

**Turning to Practices: What International Relations and European Studies Have in  
Common**

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**Abstract**

The so-called Practice Turn in International Relations (IR) has developed a new paradigm in the field, which places the day-to-day activities of practitioners at the forefront and center of IR theoretical discourse. It is proven to be an influential development not just for International Relations (IR), but also for Area Studies (AS), which share a significant amount of IR's knowledge as well as its objects of study. This is most definitely the situation in the field of European Studies (ES), where the research conducted by researchers of International Practice Theory (IPT) has made a significant contribution to bringing more attention to the contextual, banal, and every day practices of EU institutions. This essay examines the contribution that IPT scholars have made to ES in order to evaluate the additional worth of this study programme and its potential to become a "trading zone" where IR and ES/AS researchers can expand their understanding of how the local and the global are connected. It also identifies two challenges that have not been adequately addressed in the existing literature: 1) discovering ways to theorise and empirically observe the transition from the level of situated practises to EU-wide doings (the generalisation challenge); and 2) determining the exact role that interaction plays in structuring and transforming both the global and the local. Both of these challenges have not been adequately addressed in the existing literature (challenge of relationism).

**Keywords-** International Relations, Turning and European

## **Introduction**

Scholars of International Relations (IR) work in an academic environment that is profoundly influenced by a culture of fields and subfields. Within this culture, it is common practise to draw boundaries and establish value hierarchies, and doing so is frequently regarded as more important than recognising shared histories, trajectories, and synergies (Bell 2009; Fierke and Jabri 2019). This is especially problematic when it comes to the limits and hierarchies that have been established up between International Relations (IR) and Area Studies (AS), as the Special Issue aims to demonstrate (D'Amato, Dian, and Russo 2022). In point of fact, competing disciplinary politics within international relations (IR) and area studies (AS) have ensured the continuous reproduction of Western and American dominance of IR, favoured IR scholars over AS specialists, and restricted the space for interaction between the two (Acharya 2014; 2016, Kollner, Sil, and Ahram 2018, Fawcett et al. 2020, Teti 2007, Bell 2009, Chamlian 2019, Katzenstein 2002). This has resulted in IR scholars being favoured over AS specialists. Because of this, our capacity to conceptualise the relationship between the local and the global (Acharya 2014; Wiener 2018; Aris 2021) and, as a result, to best understand the challenges of our modern, interconnected world (Chan, Mandaville, and Bleiker 2001; Fierke and Jabri 2019) has been hindered as a result.

In this article, I focus on the common history and developments of International Relations (IR) and European Studies (ES) in order to emphasise the importance of interdisciplinary conversations and question the utility of boundaries and hierarchies between IR and ES – and more generally between IR and AS. This is done in an effort to show that IR and ES share a common history and developments. In particular, I would like to draw attention to the most recent cross-fertilization between international relations and economic sociology. This cross-fertilization was sparked by a group of academics who called for a Practice Turn in international relations and established what is known as International Practice Theory (IPT) (Adler and Pouliot 2011a; 2011b; Bueger and Gadinger 2018b; Adler-Nissen 2016). It is opportune to concentrate on IPT at this moment because of the growing importance and demand it has on IR research objectives and techniques (Bueger and Gadinger 2018b, 3). Even though practises "have long been a prime object of analysis in IR" (Adler and Pouliot 2011a, 1) and according to some academics, "practises of one

kind or another are what scholars of international relations always have studied" (Ringmar 2014, 2), it took longer for the family of theoretical accounts that are normally known as Practice Theory to enter IR theoretical debates (Bueger and Gadinger 2018b).

During the summer of 2019, while the co-editors and the contributors of this Special Issue first convened in the framework of the Annual Conference of the Italian Political Science Association (SISP), the newly established Working Group on the Proposed Globalizing IR Section published a petition addressing the governing bodies of the International Studies Association. During this time, the co-editors and the contributors of this Special Issue were also attending the Annual Conference of the Italian Political Science Association (SISP) (ISA). The petition was started with the intention of requesting the establishment of a new part of the ISA that would be dedicated especially to intellectual and scholarly activity within Global International Relations (IR) 1 \s. Despite the fact that a collective dedication to "broadening, diversifying, and globalising" the academic subject of International Relations before this shift, these goals have been inscribed in a number of important pieces of scholarly literature ever since.

work (Jones, 2006; Acharya and Buzan, 2007; Bilgin, 2008; Zarakol, 2010), that call expressed the urge of being recognised as a collective and institutionalised strand within one of the focal sites for knowledge production and dissemination of international studies. work (Jones, 2006; Acharya and Buzan, 2007; Bilgin, 2008; Zarakol, 2010). This call could also be interpreted as a landmark in a longer-term trajectory of international relations (IR) scholars discussing the "non-Western," the "post-colonial," and the "de-colonial"; a trajectory that included other venues and moments of aggregation and public legitimation/outreach. In his Presidential Address in 2015, Amitav Acharya, acting as President of the International Studies Association (ISA), put forward the need for "a new agenda for international studies." This agenda would have built on the past "three decades of worlding IR," challenging IR's Eurocentric limitations and shedding light on the worldviews, approaches, and perspectives of those who have been marginalised, peripheralized, or even exoticized by Western academia – that is, the subaltern and indigenous voice. In other words,

This line of engagement has a longer historical journey: already in 1961 George Modelski wrote 'International Relations needs Area Study' (Modelski, 1961); and IR theories have indeed benefited from interdisciplinary approaches for a very long time (Katzenstein, 2002; Teti 2007; Sil and

Katzenstein 2010; Aalto et al., 2011; Long 2011; Fawcett, 2017). Further, not only the developing debate on 'Global IR' promises to breathe new life into joint intellectual enterprises and interdisciplinary efforts (Bilgin, 2016), but the emergence of the field of 'comparative regionalism', too, is paving the way to a renewed dialogue between 'regionally-oriented disciplinarians' (that is, disciplinary scholars looking at regional phenomena, often in comparative terms) and 'discipline-oriented regionalists' (that is,

This Special Issue collects contributions that are both theoretically innovative and empirically focused on multiple 'regional worlds.' The goal of the issue is to study the diverse nature of internationally relevant political agencies, security issues, and systems of governance across the international system. As a result, this Special Issue provides both single-case and comparative case studies dedicated to widening the boundaries of both International Relations (IR) and Area Studies (AS), highlighting the historical and contemporary interconnectivity of both fields.

In particular, we are interested in investigating a number of problems that, to our knowledge, have not been addressed or investigated in a comparable fashion for a considerable amount of time. For instance, what part do regional actors play in the larger framework of international politics? How can we use and use the scholarship of international relations in our understanding of various international events taking place in different regions of the world? What can case studies from the research agendas of "Comparative Regionalism" and "Non-Western IR Theory" reveal about the current state of affairs in the international community?

This Special Issue constitutes an important addition to the ongoing discussion in a dual sense since it addresses these topics via the lens of six essays that come from all over the world, including Africa, Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. To begin, this Special Issue presents a variety of novel theoretical discussions, in addition to methodological and epistemological conundrums, in an effort to deconstruct and reflect upon the manner in which international affairs are discussed and perceived. In particular, this Special Issue offers untapped conceptual inputs that are able to account for multi-actor and multi-level views. This goes beyond the standard state-based approach to international relations (IR).

Certainly, scholars and activists have spent considerable time analysing the horrific experiences of Black Americans at the hands of law enforcement, including the FBI's notorious COINTELPRO programme, as well as the resilience of Black liberation movements in the face of this repression (Bloom & Martin. 2016; Churchill and Vander Wall 2001; Rhodes 2007; Balto 2019; Soss and Weaver 2017; Joseph 2006). Yet much of this analysis is lumped under the heading of "police brutality," marginalising the ways that counterterrorism and policing are part of the same law enforcement continuum that situates Black Americans as suspect communities. I argue, instead, for increased attention to Black Americans' treatment through the U.S. counterterrorism apparatus as a way of understanding that apparatus's deep historical roots. Neither counterterrorism as a policy area nor its relative ignorance of white supremacist violence are new; rather, these practices as acts of counterterrorism are only possible today due to decades of casting multiple racial Others, including Black people, as sources of terrorist violence. As a first pass at bridging the artificial divide between work on counterterrorism and policing of Black Americans, as well as addressing the oversight of anti-Blackness within the terrorism literature, I use a case study of the Black Liberation Army (BLA), an offshoot of the more well-known Black Panther Party (BPP). Though long a target of more routine police surveillance and brutality, the BLA also came to be viewed as a terrorist entity during a period where older understandings of terrorism as a revolutionary activity met domestic desires to keep people of colour positioned as second-class citizens. This narration of the BLA as terrorists was recalled in 2013 when one of the BLA's most wellknown members, Assata Shakur, became the first woman on the FBI's Most Wanted Terrorist List due to a crime she had allegedly committed 40 years earlier. I show that the firm situation of

the BLA under the “terrorist” umbrella – a process that Dixit (2016) calls “terroristisation” – stretches back to the late 1960s. In doing so, I underscore the continuum of anti-Blackness within U.S. domestic counterterrorism policy that both encourages racism against other suspect communities and the positioning of nonOthered communities – namely, white people – outside the bounds of terrorism. Bringing the study of anti-Blackness explicitly into work on terrorism in the United States underscores, further, critical terrorism studies’ (CTS) peripheral engagement with racism as constitutive of the entire enterprise of counterterrorism.

). In addition to this, it consists of an essay titled "De Franco 2022," which makes an implicit attempt to view "Europe" via the lens of Area Studies. As a result, the article de-exoticizes and de-orientalizes the underlying meaning of Area Studies. One of the goals of this study is to provide a complementary comparative view on different types of political contestation, security policies, and types of threats that exist in various regions of the world.

In order to prepare the reader for the various contributions that will follow, the purpose of this introduction is to give the primary justification for the Special Issue as well as the theoretical starting points. In point of fact, we begin by first introducing the most significant sources of contention within the field of international studies, and we continue by investigating the implications of the aforementioned dialectics in terms of methodology, pedagogy, as well as policy-relevant considerations. However, we also provide an in-depth assessment of the interaction between the two disciplinary traditions as scholarly disciplines by focusing on brokers of debate and presenting data on academic collaboration through top ranked journals and main international conferences<sup>4</sup>. In addition to this, we provide an in-depth analysis of the interaction between the two disciplinary traditions as scholarly disciplines.

In point of fact, despite the fact that requests for linking these two disciplinary disciplines have resulted in a variety of dynamics and inputs, we still know very little in quantitative terms about the shapes and formats of this dialectic.

Last but not least, we bring the introduction to a close by providing a summary of the Special Issue and putting an emphasis on the expectations and the value added by each item.

## **Conclusion**

What what is meant by the term "counterterrorism," and how exactly can methods of counterterrorism get accepted as legitimate forms of necessary targeted violence? This article has shown how anti-Blackness is a fundamental part of the domestic counterterrorism apparatus in the United States, as well as how the racial ordering of American society permeates not only policing, but all sections of the security apparatus as a whole. Law enforcement and emerging counterterrorism interests co-constituted each other during the 1970s and 1980s, as seen in the case of the Black Liberation Army. This perpetuated a system in which black criminality is presumed and sometimes escalated to perceptions of black terrorism, all while justifying the forceful repression of black communities.

Anti-Blackness still plays a role in the domestic counterterrorism techniques that are used today. Despite the fact that it only existed for a brief period of time, the Black Liberation Army continues to have a key position in modern understandings of left-wing violence that is labelled "terrorist." Establishing a through line from 20th-century understandings of Black liberation movements to 21st-century positionings of Black activists as terrorists, the FBI identified the Black Liberation Army (BLA) retroactively as a Black Identity Extremists (BIE) group in 2017. This was done as part of the construction of the threat of "Black Identity Extremists" (BIE) in 2017. (FBI, Domestic Terrorism Analysis Unit 2017). These positionings strengthen institutions of white supremacy within the United States' counterterrorism apparatus, maintaining an intergroup hierarchy in which the state's repression of communities of colour is not just durable but also regular. More than just shedding light on the inherently racist nature of counterterrorism, illuminating the historical role of anti-Blackness in the United States' counterterrorism apparatus accomplishes a great deal more.

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