the Trade*, p. 44.
18. Dumez, "La description": 86.
19. During the annual meeting of the American Sociological Society in Chicago, a speech reproduced in Joseph D. Lohman, "The Participant Observer in Community Studies," *American Sociological Review*, 2 (6) (1937): 890–897.
20. William Foote Whyte, *Street Corner Society. The Social Structure of an Italian Slum* (Chicago (Ill.), University of Chicago Press, 1943).
21. Harold Garfinkel, *Studies in Ethnomethodology* (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1984); Alain Coulon, *L'Ethnométhodologie* (Paris, PUF, 1987).
22. Jeffrey T. Checkel, "Process Tracing," in Audie Klotz and Deepa Prakash (eds), *Qualitative Methods in International Relations. A Pluralist Guide* (New York (N. Y.), Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp. 114–127; Vincent Pouillot, "Practice Tracing," in Andrew Bennet and Jeffrey T. Checkel (eds), *Process Tracing: From Metaphor to Analytic Tool* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 237–259.
23. See Chap. 12 of this book.
24. See in particular the work of Émile Durkheim, Jean Piaget, Michel Foucault, Georges Duby, Serge Moscovici and Denise Jodelet.
25. Christian Delacroix, François Dosse and Patrick Garcia (eds.), *Historicités* (Paris, La Découverte, 2009).
26. Marie-Claire Robic, Jean-Louis Tissier and Philippe Pinchemel, *Deux siècles de géographie française. Une anthologie* (Paris, CTHS Géographie, 2011).
27. Jacques Lévy (ed.), *L'Invention du monde. Une géographie de la mondialisation* (Paris, Presses de Sciences Po, 2008).
28. See Chaps. 4 and 5 of this book.
29. A particular illustration of a more general observation formulated by Durkheim: "the whole does not equal the sum of its parts; it is something different whose properties differ from those displayed by the parts from which it is formed," in Émile Durkheim, *The Rules of Sociological Method* (New York: The Free Press, 1982), p. 128.
30. Sylvie Mesure, "Dilthey Wilhelm (1833–1911)," Encyclopædia Universalis (Available at www-universalis-edu-com.acces-distant.sciences-po.fr/).
31. Raymond Aron, *Main Currents in Sociological Thought* (Penguin Books, Baltimore, 1967), p. 191.
32. Christopher Clark, *The Sleepwalkers* (New York: Harper, 2013), p. xxix.
33. Clark, *The Sleepwalkers*, p. xxx.

34. Pierre Fédida, "Interprétation," Encyclopædia Universalis (Available at www.universalis-edu.com/).
35. See also, Paul Ricœur, *Freud and Philosophy, An Essay on Interpretation* (New Haven & London, Yale University Press, 1970), p. 22.
36. Within the range of theories available, constructivism occupies a special place since it is both a theory and a method for analyzing knowledge. See Alexandre MacLeod, Évelyne Dufault and Frédérick-Guillaume Dufour (eds.), *Relations internationales. Théories et concepts* (Montreal, Athéna Éditions, 2008). For a critical viewpoint on the excesses of the constructivist approach in the social sciences, see Ian Hacking, *Entre science et réalité. La construction sociale de quoi?* (Paris, La Découverte, 2001).
37. Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures. Selected Essays* (New York (N.Y.), Basic Books, 1973). This brings to mind the famous distinction proposed by Gilbert Ryle (1900–1976) between a "raw fact" (contracting eyelid) and a wink, which involves the existence of a code or convention for the contraction to be identified as a sign. See also Paul Costey, "Description et interprétation chez Clifford Geertz. La thick description chez Clifford Geertz," *Tracés. Revue de sciences humaines*, 4 (2003) (Available at http://traces.revues.org/).
38. Gary Goertz, *Contexts of International Politics* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1994).
39. "In other words that there is agreement on the questions that are worth asking," to quote Pierre Bourdieu; see in particular "Public opinion does not exist," in Pierre Bourdieu, *Sociology in Question* (London: Sage Publications, 1995), p. 149.
40. Aron, *Main Currents in Sociological Thought*, p. 194.
41. The expression is from Paul Ricœur, *Philosophie de la volonté, tome 2: Finitude et Culpabilité* (Paris, Aubier, 1960), p. 486.

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CHAPTER 2

Constructing Subjects and Comparison in International Relations Studies

Thomas Lindemann

Abstract The purpose of this contribution is to steer between the idiographic and nomothetic poles, and to present in action the method of structured, focalized and controlled comparisons that are liable to produce "contextualized" "intermediary" theories. I will outline the explanative potential of "chrono-logics" and specific contexts. The emphasis will at first be put on the merits and limits of "particularistic" conceptions of social phenomena, then on underlining the advantages and problems of "covering law," an ambition of the dominant approaches. Finally, I will demonstrate the focalized and controlled comparison method and will show how it provides a way of analyzing international crises between times of war and peace without misrecognizing the particularity of "cases."

Comparing international subjects is not a given. For some, all comparisons are problematic, particularly in the international context, where the actors and variables often represent complex aggregates. Traditionally, criticism of comparison comes from historians focusing on the uncompromising singularity of social phenomena. Comparing Jean-Baptiste Duroselle's diplomatic history with political science manuals on international relations,[1] one

T. Lindemann (✉)
École Polytechique, University Versailles Saint Quentin, Versailles, France

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can easily see this opposition between factual history (essentially descriptive and rejecting any comparative perspective) and a "sociology" of international relations that is more mindful of concepts and "regularities." Traditional criticism of comparison by historians emphasizing "singularities" has been complemented by "constructivist" and "postmodern" authors who reject positivist epistemology due to the discursive density of social phenomena. In the same way, "critical" authors often think it less important to explain than to disclose and carefully describe dominance mechanisms. Thus, many studies have been devoted to "performative" speech acts. In this sense, the purpose of the research often shifts toward what the dominant actors make of reality, abandoning the kind of regularity to which the latter responds.

On a completely different level, but one that is very influential in political science departments in the English-speaking world, the spatial and temporal context of social phenomena is perceived as secondary. Consequently, a comparison of cases by establishing correlations through multiple regressions would constitute the most noble objective of "true" scientific research in international relations. A large number of journals, among the most well-reputed in the field such as the *Journal of Peace Research*, the *Journal of Conflict Resolution* or even *International Organization* reflect that approach. The protagonists of this kind of "comparative" framework quite clearly feel that the natural sciences and their nomothetic orientation are a model for political analysts.

The purpose of my contribution is to steer between the "idiographic" and "nomothetic" poles, and to challenge a comparative method using targeted and structured comparisons that are liable to produce "contextualized" "intermediary" theories. The emphasis will at first be on the merits and limits of "particularistic" conceptions of social phenomena, then to underline the advantages and problems in "covering law," an ambition of dominant approaches. Finally, I will demonstrate the targeted and controlled comparison method and will show how it provides a way of analyzing international crises between times of war and peace.

The Idiographic Approach and Its Limits

How can we identify the "historicist" approach with regard to comparisons? Perhaps by drawing from the German historian Leopold Ranke's assertion that history never repeats itself. In this view, each event is so singular that it becomes impossible to establish consistencies. A historian's

construction of a subject is most often driven by the desire to describe as precisely as possible.[2] In the late nineteenth century, German academics Wilhelm Windelband and Heinrich Wickert established the distinction between nomothetic and idiographic sciences. The former attempted to set up laws such as the natural sciences, whereas the latter—*Geisteswissenschaften* (the humanities)—were designed to reproduce an event's individuality. However, emphasizing the singularity of historical phenomena is not an atheoretical position. Among historians, those who defend this position often implicitly suppose that statesmen and their personalities are what determine the course of history. Moreover, it is easy to prove that any selection of facts involves a certain theory. Writing history *wie es eigentlich gewesen ist* (just as it happened) implies a certain reconstruction. The opposition between comparative political science and "singularizing" history is thus not that of "theory" versus "description," but rather between "singularizing" explanations and "nomothetic" approaches. Furthermore, there are historic schools such as the École des Annales in France or the Gesellschaftsgeschichte in Germany that strive to go beyond purely factual history in order to highlight the importance of structures—deep forces—such as economic structures and mindsets. The interpretations proposed by these schools go beyond particular cases at times. Even so, the historian's most "modern" priority consists first of all in explaining a phenomenon as such. His work is given credit if it explains the First World War—which is of course considerable.

What would be the worst criticism toward historians? Being "remiss" in examining the facts. However, to their credit, we must recognize that most of their work is characterized by lengthy archival studies. There can be another issue when in his case analysis a historian proceeds more by comparing than by identifying the sequences preceding what he is attempting to understand. By taking this perspective too far, one indeed arrives at the result that the origin explains everything. While historians are generally skeptical about comparison, they nevertheless often compare the past and the present in order to establish "continuities" or "breaks." As for comparatist political analysts, they often risk misjudging the "depth" of individual cases, and there is some legitimacy in the idea that certain articles in major international relations journals are based on what are sometimes clumsy factual errors.

Based on this criticism of historians, one could highlight the two main challenges involved in all comparisons. The first consists in answering the objection of the singularity of social phenomena. Indeed, can we suppose

that "revolutions" and wars are always singular? We can ascribe a more "postmodern tonality" to this objection of "singularization," stressing the fact that all "contexts" are based on a "text" that must first be deciphered. The second challenge involves the reliability of the sources used in the comparison. This second criticism is similar to "micro-sociologists who criticize" international relations. The latter often feel that in the absence of a field study, interviews, questionnaires and participant observation, we cannot really identify a solid empirical basis for "revealing" dominance phenomena.

It is not easy to answer these two objections, and it must be acknowledged that comparison is necessarily based on an abstraction or a "subtraction." The more cases a comparison covers, the less concrete it is and the less it "explains" particular cases. The singularity of social phenomena only makes comparison impossible if one tries to understand the phenomena "as a whole." Thus, even though the crises between Iraq and the United States in 2003 and between France and Libya in 2011 were characterized by different contexts, it is possible to single out certain aspects, for example the policy of dissuasion and its impact on the "unfolding of the crisis" ("radicalization" or not). The historian's criticism according to which political analysts make "reckless" comparisons is often based on an absolutist ideal of empirical plenitude. This approach runs against cumulative knowledge. Naturally, a complete explanation of each case rests on a set of non-reproducible factors. Moreover, although the historian's approach is more synthetic, often "multi-causal" (regime, demographic and economic forces, collective psychology or a configuration of the international system, etc.) and at first glance less dogmatic than the approach endorsed by political analysts, it may advocate, promote and further a certain intellectual laziness by rejecting any hierarchy of causal factors. Furthermore, a hierarchy of this kind supposes a method comparing factors among themselves. In short, if the goal is to test a more general "theory," and if the researcher is interested in more "generalizable" variables, comparison is possible and necessary. In that event, it is less a matter of understanding the case than observing how a "variable" "generally" affects phenomena.

The second objection is more "pragmatic." The more cases retained, the harder it will be for the researcher to master the "scientific" literature, however basic. The work of historians cannot always be used as a "data bank," for many historic cases are highly disputed. However, I think there are ways to avoid the dilemma between scholarly isolation and comparative superficiality. Without limiting the number of cases compared, one may

choose those that are relatively well documented and consensual among "political analyst" specialists and historians. The political analyst will ideally conduct his own empirical surveys to develop a "sense" of what can be compared. A researcher with little experience in the "field" risks choosing fanciful indicators for the "variables" in the case study.

Nomothetic Comparison

The "behaviorist" school, still influential in the United States and in Scandinavian countries (see the *Journal of Conflict Resolution*), proposes a methodology that contrasts with the historians', founded on hypothetical-deductive reasoning. Whereas the latter are generally satisfied with studying a single case and making use of diplomatic documents, dissertations, personal accounts and so on, the behaviorist bases his analyses on a broad sample of cases and then subjects them to statistical correlation.[3] In order to obtain a sufficient number of cases he may be rather lax in defining the phenomena studied. In extreme cases, a world war is thus often counted in the same way as a low-intensity military intervention like the American invasion of Grenada in 1983. The equivalent of this imprecise quantification can be found in the subject's approximate construction. Thus, "variables" like "democratic regime" and "war" are not always placed in their historic and inter-subjective context. "Nomothetic" studies implicitly presuppose that the "significance" actors attribute to social phenomena has little influence on their "existence." And yet, one may consider that perceptions of a war change based on its potential destructiveness, for example the invention of nuclear weapons.

Comparatists must first of all choose cases. A preliminary behaviorist orientation favors a method of agreement consisting in choosing cases that share the same results in order to observe common variables. But this methodological approach does not provide a way to know if the absence of independent variables represents a condition sufficient to produce a given phenomena. For other actors that share the same orientation, it is therefore important to add cases where the dependent variable differs (according to John Stuart Mill's method of difference), in order to confirm if the absence of x (independent variable) also leads to a change in the dependent variable y. The advantage of the n comparison, in other words of a very large number of cases, generally makes it possible to test "covariations," thanks to a sufficiently "representative" sample. In carrying out research, n case studies are highly useful for conducting preliminary tests

if two or several phenomena possibly have a causal link. If there is a "correlation" between "variables," the researcher can then explore causal mechanisms more in detail through a case study.

This nomothetic comparative approach can be illustrated concretely by examining Mathew A. Baum and Philip. K. Potter's book.[4] The authors wonder why certain democracies are liable to become involved in not strictly defensive wars such as the war in Iraq in 2003. They draw our attention to the fact that democracies are "heterogeneous" actors, and detect between them significant institutional differences, generally ignored in the literature on democratic peace: certain democratic leaders are "constrained" by public opinion and certain "institutions," while those in other democracies manage to protect themselves against them.

By comparing n cases, Mathew A. Baum and Philip B. K. Potter's study succeeds in establishing correlations that would amount to regularities, at least for democracies in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Baum and Potter first identify and operationalize the "dependent variable": "conflict initiation." The period focused on in the study runs from 1965 to 2006. The unit of analysis is the "dyad" or pair of states. The dependent variable is binary and coded 1 if State A initiates an armed conflict in a given year. In the same way, the authors have taken a rather similar second dependent variable selected from a collective project pertaining to a study from the International Crisis Behavior Project. This project detects if State A initiates an international crisis against State B in a given year.[5] Initiating a crisis is understood as "an act […] perceived by another actor as a threat to his fundamental values that increases the likelihood of military hostilities with a limited response time." This variable is crucial to the extent that the term "initiation" clearly indicates an "aggressive" aspect. If this definition is applied to a specific case, it quickly becomes apparent how complex it is to determine exactly "who" initiated a crisis. The difficulty resides in the fact that the number of observations for the dependent variable is incredibly high (over 923,534 observations about a possible initiation of a crisis for the years in a dyad) but Baum and Potter can draw on a multitude of existing databanks.

The issue is stimulating for the authors. They propose opening the "black box" in democracies in an attempt to understand whether or not the media, political parties and the electoral system foster the decision to become involved in armed conflicts. The key argument is based on a distinction between democracies in which opposition and availability of information are low, and those where opposition as well as media and

public opinion are both present and influential. This issue is interesting because it opens channels of thought for a more fine-tuned theory on the initiation of wars. The thesis proposed is highly plausible: democratic regimes with a strong opposition and influential media face significant audience costs if they get involved in a war while "betraying" public opinion. This is a possible interpretation for the political defeat of the United States in Vietnam (1973) or of Israel in Lebanon (in 1982).

The authors operationalize political opposition through access to the media and freedom of the press. Here again, the authors propose empirical evidence to quantify their hypothesis such as the number of televisions or radios per thousand individuals or referencing the Freedom House database to quantify political freedom.

The authors recognize that comparative analyses of vast temporal sequences beyond specific areas represent a rather intangible panorama of empirical reality. For this reason they attempt to explain in a more detailed case study the divergence between Germany, the United Kingdom, Spain and Poland with respect to their involvement in Iraq. They refer to the existence of a strong "political opposition" and the media's resistance in Germany, and to its relative absence in the United Kingdom. Germany's non-involvement seems due as much to its "culture" of military restraint as to the transparency of information relating to "security." Case studies have shown the concrete function of institutional constraints in certain democracies.

The "n" comparison and the focus on a "master variable" enable researchers to move forward in formulating cumulative knowledge and in establishing more general theories. The risk in this approach would be of distorting individual cases to the point where they become unrecognizable. The nomothetic approach often characterizes contributions in American journals such as *International Organization* or the *Journal of Conflict Resolution*. Every theoretical article first reviews the different possible explanations, before refuting them one after the other, then presenting the right hypothesis through multiple regressions. This approach often reduces cases to one or two "variables" that explain a certain variation in the phenomena studied.

The "Comparative" Method Contextualized

Contrary to the preceding method, certain political analysts base their analyses on studying a very small number of cases like historians—the most famous example being Graham Allison's brilliant study of the Cuban

missile crisis.[6] However, the way a political analyst studies cases differs a great deal from the way a historian examines them. Indeed, for the political analyst a case is only interesting for its "typical" features. You could say he analyzes a case not for itself but as a pretext for "turning it into a generality." This comparative and more contextualized approach proposes developing intermediary theories, in other words ones that do not proceed by general assertions (trade promotes peace) but specify in which conditions and with what actors the hypotheses advanced seem to be confirmed.[7] Rather than arguing about if it is military might or economic power that determines hierarchy in international relations, this sort of approach proposes examining whether a response to that question might depend on other, often "intermediary" factors. For instance, isn't the "realist" theory more appropriate for certain regional situations (in East Asia more than in Western Europe today) and more relevant to the late nineteenth than to the late twentieth century? A political analyst must indeed "contextualize" the variables. He must ask himself whether a "democracy" at the dawn of the third millennium belongs to the same category as a "democracy" in the early nineteenth century.

Therefore, a political analyst cannot subscribe to the postulate of the uniqueness of phenomena. But he must confirm their comparability by keeping his interpretation modest. The political analyst can also learn from the historian's synthetic approach. Rather than analyzing the impact of a single variable, it is more stimulating to examine combinations. For example, instead of examining the hypothesis according to which servicemen are more bellicose than "diplomats," it is more interesting to see how they are bellicose when their corporate interests are threatened in an "authoritarian" context marked by tensions with neighboring countries. These intermediary theories also give more weight to "inter-subjective" variables such as epistemes, international norms, belief systems, false perceptions, organizational cultures[8] and identity building. These more complex "variables" require a thorough and basically qualitative empirical investigation.

An empirical illustration of this comparative approach can be seen in a project I am conducting on international crises between peace and war.[9] In this study, an attempt is made to detect the influence of six policies on the political unit that triggered a crisis: dissuasive postures, "reassuring" postures, economic sanctions, economic rewards, symbolic sanctions and politics of recognition. It involves first seeing what kind of policy preceded a crisis (de)radicalization sequence. As an example, while the study notes that explicit dissuasive postures by State A toward an "authoritarian" State

B have led in all cases to State B triggering a crisis, and even to the use of armed force by that state, I can confirm that dissuasion against that type of state is bound to fail.

My methodology draws on Alexander George's method of structured, focused comparison. Statistical studies of n cases have many drawbacks. The greatest is the often-superficial comparison of cases that are not necessarily comparable.[10] For this reason, Alexander George proposes comparing a small number of cases in a structured, focused way, the guiding principle always being to establish concomitant variations, even if their numerical weakness excludes any statistical ambitions.[11] In his book he therefore studies a dozen cases of international crises between major powers. The cases are divergent in terms of the dependent variable: two crises resulting in war (the July 1914 crisis and the crisis preceding the Six Day War) and two crises with a peaceful outcome (the Cuban missile crisis in 1962 and the crisis between India and Pakistan in 1998). While the author defends the thesis that the outcome of a crisis depends on civilian authorities controlling the military, he shows that the outcome of war crises is "correlated" with weak control by civilian authorities, whereas the two peaceful crises differ through the civilian authorities' constant interference in military operations.

My selection of cases draws in part from the research on concomitant "variations." For my study, I have thus retained cases that constituted a divergence regarding dynamics of "peace" and "war": two cases with a hostile outcome (the Gulf War and the conflict between Moldavia and Transnistria); two cases with a peaceful outcome (the Moroccan crisis in 1905–1906 and the crisis between Taiwan and China); two cases where there was recourse to limited force beneath the war threshold, then a relative pacification (India-Pakistan 2002, India-Sri Lanka). In short, I have attempted to analyze the dynamic of escalation and the triggering of armed conflicts. In six cases I have tried to understand why a State A initiates a crisis, and why it accepts or triggers a war. In the same way, I have studied why in one case war was avoided and why in other cases the recourse to limited force was not followed by war. How can this "divergence" be explained?

A first approach consists in establishing concomitant variations. Studying a single case also lends itself to establishing concomitant variations. To confirm the thesis of a link between recognition policies and appeasing international crises, it is possible to break a crisis down into different sequences corresponding to variable degrees of recognition, in order to see

if that variability goes along with an intensification of international crises. Thus Franca Loewener's study shows that it is only when France and the United Kingdom recognized Germany's status as a major power that the 1905 crisis was pacified.[12] A researcher examining a single case must be mindful of "chronological correlations." All historians are theoretically familiar with this approach. If the researcher claims there is a link between dissuasive postures and German aggressiveness, he must clearly establish that strengthened Franco-British relations corresponded to increased German aggressiveness, measured for instance in terms of an expansion in military expenditures, provocative statements and so on.

A second step in confirming any hypothesis lies in the case study and the process tracing method that includes an analysis of sequences and "causal mechanisms" (usually referring to the leaders' beliefs). The objective involves tracing the stages by which A is the cause of B.[13] The causal process often resembles a game of dominos: one domino falling makes another fall, which makes a third one fall, until the final outcome.

Finally, all the contributions apply a congruence test, comparing the thesis retained to alternative explanations to show the relevance of their hypothesis. Researchers can determine in advance what will be the signs of a dissuasive policy or one of recognition and observe their respective weight in the evolution of a crisis and in the decision-makers' discourse and private correspondence.

This method of controlled comparison is not perfect either, entailing certain risks. The biggest challenge for a researcher involves choosing "difficult" cases for testing the hypotheses proposed. In other words, this method runs the risk of only choosing cases that validate a given theoretical perspective. Lastly, formulating more sophisticated, fine-tuned intermediary theories presupposes the existence of more general theories that are usually based on "n" cases.

Conclusion

Comparison, mindful of socio-history, provides an opportunity to develop general and intermediary theories. Unlike general theories (whose formulation is often necessary, at least at the onset of research), intermediary theories articulate the limits of their validity as much in time as in space. Clearly such conceptualization of an "international" subject is far more complex than any behaviorist definitions. How can we explain, for example, that trade promotes integration in Europe but not yet (?) in East Asia?

A historical mindset that is sensitive to nuances and singularity can help answer these questions.

Furthermore, such contextualized comparisons make it possible to relativize international relations theories, still too focused on "systemic factors" that elude human control. They enable us to further examine the "variables of action" and unspoken assumptions)—behind "human" behavior. For a historian, it is normal to consider that random factors such as a statesman's diplomatic skills determine international politics to a large extent. On the other hand, political analysts turn their attention exclusively to impersonal variables such as the configuration of power and political regimes. More modest and complex theories on the types of phenomena and human friction would thus be desirable. In any case they would provide a way of contradicting the decision-makers who accuse universities of only supplying unusable knowledge when they assert that a "dissuasive" policy helps in avoiding aggression in 60% of cases. It is worth noting that they usually require a comparative study of cases and contexts that are not always included in databanks.

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3. Robert Goodin and Hans-Dieter Klingemann (eds), *A New Handbook of Political Science* (New York (N. Y.), Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 10–23.
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PART II

Discussing Some Resources and How to Deal with Them

CHAPTER 3

Consulting Foreign Affairs Archives in France and America

Una Bergmane

Abstract This chapter explains the possibilities that the use of archival sources opens for the advancement of international relations research. It gives an overview of the structure and modus operandi of French and US Diplomatic archives and explains the legal procedures that should be undertaken in order to obtain access to still-classified documents. In the conclusion some practical tips for the first steps in primary source research are given.

Diplomatic archives are often perceived as the exclusive domain of historians, suggesting that the sources they choose are what distinguish them from political analysts. However, nothing could be further from the truth. As Jack S. Levy explains, it is rather the objectives of their research that differentiate historians and political analysts.[1] The former strive to understand specific events, their time and context. As for the latter, they study major events and formulate theories that are applicable in different historical and geographical contexts. Historians produce explanatory narratives, while political analysts create theories. That doesn't prevent them from having common areas of study. As Jack S. Levy has underlined, political

U. Bergmane (✉)
Mario Einaudi Center, International Studies Cornell University, Ithaca, NY, USA

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analysts working on international relations (IR) often have more in common with historians of IR than with researchers in their own field.

Connected through their interest in international issues, IR historians and political analysts have a lot to learn from each other. In recent decades historians have been more explicit in their use of theoretical tools, while political analysts have become increasingly interested in archival research.

Working from primary sources held in public or private archive centers has made it possible to confirm the validity of theoretical hypotheses and models. Political analysts can use archives in various ways: primary sources enable them to see the subject of analysis over the long term, to follow the decision-making process and to examine perceptions, while looking at texts produced by the main actors in IR (governments, NGOs, international institutions and firms). In other words, archives allow political analysts to work with data that provides information about the process instead of focusing exclusively on the results. Primary sources allow them to do more in-depth research by situating the subject studied in a long-term context. Institutional dynamics for instance are unfathomable without long-term work with documents that show everyday procedures in those institutions. At the same time, archives can and must be used to compare theoretical models with factual reality. For example, the validity of decision-making theories may not only be based on primary sources but also tested through working with firsthand documents.

Nevertheless, political analysts are often hesitant to work with archives because the documents produced in recent decades seem inaccessible to them, and because the various ways archives are organized can be difficult to decipher. Researchers working on the contemporary era do have to deal with national laws that impose document release times as well as complex institutional and organizational structures. In this chapter I will present the modalities laid down by the law for obtaining access to documents, including quite recent ones, and give a brief description of how the main archive centers in France and the United States are organized.

French Archives

In France, the two main institutions containing IR documents are the Centre des archives diplomatiques de la Courneuve et de Nantes, and the presidential archives held by the Archives nationales (at their Pierrefitte-sur-Seine site).

The presidential archives contain documents from heads of state and their collaborators. They are divided into five series and several sub-series corresponding either to historical periods (e.g., the "Troisième République" and the "Quatrième République"), or to presidencies (for instance, Georges Pompidou and François Mitterrand).[2] The collections may be organized in different ways because the archives often retain the structures used during the presidencies. The François Mitterrand collection is thus divided into four major sets: secretariat of the president, general secretariat, files of the president's collaborators and presidential offices (private staff, protocol service, military command, etc.).[3] Documents relating to French foreign policy can be found in each of these four groups, and in particular in the papers from the diplomatic advisor and diplomatic unit. To find one's way in these collections containing thousands of documents, the researcher must use the inventories, or if the inventory is still being drawn up (Mitterrand, Chirac and Sarkozy collections), he must follow the archivists' advice. One example of a document in the François Mitterrand collection is the translation of a letter from Mikhail Gorbachev sent in February 1990 in which he objects to the severity of the European reaction to the use of force in the Baltic countries in January 1991. The letter shows not only the impact the European statements had on the Soviet president but also the communication strategies brought into play during exchanges with his French counterpart.

The collection left by Jacques Foccart, the Secretary General for African and Malagasy Affairs and the French Community (1958–1974) and the main architect of France's Africa policy during the presidency of George Pompidou, has proven highly interesting. Today, the Archives nationales possess 400 linear meters of documents added either by Jacques Foccart's associates from 1974, or by him in 1980. These sources may be useful not only to researchers working on France's relations with African countries but also to anyone interested in post-colonialism, in power structures and networks.

French legislation (law of July 15, 2008) imposes a 50-year waiting period for releasing documents involving national defense secrets, the state's vital foreign policy interests, state security and public safety.[4] It is possible, however, to ask for a special dispensation from the French Archives Administration which will either approve it or not, based on the decision of former presidents or their representatives.

The diplomatic archives and archives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, now kept in La Courneuve and Nantes, contain French diplomatic documents dating from 1680, when Charles Colbert de Croissy, Secretary

of State for Foreign Affairs under Louis XIV, ordered his correspondence to be collected and preserved. The organizational structure of the diplomatic archives collections is complex. It is advisable to consult the archivists in La Courneuve before starting one's research. Generally speaking, there are several groups of interesting documents among the sources at the La Courneuve site: those from the central government, from diplomatic and consular representatives, from French representatives to international organizations, from protectorates, from mandated territories, from the French occupation zone in Germany, from institutions under state supervision, papers from agents and from private archives.

Documents related to the central government's activities are divided into several series (documents from the minister's office, economic affairs, cultural affairs and political affairs). The "Political Affairs" series offers the possibility of working on France's relations with countries throughout the world. For example, choosing the subset "Europe" after 1944 in the "Political Affairs" series, there are documents pertaining to relations between France and the Soviet Union as well as between France and the United Kingdom. The same series also contains documents pertaining to France's activities within the League of Nations, and papers concerning Free France. Those interested in bilateral relations would consult the "French Representatives to International Organizations" series, which contains documents clarifying France's role within the OECD, NATO, the European Community and the UN, or pertaining to its relations with various regions in Africa and in Asia-Oceania, and so on.

As for the Diplomatic Archives Center in Nantes, it contains archives repatriated from international services (embassies, consulates, French institutes abroad) and archives from the Moroccan and Tunisian protectorates as well as from mandated territories in Syria and Lebanon. As in the case of the presidential archives, there is a time limit before documents can be released, but in most cases it is shorter (25 years in accordance with the law of July 15, 2008). A dispensation may be requested from the French Archives Administration.

For the anniversaries of major dates in the twentieth century (the Chilean coup d'état in 1973, the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 or the 1991 putsch in the Soviet Union), the diplomatic archives have declassified and published key documents. Publishing these diplomatic documents is one of the archives' priorities. This has been the case for French diplomatic documents (hereinafter FDDs) since the early twentieth century. As Maurice Vaïsse explains:

"in the period of major European wars from 1870–1945, the belligerent states published excerpts from their archives with the aim of demonstrating the enemy's responsibility […]. Since the 1960s, bound and annotated volumes have been published in a different perspective, for the purpose of reflecting all aspects of a country's foreign policy."[5] Today, nine sets of FDDs covering the period from 1870 to 1971 have been published under the direction of major French historians such as Pierre Renouvin, Jean Baptiste Duroselle, André Kaspi, Georges Henri Soutou, Maurice Vaïsse and so on. Another important project realized by the diplomatic archives has consisted in creating a collection of oral archives. These interviews with diplomats, conducted by researchers, are accessible on the La Courneuve website.

Other archives, such as private collections, have material that could be useful to internationalists. The Institut François-Mitterrand, for instance, has the president's private archives as well as documents pertaining to his public service activities.

American Archives

In the United States, where private archives play a major role in declassifying public archives, the situation is a bit more complex than in France. The first thing to note is the presidential archives, which have been kept in presidential libraries since the time of Roosevelt. These libraries are archive centers that preside over the documents from all American presidents from Herbert Hoover (1929–1931) to Obama. These veritable "libraries" are the equivalent of archives and museums, built in cities chosen by the presidents themselves. Thus, the archives for President John F. Kennedy are in Boston, those for the two Bushes in Texas, while the premises containing President Obama's archives were recently opened in Chicago. The presidential archives possess among other things documents involving the activities of the president, the National Security Council, the vice president, the Bureau of Public Affairs and so on. They contain reports written by the president's advisors, transcriptions of his conversations with other heads of state, draft speeches, minutes of meetings and so on. For example, the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum has made documents from presidential campaigns accessible online, providing the opportunity to work on the significance of international issues within the context of electoral campaigns. The George Bush Presidential Library and Museum has published online records of telephone conversations and of

meetings between the president and foreign dignitaries. Thus, there are transcriptions of his numerous meetings with François Mitterrand through which one can see a real convergence of viewpoints between the two presidents over the years.

In most cases, the time limit before archives can be released is the same as for French diplomatic archives, 25 years. But the procedure granting access to the documents is different. Whereas in France, as we have seen, every researcher must request an individual exemption conferred on a personal basis, in the United States it is possible to obtain advance declassification of archival collections. According to the Freedom of Information Act passed in 1966, all Americans and foreigners have the right to request documents and classified information from federal institutions. These institutions, including archives, must process the requests in a timely manner and can only refuse them in specific cases enumerated by the law (national security, privacy, etc.).

Thousands of FOIA requests are filed every year in the United States. The National Security Archive plays a crucial role in this process. The purpose of this private archive, based at George Washington University, is to declassify documents involving American foreign policy and security during and after the Cold War. The archives file dozens of FOIA requests every year, then publish the declassified documents. A great many of these collections are published online. To give a few examples, hundreds of documents are available regarding US and Mexican anti-drug policies, relations between the United States and Argentina, the Cuban Missile Crisis and US policy toward terrorism from 1968 to 2002.

Another archive that holds crucial documents for studying IR is the National Archives and Records Administration which handles State Department documents. Documents from 1789 to 1976 are freely accessible at their headquarters in Washington, D.C. Documents subsequent to 1976 are still held by the State Department, more specifically by its Office of Information Programs and Services. In recent years, about 85,075 declassified documents have been published online. These include, for instance, documents concerning the first American reactions to the genocides in Bosnia and Rwanda. Similarly, declassified documents from the CIA are freely accessible online,[6] including several dealing with the attacks on 9/11.[7]

Two other private initiatives should be mentioned. First, the American Presidency Project team based at the University of Santa Barbara has done remarkable work by publishing online all public speeches by American

presidents since the founding of the government. This includes major speeches by American presidents on foreign policy such as Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points in 1918, and Truman announcing his doctrine in 1947. Other interesting sources include transcriptions of presidential press conferences, such as Jimmy Carter speaking about the American hostage crisis in Iran in 1979.

Next, the Cold War History Project published a large volume of documents online relating to that period, obtained through FOIA requests. The collections, containing between 10 and 1000 documents, deal with various subjects such as France's nuclear policy, Hungary in 1956, Korea and the United Nations or the foreign policy of the Soviet Union.

Finally, since 1851 the State Department has published key American foreign policy documents produced by its services, as well as by the presidency, the CIA and the National Security Council. These equivalents of FDDs are entitled "The Foreign Relations of the United States." The volumes dealing with the post-1952 period are first listed chronologically according to presidential administration, then geographically. In 2015, 234 volumes were published on the periods referring to Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, Ford and 9 others on the Carter Administration.

Advice Regarding How to Deal with Diplomatic Documents

The American and French archives mentioned in this chapter clearly represent only a few examples among thousands of institutions that contain documents relating to international interactions. The information presented here is designed to discern some of the tasks that researchers must accomplish before conducting work in the archives: finding out about national legislation regarding time limits before documents can be released, consulting already published diplomatic documents, becoming acquainted with documents published online and understanding the organizational systems used by different archives.

Once the potentially interesting archives have been identified, the real work begins. Every subject and archival collection requires a different approach, but some general advice may still be given. First, it is advisable to become acquainted with the modus operandi of the institutions that have donated the archives. If one wishes to work on diplomatic archives, for instance, it is useful to find out how a State Department is operated and structured in order to place the documents in their institutional context.

Talking with an archivist and browsing through the inventory is helpful in drawing up a list of potentially interesting boxes of files. Then, it is advisable to proceed in two phases: first, quickly going through all the boxes to be looked at in order to have an overview of available sources, then taking a closer look at the documents. Each box has a code that should be noted and used to identify the document in scientific publications. French archives do not allow photographing of documents consulted through an exemption. The researcher must be prepared for long note-taking sessions. Digitalization is allowed in the United States but in that case it is crucial to envisage from the work's inception how to store and organize the images. Like all primary sources, archival documents must always be treated as subjective representations of reality by considering the conditions in which they were produced. Thus, it is always important to conduct a critical analysis of each document, identifying its author and his/her position in the institutional chain of command, the type of document, its recipient and historical context.

Notes

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2. 1 AG Troisième République (1870–1940), 2 AG État français (1940–1944), 3 AG Charles de Gaulle avant 1959, 4 AG Quatrième République (1947–1959), 5 AG 1 Charles de Gaulle, président de la République (1959–1969), 5 AG 2 Georges Pompidou (1969–1974), 5 AG FOCCART (FPR et FPU) Archives du secrétariat général pour les Affaires africaines et malgaches, 5 AG 3 Valéry Giscard d'Estaing (1974–1981), 5 AG 4 François Mitterrand (1981–1995), 5 AG 5 Jacques Chirac (1995–2007), 5 AG 6 Nicolas Sarkozy (2007–2012).
3. Agnès Bos and Damien Vaisse, "Les archives présidentielles de François Mitterrand," *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'histoire*, 86 (2) (2005): 71–79.
4. For further information on different document release times, see the website of the Commission de l'accès aux documents administratifs (www.cada.fr/).
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CHAPTER 4

Taking Images Seriously, How to Analyze Them?

Corentin Cohen and Frédéric Ramel

Abstract The democratization of digital technologies and the proliferation of pictures and videos have forced researchers to adopt new frameworks to study how societies and media take part in international politics. This chapter shows how images can be taken into account in political science and international relations analysis. To do so it presents various methodologies and concepts that can be used individually or together and details different approaches. It firstly looks at why and how to build up corpuses of images dealing with traditional questions of political science. It then shows how a researcher can deal with the question and the policies behind the production of images. The core of the analysis focuses on the issue of how to analyze images themselves, using aesthetics and visual concepts in political analysis. Finally, the chapter deals with the questions of the circulation and reception of these images.

The shift from the old cell phones to smartphones and the advent of the internet triggered a revolution both in terms of visual practices and of the volume of images produced. In 2014, 300 hours of videos were shared every minute on YouTube compared to about 50 in 2011. This proliferation

C. Cohen (✉) • F. Ramel
Sciences Po, Center for International Studies (CERI), Paris, France

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of images has made it possible to access new sources of information. Observers of current events cannot help but notice that the first evidence of the use of chemical weapons in Syria was provided in images from amateurs (a writer for *Foreign Policy* even considered that an American intervention would have been the first one "triggered by images"[1]); videos of 9/11 are at the core of the conspiracy theorists' language; and the treatment of prisoners in American prisons in Iraq was made known through images taken by soldiers. Images also abound on social networks. In 2014 Socialbaker, a firm specializing in measuring online audience metrics, highlighted that 87% of Facebook interactions start from images.

Understanding the place and the role of images in analyzing international relations involves breaking with a form of visual illiteracy perpetuated by educational systems that refuse to take these images seriously,[2] as was long the case for the social sciences,[3] and in recent studies.[4] How to shift from multiple images that "say nothing" to a methodological system capable of handling them and incorporating them into political science issues?

While some avenues have been explored in contemporary research, reflection on images in international relations is still in its early stages, and is not unrelated to the development of methodological software and experiments.[5] Despite the obstacles, it is our understanding that these images are both sources, objects and increasingly agents on the world stage.

Four preliminary remarks are called for. The first concerns the definition. The word image comes from *imago*, which means to reproduce or represent. Images allude first and foremost to a representation of someone or something. They show. In everyday language, showing is contrasted with demonstrating (making visible what cannot be seen). Thus the idea that science founded on demonstration excludes images. Yet, and this is one of the cornerstones of this chapter, showing and demonstrating are not different in nature, only in degree. As Rembrandt's painting *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr Nicolaes Tulp* (1632) illustrates, showing is lifting a veil, then deducing lessons about how the human body functions.[6]

The second remark stems from the distinction between real and false images. Images are always representations constructed from reality. The distortions are not necessarily visible, even though they affect how the images are interpreted. In fact, manipulated images cannot be considered real or false. The act itself of taking photographs is tied to a process of defining empirical reality that already involves distortion. Doctoring and staging images are an integral part of the history of photography. Is Alexander Gardner's famous photograph *Home of a Rebel Sharpshooter*[7] more false because the photographer placed his gun in the photograph

next to the corpse of a Confederate soldier during the Civil War? With that in mind, care must be taken in perceiving all images,[8] and manipulations should be seen as a social gesture that gives life to the transformed object, transforming it into an idea.[9] Furthermore, reading images involves subjective interpretation. There are always several possible interpretations, thus the point of objectifying the multiplicity of possible views.

The third preliminary remark is related to the diversity of methods for capturing images. Handling them does not lead to a choice in favor of the quantitative or qualitative, the synchronic or diachronic. It is the conjunction of these methods, which Roland Bleiker[10] qualifies as an assemblage, that offers the most relevant path of analysis.

Lastly, one must remain cautious in evaluating the influence of images. Just as the history of representations allows us to analyze how representation and interpretations are attributed to objects,[11] studying images as vectors of representation cannot lead to identifying causal effects. Images in themselves do not produce direct effects, they create conditions of possibility that are favorable to a political decision or not. Having established these elements, we propose four observation posts for images through which to present methods that are not mutually exclusive. The first consists in elaborating a visual corpus, the second in reproducing an image production chain, the third (the hard core) in letting the images "speak for themselves" and the fourth in handling their circulation and reception.

Constituting a Visual Documentary Corpus

Two positions can be distinguished. Either the documentary corpus is conceived as the focal point of the research with an empirical rooting that is exclusively visual. This is what the historian of political thought Quentin Skinner has done in his work devoted to Lorenzetti's fresco, the *Allegory of Good and Bad Government*, created for the Siena town hall. He explains in detail its figures and pictorial treatment to draw out ideas of civic humanism found in political treatises in the Medieval era in the Italian peninsula.[12] The second stance posits the visual material as a complementary element of research. It becomes an addendum, similar to the iconographic use of punishment in international relations.[13] The corpus may come from a variety of sources:

- media images broadcast and generally produced by information professionals (press, audiovisual media, press agencies, etc.);
- political communications images;

- posters, tags and graffiti in public spaces;
- works of art from a broad perspective (paintings, photographs, films, video games);
- images produced by individuals and broadcast on the internet, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Flickr, etc.

Identifying the Image Production Chain

The first stage of analysis consists in retracing how these images were produced. It involves making a distinction between visual sociology (through images) and sociology of the image. The former uses images to give an account of social phenomena.[14] The latter takes images as objects of research in their own right.

The second approach insists on the fact that an image is a representation of the world and must be examined as a singular social construction. In *Art Worlds*, Howard Becker points out that every work of art, which every image may be deemed,[15] is the product of a set of successive and often collective activities. The same idea can be found in *Telling About Society*, a book by Howard Becker that identifies several questions through which the course of a representation can be retraced: how does it circulate after its initial production, what do its disseminators do with it, and how do they interpret it?[16] The research conducted by Corentin Cohen on the conflict in 2006 between Hezbollah and Israel takes this approach. Its point of departure is the conclusion that Hezbollah's victory rhetoric was accepted by the local population. It shows that, independently of strategic considerations, war is first of all defined by how the actors involved view it.[17] Newspaper front pages provide an indication of how the conflict has been represented. Certain photographs have clearly been staged or touched up. But how to explain that some press agencies used them while others refused to? Differences related to the market and how it operates become clear after analyzing the process of making and organizing the work of a press agency. While AFP deployed correspondents who were very familiar with the region, Reuters relocated its publishing business to Singapore, making the system less vulnerable to manipulation.

As for Déborah Guy, she speculates about a photograph from the war in Afghanistan after 2001. It is of Bibi Aisha, a woman mutilated by the Taliban after fleeing from her abusive husband.[18] The photograph, taken by Jodi Bieber, was on the cover of *Time* magazine and triggered a broad debate in the United States.[19] Through a social history of the image, Déborah Guy shows the rationale of the various actors involved in producing

it: the photographer, the NGO Women for Afghan Women and the Grossman Burn Foundation, Time magazine's editorial management, the journalist who wrote the correspondent article and the jury of the World Press prize. Déborah Guy wonders how the criteria for what is desirable differ for each of them, while showing that these criteria created "an icon" in a context marked by a reassessment of the American administration's strategic choices.

Letting Images "Speak for Themselves"

Work on image production should be linked to the analysis of the image itself. In this case we will focus on the visual aspects of static and moving images. The analysis is based on their narrative aspects (scenes, staging, scripts, characters, roles and sound processing[20]) and on the description of the image (composition, color, construction, framing, relief of the different planes, etc.). Three methods can be used in an isolated or complementary fashion. We will address semiological and aesthetic methods, analyze cognitive frameworks and then work on icons.

Semiological and Aesthetic Methods

Semiotics distinguishes between denotation and connotation. Denotation pertains to what makes an object recognizable by specifying its attributes and characteristics. Connotation is the fact that certain symbolic elements may attach themselves to this representation and add a meaning that may be more or less evident.

Political communication images produced by the Lebanese Hezbollah may be examined using this distinction. In a Hezbollah propaganda photograph of 2006, the presence of red flowers (reproduced in gray in the foreground) may appear decorative. However, a study of color codes shows that in the movement's iconography, red is only used on Hussein's flag (the flag reproduced in gray is actually all red) in the battle of Karbala that defines the condition of martyrdom. The aesthetic therefore has a seemingly hidden political meaning conveying that the anonymous soldier is a martyr. It issues a challenge to the authors who took an interest in Hezbollah's narratives and, like Kinda Chaib, questions the existence of a Shiite world with a homogeneous culture.[21]

An analysis of aesthetics involves the ability to grasp the visual codes of a culture or social group because behind the aesthetic lies a conceptualization of politics that is associated with it.[22] Studying videos of the Nigerian

armed group Boko Haram provides an understanding of how the group positioned itself and reused the visual codes of international jihadism to gain global visibility, while it was initially composed of combatants from the region motivated by local issues.

At first, Boko Haram used Bin Laden's videos as a model for messages from its leader Abubakar Shekau: the latter is in combat fatigues, holding a gun and shot up close. Ruling out this model beginning in 2013, the group increasingly began to adopt the Islamic State's (IS) visual codes and video scripts. It held parades, filmed decapitations and fighting, using special effects and slow motion like the IS in its production *Flames of War*. It went as far as proclaiming an Islamic State, imitating Al Baghdadi's proclamation of a caliphate.[23] The aesthetic thus produced a brand used for defining themselves on an international level, guaranteeing resonance in the media in the name of this new affiliation.

Aesthetic concepts may also promote political debate. Drawing from the distinction between *studium* and *punctum* developed by Roland Barthes,[24] Michael J. Shapiro has examined images of Afghanistan in the American press, reflecting on what ties they may have with American history.[25] His answer came from Westerns: while the *studium* was indeed to be found in Afghanistan, the *punctum*, the way in which the audience's attention is caught by an outside threat, recalls classic shots from the Far West with cowboys confronting a hostile environment. The outdoors in the form of the desert is presented as a threat that can imperil places of rest and refuge—home, ranch or farm—at all times.

The Cognitive Method

The cognitive framing concept was inspired by the work of Erving Goffman on the organization of experience.[26] For Robert M. Entman,[27] *framing* defines a problem, assigns it a cause, proposes a moral evaluation and suggests a solution. In this respect, it is already a selection and a way of arranging reality so as to highlight certain elements.

Several studies in international relations have drawn on this method. The first is by Shahira Fahmy.[28] Based on a visual framing of over a thousand photographs of 9/11 and of the war in Afghanistan in two newspapers, the *International Herald Tribune* and *Al Hayat*, her work analyzes how these papers have supported the military intervention. The author encodes the images according to several criteria: where they appear in the paper, their focus (human—Afghans, Americans, refugees, etc.—or technical), their degree of graphicness, their support of/opposition to war. It appears that

despite their professional practices and claims of objectivity, the two newspapers have represented the events in different ways. *Al Hayat* has published half as many photographs of 9/11 as the IHT. The IHT has shown few explicit images of suffering and violence in the Afghanistan war. As for Bleiker et al., they are interested in the representation of migrations and asylum seekers in Australian newspapers, examining how an international issue is framed and staged.[29] Through analyzing front pages, the article shows how immigrants are always represented in groups, from afar, on boats. The absence of any portraits or faces contributes to immigration being cast as a security issue and a flow that must be "managed." The authors also show how this way of framing reflects the government's communications, promoting a form of dehumanization and an intent not to foster compassion.[30]

The Iconographic Method

A third method is based on the concept of the icon, which may have different meanings. One way to imagine it consists in defining it as an image that has become a referent or symbol. An icon becomes a representation shared by a restricted group, according to a particular political and cultural sensibility. For example, Nick Ut's photograph of the little girl injured by napalm is often selected to represent the excesses of the Vietnam War.

But an icon is also an image that is repeated while being different. David Perlmutter gives the example of a starving African child. Whatever the angle or country, the image becomes an *archetype*.[31] In an attempt to articulate the objective and subjective criteria of iconicity, David Perlmutter distinguishes more than ten of them[32] that we have pared down to a few major components.

A first indication of iconicity involves the cross-sectoral nature of images. It means defining icons as images that go from one medium to another, from one point in the chain of producing images to another, or from one political field to another. As such, icons become an opportunity to highlight ties and representations shared by different social and political groups. Howard Becker compares modes of representing the world.[33] Drawing from Bruno Latour's work, he stresses the need to compare the representations deployed by different social worlds, and how each one produces in its own way a different representation of the same object.[34] According to Bruno Latour, we must identify the representations that are capable of moving from one category or world to another. These shared representations are the only possible basis for a political consensus.

To create what is as such an indicator, several criteria may be used. Certain software programs such as TinEye can be used to find out on which sites and at what date an image was posted. Then its evolution and shifting from one audience to another can be traced. During the conflict in 2006 between Hezbollah and Israel, images were published on the front pages of three Lebanese newspapers with different political sensibilities. They were among the top ten most downloaded images from the 16,000 proposed by AFP. One came out often after the Qana massacre. The image united political viewpoints behind the sacrifice of the Lebanese people, just when Israel was trying to wean the population off Hezbollah. Interpretations of the same conflict differ when using another of the criteria for iconicity—photojournalism awards.[35] This is evident in Spencer Plat's photograph taken the day after the ceasefire, awarded the World Press prize in 2007. Contrary to the Qana icons, this photograph raised questions about ways of experiencing the war and inequalities in Lebanese society, triggering a reaction from the people photographed, who considered the Qana image far more representative.[36] The image comes across as a visual counterpoint showing a society marked by divisions rather than representing cohesion in the face of the enemy.

Another way to approach icons consists in viewing them as images that concentrate various interpretations, references and debates, and shift with time. In *Diplopie*, Clément Chéroux examines images on the front pages of newspapers the day after 9/11.[37] He shows that they can only be seen as icons because they allude to two images familiar to all Americans: shots of the attack at Pearl Harbor, and of the *flag raising* at Iwo Jima. In this he agrees with the analyses of "*securitization*" by Barry Buzan[38] and of "*visual securitization*" by Franck Moeller and Lene Hansen.

Measuring How Images Are Circulated and Received

The final vantage point consists in describing how images are disseminated and their consequences. Two aspects can be distinguished: first, circulation of images that cannot be dissociated from the accompanying editorial components, and second, the issue of their effects.

Evaluating Spatial and Media Dissemination

How are images disseminated, how can that dissemination be represented and taken into account? For the internet, we have already mentioned the existence of TinEye through which one can map their

dissemination. In addition to counting the images, they can be spatialized and connected to the places where they were taken and published by using geolocation. In their work on protest iconography in the Basque region and in Corsica, Xavier Crettiez and Pierre Piazza located tags and graffiti in the public space.[39] They observed that some are more present within the Basque region than on the coast, enabling them to identify sources of protest. Michael Davie's work on posters and iconographic marking of the Lebanese civil war has helped to show how Beirut was divided up and structured into pockets by the militia, revealing strategies by different groups to control the territories.[40]

Describing How Images Are Received

A preliminary approach consists in obtaining people's reactions to the images via questionnaires, interviews and focus groups. In doing this, Xavier Crettiez and Pierre Piazza, mentioned earlier, showed varying interpretations of the graffiti they studied: sometimes pro-autonomy, at other times dissenting, with people not necessarily paying them any attention. The majority felt that the graffiti promoted threatened local identities.

Another way to factor in how images are received consists in using the commentaries or political and media discourse around them. Shahira Fahmy and Wayne Wanta asked media professionals to evaluate the impact of images:[41] are they used to advance this or that political action? what do they trigger for them? The aim is to underline the dissensus and consensus in interpretation.

On the internet, social networks provide a way to access statistics about sharing and to identify commentary. The researcher can then index reactions to the images. The commentary associated with a reportage, a film or a photograph can be analyzed almost simultaneously.

Several writers have carried out innovative experiments, including Christopher J. McKinley and Shahira Fahmy,[42] whose work is a statistical analysis of reactions to aesthetics and an analysis of the power of conviction. The two authors examine whether the position of those interviewed (on military intervention and their country's foreign policy) was affected by more or less explicit images of conflicts. In this case the fact that the images were more or less explicit had no impact on support for policies, challenging the literature on the impact of the media and the public's responsiveness to information since Harold D. Lasswell.

In another experiment, Rosemarie I. Dinklage and Robert C. Ziller assessed which images groups of children from two countries chose to illustrate notions of war and peace.[43] The researchers discovered that Germans tend to represent peace through photographs of groups or of nature, while American children favor images of houses and churches. As for Delia Dumitrescu, she proposed an original procedure to see if the visual element was as important as discourse in evaluating and trusting politicians on TV shows.[44]

Several initiatives have evaluated how images are received through *crowdtagging*, in other words by asking internet users to tag images. These tools have made it possible to both identify and categorize a large amount of data, and also to understand what individuals feel and perceive. The project conducted by the Public Catalogue Foundation is a good illustration of these initiatives and opens up many possibilities that are liable to inspire internationalists.[45]

Conclusion

Internationalists can no longer gloss over the visual aspect of their subjects, an aspect that prompts emotional reactions and even indignation and mobilization before the suffering endured by distant strangers. Witness the photograph of little Aylan on a Turkish beach in the summer of 2015 illustrating the situation of extreme distress experienced by emigrants fleeing Syria. This aspect calls for a plurality of methods that are complementary rather than exclusive. We see three key precautions to be taken:

- favoring sequenced analysis of images (production, diffusion, circulation, reception), each sequence referring to a set of particular methodological tools;
- articulating the quantitative and qualitative when attempting to make sense of certain sequences (icon status results not only from visual properties but also from the degree of visibility related to increased publishing on a variety of media);
- being wary of the so-called direct "effects" caused by disseminating images. Indeed, the latter produce fewer mechanical consequences as compared to interpretations and options, limiting or justifying political action.

Notes

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7. See MOMA in New York regarding his work (www.moma.org/).
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23. Elodie Apard, "Boko Haram, le jihad en vidéo," *Politique africaine*, 138 (2015/2): 145.
24. Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (New York, Hill and Wang, 2010), pp. 25–27. Roland Barthes distinguishes between "gazes" of two kinds: the *studium* and the *punctum*. "It is by *studium* that I am interested in so many photographs, whether I receive them as political testimony or enjoy them as good historical scenes […] The second element will break (or punctuate) the *studium*. […] This time it is not I who seek it out (as I invest the field of the *studium* with my sovereign consciousness), it is this element which rises from the scene, shoots out of it like an arrow and pierces me. […] A photograph's *punctum* is that accident which pricks me (but also bruises me, is poignant to me)," (pp. 26–27)
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CHAPTER 5

Imagining and Representing the Spatial Aspect of Actors and Societies

Marie-Françoise Durand and Benoît Martin

Abstract Like statistics, maps are pictures designed by their author or contracting organization, and as such these visualizations come to serve a particular practice or discourse. The various historical uses of maps (discoveries, administration, interstate sovereignty, etc.) show how effective they have been in serving specific purposes and also why they have been taken up so late by science. In the context of international relations research, designing a map should be considered a continuous process in which each choice—source, base map, statistical and graphic processing—has repercussions for the final image and thus its interpretation. This chapter uses two examples to illustrate these issues: international migration allows us to address certain issues concerning the nature of data (stocks/flows) and scales (global/regional/national); then, the case of France's arms exports provides an opportunity to question data producers (think tanks), units of account (values/percentages and chronology) and synchrony/diachrony. Finally, the last section evokes the multiple uses of maps in international relations research.

M.-F. Durand (✉)
Sciences Po, Paris, France

B. Martin
Sciences Po, Center for International Studies (CERI)
and Atelier de Cartographie, Paris, France

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Like statistics, maps are constructed and often used as tools in service of actors' practices and discourses. Their scientific use is relatively recent. We will begin by tracing a few remarkable historical social uses.

A Short History of the Social Uses of Cartography

Knowledge and Ancient Points of Reference

Drawings and maps of territories and itineraries are contemporary with the invention of writing: first, navigational points of reference on Phoenician tablets; then, highly detailed maps of the territory of the centralized Egyptian state (production and taxes); lastly, the first theories on the shape of the Earth and the first maps by Greek mathematician-geographers Eratosthenes, then Ptolemy, and the topology of roads and stopover towns in the Roman Empire (Peutinger's Table).

Medieval Beliefs

In the Christian world, maps by monastic scribes became theological and teleological representations of a world divided between Noah's three sons (known as "T-in-O" maps for *Terrarum Orbis*). In the Muslim world, Arab traveler-geographers undertook an inventory of places and the itineraries connecting them in order to show Islam's (politically mythical) immensity, diversity and unity.

Navigating and Territorializing

The reappropriation of ancient culture, the "great age of discovery" and the "invention" of America made the Renaissance a period of great development for marine cartography (portolans and the first atlases) and for territories in the new sovereignties. For monarchs, cartography workshops traced borders and named places. Their maps placed the North at the top of the page and Europe in the center (Mercator, 1569).

Administrating

With the industrial revolution, the second wave of colonization and increasing interstate competition in Europe, cartographic production acquired new authors, media and diffusion. It remained the instrument of conquest and negotiation for diplomats and soldiers. But the geographer-statistician

engineers in governments produced and diffused a new cartography, thanks to the development of national statistics, to the stabilization of administrative apportionment and to the semiological research on charts and figures.

Iconizing

Cartography, privileged domain of the French School of Geography (late nineteenth and early twentieth century), constituted both a scientific approach and a response to the government's need to anchor its colonial policy, support its school policies, consolidate the nation and strengthen citizenship (France "exerting its influence from the center of the world"). The map as icon of a territory also became an instrument to be used by entrepreneurs of identity and territory to legitimize and make demands. It was infinitely adaptable by nationalists, separatists and irredentists, or else it was used to naturalize simplistic ideological constructions that divided the world up in clean lines, whether geopolitical, geostrategic, third-world or Huntingtonian.[1]

A Tool for Mobile Individuals

Since the 1970s, satellite imagery has enabled new global views of the Earth. Since the 2000s, local, national and international actors from the public and private sectors have produced and diffused increasing quantities of geographical information. Geographic information systems (GIS) have multiple applications (security, planning, marketing), and Google Maps provides maps to anyone online to help in locating places as well as with mobility, allowing a "soft" multi-scale approach through instant shifting from global to micro-local and vice versa: a radical change, the consequences of which are still hard to imagine.

Cartography and Social Sciences

From Vidal to the Quantitativists

The demand for knowledge about the world and representations in the early twentieth century was not specific to France. But the heritage of the French School of Geography, with its major international influence, affected cartographic concepts. Paul Vidal de la Blache developed a "pivotal" science that combined natural sciences and historic or human sciences, worked on relationships between natural and social phenomena and was based on a direct visual approach to human environments. Topographic

maps gave average Frenchmen a solid notion of the geography of mainland and colonial territories, and geographer-cartographers took no interest in the coexistence of state territories and the flow of goods, people, political, social and cultural models that outlined the roads and networks in the globalization process in the long term.

The Vidalian and Post-Vidalian paradigm became fossilized and traditional cartography was also weakened by the symbolic devaluation of traditional geography, which reached its peak in the 1960s–1970s. After a profound epistemological crisis, the cartographic revival emerged through three different avenues[2]: quantitative methods and so-called automatic cartography in which typological classification was key; systemic analysis and models based on work in the Anglosphere, while profiting from the French sociological tradition mindful of phenomena involving cohesion and solidarity (Olivier Dollfus' "global megalopolitan network"); and the development of the semiology of graphics.[3]

Elsewhere in the Social Sciences

The new methods and paradigms in the social sciences, in particular within the French Annales School of historians around Fernand Braudel and the great trans-disciplinary initiative that characterized it could not make up for the shortage of cartographic representations in history. The first maps on long-term global mobility did not emerge until the development of historical geography.

Incorporating an analysis of the globalization process into all the social sciences did not result in the great cartographic project that could have rid cartography of its territorial obsession. The increasing weight of economists—both in universities and in defining public policies—who were indifferent to the spatial aspect in societies and to expanding economic, financial and informational integration, even established a mantra of the "death of geography" by abolishing distances and negating space, as if all places had the same value.

In international relations studies, questions about territoriality have opened up a meeting place for geographers and cartographers. Added to topographic metrics for the territories of sovereign states (which have often left out the shifting fringes of empire) are topological metrics for exchange networks, while the sociological analysis of international relations examines societies and actors who are increasingly mobile and multiscale. Quite different from the concerns of academic and media-driven geo-politicians, cartographic research on the spatial forms of globalization is a subject of debate between the two disciplines.

Semiology of Graphics

Finally, cartography's fundamental renewal has grown out of breakthroughs in the semiology of graphics which had languished following both groundbreaking and older work.[4] Starting in the 1950s–1960s, Jacques Bertin's work led to innovations in a context encompassing a demand for territorial statistical information in France at the time of the "Glorious Thirty," the development of mathematical and statistical analysis in the social sciences and trans-disciplinary academic work in the semiotics of images. In a clear break with the preceding period made of topographic maps (known as ordnance survey maps) and regional geographic drawings, Jacques Bertin synthesized a set of rules that made it possible to process and visually transcribe information. His work on the visual variables of separation (orientation, shape, color and grain) and order (value and size) in point, zonal or linear displays revolutionized cartography, producing maps "to be seen" (made up of symbols and colors) rather than "to be read" (with a great deal of text).

Production Chain

To produce a map, the creator must make a series of choices. Published maps are often the work of a collective or divided among several people: before the cartographer, there are the surveyors, statisticians, researchers and so on; afterwards, there are the graphic artists, "communicators" and so on. In an "integrated" approach in international relations research, one could take the following course:

1. *The Initial Question*. It can target a general theme such as "the French arms industry": in that case, one should try to imagine what factual and "concrete" information might help elucidate it. The initial question could also be more specific: "What states buy arms from France—rifts and continuity since the end of the Cold War?"
2. *Data Searching*. As with ordinary documentary research, it begins with broad scanning in order to obtain a preliminary panorama of the question, then fine-tunes by keeping a critical distance from the authors and actors identified as primary sources.[5]
3. *Choice of Map Background*. Geographical scale, the selection of which is partly guided by data coverage, affects how the final document is interpreted. Similarly, cartographic projection[6] and its centering often deem the area in the middle to be the reference point.[7]

4. *Statistical Processing*. It is not always indispensable. But it can consist in simple calculations such as averages (to divide the series by rank), percentages (to reduce values to one part of the total population), differences (to show the balance) or divisions (to sort multiplying factors between two dates).
5. *Graphical Representation*. This consists in employing the right way to feature the elements to be mapped within an existing structure, the "semiology of graphics." For instance, to show fluctuations in variations in number, circles of varying sizes or shades of the same color are more appropriate than symbols of different shapes or areas of different colors (see *below* the map for Fig. 5.2).
6. *Finalizing the Document*. Often reduced to "mere dressing" in cartography manuals, this written information is fundamental, as it highlights the information needed to understand the document while guaranteeing a thorough approach in constructing the map. Concision and complete features are expected regarding the title, full key (data subject, items, year), sources (author, institution, year), author of the map and copyright.

Lastly, this process should be considered ideal. In practice, it is not always possible to follow it strictly. Trials and readjustments from one phase to the next allow fine-tuning of the final image in an empirical manner.

Representing Mobility: Stock or Flow? The Example of International Migration

What Does the Data on Migration Indicate?

Data that is both cross-tabulated (indicating countries of origin and destination rather than merely the total number of migrants per country) and exhaustive (covering the entire world) is quite recent. For many years, the OECD (*via* its Sopemi branch[8]) only offered data for northern countries, which provided only a partial panorama. Thus, migrants highly present in the Gulf countries were not featured in it. Subsequently, during the 2000s, the World Bank started a program on South-South migration that included estimates for the number of international migrants.[9] For the past few years, the UN Population Division has returned to the data, fine-tuning and systematizing it.

This database is now considered a model in the field. It is based on the compilation of national data (from censuses and administrative records)

which are harmonized according to the definitions adopted, then tested and even rectified. The result is coherence between country totals (balances), the equation between births/deaths and immigration/emigration within each country, and lastly over time (from one census to the next).

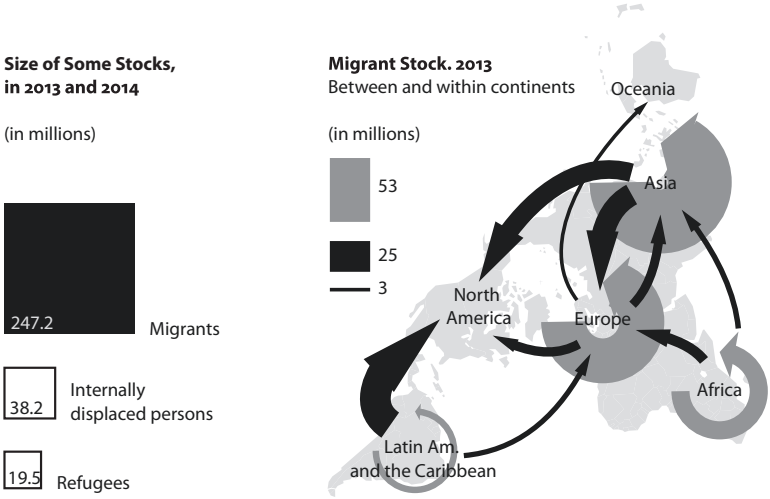
Furthermore, the issue of definitions seems fundamental. Indeed, migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons are defined very specifically in international law, whereas the assistance individuals receive depends on their "posting" in one category or other. Thus, the proportional squares in the introduction to Fig. 5.1 represent orders of magnitude that can be effectively compared to others: all the migrants driven to escape from poverty as estimated in 2013 equal the population of Indonesia, while those individuals forced to flee political violence and armed conflicts (refugees and the internally displaced) equal the population of Italy. On the other hand, and this is fundamental, the data represents stocks (a total accumulated at a given date) rather than flow (mobility estimated over a defined lapse of time).[10] Only values of the same kind may be compared. One should be informed of what is involved, of whether the researcher is in the position of user or producer of maps on the subject.

Once one is aware of the stakes and limits of the data, the "graphics issue" would be the following: how to show major trends while preserving the extreme diversity of international migration? Or, in other words, how to propose an image that is readable yet scientifically rigorous?

Scale Levels and Their Interpretations

First, the "shape of the world" is neither a given nor neutral: the Buckminster Fuller projection map makes it easy to include arrows between continents while avoiding cuts, as is too often the case between Asia and America with the all too commonly used Mercator projection centered on Europe which furthermore dramatically distorts surfaces.

By exploring a subject on different scales, one can test similarities in logic from one level to another. Thus, in the first map in Fig. 5.1, the totals per continent show a synthesizing initial overview of the asymmetry among major regions (from Asia toward Europe and North America and from Latin America toward the north) and the weight of certain internal migrations (in particular in Europe and Asia). The second map in Fig. 5.1 considers more details by isolating certain major states in terms of numbers (Mexico, India, Russia, etc.), while constituting relevant regional totals (such as the Schengen Area which has free movement inside it, but is a fortress to the outside). In both cases, on the graphics level, a variation in width



Important Notes on the Data in Arrow Maps:
- The data do not illustrate migrant flows per se, but a photograph of the numbers (stock) in 2013.
- The arrows show the origins and destinations of the migrants, who may have been on the move before 2013.
- By "migrants", the United nations means, depending on the country, foreigners (persons who do not have the nationality of their country of residence) or persons born in a foreign country.

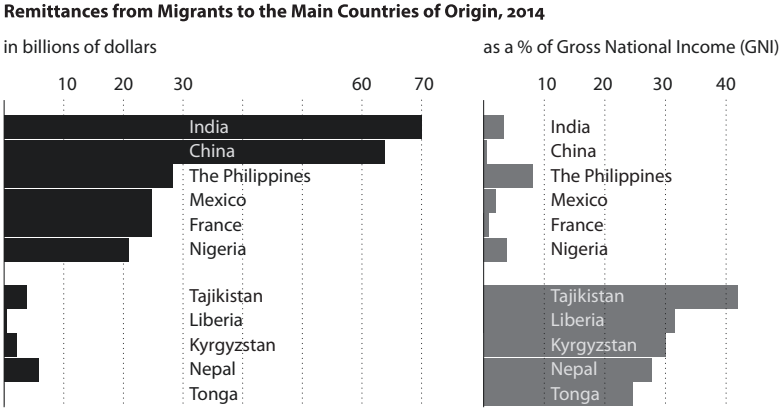


Fig. 5.1 Number of international migrants, situation in 2013
Sources for the double-page spread: UN Population Division, *Trends in International Migrant Stock: Migrants by Destination and Origin* (revised in 2013); World Bank, *Migration and Remittances Data* (updated April 2015) and http://data.worldbank.org/; International Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC); United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). © FNSP. Sciences Po, Atelier de Cartographie, 2015

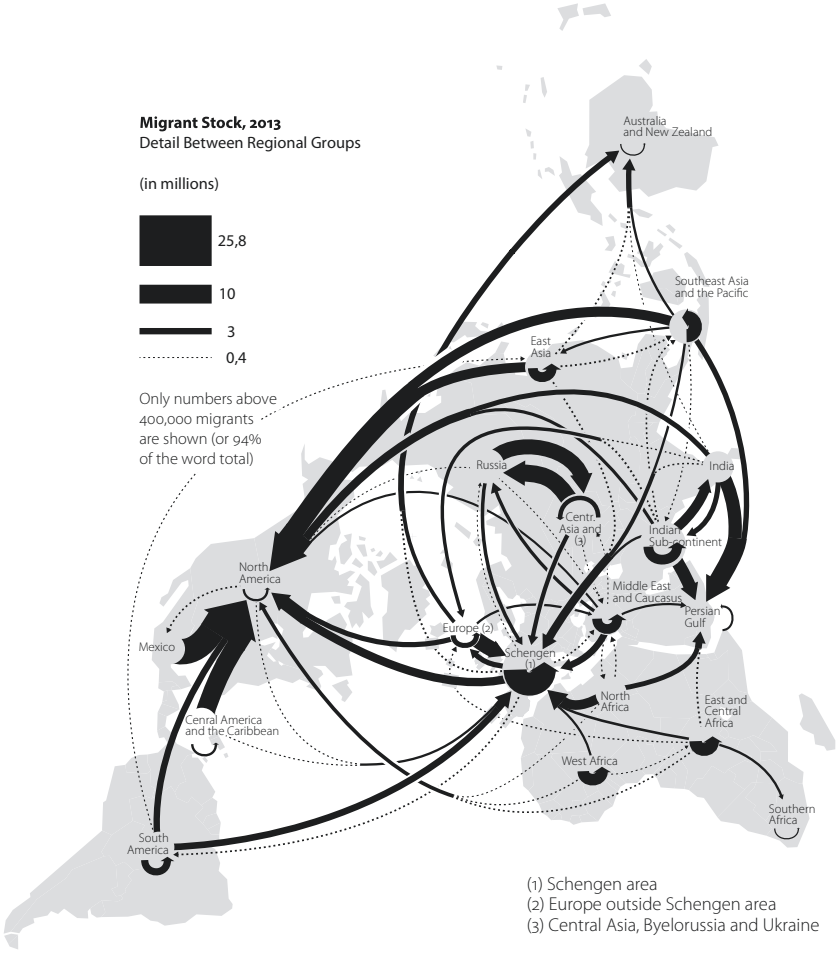


Fig. 5.1 (continued)

of the arrows makes it possible to compare numbers both between regions and within them. In the same way, a change of scale can make movements on a map "apparent" that are too minor to appear on a world map but can have considerable consequences in sparsely inhabited spaces and vulnerable societies (such as between African states for instance). Going down to the level of states, one can show the total number of arrivals and departures, possibly calculate ratios regarding the overall population, and even use net migration as the basis of one's argument for a defined period (with flows).

These images on human mobility can be complemented with their underlying economic aspect, in particular through remittances (transfers of money that "expatriate" workers send to their families back in their country of origin). In such cases, interpretations of the graph in Fig. 5.1 vary according to the information collected: when thinking in terms of dollars, the demographic heavyweights (emerging or southern economies) clearly stand out, even though when reduced to the amount of national wealth produced the remittances from migrants are high in small countries with a negative migratory balance and may represent nearly a third of the gross national income. The whole may benefit from being complemented in how the remittances evolve over time, to be compared with the evolution of public development assistance involving much smaller sums.

Determining the Rate and Geography of French Arms Exports

Data on the Military Industry: The Domain of Think Tanks

Contrary to data on migration, international data on arms come above all from think tanks and private foundations. On this subject, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) is a reference for at least two of its databases: one on military expenditures[11] and the other on the international arms trade.[12] Moreover, they are both drawn from and diffused by IOs such as the World Bank. SIPRI does not have a monopoly on this expertise, another example being the International Institute for Strategic Studies which has published *Military Balance* annually for several decades.

Also regarding this theme, the key aspects of definitions are vital, as they refer to different actors and therefore to different sources of data. Thus, the SIPRI data on international trade only pertains to "conventional" weapons,[13] without taking into account weapons of mass destruction, small arms and light weapons, or illicit trafficking. These other categories are quantified by sources other than SIPRI: respectively, estimations from the Monterey WMD Terrorism Database and the University of Maryland (START), The Small Arms Survey and the UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime). While arms contracts are often strategic for states, the president of the exporting countries often turn into salesmen for their national firms. These transactions are not characterized by transparency. SIPRI thus bases

its estimations on a combination of a cluster of media, scientific, industrial, governmental, UN[14] and non-governmental sources. This database presents states as units of account. But one must nevertheless consider that the transnational companies are the sellers: the top 10 (6 of which are American) sold weapons for a total of over 200 billion dollars (according to *The SIPRI Top 100 data sets*), or the equivalent of the GNI of Ireland for the same year.

Units of Account and Time

The chronological aspect of this case on French arms exports proves doubly interesting. This is illustrated by Fig. 5.2.

The first graphs in Fig. 5.2, dealing with total evolution, show an irregular profile with a great deal of variation from year to year. This dynamic informs us about the way contracts are negotiated, sometimes spreading out over several years. Nevertheless, calculating a shifting average over several years helps to reveal a clearer trend and to identify periods. Then, when showing evolution over time, it is preferable to express values in terms of a reference year, like a steady currency (in the case in point, 1990 constant dollars), making it possible to dismiss the effects of inflation and the risk of seeing artificially exponential growth. Finally, the first graph shows the gross value in dollars, while the second one reasons in terms of French market shares expressed in percentages of the worldwide total of arms exports. Yet the three phases identified in the first graph[15] do not all correspond to those observed in the second. Indeed, a variation in shares naturally depends on the evolution of French exports themselves, but also those of other exporting countries: an increase in the share does not mean an increase in absolute value, and vice versa.

The collection of diagrams on the right shows the main French arms importers in more detail and in chronological fashion. The value of this kind of representation lies in sorting lines vertically, which is done according to chronological spikes for each importing state, thus arranging buyers from oldest on top (Germany, Spain) to most recent on the bottom (China). By using a vertical scale shared with the total scale, we can measure to what degree buyers affected the latter. This brings to mind Iraq in the early 1980s (during its war with Iran), Taiwan of course in 1997 and 1998, the United Arab Emirates in the following years, and more sporadically Greece in 2007. The map confirms the idea that, in dealing with data showing major variations from year to year, it is important to

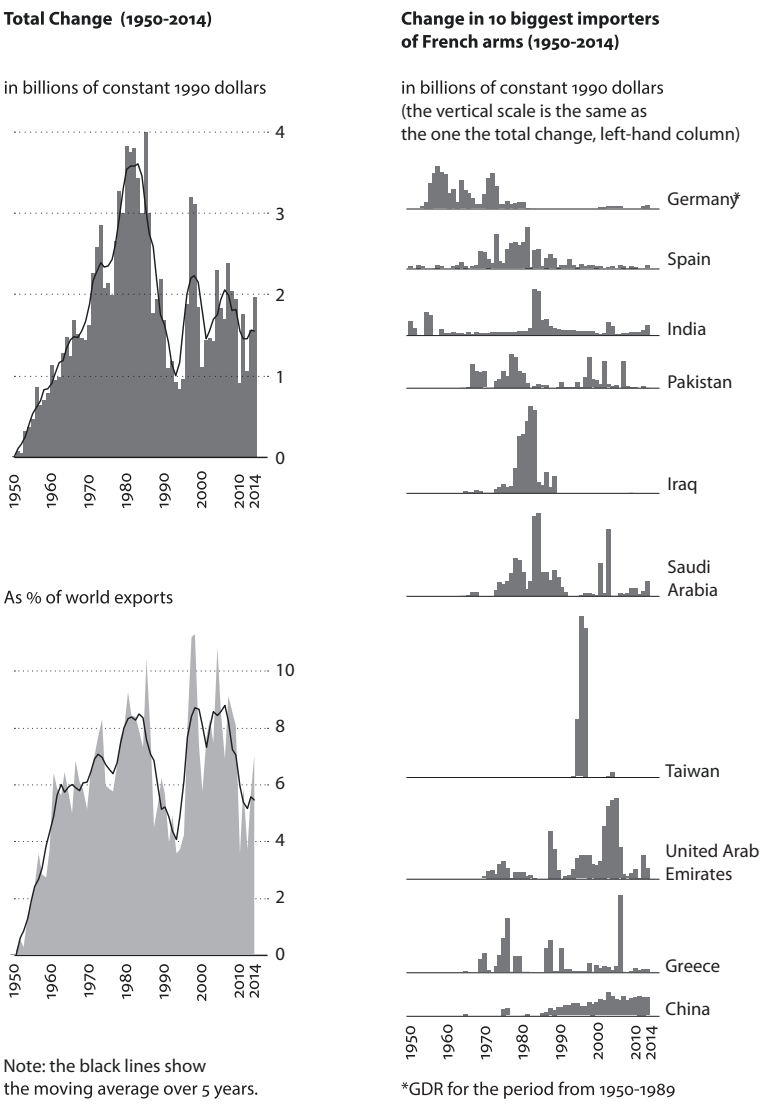


Fig. 5.2 French arms exports (1950–2014)
Sources for the double-page spread: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), *SIPRI Arms Transfers Database* https://sipri.org/databases/armstransfers
© FNSP. Atelier de Cartographie de Sciences Po, 2015

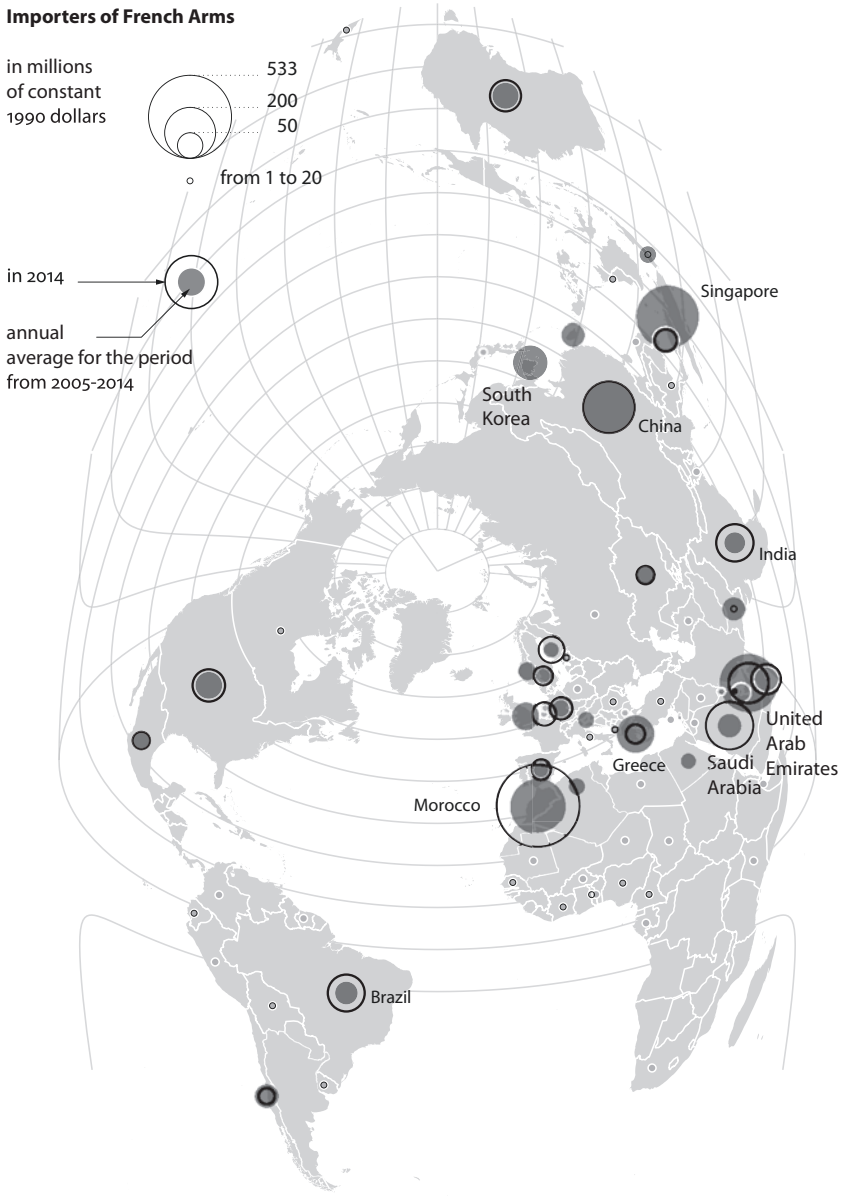


Fig. 5.2 (continued)

use averages over several years or run the risk of ignoring high levels (Singapore and South Korea, two major importers over the past decade did not buy anything in 2014) or conversely, overestimating others (Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Brazil, India and even more so Belgium, bought far more French arms in 2014 than in preceding years).

The Value of Maps in International Relations Research

An interest in the spatial dimension of social phenomena and their representation in the form of maps can be productive at different stages of international relations research.

Defining the Theme/Subject and Identifying/Framing It

In the initial phases of research, when free rein is given to the imagination, the issue of the spatial dimension for the societies and actors studied is often forgotten. Yet it can produce as many hypotheses as the more frequently used "rehistoricization." One way of initiating this spatial inquiry consists in asking what is the scale of the theme/subject? What are in fact the different scales? And what are the connections between these scales—most international relations issues are actually multi-scale, linking the global and local (glocal) and intermediary levels?

The second phase of inquiry concerns the subject's space. What is the nomenclature for current divisions? For territories in the nation-states involved and infra- and supra-national divisions (which the production of government statistics has succeeded in establishing), but also all other possible divisions or apportionment that could contribute to a proper investigation of the subject: "peoples," "ethnicities," languages, religions, and so on (remaining extremely careful about sources and definitions) and their connections to state divisions (*intra* or *supra* or "in-between"), and especially entanglements, overlapping and exclusions.

The third phase concerns the history of these divisions, their fluctuations and their traces in the present. Lastly, the final phase concerns more precisely the places, their hierarchy based on various (objective and subjective) criteria and the practices of the actors involved, their connectivity with other places, contiguities and omissions.

These four initial approaches require critical inventory work of all available cartographic representations, and subsequently even making original maps if necessary for demonstration.

Data Searching, Preliminary Processing and Validating the Hypotheses

Doing groundwork on the theme, and formulating the question for research and for the first hypotheses help to better pinpoint the data to be collected. The two examples studied previously deal with data that is complex but quite easy to find, all things considered. In many cases one will need to dig deeper, proceeding in stages, making preliminary outlines that are incomplete, comparing cartographic results with the hypotheses and often starting over again several times.

During the interviews and when preparing them it is important not to forget questions about the actors' references and territorial and intricate spatial practices (real, symbolic, reinvented, etc.), which are increasingly mobile and embedded in a local/national/international/transnational logic of opposition or cooperation. This logic is often evident in the way actors produce data and maps.

Formatting for Postdoctoral Drafting and Publishing

The approaches described above pertain to the work of a researcher. First drafts, essays, hypotheses: the maps produced are rough drafts or phases. The situation is different regarding the production of documents designed to be part of the final text, which demands the same care as writing the text and must be thought out and done while writing. Indeed, graphic documents must not be mere illustrations (formerly put away in annexes), but should help demonstrate the line of thought. It is therefore necessary to choose the data, to finalize the documents (phase 6, *supra*) and to insert them in the correct place in the body of the text.

In the case of a postdoctoral publication, there will still be a few obstacles to overcome: negotiating with the publisher (some only accord graphic documents the status of illustrations, which are dispensable), and if applicable converting to black and white (which is not always as simple as a basic conversion) and adapting to the graphic guidelines for the book or journal.

Notes

1. From an article published in *Foreign Affairs* in 1993, see the 1996 book in which the author develops his thesis in detail.
2. For a synthesis, see Paul Claval, *Histoire de la géographie* (Paris: PUF, 2011).
3. See the two books by his main representative: Jacques Bertin, *Graphics and graphic information processing*, New York: Walter De Gruyter, 1981 (1977 for original edition); and *Semiology of graphics: diagrams, networks, maps*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983 (1967 for original edition).
4. Consider William Playfair and his histograms and proportional circles in the late eighteenth century or Alexander von Humboldt's atlases in the early nineteenth century.
5. See the introduction to Chap. 12 of this book.
6. Cartographic projection is the representation of the terrestrial globe on a map. All cartographic projections distort surfaces or angles (shapes), depending on the case, but some are better adapted for certain uses or scales.
7. As such, the innumerable uses of Mercator projection (often unsuitable because it exaggerates surfaces in high latitudes) that focus on Europe reveal the total absence of reflection about the choice of a map background.
8. Which publishes data every year in its International Migration Outlook reports.
9. Through the Migration and Remittances program, initially begun in cooperation with the University of Sussex Development Research Centre.
10. On the issue of stock and flow, see the article and estimates produced by Guy J. Abel and Nikola Sander, "Quantifying Global International Migration Flows," *Science*, 343 (28 March 2014).
11. SIPRI Military Expenditure Database.
12. SIPRI Arms Transfers Database (www.sipri.org/).
13. In other words, according to SIPRI, all missiles and canons, vehicles and tanks, artillery, ships and submarines, airplanes and helicopters as well as satellites. A detailed list is posted on the "Methodology" pages of the database website.
14. In particular the "UN Register of Conventional Arms" database from United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA).
15. A continual increase until the early 1980s, then a drop and a return to an intermediary but unstable situation since the late 1990s.

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CHAPTER 6

The UN Internet Portal, Institutional Multilateralism Caught in the Web

Mélanie Albaret and Delphine Placidi-Frot

Abstract This chapter guides readers in their exploration of the "virtual" United Nations (UN) and invites them to follow intuitive navigation and explore undiscovered resources. After putting things in context to grasp the difficulty of finding one's bearings within the labyrinth of the UN digital galaxy, it provides some useful keys for conducting more methodical research by identifying a small portion of the resources available and by indicating where to find them. Lastly, it questions them by considering the portal not just as a mere tool but as a subject of research.

The lightning speed with which internet access has grown since the 1990s touches on one of the fundaments of multilateralism: so-called open or public diplomacy.[1] Until then, the latter was illustrated by the public nature of the debates in most of its governing bodies; the existence of a communications policy initiated at the founding of the United Nations (UN) in

M. Albaret (✉)
Law School, University of Clermont Auvergne (UCA), Clermont-Ferrand, France

D. Placidi-Frot
University Paris-Sud/Paris-Saclay, Orsay, France

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1945 designed to widely publicize its actions through multiple media (print media, radio, television, publications); as well as relatively free access to archives for researchers. The sudden development of the internet and the rise of social networks[2] were quickly perceived as decisive by certain UN representatives. They have made it possible for people around the world to be informed about the organization's goals and activities, thus increasing its influence, autonomy and legitimacy.[3] They have also enabled actors in the organization to increase exchanges via limited access or more restricted networks and to archive digital documents. In that respect, these major changes have modified information-accessing procedures for researchers, diplomats, journalists and charity workers, changing the conditions and focus of their work.

However, an exploration of the UN internet portal and its vast resources has proven disconcerting due to its scale.[4] This chapter's modest and prosaic purpose is to guide readers in their exploration of the "'virtual' United Nations,"[5] while inviting them to follow intuitive navigation and explore undiscovered resources. After putting things in context to grasp the difficulty of finding one's bearings within the labyrinth of the UN digital galaxy, the chapter provides some useful keys for conducting more methodical research by identifying a small portion of the resources available and by indicating where to find them. Lastly, it invites us to question them by considering the portal not just as a mere tool but as a subject of research.

"Page Under Construction": Endowing the UN with a Virtual Identity

Since launching its English version in 1995, followed by French and Spanish versions in 1996, and Russian, Arabic and Chinese in 1998, the United Nations internet portal has evolved similarly to the worldwide organization, oscillating between the quest for unity and institutional patch-up jobs. Since the portal is involved in how the UN presents itself, it helps to create the identity of an organization that describes itself as a system[6] and displays its unity through several symbols (its emblem, its headquarters, its slogans, etc.). In 20 years, the portal has become a vector of the UN public image and the organization's main tool for disseminating information, in particular for young people[7]: in 2014, nearly 40 million netizens browsed it, looking at about 140 million unique page views.[8]

However, the website was initially designed in response to technological changes, with no specific plan or long-term purposeful strategy, despite

the administrative revisions begun in 1997 to ensure proper governance.[9] This is demonstrated by the chronic lack of human and financial resources allocated to the project, due in particular to the reticence of member states to grant financing.[10] The organization's institutional fragmentation is reflected on the web: decentralized management of the website, content produced by a multitude of departments and actors, a lack of hierarchy and homogeneity among portals for different institutions,[11] non-harmonization of web strategies with other operational strategies, tension between services and staff involved in managing the site. The result is a tangled web of connections, the redundancy of certain kinds of information, obsolescence or no updates for others, a lack of legibility and coherence regarding the themes dealt with by various institutions that was lamented by the Joint Inspection Unit in a report published in 2008.[12]

Added to these difficulties are constraints tied to the presentation of an organization with a universal vocation. Addressing everyone means making the site accessible to as many people as possible. That involves increasing the number of media (radio, video, etc.) in order to overcome the different literacy rates in the public, to ensure access for handicapped individuals, to produce multilingual content in order to create bonds among all people, and to surmount technical constraints (Latin, non-Latin and bi-directional writing, [very] high- or low-speed connections). Frequently reiterated calls for universality, such as the demand for parity among official languages, have nevertheless not led to a marshaling of sufficient resources.[13] This has resulted in a new source of interference.

Like all "online" resources, the UN portal has never stopped changing and developing in order to facilitate browsing by users who look at an average of 2.4 pages per visit.[14] Starting in the late 2000s, evaluation mechanisms and data collection on netizen practices were set up to personalize browsing (online survey in 2009, use of Google Analytics). The new site inaugurated in 2015 was created using a web content management platform (Drupal) designed to streamline and harmonize document uploading and updating by various services. The site was more interactive and had increased multimedia content (radio, photo, video, audiovisual library, live television and on demand from UNWebTV).[15] Furthermore, on the home page, resources are now presented according to different users targeted by the organization: "delegates, journalists, business community, civil society, academics, students, visitors, the unemployed." Use of the website has also changed due to the increasing prevalence of smartphones and social networks in certain parts of the world, requiring constant adjustments.[16]

The breakdown of the UN family and the demands coming from its universal vocation and changes in NICT have made the UN internet portal highly varied but not very readable at first glance. Surfing UN websites is often like driving without any traffic regulations or a roadmap.

Assessing the Diversity of Resources Available

The UN website gives researchers a tool for social and historical investigations (by observing the work of the institution day after day since its inception), for following current events within the organization, for beginning to observe multilateral practices on the part of various actors and for starting prosopographical research. The following are a few revealing examples of the variety of resources available.[17] To retrace discussions within major services, two kinds of meeting records or official records are circulated: verbatim records or minutes, which are exhaustive and written in the first person, and summary records, written in the third person and using substantial elements from the orators' speeches.[18] The reports have proven crucial in following the work of the committees, commissions and administrative bodies for which there are no meeting records or individual publication of decisions. Indeed, they go back to the work accomplished during the year or the last session. The annual reports from the main bodies in the General Assembly (UNGA), as well as those from the Secretary-General, are particularly interesting. The latter are usually a response to a request from a major or subsidiary body, their symbols therefore vary according to which body is presenting them. The Secretary-General may also send reports in a letter or note from non-UN bodies, non-governmental organizations endowed with consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (Ecosoc) or from senior civil servants in the UN or who have been appointed by it on a mission of good offices.

Most UN bodies publish annual flagship reports usually pertaining to a particular theme, as well as regional statistics per country. The most recent versions can be downloaded from the websites of the various bodies.[19] This is the case, for instance, for reports from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (Refugees Around the World), from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (The State of Food and Agriculture) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (Human Development Report). The UN also markets journals, statistical compilations, syntheses and case studies (sales publications).[20] As for the UN Data portal (http://data.un.org/), it collects data produced in a decentralized fashion by the Secretariat and various UN institutions.[21]

Other synthetic documents report on debates within the organization. The *Yearbook of the United Nations*, published annually since 1946 by the Department of Public Information, summarizes the activities of different UN bodies and contextualizes the main official texts adopted during the year.[22] The *Repertoire of the Practice of the Security Council*, produced by the Department of Political Affairs of the Secretariat Mandated by the General Assembly, shows how the Security Council (UNSC) has interpreted and applied the United Nations Charter and its own Provisional Rules of Procedure since 1946.[23] As supplemental reading, the *UNSC Working Methods Handbook* is quite useful.[24]

Among sources of current news, press releases prepared by the Department of Information have been accessible online since October 1995 at www.un.org/press/. From background press releases to round-up press releases, as well as meeting coverage, they provide an opportunity to stay abreast of meetings in real time. The *UN Daily Journal*, NY, published by the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management since 1946, posts information about meetings, consultations, informal sessions and other events organized by UN bodies at the New York headquarters, as well as about topics broached and documents being discussed or just adopted. As for the *Bulletin of Meetings at the Palais des Nations*, it lists UN system meetings in Geneva. Digital versions of these two publications have been available from the ODS since 2003 (see below).[25] The UN News Centre website (www.un.org/news/) broadcasts the organization's dispatches, and the 63 United Nations information centers around the world provide information in varying quantities in local and/or regional languages.[26] Several types of data are also available on the UN website, concerning in particular certain categories of actors. The portal devoted to member states (https://www.un.org/en/member-states/index.html) provides access to different kinds of information (admission to the UN, elections in various bodies, speeches given, draft resolutions supported, periodic reports submitted, payments in arrears, etc.). Dag Hammarskjöld Library also hosts a column entitled "Member States On The Record" which gives links to major documents available at UNBISnet, UN-I-QUE and the press release database.[27]

Certain resources designed for the delegates and/or international civil servants have restricted access on the organization's different intranet and extranet portals. Others are accessible however, through the permanent missions portal for instance.[28] Viewing them often proves instructive, including the *Delegates' Handbook* regarding the UNGA or the United Nations Force Headquarters Handbook concerning peacekeeping operations (PK/G/23422).[29] As for non-Governmental Organization (NGOs)

working with the United Nations, they are listed on the Integrated Civil Society Organizations System (iCSO) portal, managed by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat. It includes among other things a list of NGOs enjoying consultative status with Ecosoc.[30] Finally, prosopographical research is facilitated by having speakers' names included in official reports and especially in the Index to Speeches, via UNBISnet; publishing biographies, when senior UN civil servants are appointed and the member states' permanent representatives are accredited; and publishing directories of accredited diplomatic personnel through the Protocol and Liaison Service (known as the *Blue Books*).[31]

Sidebar 6.1: Do You Speak UNish? Deciphering Document Symbols
The symbol for an organization *document* is composed of letters and numbers that characterize it in a unique way, whatever the linguistic version. A document produced by two or more bodies has as many symbols as bodies involved. This is the case for instance for reports from the Peacebuilding Commission, a subsidiary body of the UNGA and the UNSC.[32]

The first elements in the symbol indicate the body the document has come from or under whose jurisdiction it falls. The main bodies are designated by one or two letters: A designates the General Assembly, S is for the Security Council, E is for Ecosoc, ST is the Secretariat, T is the Trusteeship Council.[33] For subsidiary bodies, the beginning of the symbol retraces the body's place in the organization chart. Thus, the Sub-commission (/Sub./) on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights of the Commission on Human Rights (/CN.4/) falling under Ecosoc (E/) will be designated by E/CN.4/Sub.2/. However, certain institutions, while dependent on a main body, have a specific first element. Thus, the symbol for documents from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (Cnuced), although a body of the UNGA, starts with TD/rather than A/.

Once the body has been identified, then come the elements specifying the nature of the document. It could be minutes (/PV.), a resolution (/RES.), summary records (/SR.), a working paper (/WP.), a Security Council Presidential statement (/PRST.) and so on.

(*continued*)

Sidebar 6.1: (continued)

The last element indicates modifications to the original document such as additions (/Add.), corrections (/Corr.) or revisions (/Rev.). Figures may refer to the year a document was produced and/or adopted, to the session number, to the number of the document or revision, to the addendum, etc. Standards for symbols used for documents from the main UN bodies have evolved over the course of their history. During the first decades, symbols for UNGA documents (until 1975), for Ecosoc (until 1977) and for the UNSC (until 1993) did not incorporate the session or year number, and were simply numbered chronologically.

Finding Documents on the Site

Resources are accessible online about information systems and databases conceived and fed by different institutional actors to answer varying research needs. Documents issued by UN deliberative bodies in New York and Geneva are fully available starting from 1993, those published in Vienna from 1997, administrative documents from the Secretariat starting from 1993.[34] Dag Hammarskjöld Library[35] digitalizes important prior material (Dag Digital Library or DAG Repository).[36] It has also designed handbooks for different information systems, offers access to all resources online through its only portal (UN Resources) and answers netizens through online forms ("Ask Dag!").[37] The audiovisual archives group is also digitalizing the UN audiovisual collection, including photographs, films and audio and video recordings from the organization since its inception.[38]

The Official Documents System (ODS)[39] provides access to all official UN documentation since 1993, to the resolutions adopted by the UNSC, the UNGA, Ecosoc and the Trusteeship Council since 1946 as well as the Daily Journal from New York and Geneva.

The four modes of research proposed have proven complementary since the results obtained diverge due to different indexing parameters and search engines. The basic mode of research enables you to begin research without a symbol, then to limit it to a particular body, language or year. The simple search mode provides access only to the UN Documentation database (and in particular to preliminary versions of resolutions). The complex search

mode allows you to explore different databases (UN Documentation, Resolutions [1946–1993] and the *Journal of the United Nations*) while combining several criteria. Lastly, the global search mode is a full-text search suitable for advanced searches (for example, by searching for key words, names and phrases).

The UN bibliographic information system (UNBISnet) has three databases.[40] The *Bibliographic Records* draw up a catalogue of UN publications and documents indexed by the Dag Hammarskjöld Libraries and the United Nations office in Geneva, as well as outside publications acquired by the former since 1979. The *Voting Records database* gives access to voting results for all resolutions adopted by the UNSC and the UNGA since 1946 and references their texts.

Finally, the *Index to Speeches* lists speeches given at the UNSC, UNGA and Ecosoc since 1983 and the Trusteeship Council since 1982.

The ODS and UNBISnet may be supplemented by consulting additional tools. The *Index to Proceedings* has listed annually since 1946 all documents from the main deliberative bodies (UNGA, UNSC, Ecosoc and the Trusteeship Council). Each index includes a subject index, in which documents are listed by items on the agenda, as well as the previously mentioned *Index to Speeches* also available on UNBISnet. Electronic versions of the *Index to Proceedings* for the General Assembly, the UNSC and Ecosoc have been available since 2008.[41] The UN Bibliographic Information System (UNBIS Thesaurus), published online in 2001, lists all titles from domains that are important and of interest to the United Nations. It is possible therefore to verify the title of a domain name before doing a search by subject in the ODS.[42]

The UN also provides several terminological databases. UN Info Quest (UN-I-QUE) helps find the symbols for UN documents in order to then do a search on the ODS. UNTERM lists linguistic equivalents and the meaning of the acronyms for the names of UN entities in the various official languages as well as in German and Portuguese. Glossaries for agencies and special programs are also useful in deciphering their work.[43]

Unweaving the UN Web Through Comparison

United Nations websites also represent a discourse produced by the organization about itself. Browsing in real time on the UN portal is conducive to comparing the pages proposed over time. Thus it updates differing interpretations of UN identity. The website has gone from being a tool for

research to a subject of research, inviting researchers to question how the UN presents itself and the changes in this digital orchestration.

In exploring the virtual United Nations, visitors are led to perform synchronic comparisons among the entries proposed: by body, theme or actor. This exercise qualifies the visual identity presumed by the organization chart for the main bodies.

Among these, the UNSC, UNGA and Ecosoc have similar sites in terms of the presentation and headings proposed ("about," "president," "documents," "meetings").[44] The page devoted to the Secretary-General resembles the latter, while the page for the Secretariat enumerates links for its various offices and departments, reflecting its administrative nature as a non-deliberative body.[45] On the other hand, the Trusteeship Council's internet presence is more discreet, probably due to the suspension of its activities in 1994.[46]

As for The International Court of Justice website, it is outside the un.org/domain, which reflects a geographical as well as an institutional distance.[47] This configuration underlines the special status of legal themes and bodies at the UN, knowledge of which can however prove to be fruitful. For instance, it is through the entry "law" that internet users can explore the *Repertoire of the Practice of UN bodies*.[48]

These varied presentations in the UN system can also be analyzed through a diachronic comparison of websites that is possible using the Internet Archive.[49] In the early years of its existence, the website was organized in a simple and two-sided logic and appearance, combining a presentation of the UN core structure and an overview of its main topics of action (see Fig. 6.1). Several subjects (peace and security, sustainable development, human rights, humanitarian aid, international rights) appear on a regular, almost systematic basis, even though their wording has changed slightly. Alongside this core, internet users may notice a reinforcement of thematic approaches, as evidenced by the increasing number of entries by subject since the early 2010s, the growing importance of environmental issues (mainly through the "sustainable development" label) and the place given to UN prominent topics (see Fig. 6.2). Thus, on the portal's home page in late 2015, in addition to the usual themes displayed in the "Our actions" menu, there were headings devoted to the organization's "crucial themes" and "areas of action." The creation by the Department of Information of numerous sustainable or more cyclical websites has reinforced this trend (mobilization regarding the Ebola epidemic in 2014, celebrations and anniversaries [observances]).[50]



Fig. 6.1 Home page of the www.un.org/website on January 4, 1997
Source: https://web.archive.org/web/19970104075414/http://www.un.org

As for entries by actors, they have been refined and enhanced. Not very forthcoming on the subject,[51] the United Nations seemed subsequently to be addressing only civil society and the business world in highlighting these headings. This initiative followed the adoption of Ecosoc resolution 1996/31 opening up consultative status to an exponential number of NGOs and launching the Global Compact in 2000. When the site was redesigned in 2015, a double evolution emerged: on the one hand, the actors for whom the portal was designed became more diverse and were considered, at least symbolically, on an equal footing. On the other hand, the objective no longer consisted in merely presenting partnerships but also in facilitating browsing for internet users, since each heading listed resources the site's authors deemed relevant to its identity (see Fig. 6.3).

Finally, a comparison of sites by language proves to be highly instructive. UNGA frequently touches on the need for multilingualism on the website and the importance of parity among the six official UN languages. And yet there are differences in the content available in each language (sites are frequently more abundant in English) and in updates to them. While these

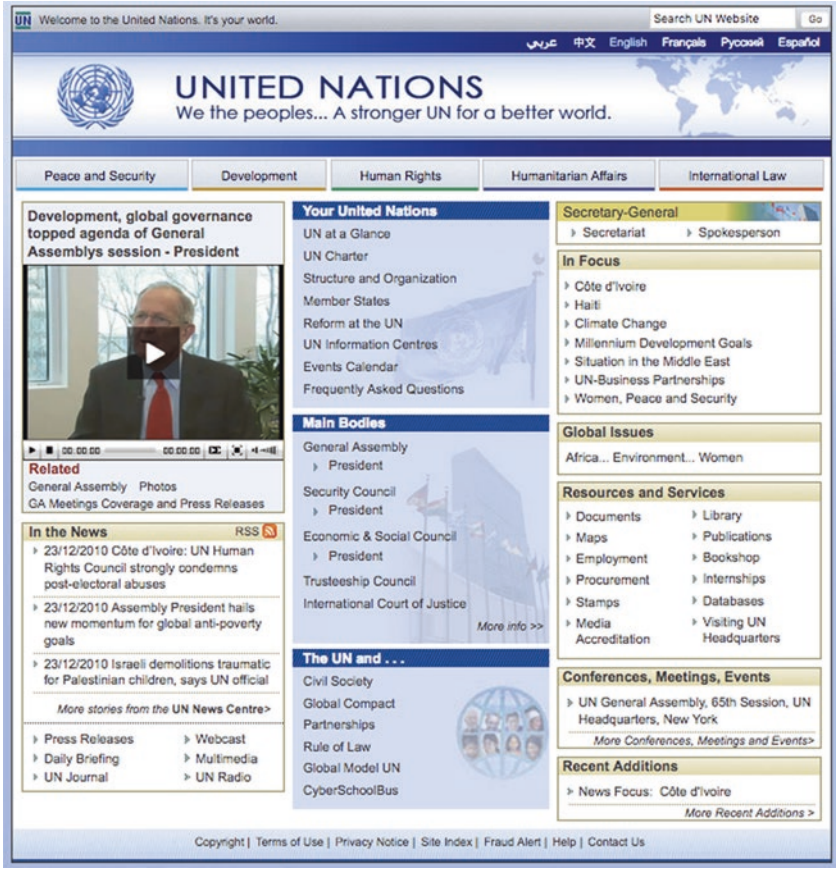


Fig. 6.2 Home page of the www.un.org/website on December 24, 2010
Source: https://web.archive.org/web/20101224081951/http://www.un.org:80/en/

variations according to language may be explained in part by resource constraints, this interpretation cannot summarize everything. Certain pages are available in only two languages (English and French in the case of the ICJ for instance). Because of their technical nature (decisions and press releases), key elements of the home page for that body do not appear to be attempting to address everyone within the United Nations. This poses the question of what audience is targeted by each UN website, the answers also reflecting how the UN sees itself through a mirror effect.



Fig. 6.3 Home page of the www.un.org/website on May 11th, 2017 Source: http://www.un.org/en/index.html

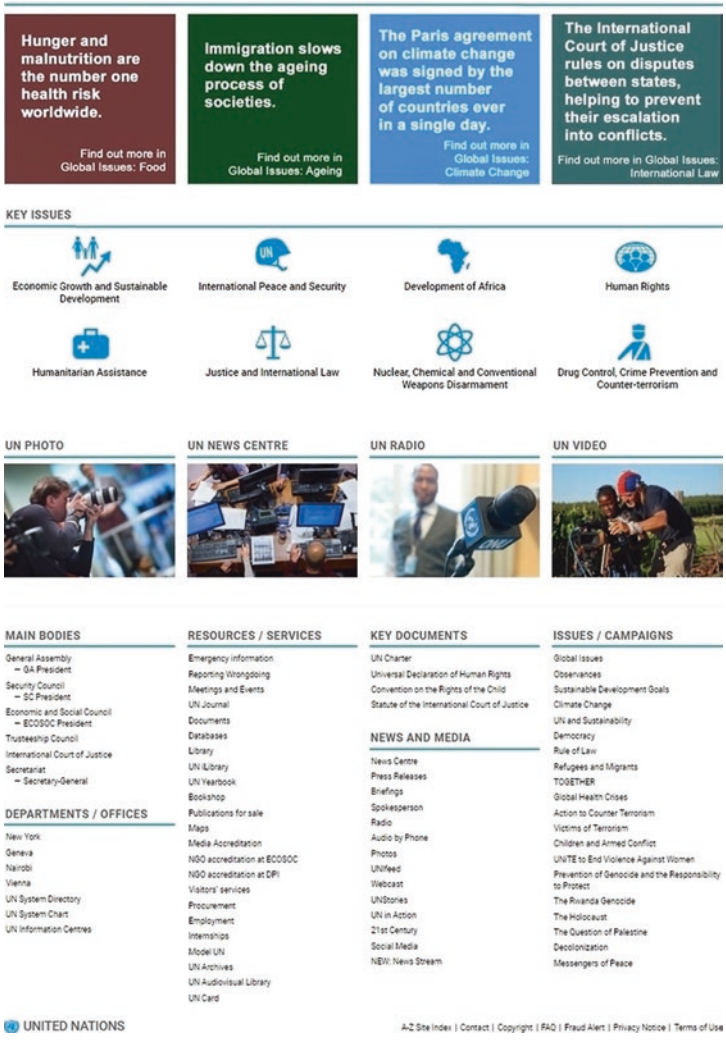


Fig. 6.3 (continued)

UN websites are thus both working tools and subjects of research. They inspire us to address core issues little explored until now in the field of international relations, such as how an institution presents itself, the symbolic customs and communications of international organizations. By combining open browsing and more methodical exploration to be highlighted

through various qualitative and quantitative methods, visitors can start thinking about the organization's contemporary transformations from the new angle of an emerging digital multilateralism, or "e-multilateralism."

Notes

1. The authors would like to thank Benoît Martin for his insightful comments.
2. This analysis focuses on the UN internet portal. It is important to note, however, the increasing impact of social networks in the organization's information and communications policy.
3. Assistant Secretary-General for Public Information, Guidelines for Publishing in an Electronic Format, August 14, 1996, ST/AI/189/Add.28.
4. In early 2016, the internet portal had nearly 60,000 url links according to www.who.is/.
5. Nikolay Chulkov and Yishan Zhang, Joint Inspection Unit, Review of Management of Internet Websites in the United Nations System Organizations, 2008, p. 22, JIU/REP/2008/6.
6. According to the UN organization chart (http://www.un.org/en/aboutun/structure/pdfs/UN_System_Chart_30June2015.pdf). For a different presentation of the organization, see the Directory of UN system organizations (www.unsceb.org/directory/).
7. In 2010, 66% of internet users visiting the site were at least 35 years old. Secretary General, Activities of the Department of Public Information: News services, January 25, 2011, p. 15, A.AC.198/2011/3, p. 13.
8. Secretary General, Activities of the Department of Public Information: News services, February 18, 2015, p. 18, A/AC.198/2015/3.
9. Including the creation of the Information Technology Section in 1997 (now the Web Services Section attached to the Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information), of an interdepartmental task force on internet issues, coordination initiatives with the Information Technology and Communications Office and with the promotion and distribution unit for new media platforms, etc.
10. Secretary General, Activities of the Department of Public Information: News services, February 16, 2010, p. 16, A/AC.198/2010/3.
11. Every UN agency and program has its own autonomous website.
12. Chulkov and Zhang, Joint Inspection Unit, Review of Management of Internet Websites in the United Nations System Organizations.
13. The General Assembly frequently refers to the importance of multilingualism and the goal of parity. See for example resolution 69/96 of December 16, 2014.
14. Secretary General, Activities of the Department of Public Information: news services, 2015.

15. Multimedia resources portal: http://www.unmultimedia.org; UNWebTV: http://webtv.un.org/.
16. UN access portal for social networks: http://www.un.org/en/sections/about-website/un-social-media/index.html. In early 2016, the UN had a presence on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, Google+, Pinterest, Tumblr, Instagram and LinkedIn.
17. The UN distinguishes different types of documentation (not always very clearly): UN documents, official documents, publications and so on. See Under-Secretary-General for Conference Services and Special Assignments, Administrative Instruction. Regulations for the Control and Limitation of Documentation, Addendum. Distribution of documents, meeting records, official records and publications 17 December 1985, ST/AI/189/Add.3/Rev.2.
18. Verbatim records are available for the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Trusteeship Council, as well as summary records for Ecosoc. There are however no records provided for sessions and other informal Security Council dialogues.
19. The United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) is now used as a cross-referencing platform toward sites for the different UN bodies. The reports are accessible at www.unsceb.org/flagship-publications/.
20. These publications are accessible at https://shop.un.org/. Among these, see for example: *Statistical Yearbook and Monthly Bulletin of Statistics* (https://unstats.un.org/unsd/publications/); *UN Chronicles* (https://unchronicle.un.org/); *Yearbook of the United Nations Commission on International Law Trade (UNCITRAL)* (www.uncitral.org/); *UN Disarmament Yearbook* (www.un.org/disarmament/publications/yearbook/); *United Nations Juridical Yearbook* and *Yearbook of the International Law* Commission (http://legal.un.org/); *Basic Facts About the United Nations* and *Yearbook of the United Nations* (http://unyearbook.un.org/en/peacekeeping-community/).
21. See Chap. 12.
22. *United Nations Yearbook* (http://unyearbook.un.org/).
23. *Repertoire of the Practice of the Security Council* (www.un.org/en/sc/repertoire/); *Provisional Rules of Procedure for the Security Council* (www.un.org/en/sc/about/rules/).
24. *Security Council Working Methods Handbook* (www.un.org/en/sc/about/methods/).
25. *Journal of the United Nations* (www.un.org/en/documents/journal.asp/).
26. United Nations Information Centres (UNIC) (https://unic.un.org/).
27. UN Member States On The Record (www.un.org/depts/dhl/unms/).
28. Permanent Missions Portal (deleGATE) (www.un.int/). Among the intranet and extranet sites, iSeek (intranet), Umoja (integrated resource management), UN Careers (recruitment), UN Inspira and HR Portal

(human resources), UN Global Marketplace (suppliers), UN System Staff College (training for international civil servants), etc.

29. *Delegate's Handbook* (www.un.int/pm/delegates-handbook/); *United Nations Force Headquarters Handbook*: on the DAG Repository digital library via http://research.un.org/en/peacekeeping-community/.
30. Integrated Civil Society Organizations System (iCSO) (http://esango.un.org/). See also the liaison unit site for NGOs in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) (http://csonet.org/).
31. Protocol and Liaison Service (www.un.int/protocol/). The United Nations Office at Geneva also publishes a *Blue Book* available online (www.unog.ch/bluebook/).
32. For example: Report of the Peacebuilding Commission on its eighth session, December 17, 2014, A/69/818–S/2015/174.
33. The International Court of Justice (ICJ) uses separate symbols for its documents.
34. Documents published before 1993 are partially digitalized and include in particular resolutions from the main bodies, documents from plenary sessions of the UNSC and official records from the UNGA. Old digitalized documents are usually available in pdf-image format rather than pdf-text, which does not allow you to explore their contents except if you use optical character recognition software (OCR). To follow the digitalization process for UN documents, see https://library.un.org/sites/library.un.org/files/dlp-digitization_program_status_report.pdf.
35. Dag Hammarskjöld Library (New York) is an institution that contains the entire United Nations collection (www.un.org/depts/dhl/). It has a blog (UN Pulse) that records the release of UN documents and publications and other international publications (http://un-library.tumblr.com/). The libraries at the headquarters in Geneva (https://library.un.org), Vienna (http://www.unov.org/unov/en/library.html) and Nairobi (www.unlibrary-nairobi.org/) also have collections, as do the headquarters of the UN regional economic commissions and regional information centers. The list of other libraries with UN collections is available at https://library.un.org/content/un-libraries.
36. Dag Hammarskjöld Digital Library (http://repository.un.org/).
37. UN Documentation Research Guide (http://research.un.org/en/docs/). The UN Resources portal provides access in different ways: through an alphabetical glossary, by organization, by theme, through the catalogue of different UN libraries, through statistics and through terminological databases (http://research.un.org/en/un-ressources/). Go to the "Ask Dag!" Q and A column (http://ask.un.org/).
38. Audiovisual Library (www.unmultimedia.org/avlibrary/).

39. Sédoc or ODS Search, Official documents of the UN (http://documents.un.org/).
40. Dag Hammarskjöld Library publishes manuals specifying current standards for indexation and cataloguing (*UNBIS Reference Manuals*) available at www.un.org/depts/dhl/unbisref_manual/index.htm/.
41. *Index to Proceedings*: https://library.un.org/index-proceedings. Furthermore, they have been gradually integrated in reverse chronological order at the Dag Hammarskjöld digital library and can be downloaded at http://repository.un.org/handle/11176/89963/.
42. UNBIS Thesaurus: http://lib-thesaurus.un.org/.
43. UN-I-QUE: http://lib-unique.un.org/; UNTERM: http://untermportal.un.org/; recension of specialized glossaries: http://research.un.org/en/un-resources/terminology/.
44. Security Council: www.un.org/en/sc/; General Assembly: www.un.org/en/ga/; Ecosoc: www.un.org/en/ecosoc/.
45. Secretariat: http://www.un.org/en/sections/about-un/secretariat/index.html, Secretary-General: https://www.un.org/sg/en.
46. Trusteeship Council: www.un.org/en/sections/about-un/trusteeship-council/index.html/.
47. International Court of Justice: www.icj-cij.org/.
48. *Repertory of Practice of United Nations Organs*: http://legal.un.org/repertory/. To better understand these issues, in its search guide relating to the ICJ (http://research.un.org/en/docs/icj), Dag Hammarskjöld library refers to those regarding international law at the Peace Palace Library, while highlighting that this is not a UN body (Peace Palace Library, www.peacepalacelibrary.nl/).
49. Internet Archive: https://archive.org/web/.
50. United Nations Celebrations: www.un.org/en/sections/observances/united-nations-observances/.
51. No entries on external actors to the organization appeared on the portal in 1997 (see photograph 6.1).

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PART III

Going Out in the Field

CHAPTER 7

The Field Study

Marieke Louis, Lucile Maertens, and Marie Saiget

Abstract Drawing upon the work of anthropologists and sociologists, scholars in political science and international relations (IR) increasingly rely on ethnographic methods. Based on multiple fieldwork experiences, within secretariats of international organizations and on the field of international interventions, this chapter addresses the relevance of such methods and the challenges of their concrete application in IR. It provides a series of concrete practical tricks to anticipate, prepare and conduct a fieldwork. It considers the different types of participation a researcher can adopt and stresses the various dimensions of observation. Finally, it draws attention to the daily challenges of ethnographic methods and suggests solutions to overcome issues of confidentiality and to deal with the effects of immersion. Ethnographic methods are relevant to cover a wide variety of fields and objects and therefore, as the chapter shows, are appropriate to the study of IR. More precisely, this chapter suggests different ways

M. Louis (✉)
Sciences Po Grenoble, Saint-Martin-d'Hères, France

L. Maertens
Institute of Political, Historical and International Studies,
University of Lausanne, Lausanne, Switzerland

M. Saiget
Sciences Po Paris, Centre for International Studies (CERI), Paris, France

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to adapt ethnographic methods to the specificities of international configurations. Doing fieldwork is required not only to study the relationships that structure the processes of internationalization and globalization but also to test the relevance of academic and indigenous categories produced to understand these configurations.

Shaped by founding work in anthropology[1] and sociology,[2] ethnographic approaches have gradually been recognized as a valid method in political science,[3] particularly in the French-speaking academic world. Studies in international relations, historically dominated by theoretical approaches, have also demonstrated a renewed interest in the ethnographic approach.[4]

This shifts the perspective both epistemologically and methodologically. Based on immersion, an ethnographic approach involves "the awareness of the crucial nature of manufacturing data."[5] The immersion process provides a way to carry out "thick description,"[6] encouraging us to contextualize and reconstitute the sociocultural meaning of the facts under study.

This raises several issues for the study of international relations: is there a specific international field? And/or can we observe only relations, as an indication of changes in scale and in internationalization processes? Does the international, transnational and global dimension of the relations observed entail a specificity and/or adaptation of our methods of investigation in the social sciences, here regarding those inspired by the ethnographic approach?

Work pertaining to the sociology of conflicts or the anthropology of war and violence has examined the appropriation of ethnographic methods in the framework of so-called "difficult" or "dangerous" fields.[7] But reflections have remained at an embryonic stage on the use of ethnographic techniques in social sciences to study "international relations" or "international issues" (depending on whether the focus is on the actors—both governmental and non-governmental—and their interdependence or on the entanglements at relevant levels of action and analysis). Complementing work that advocates resorting to multisited ethnography, prosopographical studies and multinational collective fieldwork,[8] we suggest proceeding here with a "methodological assemblage" between different kinds of data collection and processing borrowed from ethnography (on-site surveys, direct observation, participant observation, immersion, interviews) in order to explore the fields of international organizations (IOs) and international intervention (Sidebars 7.1 and 7.2). IOs are indeed relational and bureaucratic places, configurations of multiple actors that can be examined

from the inside. Through field studies, researchers can understand relationships of interdependence perceived through the prism of cooperation and solidarity as well as competition and conflict.

Offering access to a multitude of viewpoints, hierarchical levels, internal mechanisms of transformation and primary sources, an ethnographic study can help overcome a restrictive conception of an IO as a unitary actor (or "black box"), revealing the actors' behavior, logics and perceptions, bureaucratic constraints and organizational cultures.

Relations maintained among IOs and with other actors such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), national institutions, local organizations and private actors may also be observed in a restricted geographical space such as the capital of the country hosting an international operation.

Thus, using material from three different doctoral studies, this chapter proceeds like a toolbox providing some useful tricks of the trade for more or less confirmed researchers who conduct a field study in international relations.

Sidebar 7.1: Studies at International Organizations
The IOs within which we conducted our research are the International Labour Organization (ILO) and its headquarters in Geneva (the International Labour Office), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Departments of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and of Field Support (DFS), the headquarters for which are located respectively in Nairobi and New York. Marieke Louis's study of the ILO began with a three-month internship as a researcher and was then pursued in about ten stays ranging from one to three weeks over four years, for about seven months total. Lucile Maertens's study took the form of two three-month participant observations, one with UNEP's Post-Conflict and Disaster Management Branch in Geneva and the other with DPKO/DFS in New York, spread over a period of two years.

Sidebar 7.2: Studies on International Interventions
Major international peacekeeping operations have been carried out in Burundi since the 1990s. Marie Saiget's study on these international interventions was conducted from a single site, the Burundian capital

(*continued*)

Sidebar 7.2: (continued)
of Bujumbura, where she was able to map the configuration of the actors involved and to meet peacekeeping and development professionals in more informal places such as hotels, restaurants and sports facilities. It was also supplemented by observations of the activities and missions of IOs and NGOs in the field (often conducted outside the capital). The study took place during three two-month stays over three years within UN Women and CARE International in Burundi.

Tricks of the Trade in International Field Studies

Preparing

While a study cannot be controlled from start to finish, good advance preparation from one's university or laboratory can help a great deal with the quality of the generated data in the field, as well as in better identifying the subject under study. Preparations relate to several aspects, including temporal, legal, relational, spatial and financial elements.

Knowing "when" to conduct fieldwork is not only conditioned by the research's state of advancement. It is also and above all contingent on the nature of the subject and of the field concerned, both of which have their own time frame: predictable or uncertain, short or long term. The political situation of a country like Burundi may change quickly, and the researcher could be denied access to the field within a few days. International conferences are planned long in advance but occur over a limited time period (one to two weeks for an environmental conference, three weeks for an international labor conference).

These fields therefore require a certain availability and flexibility on the researcher's part which may not be compatible with a university schedule. It is thus necessary to anticipate them. Conversely, other questions (bureaucratic work, organizational culture) may be studied at other times since they are less subordinate to specific calendars.

Concerning the legal aspects, the first steps to take consist in inquiring at the embassy about visa requirements when the field is located abroad. The researcher may also need to ask for permission from her/his institution when the field is considered dangerous. Regarding the study of IOs and international conferences, obtaining accreditation is necessary and can

take several months, all the more so when they occur within the highly formal UN framework.

The many avenues of access to the field involve various control checks. Often the "researcher's hat" is not sufficient to gain entry to IOs, except to their archives. While a visitor's badge (obtained upon presentation of an ID card) may allow access to the corridors and meeting areas in the Palais des Nations and the ILO, this is not the case with all IOs (e.g. UNEP and the WTO) and does not provide access to rooms where meetings are held (plenary sessions, commissions, etc.). At a forum or international meeting, access will therefore result from the type of accreditation sought and, more prosaically, the badge requested and obtained—governmental delegation, civil society, press and so on.

The researcher's relations often prove crucial in facilitating legal procedures: activating a network of contacts within the secretariat—a network that will be reinforced over the course of the study—may therefore help in obtaining accreditation for an international conference. While a summer school (such as the one organized every year by the United Nations Office in Geneva) can provide a first contact within the UN system, being an intern (a volunteer or paid research assistant) is also a doorway into the IOs and a good way to create and expand one's network.

Parallel to access through the secretariat, access through members, by working with a delegation or an NGO, or via technical programs implemented by the organization, can also provide access to the field, although according to different modalities. Whatever the case may be, prior knowledge about the organization, the kinds of actors permitted on site and, in the case of IOs, the administrative categories used by the services in charge of accreditations is therefore necessary for gaining access to the field.

At the preparatory stage of the study, spatial aspects are often neglected. And yet, international relations are rooted in more or less extensive geographical spaces and in specific locations (organization headquarters, meeting rooms, etc.). Obtaining site maps and meeting programs in advance in order to know where and how to get there is thus an important aspect of preparations. Not only does this provide information about the single site relevant to the research, or on the contrary its multisited nature, but it also helps in saving time and better anticipating costs in the field. Indeed, while international venues are not necessarily located in Geneva, New York, Brussels or Bujumbura, distance, while relative, nonetheless remains a recurrent and even constituent aspect of this kind of study. Even researchers favoring a local approach to global phenomena must, at some

point, go through major international centers or places located outside their country of origin.

Yet access to these fields often involves travel and stays that are all the more costly due to the researchers' willingness to take on the challenge of immersion, for which they are not always paid. These costs are only partially covered by research institutions, and a substantial part is often the researcher's responsibility. The field's feasibility is thus also dictated by material imperatives that should be anticipated when the project is being developed. These material issues must also be objectified during the study's feedback stage to the degree that they provide information about an aspect often sidestepped in international relations: equity among researchers in terms of access to international venues. Finally, in addition to this material investment, there is a personal investment in acquiring certain skills, in particular linguistic ones: while a sufficient command of English is indispensable, enabling one at least to follow technical negotiations and carry on a conversation, it is also important to become familiar with other languages, particularly when the field is located in a non-English-speaking country. For instance, the world of IOs in Burundi significantly relies on an "approximate" use of English, limited to exchanges with donors or writing reports, and a much greater likelihood of using French or Kirundi in everyday relations.

First Steps in the Field

Following these various stages of preparation, and once on site, the study begins by making contact with the resource persons identified beforehand. Future colleagues, internship supervisors and members of the administration are the actors who will facilitate one's start in the field thanks to their specific knowledge of the system as well as their networks. While asking for their advice and occasional help, researchers must also learn to remain independent from them in order to limit their influence in producing and processing data. Thus, international fields require an abundance of tools for developing relationships with respondents.

Within the framework of studies in the secretariat of UN organizations such as the ILO or UNEP, exchanging e-mails, following formal procedures and being physically present in the office are the usual tools for communication. In other fields, such as studying the local activities of an organization in Burundi, the telephone may be used more frequently to organize meeting with respondents. Finally, during a second visit, facilitated by the network of acquaintances built up by the researcher, informality (both in discussions and in meeting places) is a potentially suitable approach (Sidebar 7.3).

Sidebar 7.3: Informality
Observation is centered around formal times (interviews, staff meetings, professional activities) and informal moments: the researcher must know how to use and make the most of them. Coffee breaks in the secretariat, happy hours between members of the same service after work, commuting to the field as well as social events organized in the expatriate community provide opportunities to collect data and interpret the phenomena under study.

From the start of the study, how one presents oneself is a significant credibility issue. It is therefore important to be informed beforehand, in particular concerning dress codes, in order to avoid clichés such as overly casual outfits worn in the field. Depending on the type of participation, research and self-presentation tools may vary. In generic terms, it must include a concise CV for respondents, a specific electronic signature and a business card.

Types of Participation: Potential and Limits on Choosing How to Access the Field

To observe an IO, a researcher may choose several forms of more or less active participation: indeed, not all observation involves participating on the same level as a delegate, civil servant or member of an NGO. Thus, the purpose of the research and the choice of format for the study will affect the researcher's type of participation within the organization under study as well as the data produced from that observation.

The researcher may choose to join the organization's secretariat: in which case s/he will need to understand its internal functioning, the role of its agents, to become immersed in its organizational culture and to observe the prior preparation and proceedings of meetings. S/he may benefit from the projected (although not always real) neutrality granted to international civil servants and have an easy time contacting all the present actors. However, s/he runs the risk of being influenced by the secretariat's technocratic view hanging over members, and to have more difficulty in perceiving politicization processes.

The researcher admitted into a governmental delegation can more easily observe relations among member states and the organization while taking part in negotiations. Although s/he enjoys most of the prerogatives granted

to members, and even some confidential information, s/he is nevertheless identified with her/his own delegation, which could limit access to other members of the IO and even trigger a certain mistrust during interviews.

If admitted into an NGO with an observer status, the researcher is in an ideal position to observe advocacy and lobbying strategies. The participation is nonetheless limited by the observer status granted to the NGO (general, regional, special lists) and by its reputation within the organization.

The researcher can also participate in an IO's activities at the field level. S/he is thus in a privileged position to analyze the implementation of the organization's mandate and how its activities are received by local actors. This participation depends on what stage the organization's programs and projects have reached, as well as the areas covered by interventions, each new assignment often requiring renegotiations.

What to Observe?

While fieldwork varies depending on the type of participation chosen, the observation phase is valid for all studies. A certain number of common biases in making observations can be remedied by keeping a daily notebook (see Sidebar 7.4). First, it is possible to overlook facts that will constitute significant data later on. Second, a researcher with a very specific idea of what s/he wants to find will inevitably find it, even if it is ultimately an anecdotal fact with no analytical significance. Upon rereading the notebook, certain elements that may have seemed insignificant when written up may make more sense due to multiple occurrences. Similarly, an event that seemed major may appear slightly different afterward due to its uniqueness or to being offset by the overall context. Concretely, the researcher must strive to observe the international facts and actors s/he is analyzing beyond her/his own research assumptions, thus allowing the subject to be understood within its more general configuration. For instance, the researcher's interest in a concept that seems key to her/him within the work of an IO does not mean it will be essential to respondents.

Sidebar 7.4: The Daily Notebook

A tool for both collecting and analyzing data, the notebook is an essential tool for fieldwork.[9] The researcher writes down all her/his daily observations in it. For instance, the notebook may mention actors' thoughts, reactions to events, disagreements and tangible elements revealing hierarchical relationships within the organization.

A field study generates data at different levels. While participant observation constitutes in itself research material to analyze, direct observation is first of all a pretext for collecting other data. It enables one to conduct interviews and to observe specific practices such as actors' negotiating techniques. It is also a way to collect primary written sources: participation within an IO offers access to its archives, its gray literature (meeting documents in particular) and to its intranet. While the work of selecting and analyzing can be time-consuming, one can retrace the evolution of the speech and the influence of different contributors through access to draft reports and comments from copy editors. Last, a field study enables the production of visual data. In an ethnographic approach, the researcher can pay attention to the design of the forums s/he observes and to the use of images in the publications of the organization under study.

After a first phase of familiarization with the field and a longer second period of observation, the researcher must conclude the study. In addition to the institutional constraints specific to each individual and to the organization, physical and material limits signal the need to finish the investigation. In an ideal situation one would conduct a study within an IO over a long enough period to generate significant data; but the period should be sufficiently brief to avoid the risk of being too well-known in a microcosm and of influencing respondents. While considering (im)possible returns to the field (unique fieldwork, potential follow-up interviews, etc.), one should reclaim one's role as a researcher before concluding the study.

Challenges in a Fieldwork

Rather than an inherent or preconceived difficulty in fieldwork that could restrict the researcher's access, the expressions "opening up" and "closing down" seem more appropriate in describing challenges encountered at multiple phases of the study: both physical and emotional security risks; availability of respondents; financial issues; practical conditions for conducting the study; political sensitivity of the research topic; and so on. These difficulties are not mere anecdotes from researchers, they inform us about the characteristics of a field study and their evolution: "negotiating the opening up of fieldwork, is already part of the study."[10] They can be anticipated, in particular by becoming informed when starting the fieldwork, as indicated earlier. They often involve an ability to adapt, sometimes to improvise or to revise the research subject and key questions when the field becomes totally closed off.

A second kind of challenge arises with respect to data analysis. First, it concerns issues of anonymization and use of the data collected at informal places and times during the study. How to reuse data when respondents have clearly expressed their desire not to be quoted (Sidebar 7.5)? How to include data collected during informal conversations or to which the researcher has gained access through sources s/he was not authorized to consult? One of the tricks of the trade consists in matching the information gathered with other sources—press articles and reports, for instance—or through interviews with respondents. In this regard, it is interesting to draw out off-the-record information about the interviewed actors' perceptions concerning the "secret" or "sensitive" nature of the information. What is deemed "sensitive" very often indicates the respondent's policy of neutrality or communication. In the field in Burundi for instance, international civil servants from the United Nations chose to turn off the recording more frequently than political actors do when interviewed on the same subjects, revealing a powerful logic of professional censorship. In cases where it is complicated or impossible to double-check information despite there being little doubt about its veracity, one way of including it in a demonstration is to present it in the form of a hypothesis.

Sidebar 7.5: Several Levels of Confidentiality

Several levels of confidentiality may be developed according to the wishes expressed by respondents regarding being quoted and to issues around protecting sources and people: the first, when the respondent agrees to being recorded and quoted, consists in giving the name, position and organization, the place and date of the interview; the second, when the respondent agrees to the interview but does not wish to be quoted, is designed to only underline their position, as long as it respects anonymity (a code or change of name may be considered), the organization, date and place of the interview in order to locate the actor without identifying the individual; the third level, when the interview is intended to be strictly anonymous, erases all this information, only retaining the place and date (sometimes only the year).

Another issue concerns reporting on the study and how the reader receives it (research supervisor, jury, peers or the general public). Compiling interviews and notebooks varies from one research project to another. In addition to inserting them in the body of the text, creating sidebars and appendices—including excerpts from or the entire notebook and interviews—is another way of providing "thick description" about the subject without making the presentation unwieldy. Whatever option is chosen, it is crucial to perform an analysis of the data that is systematic and as thorough as possible, which involves keeping as many written, recorded, photographed and filmed traces as possible. Indeed, beyond the raw data contained in these elements of the study, the relationship established between the researcher and respondents, perceptible in the (familiar or formal) tone of a discussion, one's presence at specific more or less confidential places or forums, and the duration of that situation, all inform the researcher and the readers about the context and subject of the study.

Finally, a third type of challenge relates to the researcher's positioning and reflexivity. Reporting on them is only relevant insofar as they involve providing a context for the work, in particular when the field has been transformed due to multifunctionality. One solution consists in remaining transparent when presenting oneself, all the more so when wearing different hats that overlap or change over time, especially in field studies restricted to a micro-community. One often forgets that the individuals one meets exchange among themselves and that they are informed about our expectations and position. If one admits playing different roles, then one may be fully engaged in them. First, being an expert is often a way to obtain access to the field, to relevant actors and to observe phenomena from up close, but it also helps to appear credible and familiar to respondents. Second, one's position as a researcher can be turned into a method of investigation[11] and, beyond merely taking advantage of one's role as a researcher, can make the relationship within the study more egalitarian: respondents are also willing to be "enlightened" about their own actions.

This exercise requires managing the respondents' expectations: being sent the interview transcript, expecting subsequent material or symbolic support, having their point of view legitimized, acquiring professional recognition or producing work for the organization. These expectations may put the researcher in a delicate situation and even lead her/him to transform her/his own fieldwork. For example, active participation in the production of her/his own primary sources (Sidebar 7.6), in information sharing and in producing an interpretation of events can affect the respondents' perceptions. Likewise, her/his work can be commandeered and exploited by other people and/or for other purposes.

Sidebar 7.6: Participating in the Production of One's Own Sources
A study using participant observation may lead the researcher to contribute to the production of primary sources written like reports produced for IOs. As a recurring issue for researcher/experts in international relations, it requires constant reflection regarding the researcher's mark on her/his fieldwork and predispositions of the organization studied to assimilate the discourse generated by the external expert. These processes are also informative regarding the close ties between different professional fields: academics and experts. Furthermore, if the researcher makes her/his expertise available, this may, at times, condition her/his acceptance in the field by the IO in question.

Conclusion

Ethnographic techniques are relevant to a wide variety of fields and subjects. They therefore have a part to play in international relations. "Going into the field" is a must for studying the relationships that structure internationalization and globalization processes. It is also necessary for testing the relevance of academic and indigenous categories produced in reference to these still little-known configurations, rather than invalidating them out of hand. Without being specific to the point of producing a radical modification of methodological techniques, international configurations—both subject and field of research—nevertheless have their own particularities (place, time, actors, activities or mandates). In order to observe relationships of interdependence, scale change dynamics and internationalization processes, an adaptation of research techniques may prove necessary. Anticipating the moment and the length of the study thus seems all the more important when the field is distant, costly and requires a command of specific skills.

Notes

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2. William Foote Whyte, *Street Corner Society. The Social Structure of an Italian Slum* (Chicago (Ill.), University of Chicago Press, 1943).

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4. For example, Marc Abélès (ed.), *Des anthropologues à l'OMC. Scènes de la gouvernance mondiale* (Paris, CNRS Éditions, 2011); Birgit Müller, "Comment rendre le monde gouvernable sans le gouverner: les organisations internationales analysées par les anthropologues", *Critique internationale*, 1(54) (2012): 9–18, Johanna Siméant, Victoria Lickert and Florent Pouponneau, "Échelles, récifs, bureaux—Terrains du politique à l'international", in Johanna Siméant (ed.), *Guide de l'enquête globale en sciences sociales* (Paris, CNRS Éditions, 2015), pp. 13–32.
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CHAPTER 8

Interviews in International Relations

Delphine Alles, Auriane Guilbaud, and Delphine Lagrange

Abstract An interview is a social relationship involving the researcher in an immediate and interpersonal rapport with an individual who becomes both an object of research and an interacting subject. While the methodology of international relations (IR) interviewing borrows techniques traditionally used in political science and sociology, it also involves a number of structural constraints. The latter may pertain to the relationship between the researcher and her interviewees (often marked by asymmetry in elitist settings), the types of subjects they address (frequently characterized by an imperative of discretion or even secrecy) or the location and material conditions of the interviews (which may take place in imposing institutional settings and involve the use of foreign languages). The methodological, practical and reflexive tools introduced in this chapter are designed to help aspiring researchers to identify and get access to relevant respondents. They will facilitate their handling of situations which may otherwise interfere with interview relationships and thus

D. Alles (✉)
University of Paris East (UPEC – Créteil), Créteil, France

A. Guilbaud
University Paris 8/CRESPPA-LabToP, Saint-Denis, France

D. Lagrange
University Paris 2, Paris, France

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with research results. The chapter also provides a reflection on the ethics of interviewing and on the uses of interviews in IR research.

As with political science in general, developing a research protocol in international relations is based on borrowing a large number of tried and transposable techniques from sociology. Among them is the interview, a "scientific investigation method using a verbal communication process to collect information relating to the desired objective."[1] An interview is a social relationship that involves the researcher in an immediate and interpersonal rapport with an individual who becomes both an object of research and an interacting subject.

This brings up the reflexivity imperative, growing out of the particular conditions of this research technique directly involving the researcher. In this chapter, that imperative will be combined with the need to understand to what extent the practice of interviewing is conditioned by the subjects or context of international relations research.

This contribution with an educational slant is based on reflexive analysis of the authors' experiences in the field as political analysts specializing in international relations. The work on which it is based thus presents a wide range of subjects (foreign politicy, multilateralism, negotiations, multi-actor diplomacy and public–private partnerships) and fields (international organizations, governmental institutions, non-governmental organizations, multinational firms and religious organizations) which complement the existing literature on research in an internationalized context, like studies of humanitarian work and of transnational mobilizations.[2]

The approach favored here assumes that the milieu studied, its subject and actors are liable to be marked by singular but not necessarily exclusive properties through their international or transnational connections. These properties are a source of difficulties that need to be identified and, insofar as possible, overcome. In order to do so, we will underline features exhibiting a particular frequency and their overall effect on interviews, and will then detail the modes of adaptation available to the researcher in following the main chronological phases in the methodological protocol: research design, then practices, from preparation to processing interviews.

Structural Constraints

An analysis of how interviews are conducted highlights three structural features that need to be explained in order to grasp their extent and effects.

Secrecy

Foreign policy, military practices and international negotiations share the fact of occurring, at least in part, in places marked by the particular importance ascribed to discretion and even secrecy. The latter may reflect a need for effectiveness involving issues deemed sensitive (illustrated by the principle of public archives that are not openly communicable, for instance), but also to a reaction of protection around the privilege of belonging to a closed circle of insiders where secrecy only exists for itself. However, technical evolutions in communications tools have facilitated the mobilization of a variety of actors in support of disseminating information about subjects bound to secrecy (war, intelligence and foreign policy in particular). In this regard, the emergence of platforms such as WikiLeaks and techniques facilitating the recording of interviews has not only broadened the range of sources and tools that are potentially useful to the researcher, but also modified the interviews themselves with respect to respondents and to information.

First, regarding the relationship to respondents, establishing a rapport of trust has become more complex due to these evolutions, which have triggered increased mistrust. Getting around this difficulty requires drawing on a variety of strategies. Thus, while asking the respondent a question, mentioning another interview while keeping it strictly anonymous may be aimed less at obtaining a response than at showing respect for the confidentiality of one's sources. Or again, in cases where recording is not an option and a respondent broaches a subject that implicitly or explicitly involves respecting secrecy, a successful interview depends on the researcher's ability to write very little, or not at all, in order not to interrupt the confidential mood, and then to write everything down as soon as the moment of confidentiality is over. This difficult exercise involves memorizing, ideally word for word, and selecting crucial passages while displaying signals of attentive yet sufficiently detached listening so that it does not seem like a de facto recording of the speaker's remarks.

Second, regarding the relationship to information, the secret nature of the topic of exchange leads the researcher to adopt a position of heightened doubt about the remarks garnered, eliciting the need to formulate specific modes of verification. Sylvain Laurens describes how, in "asking tough questions," it may be useful to introduce other modes of inquiry during the interview such as archives or the pretext of a questionnaire the researcher has to fill out for statistical purposes.[3] In the case of an interview on condition of anonymity, mentioning outside sources can also help limit the

respondent's desire to dissimulate certain possible answers by leading him/her to doubt the confidential nature of the information they possess.

In any case, secrecy is itself information from which it is necessary to glean all possible material in interpreting the interview. Honoring them may help clarify self-segregating preservation strategies[4]; attest to a source of embarrassment; reveal an acceptance of the rules without challenging their grounds; or conversely, if the secret is divulged, provide information about modes of protestation from those subjected to a hierarchy or decision-making process whose legitimacy they contest.

Asymmetry

The researcher's position within the interview relationship has given rise to sociological literature that provides adaptation strategies devoted to interactions with "dominant" or "imposing" figures.[5] Our combined experiences have frequently confirmed or occasionally complemented several observations developed during the course of the work to which we will refer, focusing here on a reflexive perspective on features in the field within the scope of an international context. Difficulties are most frequently tied to places and to the respondents', as well to the researcher's, profiles.

The interview venues often demonstrate the dual features of externality and power. Entering an international organization, an embassy or ministry for the purposes of an interview requires obtaining temporary access subject to sometimes multiple security checks for a single venue, imposing a clear boundary between the researcher and the respondent in a foreign space. Moreover, the neighborhood, architecture, furniture and art objects are all reminders of forms of representation and symbolic games of power-building, thus defining spaces impacted by these signs that reinforce a sense of distance. Furthermore, respondents from diplomatic, political, military or humanitarian backgrounds have mastered skills that are liable to have a direct impact on how the interview unfolds. They may be "communications professionals" and thus "difficult interlocutors for the sociologist" as the latter will have to deconstruct a skilled official discourse.[6] In addition, diplomats and national or international senior civil servants are often knowledgeable about the social sciences and may be authors themselves, possibly under a pseudonym. Under such conditions, the interview may be turned around to test the researcher's analysis. Preparing the interview proves crucial here in anticipating questions and providing a way for the exchange to avoid the kind of asymmetry that can take the form of an evaluation of the researcher by the respondent.

Regarding researchers, the fact of being a woman—like being of a young age[7] or from a modest social background[8]—could also interfere in the interview relationship by reinforcing asymmetry. In predominantly masculine spheres, there may not necessarily be any intention other than following routinized customs behind the suggestion of conducting an interview at the respondents's residence or the issue of whether the researcher should be called "Mrs." or "Miss." But asymmetry, marked here by masculine domination, could produce a distancing effect likely to affect how the interview unfolds.

Languages

International relations field research frequently requires conducting interviews in a language that is not the native tongue of at least one of the parties, or of neither party—typically the case of interviews in "international English." Beforehand, this issue may affect the makeup of the panel of respondents (see below), when the actors are not proficient in the language proposed, thus introducing a bias in the research. During the interview, the resulting difficulties are numerous, from incomprehension or distortion of what is said to a lack of nuance or the creation of another form of asymmetry between the interviewer and respondent depending on their respective mastery of the language. Several adaptive mechanisms are however conceivable.

In certain contexts, researchers may constitute multilingual teams[9] or hire a translator[10] provided that one can manage the risks (reliability of the translator) and consequences (nullifying as far as possible the intrusiveness of his/her presence).

Another strategy consists in recording the interview. However, this practice has raised recurring questions as to its appropriateness beyond the case of interviews not in one's native tongue, and thus cannot lead to an unequivocal response. In addition to cases where it is required, such as in analyzing a person's discourse, a recording is often desirable. Indeed, it enables researchers to be more involved in the relationship with the respondent by freeing them from the concentration required by taking notes, to more faithfully reproduce what is said and facilitate reflexive work when listening to the recording. Yet it is not always an option, either because the respondent is opposed to the idea or because the potential costs (self-censorship by the respondent, increased mistrust) are higher than the gains. From that perspective, the researcher must find a balance between building

a relationship of trust with the respondent and obtaining the most detailed information possible. Even so, not doing a recording does not necessarily eliminate the mistrust felt by the respondent, who may want to reread the retranscribed words or adapt his/her speech to the pace of note-taking. Finally, the possibility of a secret recording presents various pragmatic limits beyond the ethical issues: concern about its potential discovery could affect the researcher's involvement in the interview; its discovery involves a risk of being forbidden access to the field, not to mention the eventuality of a lawsuit in the context of increasing judicialization in the social sciences.[11]

Interviews and Research Design

Circumventing the difficulties described, in particular those linked to dominance mechanisms, requires preparation work, crucial for building a panel of respondents and for determining the purpose of the interviews.

Identifying Respondents

The first task consists in designing a panel of interviews to be conducted based on the subject of research. Depending on the approach chosen (qualitative or quantitative), it could take the form of a complete list or a sample, a technique suggesting there is no need to interview an entire group, but that a selection of representative actors is sufficient. The nature of the panel also depends on what the researcher expects from respondents. It could involve gathering information and/or studying the actors' representations.[12]

If the interviews aim to collect information that is indispensable to the study, a major difficulty arises when there are few actors with such information, and all the more so in environments that are hard to reach. This situation, which also poses problems regarding the credibility of information that is difficult for the researcher to cross-check, calls for a broadening of the panel. Thus, circles of people around political or diplomatic figures (cabinet members, administrative staff), who are less frequently solicited than their administrative superiors, may clarify concrete aspects of negotiation processes, writing texts and implementing specific policies. Similarly, it is often useful to take an interest in actors who may seem marginal (in the sense that they are on the margins of the field analyzed), such as retired persons or former employees liable to speak more freely.

In the case of a study of group representations, the non-completion of some interviews introduces a bias into the sample that has to be assessed in order to maintain "representativeness" or sufficient "diversity"[13] despite the limits inevitably due to refusals from the respondents solicited.[14] However, the more familiar the respondent's profile to the researcher, the more the latter will be in a position to grasp the characteristics of those he/she fails to contact[15] and thus to determine if their refusal is itself a piece of information to be utilized.

Defining the Functions of the Interview

Preparatory work before the interviews has several objectives: identifying the researcher's representations, designing the subject of research and consolidating the researcher's credibility and effectiveness in interactions with the respondent.

First, a reflexive perspective strives to identify and evaluate the researcher's representations. This procedure, applicable to all social science research,[16] is even more necessary for the researcher eager to control the dominance mechanisms described earlier, to limit the influence he is liable to exert over respondents and to avoid complicity when motivated by a cause akin to his subject or when sharing some of the respondent's values. This approach, conducted before the research begins, must be adjusted throughout the whole process. Requiring extensive knowledge of the subject and the respondents, it also involves awareness of the fact that the image projected by the researcher (his/her perceived sociocultural background, political affinities associated with his profession or theme of research, his/her gender, etc.) may affect their responses. Finally, a reflexive approach may allow him/her to anticipate respondents' mistrust about how the research is going to be used, guaranteeing respect for their anonymity for example.

Second, preparatory work is also necessary in designing the research subject. Retracing professional trajectories and academic careers, following the movement of individuals between various worlds enables the researcher to identify the multitude of scales of analysis (from local to global) that usually characterize international relations studies, and to identify "where" respondents are speaking from, in particular when part of an organization.

Third, preparing the interviews conditions the researcher's credibility. He/she must become familiar with the codes and semantic norms of the

milieu being studied, evaluating in particular its degree of openness to the world of academic research, aspects that will affect how questions are formulated. Consequently, this phase may be very costly in terms of the researcher's finances and time, all the more so if the study takes place in a remote cultural environment. This typical case in international relations research may require perfecting or learning a foreign language, broadening one's overview of the literature to general works about the geographical area or organization studied and devoting a sizeable amount of one's time fund-raising for the study. Under these conditions, the first phase of interviews (outside those designed to specify the research outlines, with academics for instance) is not likely to occur before the phase prior to writing a Master's thesis or before the second year of a Phd. Using other techniques such as "incognito" or "guest" observations may enable one to prepare the interviews while starting the study, for example, by attending events that offer an opportunity to observe potential respondents in their professional or advocacy environment and to familiarize oneself with their codes.[17] At the same time, in order to study as specifically as possible the trajectory of each respondent, his sociocultural milieu and entourage, biographical yearbooks such as *Who's Who* and professional networks like LinkedIn are very useful, in particular for politicians and diplomats whose network is a constituent feature of their identity, provided that biases are also taken into account.[18] Lastly, preparation also strives to consolidate the researcher's effectiveness when questioning beforehand the possible motivations of the actors who have agreed to do interviews—whether it involves promoting a cause, highlighting certain arguments or validating their role or that of their organization. Understanding these motivations proves not only useful in obtaining interviews, but even more crucial in conducting and interpreting them.

Interview Practices

Interview practices require mastering a certain number of techniques, resources and rules from the moment of introduction to the use of exchanges in the final phase of work.

Ways of Gaining Access and Self-Presentation

Strategies for gaining access to respondents may take several forms depending on the researcher's degree of penetration in the actor's environment. On one end of the spectrum is ethnographic-type immersion that provides

a means not only to carry out observation work (see Chaps. 1 and 7) but also to obtain interviews with actors that have been made more accessible. On the other end, one finds the case of total exteriority leading the researcher to solicit an interview without prior contact. Between the two there are a variety of situations, such as occasionally being in the presence of the actors concerned, within the framework of archival consultations for instance.

In all cases, creating the conditions for access to respondents involves mastering various codes and issues, from how requests are formulated to how one presents oneself. The choice of format for a request calls for knowledge of the actors' institutional and cultural contexts. Thus, e-mails are now common in Europe and North America, whereas text messages are often preferred in Southeast Asia. Sometimes, as at certain diplomatic levels in France, letters may be more highly valued. As for wording, it requires exploring issues around self-presentation. In cases where externality is strongest, the respondent's consent may depend on the ability to highlight a connection. In other words, it involves substituting one's inclusion in a network—even through weak links—for the externality described, provided it is not likely to introduce biases into the interview itself. Thus it is often useful to be recommended by a third party. In addition, the formulation may vary according to the actor's anticipated perceptions and motivations. Provided one respects the rule of confidentiality in interviews, it can thus be useful to indicate the name and function of the people already met in order to gain the respondent's trust, or to prompt him to defend his own vision of the subject broached. Finally, self-presentation involves how one explains the subject of one's research, in that it involves not only informing the respondent about the framework of the interview but also showing oneself to be credible while avoiding jargon that would create a distance in exchanges.

Observing, Questioning and Reacting

For the interview to run smoothly, the researcher must use all the information explicitly or implicitly made known to him. To do so, he must observe, question and react throughout the interaction, and even before. Thus, arriving early when an interview has been arranged in an institution will enable him/her not only to exchange with the respondent's entourage, but also to observe the comings and goings, or how the service is organized, and to note objects valued by the respondent—in particular photographs of meetings, gifts received during international exchanges and books given prominence on bookshelves. Over the course of the interview,

in addition to the attention paid to context (place, surroundings, people who may be present) is the awareness of non-verbal communication (non-answers, irony, sighs, smiles, tensions, silence, etc.). This data may be necessary for interpreting interviews, thus the importance of favoring direct face-to-face interactions. Exchanges by telephone or Skype[19] (offering only limited opportunities for observing the context, and not allowing one to know if anyone else is present at the interview) are consequently to be reserved for important interlocutors for the study who prove impossible to meet due to being frequently away, a common situation in research involving international organizations and diplomatic milieux.

The work consisting in questioning a respondent resembles a course marked by a few strategic questions whose purpose goes beyond mere information gathering. Thus, the first question, crucial in initiating the exchange by gaining the respondent's trust, must not be too delicate or naive. As a result, it may consist in questioning the nature of his position, about the activities in his department or about his personal career. During the interview, in order to prevent the respondent from controlling communication or keeping a secret, it is also possible to ask a question to which one knows the answer in order to evaluate the (personal and institutional) constraints potentially weighing on the person's freedom of speech. This question with an experimental purpose should ideally appear harmless, while having a possibly sensitive answer. Finally, it often proves useful to end a meeting by asking the respondent if he has any contacts to recommend for future interviews. This can not only facilitate access to other respondents, but also provide possible information about networks to which the actor belongs, often in a more informal context since this question may be asked when thanking them orally, to which one could add a written message in the following days in order to maintain contact.

Finally, the work of observing and questioning depends on the researcher's ability to react and adapt during the interview, particularly when the respondent is in a familiar environment, contrary to the researcher. Depending on the social or institutional culture, the latter may thus have to answer personal questions about his career or lifestyle—which supposes a command of conventions in order to gauge what should be revealed. Adaptation is also involved in how the interview is conducted, often subject to the respondent's schedule, and may invite the researcher to share a meal, go on a drive or to his home (the latter often serving a purpose of public representation for diplomats). The researcher may also be faced with a reversed interview that consists in the respondents asking the questions, either because they consider the researcher to be an expert whose

analysis they would like to have, or because they try to control the framework of the interview by limiting themself to confirming or invalidating information obtained elsewhere. Prudence requires preserving the potential confidentiality of other interviews, limiting the length of responses and following up with a question in order to regain control of the interview process. It follows that the semi-directive interview method proves most often preferable because it allows flexible use of the questionnaire based on the person's remarks, while taking care to prioritize the issues so as not to keep the most important ones for the end of the appointment, at the risk of not having enough time to ask them.

Using Interviews: Scientificity and Deontology Issues

Once the interviews have been carried out, the issue arises of their use. It is pointless and even counter-productive to present a long list of interviews in appendices if the latter are not used, particularly in quotations in the text. For this reason, it is advisable to reread all the interviews very carefully, drawing out the links, similarities and differences among the answers obtained. At that stage, the interview is also complementary with other research methods presented in this book, such as lexicographical analysis, which can be conducted from transcripts of exchanges (see Chap. 11).

When an interview is used, either directly or indirectly, the question arises of the respondents' anonymity. Without permission to quote them by name, one must settle for mentioning their organization and possibly their position, assuring oneself they cannot be identified through this information. As with concern for the respondent's feelings,[20] this respect for confidentiality and transcript accuracy goes well beyond technical questions, reflecting the concern for a certain ethical stance in interviews, understood here as covering two issues: intellectual honesty and taking the other into account, for which the researcher will be the sole judge at the time of the study. Finally, in the research context described, the list of interviews conducted must be featured in the appendix with their date and place, and possibly a succinct presentation of the actor.

Conclusion

In conclusion, while the typical properties of certain fields in international relations have an effect on interviews, the work methods and inquiries frequently agree with those of sociology, and even more generally of the human and social sciences. A demanding task, interviewing calls successively

for significant preparation, sustained attention, then methodical feedback on the work carried out, as well as, transversally, a reflexive approach on using this method, whatever the researcher's specialization. Carrying out this kind of work requires time, all the more so when facing the constraints described here. Lastly, this technique, which happens to be both a research method and a social relationship, reminds us that "methodology cannot be passed on like explicit knowledge except in small doses: the best treatise can only provide a few tools. Nothing can replace experience."[21]

Notes

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3. Sylvain Laurens, "'Pourquoi' et 'comment' poser les questions qui fâchent? Réflexions sur les dilemmes récurrents que posent les entretiens avec des 'imposants'," *Genèses*, 69(4), 2007: 112–127.
4. Georg Simmel, *Secret et sociétés secrètes* (Strasbourg: Circé, 1991).
5. Hélène Chamboredon, Fabienne Pavis, Murielle Surdez and Laurent Willemez, "S'imposer aux imposants," *Genèses*, 16(1) (1994): 114–132; Sylvain Laurens, "'Pourquoi' et 'comment' poser les questions qui fâchent?; Michel Pinçon and Monique Pinçon-Charlot, *Voyage en grande bourgeoisie. Journal d'enquête* (Paris: PUF, 2005).
6. Pinçon and Pinçon-Charlot, *Voyage en grande bourgeoisie*.
7. Chamboredon, Pavis and Surdez, "S'imposer aux imposants."
8. Pinçon and Pinçon-Charlot, *Voyage en grande bourgeoisie*.
9. See for example the case of multinational teams assembled for a study conducted at the World Social Forum in Nairobi, Johanna Siméant and Marie-Emmanuelle Pommerolle (ed.), *Un autre monde à Nairobi. Le Forum social mondial 2007, entre extraversions et causes africaines* (Paris: Karthala, 2008).
10. Lee Ann Fujii, "Working with Interpreters," in Layna Mosley (ed.), *Interview Research in Political Science* (Ithaca, N.Y., Cornell University Press, 2013), pp. 144–158.
11. Sylvain Laurens and Frédéric Neyrat (ed.), *Enquêter: de quel droit? Menaces sur l'enquête en sciences sociales* (Bellecombe-en-Bauges, Éditions du Croquant, 2010).
12. Gill Valentine, "Tell Me About…: Using Interviews as a Research Methodology," in Robin Flowerdew and David Martin (eds), *Methods in*

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13. Sophie Duchesne, "Pratique de l'entretien dit 'non directif'," in Myriam Bachir (ed.), *Les Méthodes au concret. Démarches, formes de l'expérience et terrains d'investigation en science politique* (Paris: PUF, 2000), p. 11
14. Christian Lequesne, "Interviewer les acteurs politico-administratifs de la construction européenne," in Samy Cohen, *L'Art d'interviewer les dirigeants* (Paris: PUF, 1999), p. 55
15. Kenneth Goldstein, "Getting in the Door: Sampling and Completing Elite Interviews," *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 35 (4) (2002), p. 670.
16. Howard S. Becker, *Tricks of the Trade. How to Think About Your Research While You're Doing It* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1998), pp. 10–12.
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PART IV

What Quantitative Methods Can Bring Us

CHAPTER 9

Examples of Quantitative Data Processing in International Relations

Simon Hug

Abstract Quantitative methods are increasingly used in research on international relations. The present chapter documents this increased use and highlights with three examples how such methods allow to address important research questions in international relations. In addition, it emphasizes that the use of these methods relies on various assumptions that are quite explicit, many of which are also necessary to use qualitative methods to make causal inferences.

Quantitative methods play an important role in studying international relations, in particular for what is commonly known as one of the main goals of all social science work, namely causal inference.[1] Nevertheless, these methods[2] have had to make their way in international relations and still play only a minor role in certain geographical contexts, especially in France.

Drawing on some basic premises, this chapter shows first of all the place of quantitative methods in international relations. After observing the latter's widespread expansion, particularly in the major international relations journals, this chapter presents the contributions of different

S. Hug (✉)
University of Geneva, Geneva, Switzerland

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quantitative methods through three themes and three examples of their uses. It demonstrates both their advantages for the subject of research and the assumptions, although simplifying, on which the researcher must rely. Lastly, we will attempt to evaluate the contribution of quantitative methods within the framework of the three themes covered, before looking at those contributions from a critical perspective.

Premises and Position of Quantitative Methods in the Discipline

Social science researchers, like international relations specialists, do not frequently admit their attempts to identify causes of phenomena. Often, however, they are betrayed by their own language. Thus, formulations such as "the reasons why x occurred are…" abound in their work. Therefore, it is a difficult dispute that causal inference is central in the social sciences in general and in international relations in particular. Moreover, as a well-known researcher in international relations has asserted: "social scientists and historians take the discovery of causes of events in the human world as a goal—perhaps the principal goal—of their work."[3]

This idea can be found in the following quotes, respectively, from the writings of two sociologists and two economists:

> Simple cause-and-effect questions are the motivation for much empirical work in the social sciences, even though definitive answers to cause-and-effect questions may not always be possible to formulate given the constraints that social scientists face in collecting data.[4]

> Although purely descriptive research has an important role to play, we believe that the most interesting research in social science is about questions of cause and effect.[5]

While the last two quotes come from work that takes a close look at causal inferences in the social sciences (in the broad sense), and mainly within the framework of quantitative methods in sociology and economics, the first passage cited has a broader scope. Indeed, James D. Fearon proposes a discussion of counterfactual analysis, the basis for nearly all approaches to causality, especially in international relations.[6] The author also shows the existence of similarities among problems linked to causal inference in studies covering a large number of cases (thus often quantitative) and in studies of more in-depth cases. As James D. Fearon has noted,

while problems of causal inference are stressed in quantitative research, case studies tend to ignore them.[7] In doing so, quantitative studies often provide a way to make causal inferences more easily. As the renowned Italian political analyst Giovanni Sartori has underlined: "words alone beat numbers alone. Words with numbers beat words alone."[8]

Although Giovanni Sartori wrote this nearly 40 years ago, within the framework of a sub-discipline close to international relations, quantitative methods have only spread very gradually within international relations and only after a great deal of difficulty. These difficulties were nevertheless overcome on the international level. This has been shown in recent contributions in the most prestigious international relations journals.[9]

Several authors have evaluated the relative importance of different empirical methods in international relations research by classifying articles published in the most prestigious journals according to their approaches. Anna Pechenkina and D. Scott Bennett have thus underlined a tendency toward more quantitative work and more sophisticated quantitative methods.[10] That tendency is illustrated in Fig. 9.1 showing the share of articles according to the methods used, published in the journals *International Organization* (IO), *International Studies Quarterly* (ISQ) and *Journal of Conflict Resolution* (JCR).

Two factors explain this growth. First, for several years, an increasing number of databases on international phenomena and events have become accessible and have enabled the use of a wealth of secondary sources. Second, training resources and possibilities in quantitative methods have multiplied, going hand in hand with the introduction of empirical models more adapted to analyzing international phenomena.

It is not surprising however that the recourse to quantitative methods varies from one context to another. Thus, Jérémie Cornut and Dario Batistella,[11] drawing on a study of internationalists in France, have noted that only 2% of them (compared to 15% on average in countries included in the study) "use quantitative methods." Furthermore, this may not be surprising when one considers that in a book recently published with the modest title, *Guide de l'enquête globale en sciences sociales*,[12] the criteria for inclusion in the discussion of work cited consisted in knowing if any reference was made to Pierre Bourdieu (thus in the contribution by Anne-Catherine Wagner and Bertrand Réau,[13] the work of André-David Thomas and Félix Bühlmann[14] is cited, even though it did deal solely with national issues, but referred to work by Pierre Bourdieu).

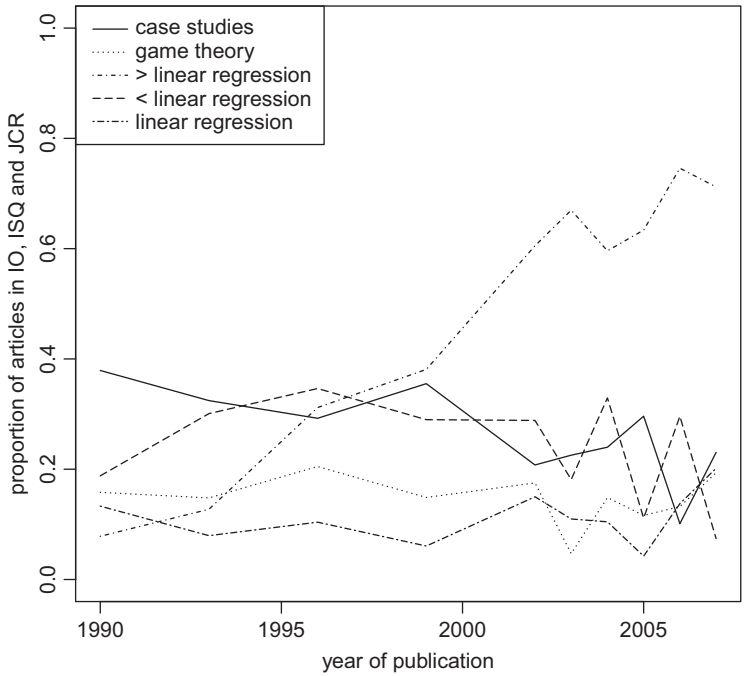


Fig. 9.1 Methods and publications in Prestigious Journals
Source: The figure was made by the author using and adapting data by Anna Pechenkina and D. Scott Bennet in, "Is OLS Dead in IR?," *The Political Methodologist*, 19(1), 2011: 2

International Negotiations

International negotiations are one of the first areas in which quantitative methods have played a major role. According to the realist perspectives that were dominant during the postwar era, there seems to be no doubt that the states wielding the most power (defined in military, economic or other terms) would systematically prevail in international negotiations and impose their will on weaker states.

Starting from observations by Thomas C. Schelling[15] and Robert D. Putnam,[16] who challenged this simplistic vision of negotiations, several researchers have examined national factors influencing a state's negotiating power. The initial work by Thomas C. Schelling and Robert D. Putnam,

as well as empirical studies conducted after it (e.g. the work of Peter B. Evans, Harold K. Jacobson and Robert D. Putnam[17]), draws on case studies (sometimes conceived as an illustration of theoretical arguments). With the availability of detailed information on international negotiations, in particular in the context of European integration, it is now possible to carry out quantitative studies.

In our study conducted with Tobias Schulz,[18] we have tried to test the hypothesis according to which, when faced with a population critical about changing a treaty, the possibility of turning to a referendum may reinforce the position of governments and help them to make gains in negotiations. To evaluate this hypothesis, deriving essentially from the work of Robert D. Putnam,[19] it was necessary to collect a whole series of data. Based on studies of experts of the negotiating process for the European Constitutional Treaty, it was possible to obtain information about the positions of member states during the negotiations. In addition, the Eurobarometer surveys have provided us with information on voter preferences. Based on this data, we have evaluated our hypothesis using a linear regression model:

$$\text{gains}_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{referendum} + \beta_2 \text{preferences}_i + \beta_3 \text{referendum}_i \times \text{preferences}_i \ldots$$

Figure 9.2 illustrates the main results.[20] These quantitative analyses are, however, also based on a whole set of assumptions relating to the process of generating data such as the independence of observations, the interpersonal comparison of utility and so on[21]: the use of quantitative methods requires to discuss these assumptions in an explicit way. On the other hand, these same assumptions are often implicit in case studies that use qualitative approaches (e.g. the study by Peter B. Evans, Harold K. Jacobson and Robert D. Putnam[22]). They are almost never discussed, even though they are the basis for all causal inference in the context of research dealing with international negotiations.

Violence

The recent publication of two major books has influenced the global debate in political and academic spheres on the evolution of the recourse to violence. For Joshua S. Goldstein,[23] who has focused on the role of the United Nations, this international institution has contributed to the decline in the use of violence, in particular violence among states.

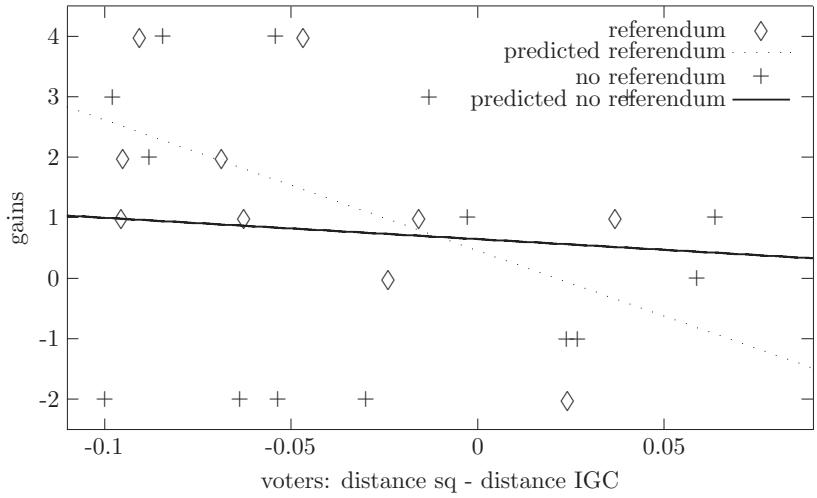


Fig. 9.2 Gains in negotiations due to the position of voters and use of a referendum
Source: Simon Hug and Tobias Schulz, "Referendums in the EU's Constitution Building Process," *Review of International Organizations* 2(2) (2007): 190

Drawing in part on this book, but adopting a global perspective, Steven Pinker asserts that violence (conjugal violence, crimes, civil wars and conflicts between states) has experienced a considerable decline.[24] To present his argument, the author draws on the results of quantitative work on violence in general and interstate wars in particular.

On the last point, the author refers to an article by Lars-Erik Cederman.[25] He highlights that Immanuel Kant did not necessarily imagine liberal states not resorting to violence, but rather that, based on their experience, they learned that conflicts were handled better through non-violent means. To defend this thesis on the "liberal peace," in particular against attacks from realist authors at the time,[26] Lars-Erik Cederman[27] proposed using a quantitative analysis based on a dataset focusing on militarized interstate disputes (MIDs).[28] Thus, his dependent variable encodes the presence or, conversely, the absence of MIDs for the period of 1825–1992, with relevant dyads as units of analysis, according to a chronological series structured by year. A dyad refers to a pair of states. Each dyad includes a number of observations equal to the number of years covered by the analysis. The analysis is conducted solely from a sample composed of so-called relevant dyads for the

subject of study, in other words contiguous states or pairs of states including at least one major power. Indeed, conflicts between distant states (e.g. Ghana–Finland) are very unlikely.[29]

Lars-Erik Cederman's first figure, entitled "Dispute Probabilities as Moving Averages, 1837–1992,"[30] presents a descriptive analysis of the author's data. It appears that after each of the world wars, the propensity of democratic dyads to experience MIDs has fallen considerably. In order to evaluate whether this effect could be the consequence of a causal relationship, the author, using a logistic regression model, proposes to analyze the factors that determine the probability of a dispute π_{it}(MID) between the dyad *i* during the year t. The logistic regression model can be presented in the following way:

$$\log(\pi_{it}(\text{MID})/(1-\pi_{it}(\text{MID})) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{democratic dyad}_i + \beta_{j2} \ldots$$

The results of Lars-Erik Cederman's analysis, presented graphically using predicted probabilities in his Fig. 9.3 entitled "Estimated Learning Curves with Democratic Maturity Effect,"[31] show that the learning effect was considerable among democratic dyads, particularly in the period after the Second World War. Thus, even taking into account the realists' preferred explanations, the author succeeds in showing that this greater learning effect in the democratic dyads is what has made relations between democratic states more peaceful around the world. Using quantitative methods of analysis, Lars-Erik Cederman was thus able to demonstrate this learning dynamic, a conclusion it would have been hard to reach through other methods.[32] In addition, his analysis has also enabled him to challenge realist critics. Without this quantitative work, and a whole set of other research using similar methods that deal with other kinds of violence (civil wars, etc.), it would have been hard to imagine a contribution as influential as Steven Pinker's.[33]

International Institutions

The last example of the processing of quantitative data comes from a study about an international institution. This study takes a specific interest in the assemblies that exist within the United Nations. From the early work by Margaret Ball[34] and Thomas Hovet,[35] researchers have pondered the question of whether delegates voted according to the bloc that the country they represented belonged to (the Soviet bloc during the Cold War, the bloc of

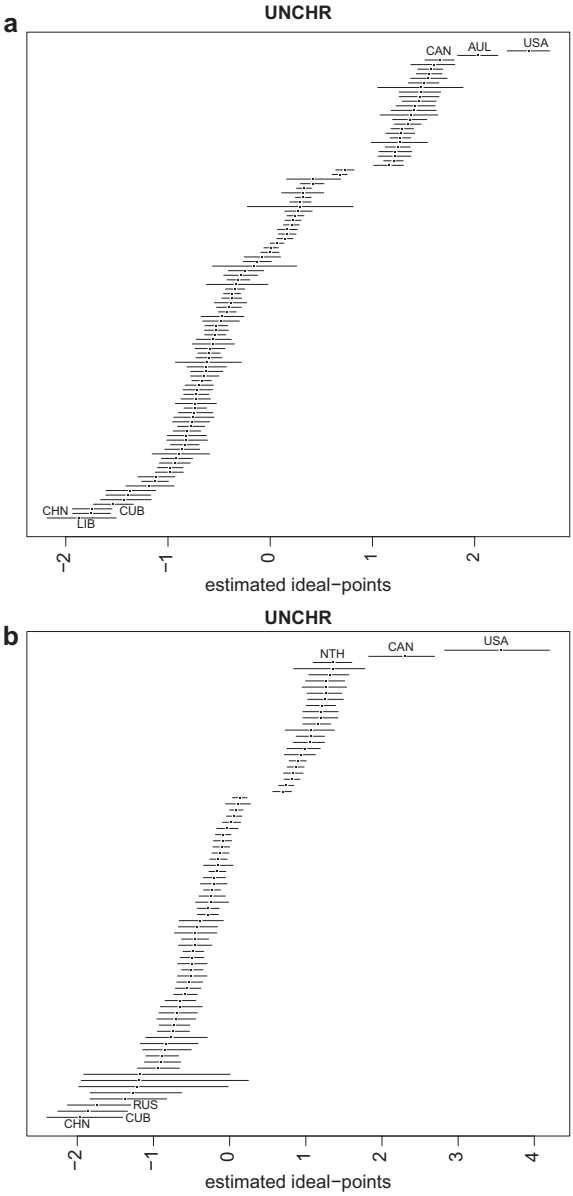


Fig. 9.3 Positions of countries within the UNCHR and of the UNHRC based on an ordered probit model

Source: Author, in "Dealing with human rights in international organizations," presentation at the ECPR General Conference, Bordeaux, France, September 4–7, 2013. Available at www.unige.ch/ses/spo/static/simonhug/dwhrio/dwhrio.pdf

Muslim countries, etc.). Starting from a Master's thesis, Richard Lukács and I explored the issue of the role of different blocs in positions defended by members of the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC), which had replaced the former Commission on Human Rights, highly criticized at the turn of the century.[36] We were able to demonstrate that belonging to certain blocs played a lesser role in votes within the UNHRC than the delegates' preferences.

Based on that work and ideas presented by Michael A. Bailey, Anton Strezhnev and Erik Voeten,[37] we proposed comparing the UNHRC with its predecessor, the Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR), in order to assess whether the criticism directed at the UNHRC was deserved.[38] The data used are mainly made up of information about votes within the Commission and the Human Rights Council. They were analyzed using an "item response theory" model, based on the idea that:

$$p_{ij} = \Pr\left(y_{ij} | \theta_i | \beta_j | \alpha_j\right) = F\left(\theta_i \beta_j - \alpha_j\right)$$

namely that the probability of delegate i voting in favor of proposition j (p_{ij}) depends on the position of delegate i (θ_i) and the discrimination parameters of proposition j (β_j) and the difficulty of proposition j (α_j). Based on the votes we observed, the voter's position and the characteristics of the propositions can be estimated using this model. Bayesian statistics offer the specific tools required to proceed with such estimations.

Proceeding in this way, the estimation of positions (or preferences) for different countries shows distributions that are generally similar for the two assemblies but that also present divergences (see Fig. 9.3). First, in both cases, similar states occupy the extreme positions on the scale of preferences, namely China and Cuba in the lower left-hand corner, and Canada and the United States in the upper right-hand corner. However, the two graphs also suggest differences. Thus, for the UNHRC, the most far-right positions seem more scattered than for the UNCHR. Nevertheless, the positions estimated (and presented in Fig. 9.3) are not absolutely comparable, since the analyses of the two assemblies were conducted separately.

By following the strategy proposed by Michael A. Bailey, Anton Strezhnev and Erik Voeten[39] to analyze votes in the United Nations General Assembly, which involves considering resolutions with nearly identical contents having been voted on in several sessions as anchor points, an estimation of the positions of the two assemblies in the same space becomes possible. Figure 9.4 represents the distribution of positions

in the two assemblies. It appears that in this common space of positions, those of members of the UNHRC are more dispersed than those of members of its predecessor, the UNCHR. These results consequently suggest that suspicion advanced about constant—and even reinforced—polarization within the UNHRC has been corroborated. Quantitative methods have thus made it possible to confirm an observation that until now was only the result of indicators taken in isolation.

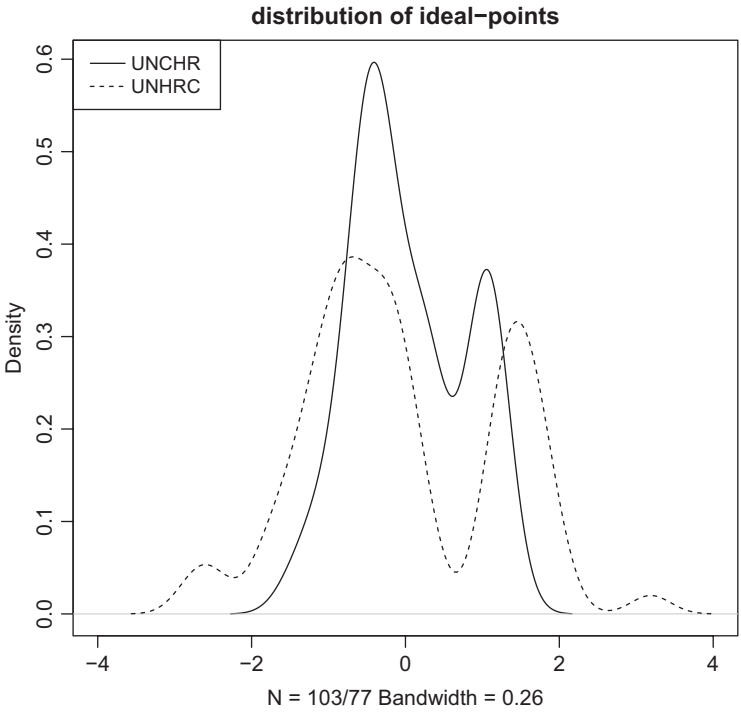


Fig. 9.4 Distribution of positions within the UNCHR and the UNHRC based on an ordered probit model
Source: Author, in "Dealing with human rights in international organizations," presentation at the ECPR General Conference, Bordeaux, September 4–7, 2013. Available at www.unige.ch/ses/spo/static/simonhug/dwhrio/dwhrio.pdf

Conclusion

In this short chapter, I have tried to demonstrate that quantitative methods have been on the rise in the field of international relations. Today, quantitative contributions occupy an important place in the most prestigious journals, including those perceived as such by French internationalists. Consequently, in order to follow and evaluate the most innovative recent work in a critical manner, internationalists must master these methods.

The use of quantitative methods, particularly in international relations, poses, however, also some problems. This is what has been pointed out with a certain sense of humor in contributions by Christopher H. Achen[40] and Philip Schrodt[41] highlighting some of their weaknesses. They have nonetheless provided solid tools for carrying out causal inferences. They are only valid, however, if (at times highly limiting) assumptions are observed. By using quantitative methods in a meticulous way, we are confronted by them in a direct way. As Gary King, Robert O. Keohane and Sidney Verba[42] have emphasized, as well as James D. Fearon,[43] a great many of these assumptions underlie causal inferences conducted with qualitative methods. Unfortunately, few qualitative works have focused on them in order to verify whether or not they have been fulfilled.

Notes

1. This chapter is based on my intervention in Guillaume Devin and Marie-Françoise Durand's course at Sciences Po Paris in 2014 and 2015. My thanks to Fabien Cottier for his thorough proofreading of an earlier version in French of this text.
2. It is useful to clarify the notion of methods from the beginning. Starting from the idea that all research aiming at causal inference draws on hypotheses, methods are therefore procedures set up to test these hypotheses.
3. James D. Fearon, "Counterfactuals and Hypothesis Testing in Political Science," *World Politics*, 43(2) (1991): 169–195.
4. Stephen L. Morgan and Christopher Winship, *Counterfactuals and Causal Inference: Methods and Principles for Social Research* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 3.
5. Josua D. Angrist and Jorn-Steffen Pischke, *Mostly Harmless Econometrics: An Empiricist's Companion* (Princeton (N. J.), Princeton University Press, 2008), p. 3.
6. Fearon, "Counterfactuals and Hypothesis Testing in Political Science."
7. Fearon, "Counterfactuals and Hypothesis Testing in Political Science."

8. Giovanni Sartori, *Parties and Party Systems* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1976), p. 319.
9. Note that these journals are all in English. As will be seen later on, however, they are frequently used by French internationalists.
10. Anna Pechenkina and D. Scott Bennett, "Is OLS Dead in IR?," *The Political Methodologist*, 19(1) (2011): 2–3.
11. I would like to thank Scott Bennett for providing me with the data he collected in the framework of his research with Anna Pechenkina (see Pechenkina and Bennett, "Is OLS Dead in IR?"). Of the three journals chosen by the authors, the first also headed the list of preferred journals to be published by French internationalists (41% of them would like to have an article published in it, against 22% for the *Revue française de science politique*, ranked second). *IO* is also considered by 67% of French researchers as being among the most influential journals in international relations, and ISQ is ranked in 8th position with 14%. See Jérémie Cornut and Dario Batistella, "Des RI françaises en émergence ? Les internationalistes français dans le Sondage TRIP 2011," *Revue française de science politique*, 63(2) (2013): 303–336.
12. Johanna Siméant et al. (eds.), *Guide de l'enquête globale en sciences sociales* (Paris, CNRS Éditions, 2015).
13. Anne-Catherine Wagner and Bertrand Réau, "Le capital international: un outil d'analyse de la reconfiguration des rapports de domination," in Siméant, *Guide de l'enquête globale en sciences sociales,* pp. 33–46.
14. André-David Thomas and Félix Bühlmann, "La fragilité des liens nationaux. La reconfiguration de l'élite de pouvoir en Suisse, 1980–2010," *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, 190 (2011): 78–107.
15. Thomas C. Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict*, (Cambridge (Mass.), Harvard University Press, 1960).
16. Robert D. Putnam, "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games," *International Organization*, 42(3)(1988): 427–460.
17. Peter B. Evans, Harold K. Jacobson and Robert D. Putnam (eds), *Double-edged Diplomacy: International Bargaining and Domestic Politics* (Berkeley (Calif.), University of California Press, 1993).
18. Simon Hug and Tobias Schulz, "Referendums in the EU's Constitution Building Process," *Review of International Organizations*, 2(2)(2007): 177–218.
19. Robert D. Putnam, "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games."
20. More detailed analysis is available in this article. The authors show, among other things, that for states having announced their intention to hold a referendum on the ratification of the Constitutional Treaty, the link between the voters' position and gains obtained in the negotiations is

stronger. More particularly, when the former had a critical position vis-à-vis the treaty proposed, the gains were greater. These results thus support the theoretical arguments developed by Robert D. Putnam in "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games."

21. These are discussed in the study by Hug and Schulz, "Referendums in the EU's Constitution Building Process."
22. Evans, Jacobson and Putnam (eds), *Double-edged Diplomacy: International Bargaining and Domestic Politics.*
23. Joshua S. Goldstein, *Winning the War on War* (New York (N. Y.), Dutton/Plume (Penguin), 2011).
24. Steven Pinker, *The Better Angels of Our Nature. Why Violence Has Declined* (New York (N. Y.), Penguin, 2011).
25. Lars-Erik Cederman, "Back to Kant: Reinterpreting the Democratic Peace as a Macrohistorical Learning Process," *American Political Science Review*, 95(1)(2001): 15–31.
26. Henry S. Farber and Joanne Gowa, "Polities and Peace," *International Security*, 20(1995): 123–146.
27. Cederman, "Back to Kant."
28. This corresponds to a sophisticated regression, according to the classification in Pechenkina and Bennett, "Is OLS Dead in IR?"
29. Cederman, "Back to Kant."
30. Cederman, "Back to Kant", figure 1: 20.
31. Cederman, "Back to Kant," figure 3: 28.
32. Cederman, "Back to Kant."
33. Pinker, *The Better Angels of Our Nature.*
34. Margaret Ball, "Bloc Voting in the General Assembly," *International Organization*, 5(1) (1951): 3–31.
35. Thomas Hovet, *Bloc Politics in the United Nations* (Cambridge (Mass.), Harvard University Press, 1960).
36. Simon Hug and Richard Lukács, "Preferences or Blocs? Voting in the United Nations Human Rights Council," *Review of International Organizations*, 9(4)(2014): 83–106.
37. Michael A. Bailey, Anton Strezhnev and Erik Voeten, "Estimating State Preferences from United Nations Data," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 61(2): 430–456.
38. Simon Hug, "Dealing with Human Rights in International Organizations," *Journal of Human Rights*, 15(1), 2016.
39. Bailey, Anton Strezhnev and Erik Voeten, "Estimating State Preferences from United Nations Data."
40. Christopher H. Achen, "Let's Put Garbage-Can Regressions and Garbage-Can Probits Where They Belong," *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, 22(4) (2005): 327–339.

41. Philip Schrodt, "Seven Deadly Sins of Contemporary Quantitative Political Analysis," *Journal of Peace Research*, 51(2014): 287–300.
42. Gary King, Robert O. Keohane and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry* (Princeton (N. J.), Princeton University Press, 1994).
43. Fearon, "Counterfactuals and Hypothesis Testing in Political Science."

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Mclaughlin Mitchell, Sara, Paul F. Diehl, and James D. Morrow, eds. 2014. *Guide to the Scientific Study of International Processes.* New York: Wiley.

Schrodt, Philip. 2014. Seven Deadly Sins of Contemporary Quantitative Political Analysis. *Journal of Peace Research* 51: 287–300.

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CHAPTER 10

Multiple Correspondence Analysis in International Relations

Médéric Martin-Mazé

Abstract The chapter showcases the benefits of resorting to multiple correspondence analysis (MCA) in enquiring international relations (IRs). To do so, it recounts how I investigated the aid that Central Asian States receive, usually in the form of projects, from international organizations (IOs) in the area of border security. I first turned to qualitative interviews with actors working "in the field" to deliver this assistance directly in contact with Central Asian beneficiaries. Those revealed a set of heated struggles over who is the most legitimate actor of border security in this region of the world. But, simultaneously, no one agreed on the hierarchy resulting from those struggles. MCA helped solving this conundrum by mapping out the positions that actors occupy in their operational environment, and from which they talk. They show which actors are more autonomous than others, and how some IOs remain heavily development-driven while others implement security-oriented projects. As such, MCA provides a promising venue for scholars who try to work through those complex socio-bureaucratic transnational settings that make the bread and butter of IR research.

M. Martin-Mazé (✉)
University Paris 8/CRESPPA-LabToP, Saint-Denis, France

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What do multiple correspondence analyses (MCA) contribute to the study of international relations? While Pierre Bourdieu used this method to explore the multidimensionality of social settings, internationalists rarely put it to work.[1] This lack of interest may seem paradoxical, since MCA can summarize the complexity of the international stage, which as we now know goes beyond a solely intergovernmental grammar. This chapter strives to show what purpose they may serve in conducting a study of international practices. I will begin by recalling the research that was the starting point for their use. I will then explain what the method consists of and how the data was built in this case. Finally, I will comment on the results obtained before briefly concluding on the necessity of including MCA in a multimethod strategy.

A Dense and Conflict-Ridden Transnational Microcosm

My research analyzes the technical assistance that Central Asian governments have received in the area of border controls and security from 1992 to 2012. The purpose is to understand how this aid was provided, by whom, for whom, toward what aims and to what effect. I was particularly interested in the way governmental knowledge and know-how about borders cross those boundaries.[2] First, several on-site surveys were conducted in Central Asia and in Europe, combining observations of border controls and semi-structured interviews with international and national civil servants.

These on-site surveys provide three possible answers. First, they reveal a transnational and particularly dense social context. In addition to the United States and Russia, they include international organizations such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM), regional institutions like the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and institutions in the European Union (EU), not to mention UN bureaucracies such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

In addition to this bureaucratic splintering, there are relationships of co-operation, sub-contracting and cross-financing that render the social setting under examination all the more complex. While the "Border Management in Central Asia" (BOMCA) program, financed by the EU, was implemented by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), certain activities it provides for are entrusted to the IOM, the UN High

Commissioner for Refugees and the International Center for Migration Policy Development. Furthermore, as sponsors reinforce the beneficiaries' capacities, local organizations arise whose purpose is to get involved in the very game that gave rise to them, like the Tajikistan Drug Control Agency.

Through these tangled relationships, we can nonetheless see a more specific place where aid delivery is negotiated in direct contact with beneficiary administrations in Central Asia. This context appears autonomous in two respects. First, it maintains a relative separation vis-à-vis decision-making centers located in Europe, where aid is tallied and authorized. Second, it differs from departments in charge of border control in Central Asian countries. The frontiers of this social world seem to cut as much through the international organizations, between headquarters and "the field," as through the beneficiary administrations, between international co-operation specialists and services on the ground.

Finally, interviews have shown that this world is constantly racked by hidden struggles. The actors argue in particular over who is a legitimate expert in border security in this region of the world. Frameworks of perception opposing the technical and political, the futile and serious, the short-term and long-term, development and security professions, freedom or control of movement appear frequently in interviews.

In describing and discrediting one another, the actors I meet point toward a hierarchical context that sanctions—positively or negatively—the blows they deal to each other. But at this stage of the study it is impossible to draw a precise map of it. Indeed, the practical reasoning behind the perceptive framework of their discourse keeps eluding me. Experts from the IOM criticize those from the EU in terms that resonate with the rhetoric displayed by EU employees to discredit those from the OSCE. But the civil servants from the OSCE give an assessment of the IOM's work similar in all respects to how EU consultants judge the UNODC's contribution. In other words, everyone agrees more or less on the principles of competition, but not one accepts the resulting order or hierarchy.

To be sure, what I am describing here is nothing exceptional. Entangled chains of action and ambivalent interests, to use Elias' terms,[3] can be observed in many other fieldwork. All the more reason to strive to map that context as precisely as possible. In this regard, while interviews enable one to grasp the main logic at work in the microcosm under study, they can only juxtapose points of view that constantly contradict one another. Then it is a matter of building a point of view on the points of view, an undertaking for which MCA may prove useful.

Exploring Social Contexts Through MCA

MCA are part of geometric data analysis.[4] This set of methods represents a population of statistical individuals in a Euclidian plane. I assume, within the framework of this brief presentation, that any statistical population described by a series of variables may be represented in the form of a point cloud in a multidimensional context. It is as if one were sectioning the cloud—in order to find the bidimensional plane on which orthogonal projection will best preserve the distances between the points that compose it.

In order to unearth the structure of the population studied, the analysis is based both on the two dimensions of the plane and the distances resulting from the projection. Contrary to other methods of geometric analysis, MCA are unique in that they only apply to qualitative data. Individuals who give the same answers to the questionnaire are close in the projected space, while those that give different answers are further away. In addition, MCA allow to identify the most important questions. Indeed, these aspects synthesize the most structuring variables, in other words the questions whose answers produce the greatest amount of distance between the points.

Turning now from statistical and geometric principles to the analysis of political science and sociology, two points deserve to be mentioned. First, MCA capture with precision the most important resources in the social game under consideration—which Pierre Bourdieu calls capital. They also simultaneously show how these resources are distributed among actors. Second, the aspects uncovered by MCA provide accurate indications about the oppositions that characterize social contexts. At each end of an axis, one finds relatively peripheral actors compared to the population studied, but who are in total opposition to one another with respect to the structuring dimensions in their social context. The struggles among actors take on their full meaning in light of these structural oppositions.

MCA thus seem to offer a methodological solution to problems encountered by the study after the interview phase. At first, this method is liable to show which properties among those evoked in the interviews act as capital. It then seems capable of measuring how the various actors are divided in the space, in view specifically of the capital available to them. Thus, one may hope to give a better account of the power struggle at the heart of the conflicts detected in the interviews. But to do that one must also create an appropriate dataset.

Building Data on International Projects

Preliminary results from the field study are used to build data. Indeed, the interviews show that most of the aid given to Central Asian governments for border security is delivered in the form of projects. In understanding this way of organizing work as a "*pocket of accumulation* which, creating value, provides a base for the requirement of extending the network by furthering connections,"[5] one may observe how capital is formed and distributed through the prism of projects implemented in the field. In other words, one strives to situate international organizations in a transnational setting created by the projects they are conducting.

The information used to that end is mainly taken from financial and annual reports available on the websites of the organizations involved. Firsthand documents collected during research periods are also used, such as donor matrixes that are sometimes kept by project managers. These different sources have turned up traces of 236 technical aid projects to Central Asian governments regarding border security. Between 1992 and 2012, the IOM led 71 of them, the OSCE 26, UNODC 64 and BOMCA, the EU program, 75. To describe these projects, a set of 30 variables divided into 6 categories has been created. Each variable (question) can be informed through several modalities (answers), some of which are indicated between parentheses below.

The first category measures the projects' area of action. It includes three variables: sectors (narcotics controls, human trafficking, etc.); intensity of security; intensity of development, both graded from zero to four. The second category describes financing mechanisms. It includes a variable on budgets that has five groups (under 60,000 US dollars, etc.), on financial instruments (e.g. extra-budgetary or unified budget for the OSCE), on financing cycles (very short, short, etc.), on stability, on the agent's financial contribution and on the level at which the financing is given (by project or by program). The third category reports on the aid beneficiaries: Kyrgyzstan (yes/no), Tajikistan, and so on. The fourth category corresponds to the organizations that implement the projects: OSCE, BOMCA, IOM and UNODC. The fifth enables one to see the type of administration receiving technical assistance: customs (yes/no), NGO, and so on. Finally, the last category describes the donors. It has five variables (European Commission, EU Member States, the prime contractor, the United States and other sponsors). For each of these variables there are corresponding modalities resulting from the classification of

financial contributions. Thus, for the "European Commission" variable, there are four modalities, ranging from 10,000 to 90,000 US dollars, from 90,001 to 900,000 US dollars, and 900,001 to 2.1 million US dollars and finally "zero" in all cases where the Commission is not involved in financing. X is sometimes indicated when financing does exist but the amount remains unknown.

The Security Context on Central Asian Borders

The first map in Fig. 10.1 represents projects and their implementing agencies. While the BOMCA and OSCE are close to the central axis, although slightly tilted to the left, the IOM and UNODC are placed on either side of it. Furthermore, whereas the OSCE occupies an area more in the middle, the IOM and UNODC are located in the lower part, and the BOMCA in the upper part of the illustration.

The axis of ordinates corresponds to the dimension brought to light by MCA. It accounts for 14.29% of the variance in 236 projects identified during the 1992–2012 period.

Figure 10.2 shows the projects that are opposed to one another along this first dimension, as well as the modalities that contribute most to forming it. Those modalities have mainly to do with modes of financing and the nature of the donors.

Projects located in the upper part of Fig. 10.2 benefit from the stability conferred by the European Commission's multiyear instruments (RRM, IFS, DCI, TACIS).[6] Activities located in the lower area depend on ad hoc financing offered by the United States and EU Member States. The first aspect thus contrasts an autonomous pole, where the prime contractors are quite independent from central command, with a heteronomous pole where they must raise funds on the international aid market every year.

The abscissa axis corresponds to the second aspect revealed by MCA. It accounts for 8.65% of the variance in the initial cloud.

Figure 10.3 illustrates contributive modalities and extreme projects. We can see that this second axis contrasts projects combining development and cross-border movement in the left-hand quadrant with activities ruled by a security imperative on the right side. The former tend to be involved in short-term timescales, to have limited budgets, to benefit NGOs more and are often implemented by the IOM. The latter are more frequently conducted by the UNODC, occur over long-term time frames and benefit customs and anti-narcotics trafficking services. They also have access to much larger budgets.

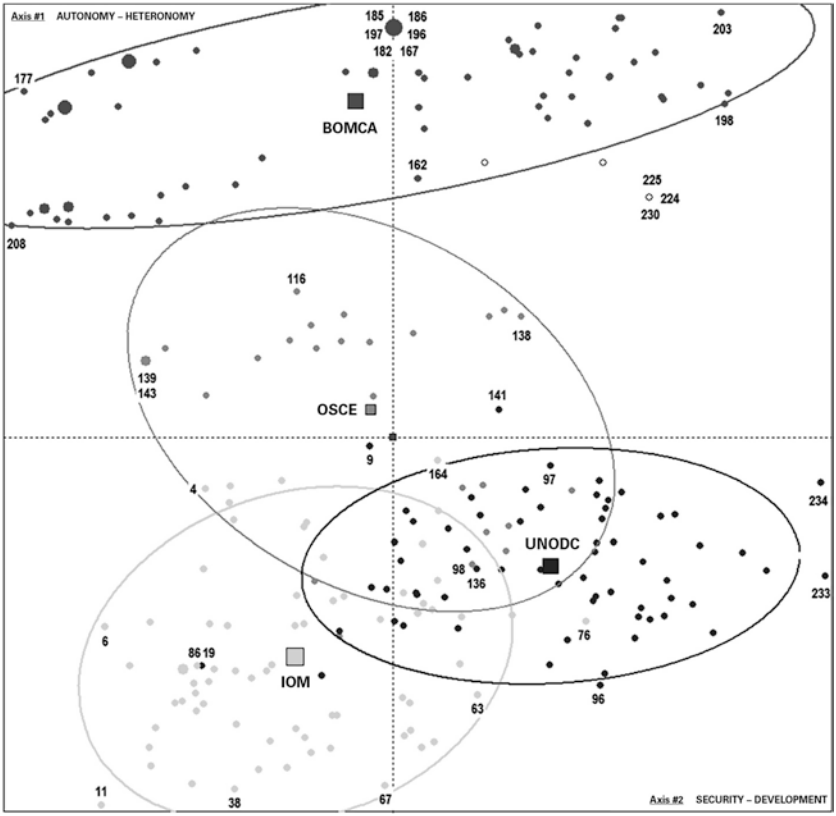


Fig. 10.1 International border security projects and implementing agencies in Central Asia (1992–2012)
Source: author

Thus, MCA reveal a context shaped by a double opposition between autonomous and heteronomous implementing agencies, on the one hand, and development and security professions on the other. These oppositions are mutually reinforcing. Generalist implementing agencies such as the BOMCA and OSCE have it both ways, managing to gain in autonomy vis-à-vis the centers of decision-making. More specialized organizations, like the IOM and UNODC, are more closely subjected to injunctions from the contracting parties, foremost among them is the United States.

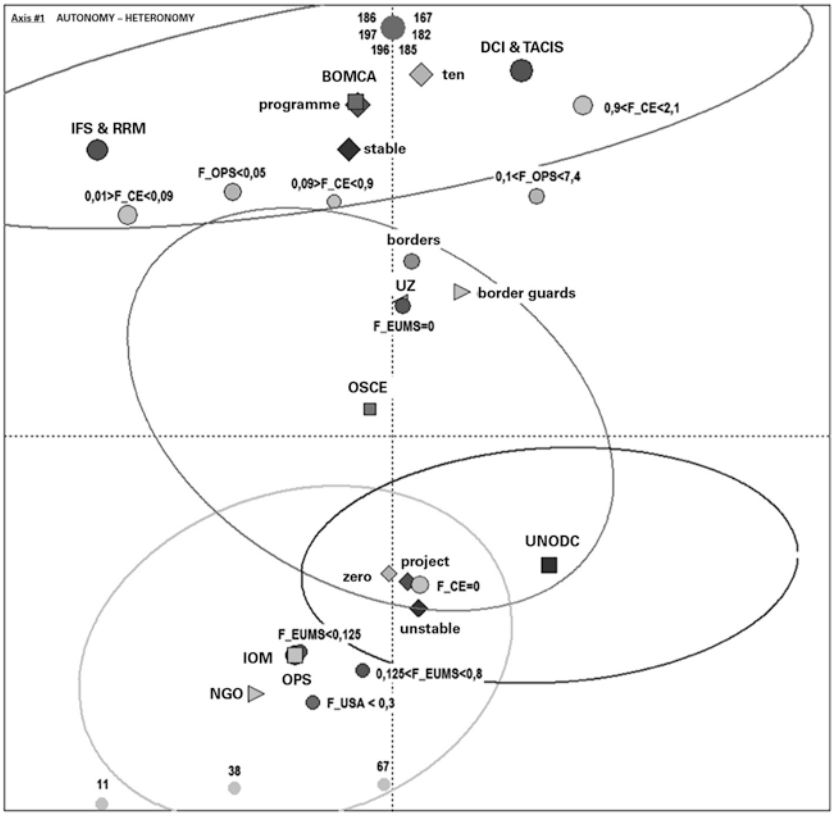


Fig. 10.2 First dimension: autonomy vs. heteronomy
Source: author

Conclusion

MCA provides a perspective that accounts for points of view expressed in interviews. We understand, for example, that tensions are all the greater when distances between agents are short. The struggles waged by the EU and the OSCE in the post-Soviet context are clearly visible here: the latter contests the monopoly established by the former on generalist approaches to border management, combining freedom of movement and migration flow security. Moreover, criticism directed at the IOM and UNODC,

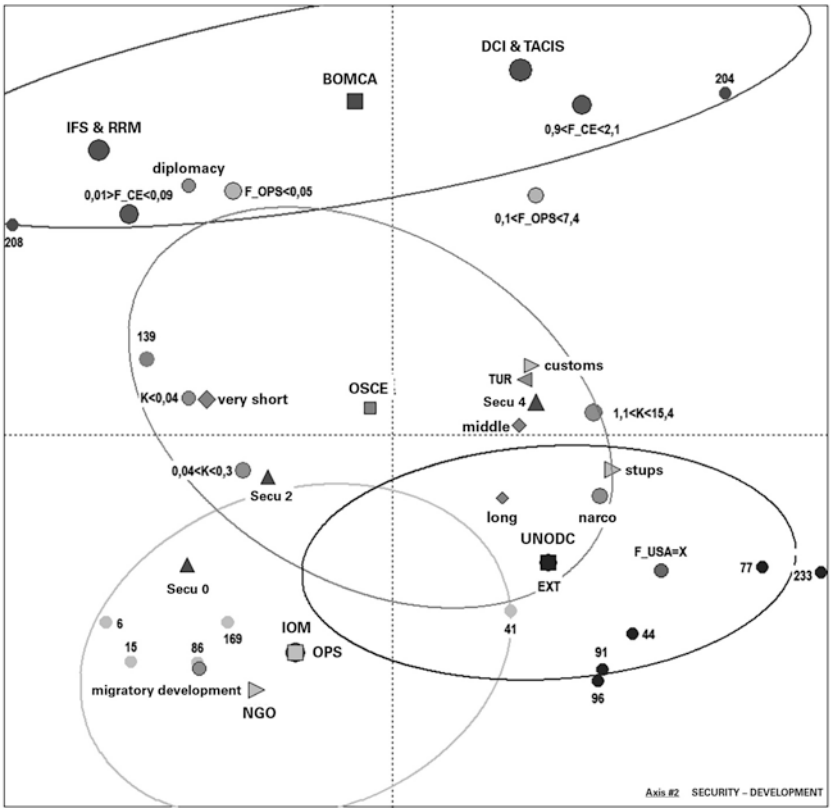


Fig. 10.3 Second dimension: development vs. security
Source: author

especially regarding political dependence, becomes clearer in light of the heteronomous positions they occupy. While all implementers of aid contracts tend toward greater autonomy from centers of decision-making, some of them seem to be far more autonomous than others.

But what happened to Russia? Its absence might seem surprising. Has it lost interest in border security in its near-abroad? In fact, it has turned to operational and bilateral action, which most often eludes the technical multilateralism of international organizations. It would take a more detailed analysis of the projects implemented by the UNODC to follow the trail of this crucial regional power in Central Asia.

This observation serves as a reminder that MCA must be handled with care. Their results can only be read through the prism of the quality of data. Much depends on the way in which they were shaped in the first place. Thus, starting with projects enables one to describe in detail the different aspects of international practices in technical aid, and to report on the relative autonomy that actors enjoy in their working contexts. It also makes it possible to make one's way through the bureaucratic maze of sub-contracting reports and cross-financing. But it also triggers scope effects that need to be monitored. In this regard, including MCA in an open study scheme combining interviews, observations and archives seems a promising perspective.

Notes

1. See for example, Pierre Bourdieu and Monique de Saint-Martin, "Le patronat," *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, 20(1) (1978): 3–82; Pierre Bourdieu, "Une révolution conservatrice dans l'édition," *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, 126(1) (1999): 3–28. For an exception in international relations, see Francesco Ragazzi, "A Comparative Analysis of Diaspora Policies," *Political Geography*, 41 (July 2014): 74–89. See also Frédéric Lebaron, "Central Bankers in the Global Field of Power: a "Social Space" Approach," *Sociological Review*, 56(1) (2007): 121–144.
2. For a development of this issue, see Médéric Martin-Mazé, "L'extension transnationale du domaine de la lutte symbolique: comment les savoirs d'État sur les frontières passent-ils les frontières de l'État ?", *Cultures et Conflits*, 98 (Summer 2015): 53–70.
3. Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process: Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations*, (Malden (Mass.), Blackwell, 2000), pp. 312–343.
4. For a complete methodological introduction to multiple correspondence analyses, see Brigitte Le Roux and Henry Rouanet, *Multiple Correspondence Analysis* (Los Angeles (Calif.), Sage, 2010).
5. Luc Boltanski and Ève Chiapello, *The New Spirit of Capitalism* (London: Verso, 2005), p. 105.
6. These include mainly the RRM, or Rapid Reaction Mechanism; IFS, Instrument for Stability; DCI, Development and Cooperation Instrument; and TACIS, Technical Assistance for the Community of Independent States.

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CHAPTER 11

On Words and Discourse: From Quantitative to Qualitative

Alice Baillat, Fabien Emprin, and Frédéric Ramel

Abstract This chapter introduces two types of methods of textual analysis by dealing with an empirical case (the state of the union discourses of the Bush Jr. and Obama administrations). The first part demonstrates the interest of using statistical textual analysis to explore voluminous corpus of texts, test assumptions, identify major lexical worlds and increase methodological rigor of textual data analysis. The second set of methods comes from political theory, with a focus on specific textual dimensions: classical or Straussian approach (the exegesis of texts), neo-Marxism (the linguistic structure of hegemony), Cambridge school or Skinnerian perspective (the usage of linguistic conventions in conceptual and historical contexts). By linking these two kinds of methods, the chapter intends to show the advantages of cross-fertilization between quantitative and qualitative tools for understanding political discourses.

A. Baillat (✉)
French Institute for International and Strategic Affairs (IRIS), Paris, France

F. Emprin
University of Reims, Reims, France

F. Ramel
Sciences Po, Center for International Studies (CERI), Paris, France

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Treaties, declarations, resolutions. All international relations scholars are confronted with oral and written material that is textual in nature.[1] How to deal with language, as a crucial component of international relations and political reality as a whole? What tools can the analyst access and strive to make the most of? To answer these questions, this chapter aims to present a set of methods taken from two different worlds: lexicography and political theory.[2] The former methods are framed in a quantitative perspective, whereas the latter are intended to be above all qualitative. Internationalists may use them separately when focusing on a text. They may also connect them, and in so doing examine their subject according to a logic of methodological "assemblage" that is sure to be fruitful.[3] To illustrate this, we will focus on a specific case in the following pages: State of the Union addresses pronounced annually by American presidents during the terms of George W. Bush and Barack Obama. They offer a vantage point on the country's diplomatic and strategic postures that enhances our understanding of American foreign policy.

Importing Lexicometric Methods

Lexicometric analysis of a text by using statistical tools applied to the words in a speech has rarely been applied to the study of international relations. At the crossroads between the linguistics, statistics and data processing, it combines quantitative methods for examining discourse. What is lexicometry's potential for analyzing textual data such as interviews, archives and political statements? Lexicometry provides tools for objectifying the corpus, formulating and verifying hypotheses and helping with interpretation. It produces statistical facts which, when well thought out, increase the methodological thoroughness of language data analysis.

Tools for Analyzing Texts

Interpretations are often influenced by initial presuppositions despite researchers' efforts at being objective when exploring texts. A large corpus also makes it difficult to conduct detailed, subtle analysis, reinforcing the tendency to look only for what one wants to see. The risk is of obtaining an intuitive and at times biased understanding of the material studied. Lexicometry provides tools for overcoming these difficulties and showing the researcher aspects that cannot be detected manually. We propose using two of them in this chapter: calculating word occurrences, or how many

times a word is present, and co-occurrences, or which words are used together in the same semantic units.

An analysis of occurrences answers a certain number of questions that may be asked about a text: what is the specific vocabulary? What are the dominant themes? What is the literary genre? The number of words per sentence and the use of verbal forms such as the active or passive voice also help to characterize the author's style and intentions. The analytical device that interprets co-occurrences is based on the work of Max Reinert: "it [the analytical device] consists in dividing the text studied into segments of comparable length […]. This simplified model of statistical representation of a speech suffices to highlight, at least in the analysis of certain corpuses, the tendency of vocabulary to be distributed in stabilized lexical worlds, etc."[4] The hypothesis is as follows: segments of texts full of co-occurrences occupy the same "lexical world," and these "lexical worlds" can be interpreted by researchers.

This type of analysis is useful in the initial exploration phase of a voluminous corpus in order to reduce the amount of information to be processed, and to pinpoint thematic breaks and the content of each theme. Textual analysis software is essential for implementing it. In this chapter we use the IRaMuTeQ software.[5] With this computer-based method, it is possible, for instance, to study the semantic evolution of the official discourse around the European Neighborhood Policy published by the European Commission and the European External Action Service.[6] These approaches are also useful in describing argumentative strategies present in political and media discourse or to detect shared or competing representation systems in a group of actors.[7]

Choosing and Preparing the Corpus

Attention given to building the corpus is the basis for any thorough lexicometric approach. The latter must be voluminous and homogeneous. It is essential to group together texts that are similar in form (semi-directive interviews, open questions, press articles, speeches given before the United Nations General Assembly, etc.) in order to compare what is comparable.[8] The corpus must be sufficiently large in volume so that statistical tests can apply (to determine whether there is a significant presence or absence of words). In the sample application presented in this chapter, the corpus is composed of State of the Union addresses given by George W. Bush and Barack Obama between 2001 and 2015.

IRaMuTeQ identifies the presence of lexical worlds in the corpus. In our example, it helps us to determine whether a lexical world is characteristic of certain years or of one of the two presidents, or not. Programming the corpus by inserting tags not to be treated as words in the speech but to be used for analysis is thus important. This codification procedure involves linking variables relevant to the research (author, year of production, gender, etc.) with different parts of the corpus. The quality of the results of the lexicometric analysis therefore depends on the preparation and coherence of the corpus.

Limits

Like any quantitative techniques, using lexicometry involves precautions. It is difficult for data processing to take into account the polysemy of terms and homonyms. Indeed, statistical analysis software includes lemmatization tools enabling counting (occurrences and co-occurrences) that groups together the different forms of a word.[9] This function is useful but reductive. Therefore, he researcher must use other tools, such as concordancers, to find initial information and process it, if relevant.[10]

When calculating co-occurrences, the corpus as a whole cannot be divided into lexical worlds. This involves a more or less sizeable loss of information that must be monitored. In any case, it is up to the researcher to restore the meaning of the speech when analyzing the results. This implies proper prior knowledge of the corpus and of the software features through which one may return to the original text.

In addition to these questions inherent in software programming, the risk of isolating textual data from the speakers and situations involving enunciation and reception is another limit. The historical, social and political contextualization of the corpus is essential in interpreting data produced by the software. While lexicometry rapidly provides an overall vision of voluminous documentation, however, it cannot be a substitute for the researcher's work of analyzing and interpreting data.

A Comparison of State of the Union Addresses by George W. Bush and Barack Obama

The content of the speeches was explored through a quantitative analysis of the vocabulary and lexical fields. The use of the IRaMuTeQ software has helped to detect semantic changes, ideological and political breaks and

lastly major messages the two presidents delivered to the American nation. Initially, it was decided not to propose hypotheses on the content of the corpus but, on the contrary, to allow statistical textual analysis to bring out elements that might help in formulating them.

The speeches were first assembled in the same document and programed with respect to the president and year. The software revealed a corpus split in two (Fig. 11.1). On the one hand, class 2 is specific to Obama's speeches and centered around economic policy. On the other hand, two classes (1 and 3) are associated with George W. Bush's speeches and reveal a vocabulary firstly linked to terrorism and Iraqi nuclear threats and, secondly, to defense of democracy and freedom. This preliminary analysis showed a clear divide between the two presidents' speeches bearing very different messages (no shared lexical class and a weak percentage of corpus that could be grouped into classes—30%).

Two distinct corpuses were then developed to refine the semantic analysis of each president's speeches. For George W. Bush, six classes were detected, including three that bring together utterances linked to American foreign policy (classes 3, 5 and 6) (Fig. 11.2). Iraq and Afghanistan feature significantly and are associated with terms referring to American military intervention (class 5), terrorism and nuclear threats (class 6, which appears significantly in 2002 and 2003), defense and democracy and freedom in the Middle East (class 3). Central elements in Bush Jr.'s foreign policy, such as concepts of "terrorism" and "freedom" or rhetoric about the "axis of evil," also appear prominently. The notion of "rogue states," which serves as the ideological basis for the American intervention in Iraq and Afghanistan, is not significantly present in the corpus (one occurrence). However, it is implicit in George W. Bush's speeches through numerous co-occurrences between those countries and vocabulary associated with threats to and defense of democracy.

There is a significant association between class 2, focusing on economic and social policies, and 2001, a date matching George W. Bush's first year in office. That focus disappears from speeches given after the attacks on September 11, 2001, in favor of a discourse centered more on terrorism and nuclear threats. Lexical analysis thus shows a shift in George W. Bush's speeches following those events.

An analysis of Barack Obama's speeches shows a division into five classes, with only one of them linked to foreign policy (class 1) (Fig. 11.3). The others include terms relating to economic, fiscal and energy policy (classes 2 and 5), healthcare reform (class 4) and education (class 3).

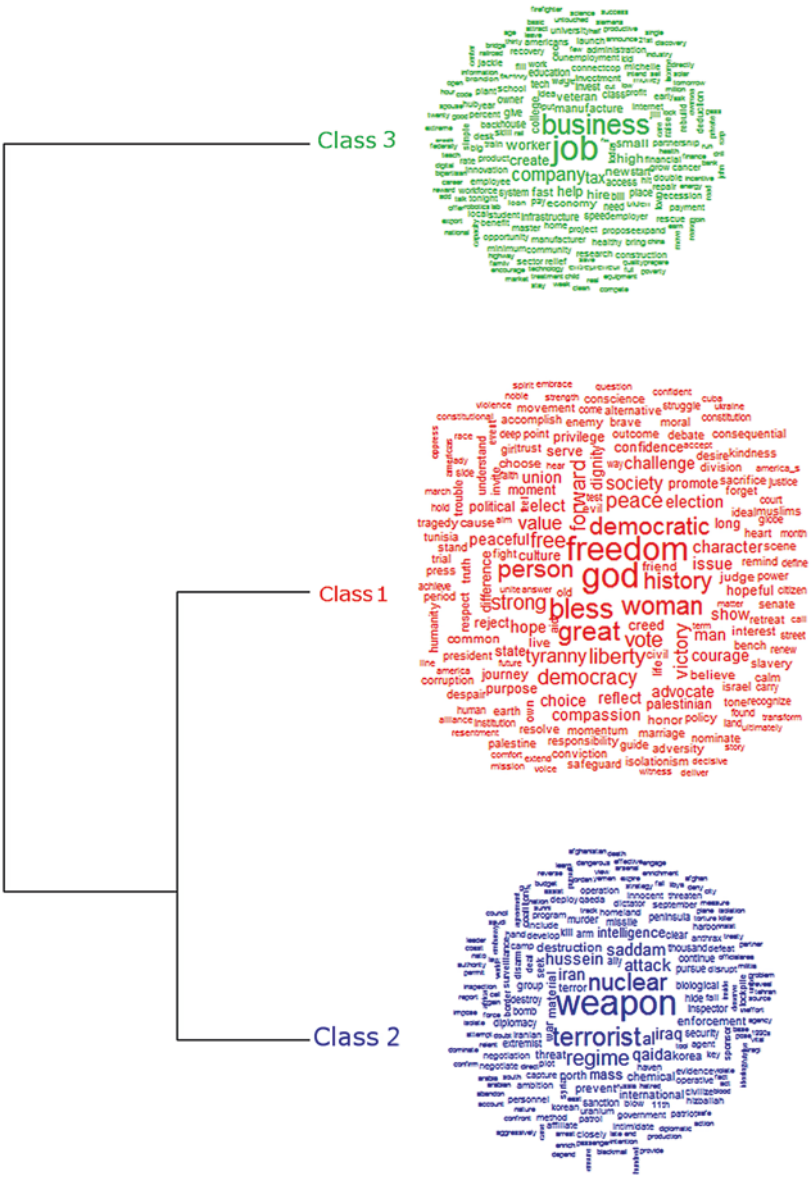


Fig. 11.1 Phylogram of the corpus of speeches by George W. Bush and Barack Obama associated with co-occurring point clouds. Parameters: Iramuteq version 0.7 alpha 2. Double classification on RST (RST1/RST2: 12/14, 7000 max forms analyzed) 681 segments classified out of 2434 (27.98%)
Sources: authors. © All rights reserved

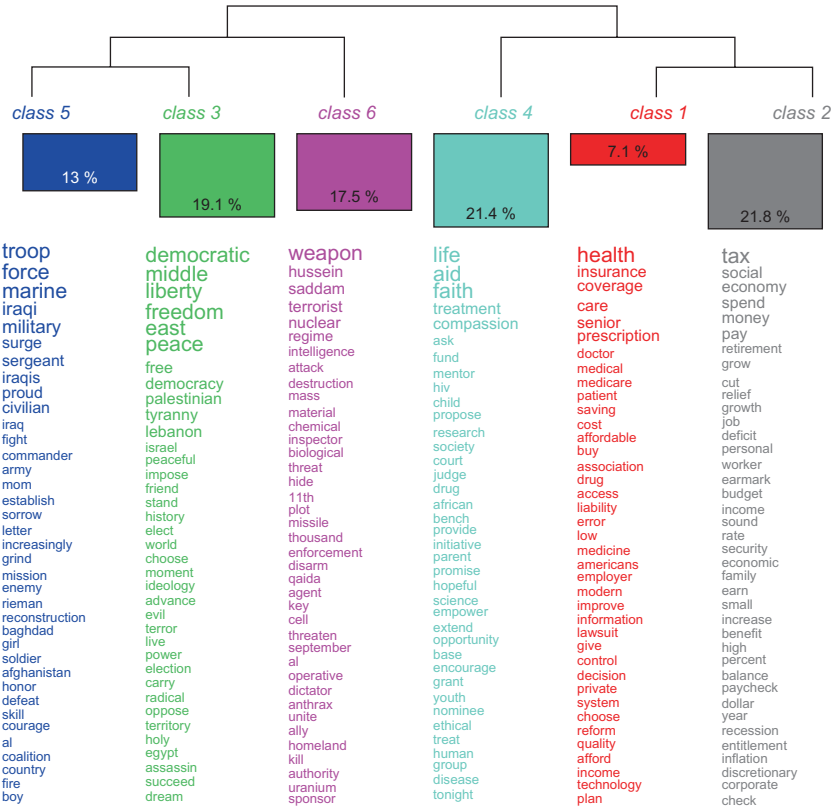


Fig. 11.2 Phylogram of the corpus of speeches by George W. Bush (2001–2008). Parameters: Iramuteq version 0.7 alpha 2. Double classification on RST (RST1/RST2: 12/14, 5000 max forms analyzed) 784 segments classified out of 1103 (71.08%) Sources: authors. © All rights reserved

Domestic policy considerations figure prominently in all of Obama's speeches, while they only featured in George W. Bush's 2001 speech. This semantic divide could be a starting point in studying the different political agendas of the two American presidents. Regarding foreign policy, several terms are shared by both corpuses. However, an analysis of concordancers reveals a divergence, Obama insisting on the withdrawal of American troops in Iraq and preferring a "muscular diplomacy" vis-à-vis Iran, rather than introducing new international sanctions.

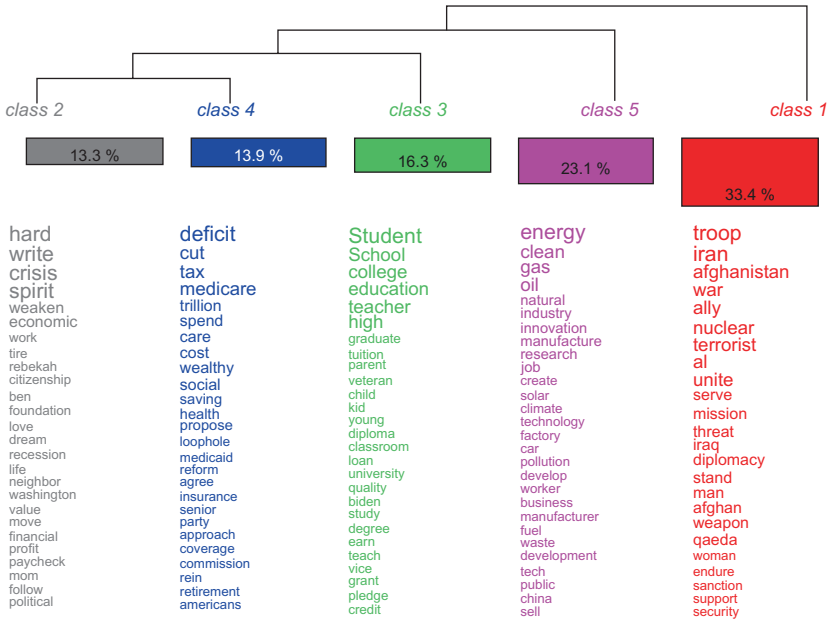


Fig. 11.3 Phylogram of the corpus of speeches by Barack Obama (2009–2015). Parameters: Iramuteq version 0.7 alpha 2. Double classification on RST (RST1/RST2: 12/14, 5000 max forms analyzed) 676 segments classified out of 1331 (50.79%)
Sources: authors. © All rights reserved

To conclude, this chapter introduces a preliminary approach to the data provided by IRaMuTeQ. Each class may then be analyzed in detail relative to the years significantly represented, dominant phrases and so on. Our example shows that in using statistical data it is possible to go deeper into the text itself and analysis of the speeches. These methods may be used exclusively or as tools to probe the corpus in the initial research phase. Other methods of analyzing texts may then be called upon depending on the research needs and objectives.

Importing Methods of Political Theory

Three types of textual interpretation, all connected with specific methods, may be distinguished in the study of political ideas: so-called traditional approaches, Marxist approaches and those from the Cambridge School. It

is quite feasible to import these methods into international relations, as shown in recent work. They may also be combined with the quantitative tools explained above.

The Exegetic Method of the Classics

Leo Strauss embodies the main figure of this approach, which is highly critical of the two underlying illusions of modernity: all ideas have the same value (relativism); ideas are considered through the prism of history and progress (historicism). His objective consists in reclaiming the spirit that animated the Ancients because "the meaning of political philosophy and its meaningful character is as evident today as it always has been since the time when political philosophy came to light in Athens."[11]

The method favored is twofold. First, it is based on the text, and solely on the text. This exegesis draws from careful study of the concepts used, their meaning and properties. It also requires highlighting general thought processes (references to other sciences, calling upon the philosophy of history and making use of specific historical facts, applying mechanisms relating to the social contract, etc.). The second component is of an esoteric nature (namely hidden meaning). The analyst must be able to read "between the lines" since the author himself may dissimulate his main ideas depending on the context in which he was writing.

The exegetic method focuses on what can be qualified as monuments in the history of thought: Machiavelli's *The Prince*, Hobbes's *Leviathan* or Rousseau's *The Social Contract*. It is not concerned with the official discourse of politicians. Thus, it does not appear applicable to the case shown in the present chapter. It has nonetheless proven useful in highlighting the sources of certain speeches.

In this particular case, the State of the Union addresses pronounced by George W. Bush, in particular the justification for military interventions against "rogue states," especially Iraq, may be interpreted as applying the ideas formulated by Leo Strauss. Because many of the neoconservatives within his administration were taught by Strauss's students, they could have disseminated the ideas he expressed in his day, in particular regarding regime change through coercive means.

However, the exegetic method cannot take speeches themselves as a documentary source, favoring a return to texts produced by philosophers (Strauss here) concerning foreign policy and international relations. In the case studied, the text exegesis shows the fragility of this argument.[12] Moved

by a deep sense of skepticism, Strauss did not believe in the transformation of the world through political action and even less in the existence of a supposed better political regime that would be universally adopted in the end of history.

The Analogical Method of Marxism

"It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness."[13] This famous phrase by Marx is the very basis for a methodology that interprets all political texts as products of their authors' interests. Thus, the analogy prevails in situ, namely the close correspondence between the content of the texts studied and the social and economic structure at the time of their writing. The classic example is of Charles Beard summarizing the American Constitution and the Federalist Papers. The purpose of the texts was to protect landowners and to ensure their preeminence.[14]

Starting in the 1970s, critical theory of neo-Marxist inspiration generated a large number of books on international relations, including those by Robert Cox. Cox established connections between the mental patterns through which people perceive reality and dominance relationships. Robert Cox partly took on the concept of hegemony developed by Antonio Gramsci (hegemony is based on a legitimizing discourse that confuses a power's private interests with those of all of humanity). These elements can be seen in speeches through a set of markers, the two main ones being: self-definition as a power dispensing international security; promoting the democratic values championed by the United States.

George W. Bush's speeches feature a tendency to confuse the interests of the United States with those of all governments: "A strong America is the world's best hope for peace and freedom" (2001); "our Nation is at war; our economy is in recession; and the civilized world faces unprecedented dangers" (2002); "America's purpose is more than to follow a process; it is to achieve a result, the end of terrible threats to the civilized world" (2003); "The terrorists continue to plot against America and the civilized world" (2004). This characteristic is less structural in Obama's speeches, but it arises when there is a question of supporting freedom abroad, in particular in Africa (2008).

The Cambridge School Method of Historical Inquiry

The Cambridge School has refused to come out in favor of either of the preceding approaches. The former limits itself to the text, while the latter thinks only in terms of social and economic contextualization. Quentin Skinner, one of the main representatives of the Cambridge School, has proposed a twofold extension. First, the texts are not limited to those written by "major" philosophers (they also correspond to secondary writings and to visual creations like paintings[15]). Second, the context must be taken into consideration, but mainly for its intellectual rather than socio-economic aspect. This intellectual context is composed of conventions (arguments, concepts, platitudes, preconceptions) that circulate and can be used in different ways depending on the author's intentionality.

The method strives to be grounded in history and language. It involves first identifying the specific moment and texts when a new concept (or another use of an existing convention) emerges. The text is then taken not only for itself but as an act. The author is making a statement in addressing his readers[16] and choosing a way to expose his thoughts.[17] As an illustration, Machiavelli seems at first to be in keeping with the Ancients in drawing on the idea of virtue in political action. And yet, he radically subverts that heritage in underlining the need to borrow from animal behavior depending on the circumstances (the virtuous prince is capable of being a lion). He uses a convention (virtue), but modifies its original meaning (while using the term in the vernacular language: *virtù*). Thus the need to compare conventions during the same given period and detect their significant inflections.[18]

Quentin Skinner has identified the main pitfalls the analyst may be faced with: anachronism or the fact of mistaking the author's intention. These two risks merge into one: highlighting a mythology of ideas (these not varying over time, conferring a unique meaning throughout the ages).[19]

In the specific case of State of the Union addresses, it is the "rogue states" category that enables us to apply the analytical model in question. Indeed, this convention fell into disuse during Clinton's second term. Madeleine Albright, then Secretary of State, stressed its shortcomings due to a difficult summary of strict and distinctive criteria. And yet, after the attacks on 9/11, George W. Bush reactivated the category. Paradoxically, it has not been employed extensively in the corpus as a whole (a single occurrence in 2002) in the form of a "rogue nation." It is closely associated with two constituent elements: the nature of a political regime ("tyrants" rule it)

and strategic capacity (they contribute to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction). Nevertheless, this restricted use is an all new logical development from the point of view of the strategic posture of the United States. This convention has provided a way to identify a state target as an enemy in circumstances characterized by a certain vagueness about the origin of the transnational terrorist threats. Obama never used the expression "rogue nation," thus revealing his desire for a rhetorical differentiation from his predecessor, even though in substance a large share of his strategic choices were a logical continuation of it, such as the increased use of drones and the use of special forces.

Ultimately, these different methods coming from the history of ideas are based on divergences regarding the constituent properties of a text and the purposes surrounding their respective methods. The classics are limited to texts by philosophers and major political thinkers (restrictive conception)

Table 11.1 Typology of methods in the history of ideas

	Classic approach	*Marxist critical approach*	*Cambridge school*
Defining a text and constituting the	Focus: texts by philosophers	Focus: texts by philosophers and political texts	Extension: theoretical writings, public speeches, aesthetic production, etc. Decentering: look at secondary and minor output in addition to the work itself
Method	Double method • Exegetic • Esoteric (hidden meaning)	Analogical method • Textual content • Structure of the economic and social life when written	Historical method of enquiry • Language: pinpoint conventions (concepts, arguments, examples, trite phrases, etc.) • intentionality of the author
Major examples	Interpretation of Machiavelli	Interpretation of the federalist papers	The origin of modernity during the Renaissance era: revise the idea of an exclusively liberal modernity

Source: authors

carrying on a dialogue through the ages. Marxists undertook a preliminary extension of the (philosophical and political) texts, while revealing the dominance they initiate or maintain. The Cambridge School has adopted a very broad conception of the textual material, striving to explain the underlying intentions behind the author's conventions in a context that has remained singular (Table 11.1).

Conclusion

In this chapter the reader has become conversant with two methodological perspectives (lexicometry and methods of political theory) rarely used by international relations scholars. Yet, both of these approaches reveal heuristic qualities for studying the textual data at the heart of works on international relations. By applying the statistical methods of lexicometry to a corpus of work, it can be objectified and its salient points rapidly brought forth. In our example, this has helped highlight the rhetorical differences between Obama and George W. Bush as well as the revealing presence of vocabulary associated with threats and democracy in Bush's speeches to justify the war against "rogue states" such as Iraq and Afghanistan. As for the use of approaches that have grown out of Political Theory (classical, Marxist and the Cambridge School), it fosters greater historicization of the concepts employed in international relations. This affords a new, reflexive take on the subjects studied, grounded in a contemporary context. The Cambridge School approach thus provides a way to refocus the "rogue state" concept in its context of output and use. While these methods can be used separately, combining them is a productive way to bring out new questions, to avoid errors of interpretation and ultimately distance oneself from the risk of a superficial reading of the texts.

Notes

1. It is surprising to see that certain political analysts do not take this major aspect into consideration. On this point, see the introduction to the collective work directed by Johanna Siméant, *Guide de l'enquête globale en sciences sociales* (Paris, CNRS Éditions, 2015), pp. 5–11.
2. We deliberately chose these two contrasting methodological matrices to suggest possible links and an exchange between varying perspectives.
3. On the notion of assemblage, see Michele Acuto and Simon Curtis (eds), *Reassembling International Theory. Assemblage Thinking and International Relations* (London: Palgrave, 2013).

4. Max Reinert, "Mondes lexicaux stabilisés et analyse statistique de discours," *Actes des neuvièmes journées internationales d'analyse statistique de données textuelles JADT*, Lyon, France, 2008.
5. IRaMuTeQ is an open-source software based on Reinert's method and developed by Pierre Ratinaud. The software and instruction manual can be downloaded at: www.iramuteq.org/
6. Laurent Beauguitte, France Guérin-Pace and Yann Richard, "L'UE et ses voisinages: acteurs et espaces d'un discours," paper presented at the Fronts et frontières des sciences du territoire colloquium, Paris, March 27–28, 2014.
7. For example, Cécile Alduy and Stéphane Wahnich, *Marine Le Pen prise aux mots. Décryptage du nouveau discours frontiste* (Paris, Seuil, 2015).
8. The texts must be written in the same language, and the researcher must have mastered it and be in a position to detect linguistic subtleties.
9. For example, declensions of a verb, and the singular and plural of a noun are classified under the same lexical entry (a lemma).
10. A concordancer is a tool proposed by software that puts words in their enunciative context.
11. Leo Strauss, *What is Political Philosophy And Other Stories?* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), p. 10. On the context, see Leo Strauss, *La Persécution et l'art d'écrire* (Paris: Éditions de l'éclat, 2003 [1952]).
12. Corinne Pelluchon, "Leo Strauss et George Bush," *Le Banquet*, 19–20, December-January 2004, pp. 238–292. For a point of debate, see Anne Norton, *Leo Strauss et la politique de l'empire américain* (Paris: Denoël, 2006 [2004]). Robert Howse, *Leo Strauss. Man of Peace* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014).
13. Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (New York: International Publishers, 1970), pp. 20–21.
14. Charles Beard, *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States* (New York (N. Y.), Macmillan, 1913).
15. See in particular his study of Lorenzetti's fresco (see Chap. 4 of this book).
16. Quentin Skinner, *Visions of Politics, 1*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 86–87.
17. Claude Gauthier, "Texte, contexte et intention illocutoire de l'auteur. Les enjeux du programme méthodologique de Quentin Skinner," *Revue de métaphysique et de morale*, 2(42), (2004): 175–192.
18. Another orientation consists in identifying a great historical fresco. See R. Koselleck, "Einleitung," in O. Brunner, W. Conze and R. Koselleck (eds), *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Historisches lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland 1, at XIV*.
19. For an example, see Frédéric Ramel, "Perpetual Peace and the Idea of "Concert" in Eighteenth-Century Thought," in Damien Mahiet, Mark Ferraguto and Rebekah Ahrendt (eds), *Music and Diplomacy from the Early Modern Era to the Present* (New York (N. Y.): Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp. 125–146.

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CHAPTER 12

Classifying, Ordering, Quantifying

Milena Dieckhoff, Benoît Martin, and Charles Tenenbaum

Abstract Data is useful for classifying, ordering and quantifying international phenomena. The practical dimension of representing reality through figures and the power of objectification of data explain why databases are numerous and data is often used in international relations research. However, one cannot use figures rigorously without also embracing a qualitative approach to data, taking into account the way data is constructed. Knowing who has put together the data, how and for what purpose is an essential prerequisite for all research. Attention to the definitions chosen and the methodologies employed is crucial, as illustrated through the focus on databases and composite indicators dealing with conflict and peace. More generally, this chapter demonstrates the value of a critical "de-constructivist" stance toward data.

M. Dieckhoff (✉)
Sciences Po, Center for International Studies (CERI), Paris, France

B. Martin
Sciences Po, Center for International Studies (CERI)
and Atelier de Cartographie, Paris, France

C. Tenenbaum
Sciences Po Lille, Lille, France

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"Data"[1] is now everywhere and easily accessible. All actors in international relations use it to quantify and give a "scientific" aura to their expertise and/or to "rationalize" their actions. Despite their undeniable power of objectification, statistics nevertheless constitute a particular, selective reduction of social phenomena. For this reason, we are proposing a middle way here between the *realist statistical* paradigm (according to which data apprehends reality objectively) and the *constructivist* approach (where, conversely, it is thought to reflect only their authors' specific activity[2]): *the data provides an interesting perspective, but one must take a critical look at how it is constructed*. Like Alain Desrosières, who reminds us that "statistics are not neutral *in principle*," and that "only by reconstituting their chains of production and usage can we judge their real impact,"[3] one must study the quantitative qualitatively in order to use it in an enlightened way for international relations research.[4]

What is this so-called international data? How is it constructed? We can start by identifying two channels through which it can be obtained: one where national statistics are gathered, then combined *afterward*,[5] and one where the data is conceived at an international level from the beginning.

For instance, data on international trade is first recorded by governmental customs offices and then compiled by the UN, while the initial purpose of certain indicators such as the human development index is to compare nations. One must then differentiate between quantifications conducted for the evaluation, which strive to produce combined data with a general scope, and those growing out of the activities of actors or administrations that deem data production to be secondary. Thus, the Pew Research Center's "Global Religious Futures" project has developed a database for its analysis, whereas estimations from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees support activities for refugees and displaced persons in the field. Finally, in terms of objectives, a distinction can be made between a historic statistical approach that draws up an inventory and a more recent one that tends toward rankings, evaluation (often of performance) and benchmarking. Statistics on education produced by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization correspond to the first category, while the "Programme for International Student Assessment" from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development or the Tax Justice Network's Financial Secrecy Index belongs to the latter.

As a result, it is in the interest of international relations researchers to detect these disparities—which give indications about the motivations of the

authors of the data—among the metadata, commentaries and methodological articles contained in any serious database. In particular, this information makes it possible to clarify phases as crucial as adopting definitions,[6] using units of measurement,[7] applying weightings,[8] constructing statistical models and so on.

Identifying primary sources is the first stage of research. Indeed, thinking about the *authors* is essential, as quantifying means implementing a tool *in the service* of an activity. In fact, statistical activities developed along with modern states[9] from the start combined a cognitive aspect (examining reality through figures) and another feature tied to a political course of action (governing based on those figures). These two dimensions have proven inseparable: taking a census of the population to be enlisted in the army, calculating wealth in order to raise taxes and carry out economic planning and so on. Consequently, these schemes cannot be detached either from their author or from the (institutional, political, ideological and technical) context in which they were conceived, nor from the uses initially planned. In terms of international data, IOs remain the major producers of data, although often constrained by their intergovernmental structure.[10] Next to these guardians of "official data," non-governmental organizations (NGOs) establish figures to defend causes often dropped by IOs,[11] like think tanks and research centers, also freer to choose themes to be quantified. Certain firms (and not just the so-called polling organizations) have specialized in expertise on numbers or individuals. In short, these actors cooperate or compete to quantify—and in so doing, acquire recognition of—their expertise. The recent evolution in digital applications and the emergence of big data (massive data production based on personal usage, most often of consumers) have shifted the context for data producers.

The examples developed below deal with two particular aspects of quantifications that international relations researchers must deal with on a regular basis. The first part explores the crucial issue of definitions, a systematic prerequisite for any classification or quantification. In the second part, issues are raised involving composite indicators, in particular those dealing with their construction, usages and political effects. The theme chosen, conflicts and peace, is frequently processed into lists, rankings or figures, especially by think tanks and research centers. Thus, the purpose of this chapter is to suggest a few concrete tips to follow when one finds a database, as its advantages and limits must be identified before making use of its contents.

Understanding What Is Measured: The Necessary Detour Through Definitions

Conflict Databases

The behaviorist turning point in the 1960s and the rationalist quantitative methods inspired by economics that became widespread in the 1980s are the source of the increase in databases attempting to grasp international conflicts.[12] Often the product of a collective project conducted by research centers associated with major universities, "quantification" work has drawn on increasingly large teams for updating databases (through continuous information gathering) and coding data. The evolution in techniques and forms of conflicts has also modified the kind of data collected as well as the way it is represented. For example, an increasing trend has been observed for geolocating events with a heightened focus on individual violence, requiring a highly subtle level of analysis and rendering coding and processing operations more complex.[13]

In addition to books and articles written by researchers working in data production centers, data may be cited directly by various actors such as IOs and NGOs once an institute has been recognized as an authority in its field.[14] Raw data may also be used as primary material for other researchers, in which case the codebooks detailing methodological aspects (units of analysis, variables selected, coding, etc.) must be studied. But however the data is used, the concrete tips for making the best use of it remain more or less identical, with one prerequisite: examining definitions in order to really understand what is being measured.

"Measuring Conflict": What Are We Talking About?

To show how choices regarding what is being measured affect what we take away from the data, we propose a comparison (with no claim of it being representative) between three databases focusing on international conflicts. Without going into a full justification of how cases were selected, we will simply note that the databases chosen—the International Crisis Behavior (ICB) Project, the Armed Conflict Dataset (ACD) and the Conflict Barometer (CB)—reflect rather well the geography of research centers devoted to studies of conflicts and peace, with institutions predominantly located in North America and in Northern Europe.[15] To

address the comparison we propose a summary table presenting simple factual defining elements that are nevertheless highly instructive.

Figure 12.1 shows that measuring conflict is not done through identical concepts and units. The ICB focuses on "international crises" characterized by "disruptive interactions" occurring between two or more states. The ACD reports on "armed conflicts" that result in "antagonisms" involving at least one state. As for the CB, it does not use the type of actor as a classification variable to talk about "political conflicts," generally described as a "positional difference." The conflict's focus is only specified in the definition given by the ACD, which limits it to territories and/or governments.

Each database has chosen to define the scope of "conflict" differently, so the focus of the measurement is therefore unique and modifies our understanding of peace accordingly. The ICB ultimately gives an account of the presence of conflictual relations between states and the degree of general instability in the international system. Peace is synonymous with intergovernmental stability and the absence of major

	International Crisis Behavior (ICB):	**Armed Conflict Dataset (ACD):**	**Conflict Barometer (CB):**
Institutions	CIDCM, University of Maryland, United States	UCDP, Uppsala University, Sweden and PRIO, Oslo, Norway	HIIK, University of Heidelberg, Germany
Objectives Stated by the Producer	1. Accumulating and disseminating knowledge 2. Helping manage crises and inform the choices of decision-makers 3. Highlighting recurring paterns in crises 4. Draw lessons from history in order to promote international peace and world order.	Academic use in statistical and macro-level research.	1. Informing a wide audience 2. Promoting research 3. Testing hypotheses 4. Proposing forecasts
Measure	**International Crisis**	**Armed Conflict**	**Political Conflict**
Actors	Only States	At least one State	Non-specified
Period	1918-2007 (v10, 2010)	1946-2014 (v4, 2015)	1992-2014 (2014)
Definition of Object	Two criteria for an International Crisis: "(1) A change in the type, and/or an increase in the intensity, of **disruptive** (hostile verbal or physical) **interactions** between two or more states, with a heightened probability of military hostilities. (2) These changes destabilize the states' relationship and challenge the structure of an international system."	"An armed conflict is a **contested incompatibility** which concerns government and/or territory where the use of armed force between two parties, of which at least one is the government of a state, results in at least 25 battle-related deaths."	"A political conflict is a **positional difference**, regarding values relevant to a society - the conflict items - between at least two decisive and directly involved actors, which is being carried out using observable and interrelated conflict measures that lie outside established regulatory procedures and threaten core state functions, the international order or hold out the prospect to do so."
	source: Jonathan Wilkenfeld et al. (2003)	source: www.pcr.uu.se/research/ucdp/definitions/definition_of_armed_conflict/	source: http://hiik.de/en/konfliktbarometer/pdf/ConflictBarometer_2014.pdf

Fig. 12.1 Comparison of three definitions of conflict
Sources: Compiled from elements communicated by the organizations. Atelier de cartographie, Sciences Po, 2016

military confrontations within the structure of international order. The ACD measures violent behavior (with a threshold established at 25 deaths) perpetrated between actors that can be of varying natures. Peace is thus perceived above all as the absence of physical violence, but is not restricted to a governmental framework. By proposing a broad definition of political conflict, the CB goes beyond a sense of peace as the mere absence of violence. Its focus is more on the degree of intensity in conflicts (at the national and sub-national levels), making it possible to take into consideration a wide variety of conflict motives and actors that may be involved in the conflicts.

Producing Knowledge About "Conflicts"

Definitions chosen and initial objectives that the database designers assigned themselves influence not only the results, and thus the interpretation of "international conflicts," but also the types of work that can be undertaken from the data. Through the scale of time covered and a cumulative approach to crises, the ICB has favored historical research with a systemic perspective. The ACD also has this long-term dimension, with data available since 1945 that provides an opportunity to bring to light general evolutions in conflicts. However, the continual updating of the database and the ability to sort data in order to retain only what is most recent have also made it easy to take stock of the current situation.[16] With its CB, the Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research (HIIK) has highlighted the production of data about the year in progress. Large-scale statistical processing to show trends is thus more difficult, favoring an approach using lists and classification over quantification and statistics' production.

To evaluate the influence of definitions and methodology on representations of international conflict, we have created two maps from data supplied by the ACD and the HIIK (see Fig. 12.2).[17] This comparison shows that despite differences in definitions, the general geography of conflicts is by and large similar—which is quite reassuring as to our collective ability to give an account of reality. However, differences concerning the state of conflict in certain regions are visible, echoing the defining choices made by the databases. For example, according to the HIIK, Mexico experienced two political conflicts in 2014 connected to drug trafficking qualified as

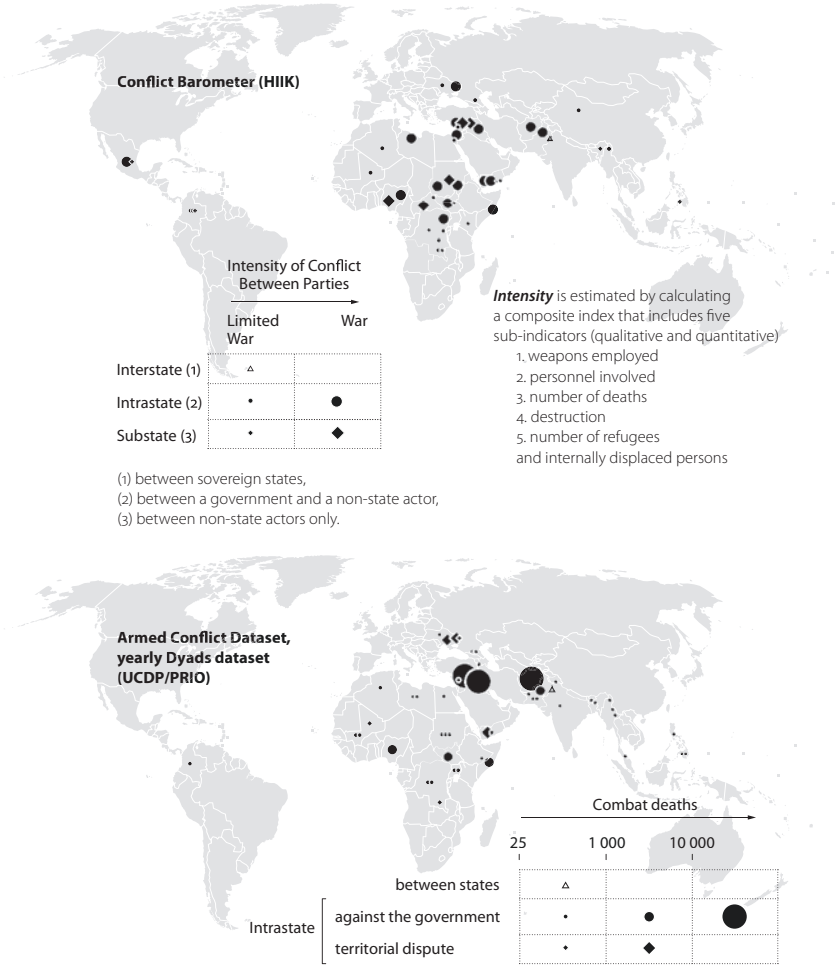


Fig. 12.2 Mapping of two typologies of conflict (2014)
Source: Conflict barometer 2014; yearly dyads dataset. FNSP. Sciences Po, Atelier de cartographie 2016

wars. In the case of the Uppsala Conflict Data Program/Peace Research Institute Oslo (UCDP/PRIO), Colombia was the only country considered to be in a conflict on the whole American continent. Conversely, more conflicts were listed by the UCDP/PRIO than by the HIIK in Southeast Asia.

A Single Number: War and Peace Through the Prism of Composite Indicators

Composite indicators provide a way to take in an abundance of information while reducing it to a single value. Because it facilitates immediate classification according to the data and offers increased intelligibility, this type of indicator fits easily into output by experts. Used for the purpose of providing advocacy and advice, composite indicators are designed to help in rapid decision-making. In order to grasp how these indicators are conceived in studying war and peace phenomena, we have used two examples: first, work by the Center for Systemic Peace (CSP) on the evolution and transformation of conflicts; and second, the Global Peace Index (GPI) published by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP).

The CSP's and IEP's statistical work on war and peace follows the approach inspired by Quincy Wright's pioneering work.[18] Starting in 1926, Quincy Wright launched a collective research program on the causes of war and its social, cultural, economic, historical and diplomatic aspects over more than four centuries (1480–1940). Like later initiatives,[19] the prescriptive approach came with a central question: "How to prevent war?"

Published since 2007, the GPI strives to measure the "level of peace" in the countries listed (162 in 2015).[20] It is composed of 23 qualitative and quantitative sub-indicators. In order to obtain a score on a scale of 1 to 5 for each country, these sub-indicators are weighted, added up and put together around three main themes: security, conflict and militarization (see Fig. 12.3). Specialized in forecasting and country risk evaluation, experts from the IEP and the consultancy firm The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) collect data from various actors (IOs, think tanks) to compose the sub-indicators. Offering its expertise to public administrations and to the private sector, the EIU belongs to The Economist group, which owns the magazine of the same name. In case of missing data, the EIU drafts qualitative estimations and provides extrapolations.

Since 2007 the CSP has published a composite indicator entitled "magnitude of war," used to give an account of the overall evolution of armed conflicts since 1946.[21] Distinguishing between "societal" conflicts (subnational) and "intergovernmental" ones, this indicator reflects the "magnitude" of wars on a sliding scale from 0 to 200, and is designed to quantify the impact of "episodes of violence" on political systems and societies ("magnitude of societal-systemic impact"). According to the CSP, the "societal effects" of conflicts can be seen through the prism of six indicators

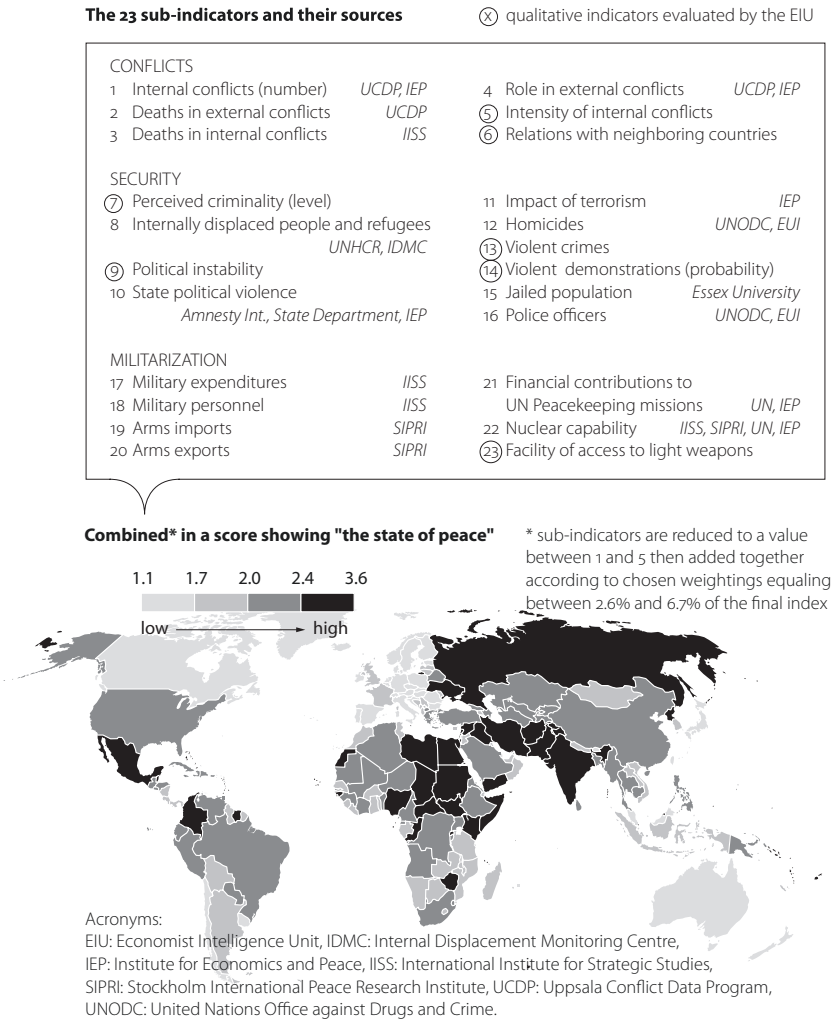


Fig. 12.3 How the global peace index (GPI) is built
Source: Institute for Economics and Peace, Global Peace Index 2015. Measuring peace, its cause and its economic value (www.visionofhumanity.org/) © FNSP. Sciences Po, Atelier de cartographie, 2016

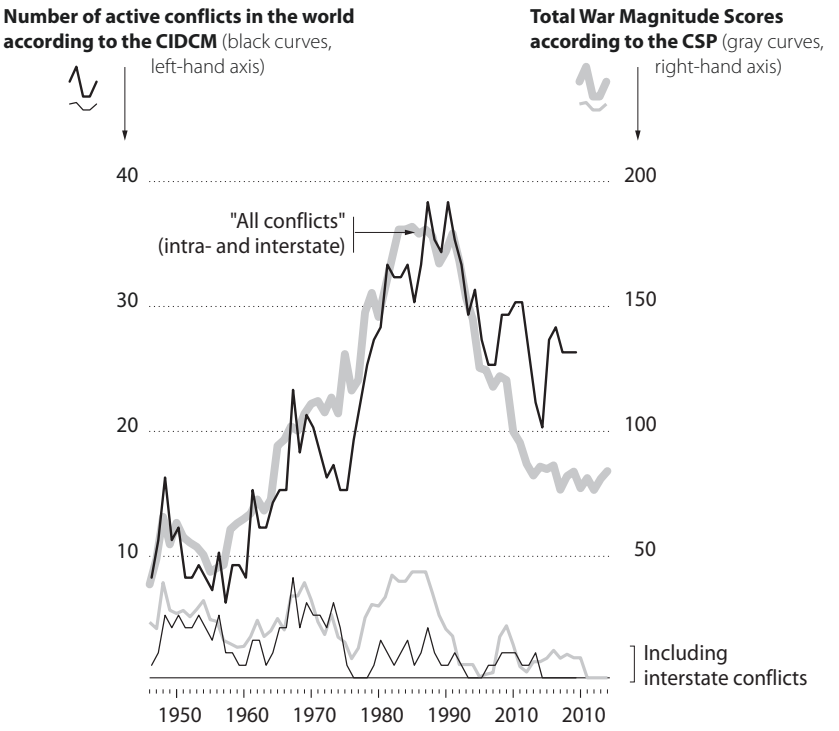
(for instance, "the human dimension," "consequences for the population," "relations among individuals" and "the impact on environmental quality").[22] A qualitative study of the indicators selected is combined and coded on a scale of 1 to 10. From "sporadic or demonstrative political violence" (category 1) to "extermination and annihilation" (category 10), the war "magnitude" indicator aims to render both the diversity of conflicts and their societal impact. This approach replaces the mere accounting of wars with an evaluation of the effects of political violence and warfare on societies. Superimposing (see Fig. 12.4) this composite indicator with the growth curve for the number of wars in the Peace & Conflict[23] report published by the Center for International Development and Conflict Management (CIDCM) shows the strong similarity of results obtained despite the difference in methods adopted (on the one hand, the mere accounting of wars, and on the other hand, a complex measurement of the "societal effects" of conflicts).

A comparison of these two approaches challenges the relevance of resorting to composite indicators, which are difficult to implement since, paradoxically, the result—a single value—runs the risk of oversimplification.

Statistical Projection of Theoretical Models

Theoretical postulates determine the makeup of indicators in reports published by the IEP and the CSP. Experts and researchers use concepts from the field of peace studies, theories of state-building, on democratic peace and on the motives for international cooperation to claim scientific legitimacy and social, economic and political relevance. Thus, despite building an apparently mathematical methodology, the subjective dimension in the choice of sub-indicators, their sources and weighting remains central.

In the case of the GPI, the measurement of the level of "negative peace"[24] corresponds to the "absence of organized collective violence" and is based on a definition stated by Johan Galtung in 1967.[25] According to that author, "positive peace" is characterized by the absence of structural violence and the rule of social justice. In accepting Johan Galtung's binary definition of peace, the IEP has opted for a broader conception of peace and so-called human security. This approach is in line with academic debates structuring the field of war and peace studies, where no consensus has been reached regarding notions such as those of "human security" and "positive peace." In this context, the IEP operates a methodological choice dictated by theoretical preferences that are not clearly exposed.



Notes on the index's detinition and content:
- The CIDCM considers "major armed conflicts as episodes of political violence experiencing sustained and systematic armed violence responsible for over 100 deaths per year and over 1,000 deaths for the duration of the conflict.
-The "war magnitude score" calculated by the CSP takes into account numerous sub-indexes relating to the human aspect of conflicts (dead, wounded, victims of sexual crimes, etc.), consequences for the population (trauma, internally displaced, etc.) and relations between individuals, environmental quality, infrastructure damage and resource diversions, an immediate diminished quality of life and future opportunities (see details at www.systemicpeace.org/warlist/warcode.htm)

Fig. 12.4 Number of conflicts or sum of a composite index?
Sources: Data compiled from: Center for International Development and Conflict Management (CIDCM), Peace and Conflict 2012, Executive Report (https://cidcm.umd.edu/research/peace-and-conflict); Center for Systemic Peace (CSP), Global Conflict Trend (www.systemicpeace.org/). © FNSP. Sciences Po, Atelier de cartographie, 2016

Producing and Diffusing Expertise

In 2007, Steve Killelea, the founder of IEP, an Australian "technology entrepreneur" and "philanthropist," designed a project for an indicator to measure world peace. Compiling statistical data on the state of countries around the world was transformed into a "tool for promoting peace," thereby converting a scientific procedure into a tool for expertise, counseling and advocacy for governments and IOs, NGOs and multinational firms.

In quantifying the "economic cost of peace," this global think tank professed a "paradigm shift," establishing the foundation for a new way of promoting peace. An "advisory panel" of researchers from prestigious universities, representatives from major research centers on conflicts and philanthropic networks validated the indicators chosen and their weightings, thus ensuring the scientific marketing of the IEP reports. Proclaiming a new "vision of humanity"—as indicated on the organization's website—the IEP uses its attractive interactive portal (animated mapping tools, "computer graphics" and key facts) to convince a handpicked group of political "decision-makers."

As for the CSP, it is a non-profit organization founded in 1997, closely linked to the world of academia. To the militant advocacy favored by the IEP, the CSP scientific approach prefers the thorough identification of the explanatory patterns of transformations in the global order. With its expertise in collecting and using vast statistical data, the CSP strives to renew the analysis of conflicts and their mutations through an interdisciplinary approach, linking quantitative and qualitative studies. This scientific project is ultimately close to the research program on the evolution of conflicts pursued by the CIDCM and to its biannual report devoted to the study of conflict evolution and measuring political instability.[26]

Despite these divergences in structure and objectives, the CSP and the IEP use similar methods in resorting to composite indicators in order to facilitate the reading of complex combined data in a single value. An attachment to determining theoretical postulates is at the origin of methodological choices that are debatable (choice of indicators, weightings, implicit extrapolations, heterogeneity of the themes combined, mixing qualitative and quantitative indicators). For the IEP, a broadened conception of peace justifies renewed strategies for international pacification. The CSP uses a methodological reversal in the study of war, putting the focus on the violence suffered by societies and individuals. Beyond producing figures, the link between methodological choices and theoretical preferences has remained crucial.

Conclusion

This chapter has proposed an approach that may seem relatively critical of data, toward which it has favored a "de-constructivist" stance. However, we have not disregarded its considerable importance in representing reality through figures. This gives data a practical dimension by providing a means to grasp magnitude, to order, classify and create categories, and even to map phenomena that are often complex with an efficiency that qualitative description does not allow. Furthermore, most authors and organizations using figures are aware of their biases and limits. They can therefore undertake methodological work that aims to improve their results through the attention given to all research protocols.

However, the tendency is often to present any quantitative approach as automatically more thorough than a qualitative study. And yet, as with any method, it is important to maintain a certain critical distance, as "figures"—whether "traditional" statistics or composite indicators—are no more neutral than words or a photograph. Knowing *who* has put together the data, how and *for what purpose* is an essential prerequisite, whatever it is used for. As we have shown, an informed use of data cannot avoid for example paying specific attention to the definitions chosen in order to define the scope of a phenomenon and the methodologies employed to measure it. In conducting research in international relations, one must avoid the pitfalls of overly blind references to the production and the producers of data by always counterbalancing the data used with one's own scientific objectives. This means that in addition to selecting and cross-referencing data, it often proves necessary to collect new information, or even to establish one's own methodological criteria in order to position this tool in the service of a broader demonstration. Thus, it is possible to take advantage of the figures—and in particular their systematic aspect—by reducing limits and potential methodological biases or theoretical postulates ill-adapted to a researcher's own analytical framework. Finally, cross-referencing several methods (see the other chapters in this book) remains the best way to succeed in studying all aspects of a subject. Data, here again, is no exception.

Notes

1. Unless otherwise specified, we have assigned the same meaning to the terms "statistics" (plural), "data" and "figures."

2. See the well-known article by John I. Kitsuze and Aaron V. Cicourel, "A Note on the Uses of Official Statistics," *Social Problems*, 11(2) (1963): 131–139.
3. Christian Mouhanna, "Entretien avec Alain Desrosières," *Sociologies pratiques*, 1(22) (2011): 15–18.
4. This approach is thus in keeping with the "mixed methods" that may be used in studying international relations. Endorsing this perspective naturally does not mean it is the only way to deal with quantitative data: the preceding chapters in this book have clearly shown the various uses that can be made of statistics and their heuristic value for research.
5. Data may have been collected according to standards established and disseminated in particular by international organizations (IOs)—such as the United Nations Statistics Division which has worked closely with national statistical institutes (NSIs)—to make them comparable among countries.
6. Do they correspond to existing legal categories or were they elaborated for statistical purposes?
7. For example, for the same social phenomenon, the use of numbers, ratios or percentages may show three different and even contradictory trends.
8. In particular in the case of composite indicators (each value is calculated from several sub-indicators, as will be shown in the second part of the chapter).
9. Alain Desrosières, *Politics of Large Numbers, A History of Statistical Reasoning* (Cambridge (Mass.): Harvard University Press, 2002).
10. See Benoît Martin, "Les quantifications dans l'expertise des OI, le cas de l'UNODC," in Asmara Klein, Camille Laporte and Marie Saiget (eds.), *Les Bonnes Pratiques des organisations internationales* (Paris: Presses de Sciences Po, 2015), pp. 131–150
11. We are thinking of human rights, of corruption and of types of political regimes, as well as of the environment and weapons.
12. Kristine Eck has identified about 60 databases devoted to conflicts in a very thorough report: "A Beginner's Guide to Conflict Data: Finding and Using the Right Dataset," Uppsala Conflict Data Program, *UCDP Research Paper Series 1*, December 2005, available at http://www.pcr.uu.se/digitalAssets/18/a_18128-f_UCDP_paper1.pdf.
13. See for example the comparison between two databases offering geolocation: Kristine Eck, "In Data We Trust? A Comparison of UCDP GED and ACLED Conflict Events Datasets," *Cooperation and Conflict*, 47(1) (2012): 124–141.
14. The UN often reuses data and work from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) in its own reports devoted to conflicts and peacekeeping. One example is: United Nations, "Preventive Diplomacy: Delivering

Results," Report of the Secretary General, S/2011/552, 26 August 2011, paragr. 7 and 49.

15. Note that the cases studied are sometimes only one of the databases produced by these centers. For example, the UCDP currently has 15 databases and also offers the possibility of generating one's own dataset by choosing the criteria.
16. This double dimension can be seen in an article published every year by the Journal of Peace Research proposing a progress report while placing the analysis in a more long-term perspective. See the latest version: Therése Pettersson and Peter Wallensteen, "Armed Conflicts: 1946–2014," *Journal of Peace Research*, 52(4) (2015): 536–550.
17. We have not mapped the CIDCM data, as the latest available data is from 2007.
18. Quincy Wright, *A Study of War*, Chicago (Ill.), The University of Chicago Press, 1942.
19. For example, The Correlates of War Project (www.correlatesofwar.org/).
20. The interactive version of the GPI is available online: *Vision of Humanity* (www.visionofhumanity.org/). For the report: *Institute for Economics and Peace, Global* Peace Index 2015 (http://economicsandpeace.org/).
21. Monty G. Marshall and Benjamin R. Cole, *Global Report 2014: Conflict, Governance and State Fragility*, Vienna (Va.), Center for Systemic Peace, 2014.
22. "Assessing the Societal and Systemic Impact of Warfare: Coding Guidelines" (available at: www.systemicpeace.org/).
23. David A. Backer, Jonathan Wilkenfeld and Paul K. Huth (eds), *Peace and Conflict 2014* (Boulder (Colo.), Paradigm Publishers, 2014).
24. Since 2015, the IEP has also published a report on "positive peace," *Positive Peace Report 2015* (available at www.visionofhumanity.org/).
25. Johan Galtung, "On the Future of the International System," *Journal of Peace Research*, 4(4) (1967): 305–333.
26. This proximity entails data sharing, co-publications and crisscrossing trajectories for certain researchers, such as Monty G. Marshall, CSP director (which explains the comparison made in Fig. 12.4).

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[1] Note: Page numbers followed by "n" refers to notes.

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