

# **The Apparent Demise of Grand Theory: Relative Gains or the Discipline is What We Make Of It**

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## Abstract:

There has been much debate as of late about trends in the field of IR: that grand theory is fading away as hypothesis testing is now dominating the publications and the profession OR IR remains too abstract. These arguments are based on rather thin evidence, so this paper seeks to test these hypotheses about the state of the field. I rely on three sets of TRIP-related data: the TRIP Journal Article Database, the TRIP Surveys of Scholars, and citation data collected by Dan Maliniak and his team. These datasets can be helpful in pursuing four distinct angles to address these questions: what is being published, how do scholars see themselves and the field, what is being cited, and what is being taught. The overall findings suggest that there is more IR than before, so that it really depends on whether one is a Realist or not. If one focuses on relative gains, then Grand Theory is in a bit of trouble as it is a bit less prevalent than before. If one focuses on absolute gains, then there is no problem for grand theorists as the rise in non-paradigmatic work has not really reduced how much Grand Theory work that is being done. The trends in identification and teaching also suggest that Grand Theory is not going away. The paper concludes with some caveats about the data and the approach taken here.

In recent months, we have had a series of claims made about the nature of IR work today. Most visibly, John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt (2013) disseminated a working paper that made a key claim: there is not enough grand IR theory.<sup>1</sup> They argued that grand theory is in decline, that too much work was on hypothesis testing, and that this was bad for IR. Robert Galluci (2012) essentially asserted the opposite: that there is too much abstract theory with little or less attention to “whether these models can be used to understand real-world situations.”<sup>2</sup> The basic assertions about the avowed trends are not really based on any data about the kind of work that is published or cited these days. Thus, we need to consider these arguments because they reflect larger concerns about the state of IR and even its relevance beyond the academy, something that is especially important at a time where politicians are threatening the public funding of social science.

The intent of this paper is to ascertain whether these trends are actually happening—is the field moving towards more abstract or less abstract? Using TRIP datasets, I hope to assess the state of play in IR and whether there are any trends. To be clear, there are more than a few questionable assertions in this debate—that hypothesis testing is devoid of theory and so on.<sup>3</sup> The primary objective here is not to address those concerns, but to examine what scholars are actually publishing, citing and teaching. My initial guess was actually that M&W are overwrought—that middle range theory has always been a significant portion of the work in the field and remains and that grand theory has not gone away nor diminished much in terms of what people are doing.

In this paper, I will first discuss the competing claims and why they are important. I will then present both trends over time and the existing patterns of work, of perceptions, of citation, and of teaching to assess where the field stands now and how it has evolved over the past decade or more. I will then conclude with the implications for IR work and for the policy world.

## The Demise of Grand Theory?

Mearsheimer and Walt assert “the amount of serious attention IR scholars in the United States pay to theory is declining and seems likely to drop further in the years ahead” despite citing TRIP work that shows a tremendous drop-off in atheoretic work (p. 3). They find this problematic because theory is the “lodestone” of the field. Yet their paper does not really document changes in the use of theory, especially grand theory, but instead focuses on the proportion of work that is quantitative. This is, of course, strange since quantitative work, just like qualitative work, can be informed by theory or not informed by theory. In any case, the paper does cite some TRIP data, but does not really explore the datasets in any way that might actually and perhaps ironically test their hypotheses.

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<sup>1</sup> John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, “Leaving Theory Behind: Why Hypothesis Testing Has Become Bad For IR,” HKS Faculty Research Working Paper RW13-001, January 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Galluci, “How Scholars Can Improve International Relations,” *Chronicle of Higher Education*, November 26, 2012. [http://chronicle.com/article/How-Scholars-Can-Improve/135898/?cid=wb&utm\\_source=wb&utm\\_medium=en](http://chronicle.com/article/How-Scholars-Can-Improve/135898/?cid=wb&utm_source=wb&utm_medium=en), accessed April 17, 2013.

<sup>3</sup> I address those claims elsewhere. For my take on Gallucci, see here <http://opencanada.org/features/blogs/roundtable/the-academic-policy-divide/>. For my post on M&W, see here: <http://saideman.blogspot.ca/2013/01/leaving-grand-theorists-behind.html>.

While Gallucci makes some good points about how academics focus most of their effort on talking to each other than to the policy world, he makes more questionable assertions about what scholars, such as those in IR, are actually doing. He argues that “Rather than concentrating on a grand theory that explains everything, scholars could help policy makers by providing ways to assess whether their policies are working in real time.”<sup>4</sup> So, Gallucci is essentially arguing that M&W are wrong, that there is too much grand theory and not enough work that is focused less on paradigms and more on problems. Alas, like M&W, Gallucci provides no evidence to back up his claims.

This debate, however ill-founded, is important as these individuals are quite influential. Mearsheimer and Walt are two of the biggest names in the discipline; they influence the admissions and output of two prominent graduate programs; they sit on editorial boards of major journals; and write letters influencing the promotion and tenure of scholars around the world.<sup>5</sup> Gallucci is the President of the MacArthur Foundation and used to run Georgetown’s School of Foreign Service, so he is greatly influential in the policy community and among those who fund research. So, we need to take seriously their claims, even more so when Congress is seriously questioning the public funding of scientific research, especially that of political science. The argument that scholars are engaged in arcane debates that do not speak to today’s problems is an old one, so it needs to be considered. The claim that there is too little grand theory must also be addressed, as it may affect not just funding but the agendas of the next generation of graduate students. For instance, those seeking to play moneyball<sup>6</sup> and do what is under-valued might be tempted to do grand theory for the sake of being more marketable only to find that there is no shortage of grand theorists.

## Testing Hypotheses About Hypothesis Testing

To ascertain whether the grand theorists are correctly lamenting their demise or are utterly wrong, as Gallucci avers, I use the various TRIP datasets to assess the claims as they apply to publishing, perceptions, citation and teaching. Besides the big question of grand theory versus everything else, I will also add a variety of potential complementary claims that can be tested in order to maximize the potential observable implications of whatever trends that might be occurring. The article will start by considering what is and has been published, relying on the *TRIP Journal Article Database*.<sup>7</sup> The second section will address what scholars value as measured by the various questions in the *TRIP Surveys of Scholars*.<sup>8</sup> The third section will consider what scholars are citing as an additional way to consider whether grand theory is valued today compared to the past.<sup>9</sup> Finally, to figure out the trends down the road, we need to assess what is being taught now.<sup>10</sup> So, I will rely on the *TRIP Surveys of Scholars* to determine whether grand theory is dropping out of the curriculum or not. Together, these sections should provide

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<sup>4</sup> Gallucci, “How Scholars Can Improve ....”

<sup>5</sup> The last is an informed guess.

<sup>6</sup> (Lewis 2011)

<sup>7</sup> Available via the TRIP project at the College of William and Mary: <https://data.itpir.wm.edu/unity/trip2013/data/>

<sup>8</sup> Available via the TRIP project at the College of William and Mary. This section in part replicates and extends some of the findings in (Maliniak et al. 2011)

See here for a list of the related publications <https://data.itpir.wm.edu/unity/trip2013/publications/>

<sup>9</sup> Dan Maliniak generously shared his dataset on cumulative citations. See Daniel Maliniak, Ryan Powers, and Barbara Walter, “The Gender Citation Gap in International Relations,” *International Organization* (forthcoming).

<sup>10</sup> Again, this section builds on Maliniak et al (2011).

enough pieces to figure out the puzzle—is grand theory fading away or are grand theorists actually ignorant of the realities of our discipline?

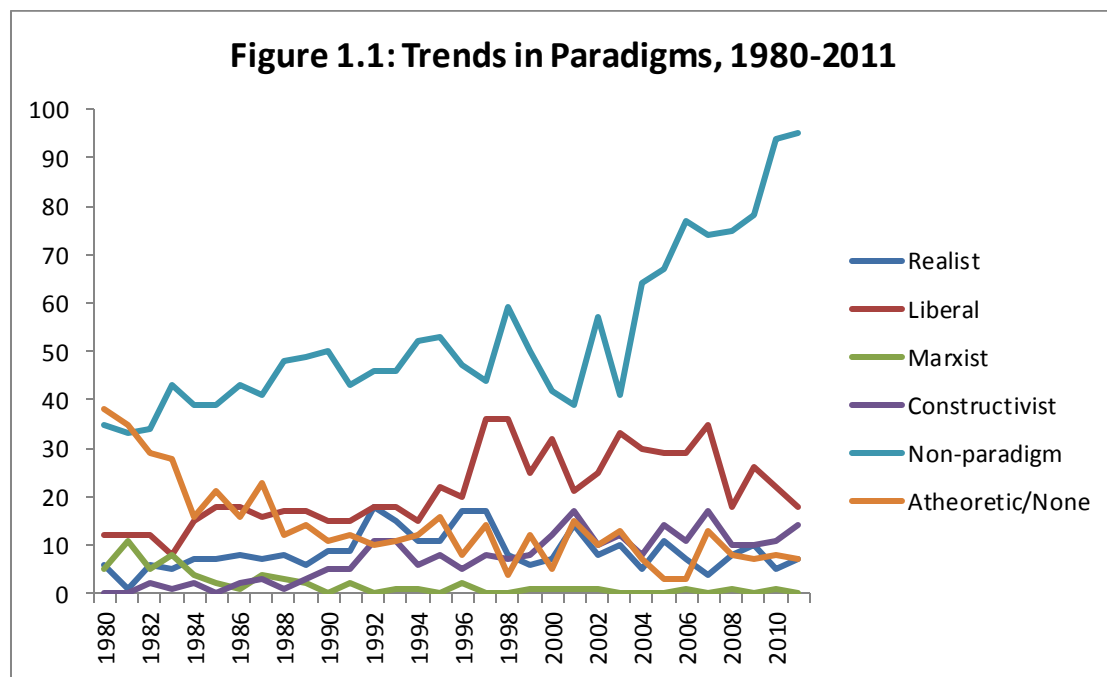
### 1. *What IR Scholars Are Publishing*<sup>11</sup>

The basic hypotheses emerge quite straightforwardly from M&W and Galluci:

H1a: There is less grand theory than there used to be.

H1b: There is more grand theory than there used to be.

The challenge, of course, is figuring out what grand theory is and is not. The TRIP Journal Article Database contains information about 3,391 articles published in twelve major journals between 1980 and 2011.<sup>12</sup> A key variable is *Paradigm*, which codes each article by which major school best applies: Realist, Liberal, Marxist, or Constructivist. Other values include Non-paradigmatic or Atheoretic/None. “Paradigms are defined primarily by their core assumptions and secondarily by the independent variables they emphasize (TRIP JAD Codebook, p. 3).” If the article represents a synthesis, the Paradigm that gets more prominent is the one that is coded. Figure 1.1 presents the trends in Paradigms in articles in major journals over thirty years:



The most obvious trend here is that there has been quite a growth in non-paradigm work over the past ten years or so. This does not really tell us whether there is less grand theory, only that there

<sup>11</sup> The focus here is on articles and not books. While it might be the case that the trends in books are significantly different than the trends in articles, it is not clear why this would be the case. Still, this is an important caveat to keep in mind.

<sup>12</sup> The journals are: American Journal of Political Science, Journal of Politics, World Politics, International Studies Quarterly, Journal of Conflict Resolution, American Political Science Review, International Security, International Organization, British Journal of Political Science, European Journal of International Relations, Security Studies and Journal of Peace Research. One may quibble about what is included or excluded as this is a fairly American-centric set of journals (BJPS, EJIR, JPR as the only European-based journals), but given that the contenders in this debate are focused on American IR trends, this should not be problematic. See the Codebook and User’s Guide for TRIP Journal Article Database, April 2013.

is **more work that is not grand theory**. The other lines in Figure 1.1 do not go down in a way to suggest that Paradigms are becoming obsolete. If we collapse the categories, so that the paradigms are all coded as Grand Theory (*grandp* in the dataset I have revised) and non-paradigm and atheoretical/none are put into another category, we get the trends displayed in Figure 1.2

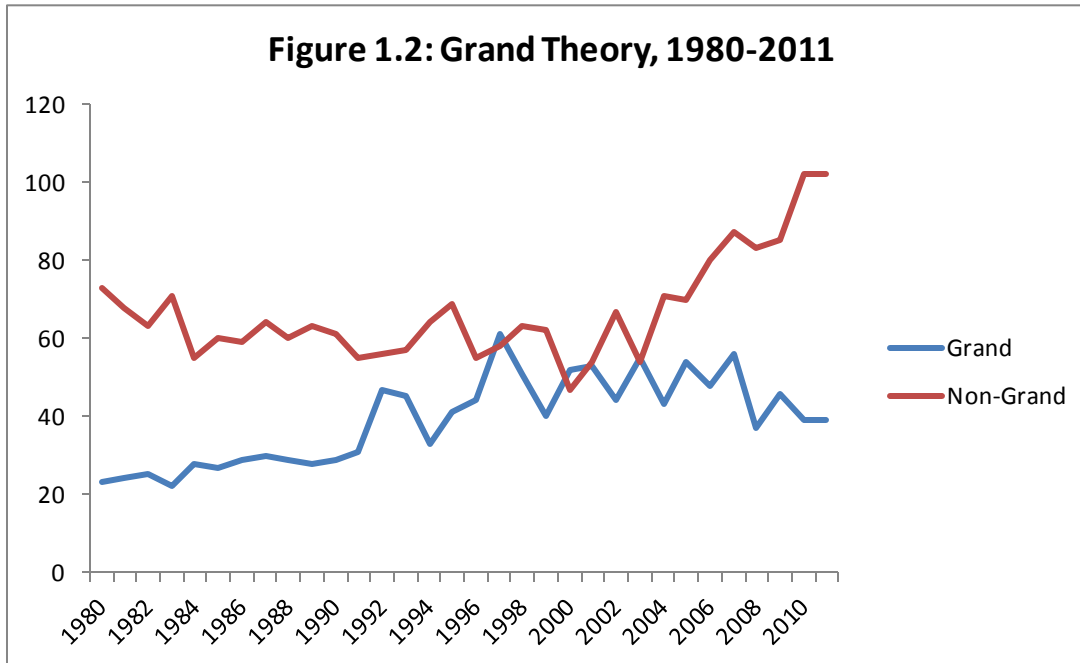


Figure 1.2 shows that the real trend is there has been a **growth in non-paradigm research** published in major journals but not necessarily a major decline in grand theory. For the past few years the number of articles containing grand theoretical work remain above the levels of 1980s and early and mid 1990s. While there may be less grand theory the past few years, this is hardly a dramatic decline: the mean for 2006-2011 is 44, below the means for the previous two five year periods but above the means before 1996.<sup>13</sup>

**Table 1.1 Mean Grand Theory Articles, 1980-2011.**

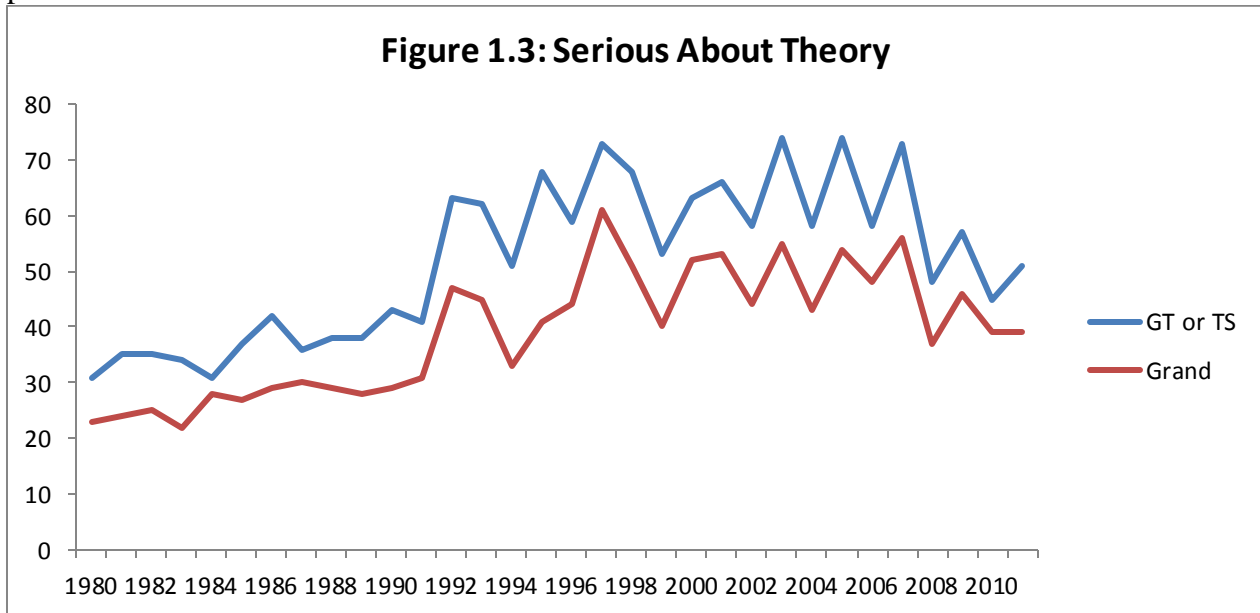
1980-1985	24.8
1985-1990	29.0
1991-1995	39.4
1996-2000	49.6
2001-2005	50.2
2006-2011	44.2

What these trends really demonstrates that there has been a **net gain in the number of articles published in IR** and most of those new article spots have gone to non-grand theory. So, given the 1990's debate between Realists and Liberals about relative versus absolute gains (Baldwin 1993; Grieco 1988; Powell 1991), it is ironic that grand theory may have encountered a relative loss but not very much of an absolute loss. Mearsheimer and Walt, as realists, are

<sup>13</sup> The decade means show that grand theory is more prevalent in the 2000's (46.7) than in the 1990s (44.5) or 1980s (26.7).

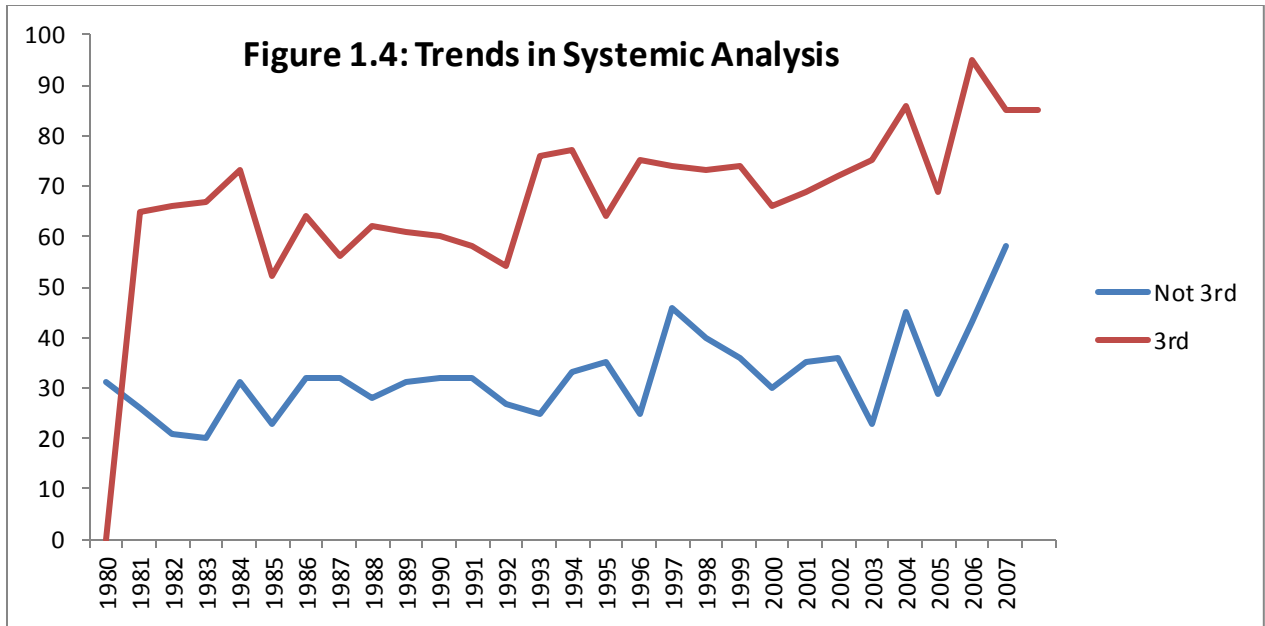
consistent in caring about the relative losses, but in terms of scholarship, Grand Theory is hardly dying out.

Before moving on, we should consider articles that may not fit within a paradigm but still engage Grand Theory. The dataset includes information about whether an article takes a paradigm seriously perhaps as an alternative argument. I created a dummy variable measuring whether any of the Paradigms were taken seriously (*TheoryTS*) and then created a new dummy that would be one if an article either was coded as fitting into one paradigm or took a paradigm seriously (*grand1*). The results in Figure 1.3 show that there was not much variation in the time frame in terms of taking theory seriously with grand theory directly or indirectly being as frequently important in articles in the 2000s as in the early 1990s and certainly more so than prior to the end of the Cold War.



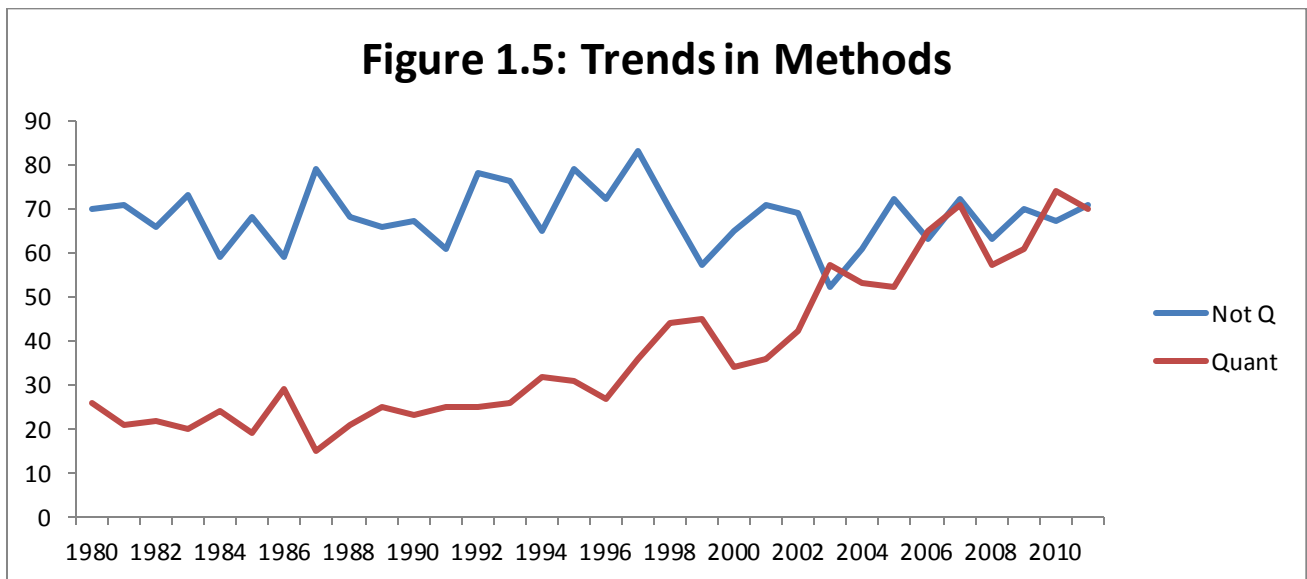
A different way to think about grand theory is to focus on levels of analysis rather than on paradigms. While grand theory need not be at the systemic level of analysis, this is how some may tend to think about it. We tend to consider Neo-Realism as grand theory but neo-classical realism not so much (Lobell et al. 2009), Liberal Institutionalism (Keohane 2001; Keohane 2005) but not Democratic peace theory (Russett 1993), Wendt's constructivism (Wendt 1999) and so on. So, we can examine whether work at the third level of analysis has trended up or down. The variable *Level of Analysis\_3* is a dichotomous variable indicating whether a work has independent and/or dependent variables at the systemic level of analysis (see codebook, p. 11). Figure 1.4 displays the trends in work at the third level versus all other work.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> The variable was coded differently after 2007 so we only consider 1980 to 2007 in Figure 1.4.



Again, while there are swings from year to year, most work seems to have considerable attention paid to systemic level variables. There seems to be growth in both 3<sup>rd</sup> level analyses and those that are not at that level throughout the 2000's.

Mearsheimer and Walt tend to conflate quantitative work with non-grand theory, as they see statistical work as being more likely to be "mere" hypothesis testing. So, we can consider trends in methodology: is there more quantitative work?



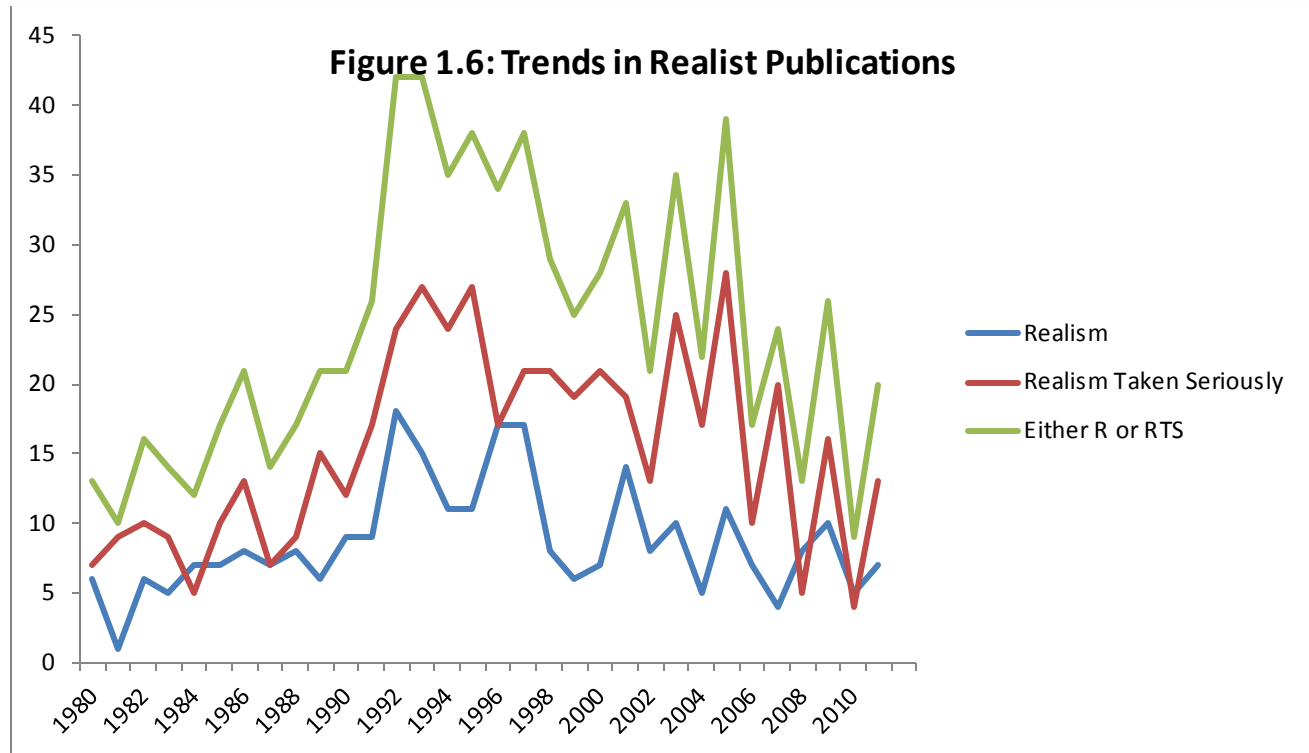
Once again, the answer is mixed: there is more quantitative work but not less work by other methodologies. There is a steady rise in quantitative work, but, surprisingly, this means that quantitative work has only reached a rough parity with non-quantitative work the past couple of years. This is hardly a trend of quantitative work wiping out its competitors. Indeed, Table

1.2 indicates that that non-quantitative work has remained largely the same—about 68 articles per year from the early 1980s to the end of the 2000s.

**Table 1.2 Means of Methods, 1980-2011.**

	Quant	Non Quant
Mean 1980-1985	22.0	67.8
Mean 1985-1990	22.6	67.8
Mean 1991-1995	27.8	71.8
Mean 1996-2000	37.2	69.4
Mean 2001-2005	48.0	65.0
Mean 2006-2011	66.3	67.7

Perhaps the complaint is not so much about the relevance of grand theory but the “right kind” of grand theory which would be Realism. Given that Mearsheimer and Walt not only represent two distinct versions of Realism but are very much self-identified defenders of the faith paradigm, perhaps they think there is less grand theory today because scholars are taking Realism less seriously.



Now we are onto something. As Figure 1.6 illustrates, articles that are avowedly Realist or take seriously Realism boomed in the 1990s and after the invasion of Iraq but have declined since then. Realist works are averaging the same output now as they did before the end of the Cold war. Ironically, Mearsheimer was wrong to predict that we might miss the Cold war—the immediate post-Cold War was a boom time for Realism (Mearsheimer 1990). Alas, scholars are



engaging realism less frequently now than any time since the Reagan administration. So, the complaint that there is less Grand Theory may be a product of cognitive biases: Mearsheimer and Walt see less Realism and infer that there is less Grand Theory. One could ponder why there are less Realist articles these days given that there has been no shortage of war. Given that conflict is supposed to be the relative strength of Realism, its decline is rather puzzling.

Before moving on to consider how people identify themselves and how they perceive the literature by switching to another dataset, we ought to consider the correlates of Grand Theory. That is, what factors might be associated with an increased or decreased the probability of an article taking Grand Theory seriously. Does the year of publication decrease the probability of a Grand Theory article being published in a major IR outlet? Thus far, we have looked at trends, which can only tell us so much. We could look at bivariate correlations, but given that enough space has been dedicated her to descriptive statistics, it makes sense to move onto multivariate analyses.

In the analyses below, I consider the year of publication, the type of journal, the type of method, and the characteristics of the authors to assess what is associated with grand theory or grand theory taken seriously. The dependent variable in the first three columns in Table 1.3 are dichotomous, so I ran logit and report the odds ratios, which means that numbers over 1 can be read as positive and numbers less than one are negative. Thus, each year increases the chances of an article focusing on a grand theory by two percent—that Mearsheimer and Walt are wrong as grand theory is becoming slightly more likely rather than less, once we control for other factors The funny thing is that the journals in which they have the greatest influence, *International Security* and *Security Studies*, are associated with a significantly lower probability of grand theory appearing or being taken seriously—about forty percent less.

**Table 1.3: Multivariate Analyses of IR Articles**

Variable	Grand	Grand Or TS	Realism
<b>Grand Theory</b>			
<b>Year</b>	1.02***	1.02***	0.99
<b>Big3</b>	1.04	1.07	1.09
<b>Security (IS/SS)</b>	.62***	.58***	4.51***
<b>American Journal</b>	1.37**	1.25**	1.17
<b>Quant Methods</b>	.68***	.60***	1.01
<b>Rank of Author</b>	1.01	1.09**	1.04
<b>Gender</b>	.84*	.74**	.47**
<b>constant</b>	1.02e -15	5.97E-14	730391.4
<b>N</b>	3391	3391	3391
<b>Lr Chi2</b>	49340	82.05	160.07
<b>Prob &gt; chi<sup>2</sup></b>	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
<b>Pseudo R<sup>2</sup></b>	0.0111	0.0175	0.0832

\* = p < .1, \*\* = p < .05, \*\*\* = p < .01

American journals were more likely to contain IR articles with grand theory. The big ones that matter most to Americanists—APSR, AJPS, JOP—are not as hostile to grand theory as one may have guessed with no real relationship. M&W are correct in their perception that quantitative work is less likely to contain a grand theoretical claim or take grand theory seriously. So, if there is more quantitative work, as the trends indicate, then there will appear to be less work that is grand theory, at least relatively. Gender does seem to matter as well, as women are fifteen percent less likely to make a paradigmatic argument.

Again, the M&W lament may be more about the apparent demise of Realism, so I ran a separate analysis with a dependent variable of whether article was Realist (dummy variable created from Paradigm). Here, we find only two significant variables: that the *International Security* and *Security Studies* are four and half times more likely to contain avowedly Realist articles and that women are about half as likely to put forth a Realist argument.<sup>15</sup>

To be sure, none of these analyses capture much of the variation (note the low pseudo  $R^2$ 's). Still, it is clear from these results that Grand Theory is not on the decline in articles published in the major journals. From this section, what we know is that there are more IR articles, that qualitative work and grand theory have not really lost in any absolute sense but the new article spaces do seem to be going to non-paradigmatic work and to quantitative work. The tent is getting bigger, but the old folks are not being kicked out of the circus quite yet.

## **2. What Do IR Scholars Perceive**

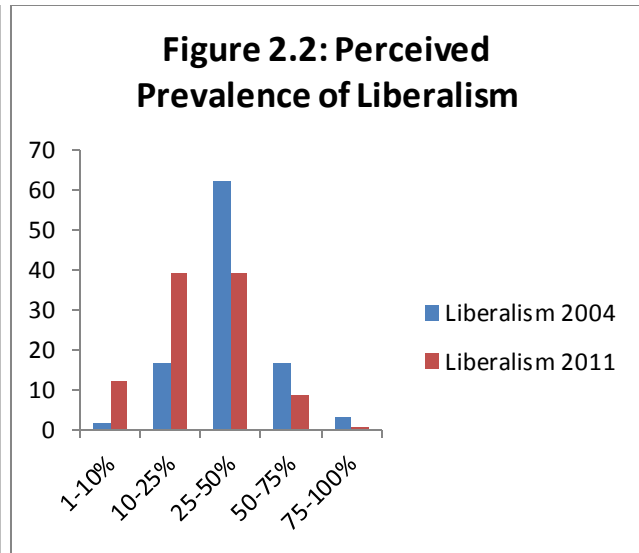
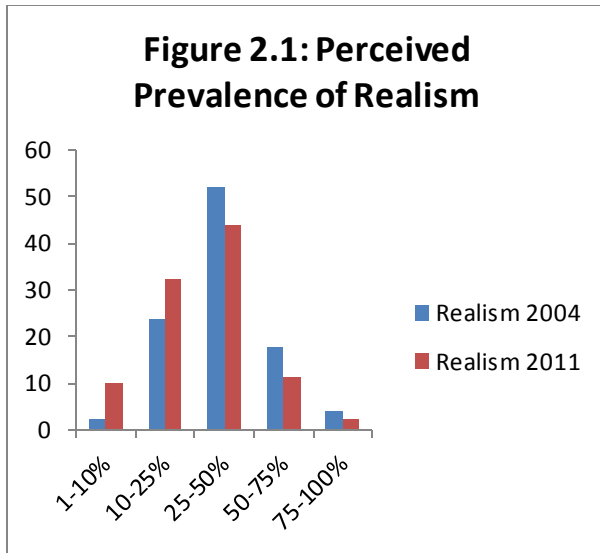
Of course, perception and reality are often two different things (Jervis 1976), and arguments about perceived realities may ultimately shape what people do. TRIP has conducted a series of surveys of IR scholars in the U.S. and around the world, the *TRIP Surveys of Scholars*, which will help us to determine how IR scholars see themselves and see the field. I will be focusing on two sets of surveys—the first one in 2004 and the most recent one in 2011—to assess where things stand now and how they have changed (or not).<sup>16</sup>

Despite the content of articles as reported in Figure 1.1, scholars today perceive that Realism is the most prevalent paradigm and the three most prominent paradigms are perceived to be in many if not most articles, as Figures 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3 illustrate. The question here is: “What percentage of IR literature do you estimate is devoted to each of these paradigms today?”

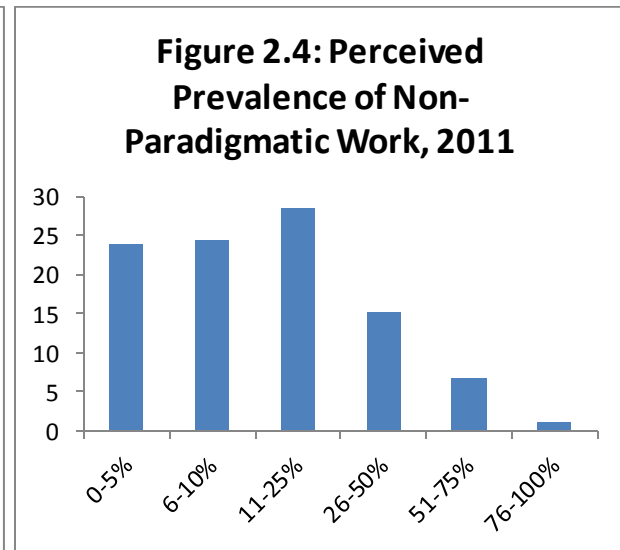
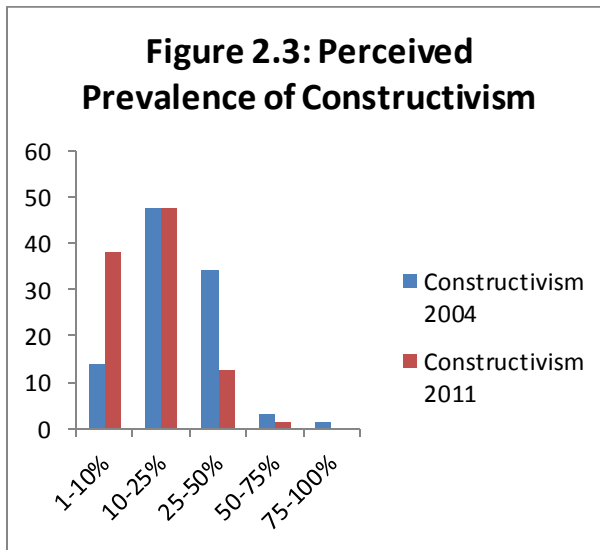
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<sup>15</sup> This might explain their lament about the demise of the Old Boys Network (Mearsheimer and Walt 2013, 39).

<sup>16</sup> I only use the US data in 2011 to keep the results comparable to the 2004 dataset.



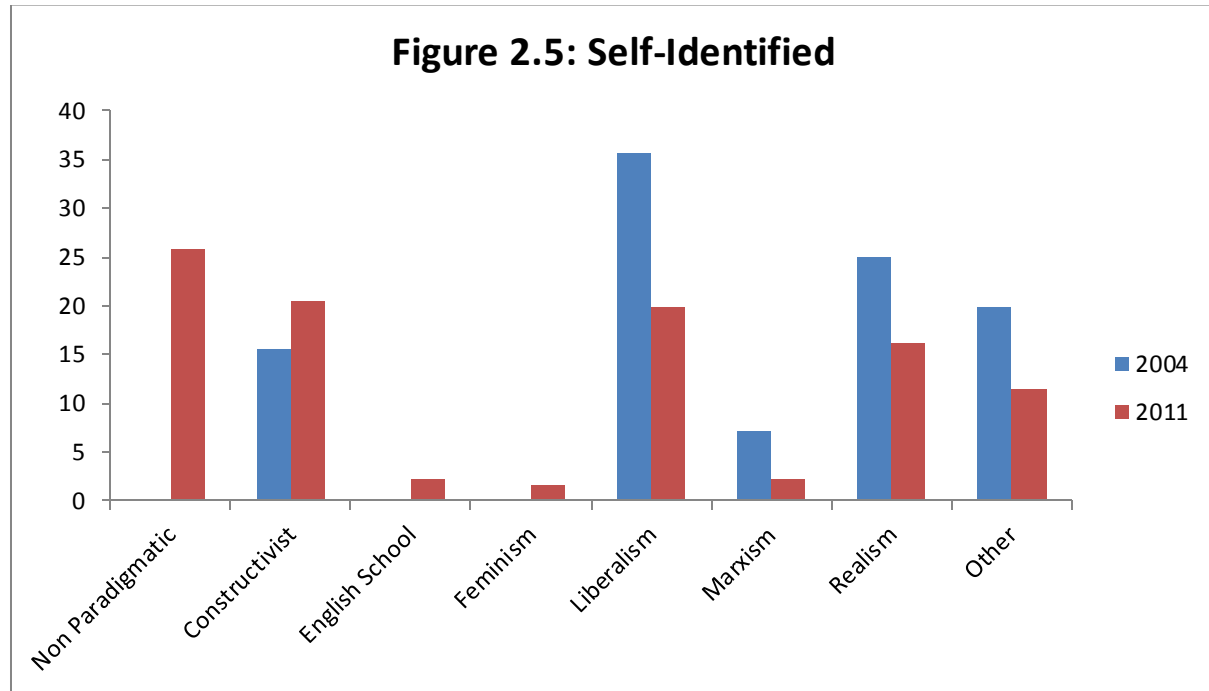
Figures 2.1-2.4 show that most scholars think that the three major approaches are still quite prevalent. In 2011, nearly fifty-seven percent of surveyed scholars based in the U.S. considered more than a quarter of the IR literature to be devoted to Realism. This is down from 2004 where seventy-three percent of the scholars believed that more than a quarter of the literature was devoted to IR. Figure 2.1 illustrates that Realism is no longer seen as quite as prevalent even if the majority of scholars still consider the work widely published. Figure 2.2 indicates that Liberalism took a greater hit as it went from the leading position in the field to second place behind realism. Surprisingly it was not due to an increase in the perceived prevalence of constructivism, which actually declined as Figure 2.3 indicates.



Overall, Figures 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 suggest that scholars, other than M&W, do not think that Grand Theory has gone away, but they also do not seem to be thinking there is much more of it. Unfortunately, we do not have comparable 2004 for Non-Paradigmatic. Still, most scholars think that non-paradigmatic work is not very prevalent with more than seventy-six percent

thinking that non-paradigmatic scholarship is in twenty-five percent or less of the literature. Given the earlier set of figures, this demonstrates most strongly that perceptions have not caught up to the reality.

Of course, one key factor shaping perceptions of the field is how people see themselves. The 2004 and 2011 surveys asked scholars under which label do they see themselves. Figure 2.5 shows the results:



Unfortunately, the 2004 survey did not have categories for non-paradigmatic, English School or Feminism, so we cannot be sure that more people identified under those labels. To be clear, in 2011, about a quarter of the field saw themselves as doing work that was not within any of the major schools AND was not seen as “Other”. In the intervening years, Liberals lost almost half of their relative size. Constructivists grew despite many perceiving that there was less constructivist work in the latter period. Realists also declined relatively. Again, the trends indicate that Grand Theory is not disappearing but that there is much work that does not fit within that category.

To determine what might be shaping these trends, I turn to some modest multivariate analyses. What influences perceptions of the prevalence of any particular approach to International Relations? Taking the available data from the 2004 and 2011 Trip Surveys, I focus on a few variables: self-identification with a paradigm; whether one self-identifies as a positivist, whether one uses quantitative methods and for the 2004 analyses when they first started teaching IR and their perception of the paradigms in the previous decade. Table 2.1 presents the resulting ordered logits as the dependent variables were ordinal—perceptions of increasing prevalence of a paradigm.

**Table 2.1: Multivariate Analyses of Perceived Prevalence**

Variable	Realism 2004	Liberal 2004	Con 2004	Realism 2011	Liberal 2011	Con 2011	Non-Paradigm 2011
Realist	.45**			.46**			
Liberal		.54**			.59**		
Constr			.43*			.46**	
Non-Parad							.82***
Epistem	-.25	-.03	.21	-.29**	-.09	-.11	.53***
Quant				-.57***	-.25*	-.69***	.61***
First Year	-.03***	.02**	.002				
1980s View	2.05***	1.93***	.77***				
Cut/1	-62.4	40.9	3.8	-4.3	-3.8	-2.9	-.36
Cut/2	-59.1	44.2	6.4	-2.5	-2.1	-.65	.80
Cut/3	-55.7	48.0	9.1	-.57	.06	1.7	2.2
Cut/4	-53.3	50.6	10.2	-1.6	2.3	4.1	3.5
Cut/5				3.5	4.8		5.6
N	470	470	464	970	954	959	813
LR chi2	202.80	152.92	41.51	38.16	18.82	44.73	79.86
Prob > chi2	.0000	.0000	.0000	.0000	.0003	.0000	.0000
Pseudo chi2	.1822	.1581	.0391	.0147	.0077	.0193	.0314

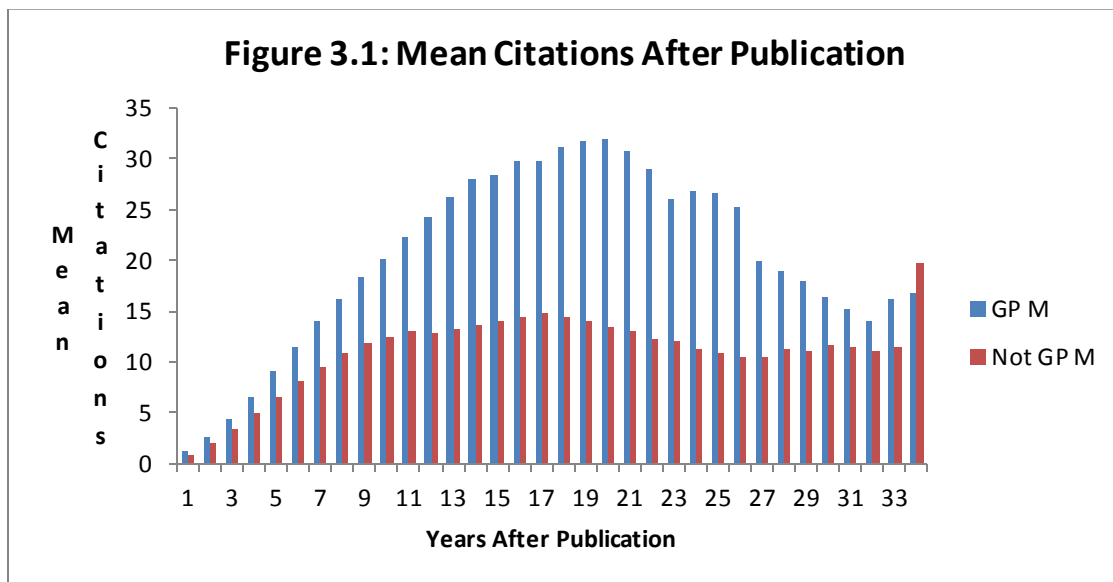
\* =  $p < .1$ , \*\* =  $p < .05$ , \*\*\* =  $p < .01$

The most obvious pattern is **that scholars will tend to perceive that their approach is more prevalent**, making M&W are atypical realists. Realists tend to see more of their own, Liberals tend to see their approach as being more prevalent, and the same for Constructivists. Positivists and quantitative people do see non-paradigmatic work as more prevalent. Younger folks in the 2004 survey were less likely to see Realism as prevalent but more likely to see Liberalism as prevalent. Finally, whatever people saw in the 1980s tended to shape what they saw in the next time frame: those seeing more realism earlier tended to see more realism later and so on.

If perception is reality, then Realists and other grand theorists do not have that much to worry about. Scholars tend to believe that much work today still is in the realm of Grand Theory. There are cognitive biases, as Realists see Realism as more prevalent and so on, but combined with the first sets of figures and analyses, it is pretty clear that the field is not discarding the big thinkers of the past. Of course, one way to examine that is to consider what is being cited.

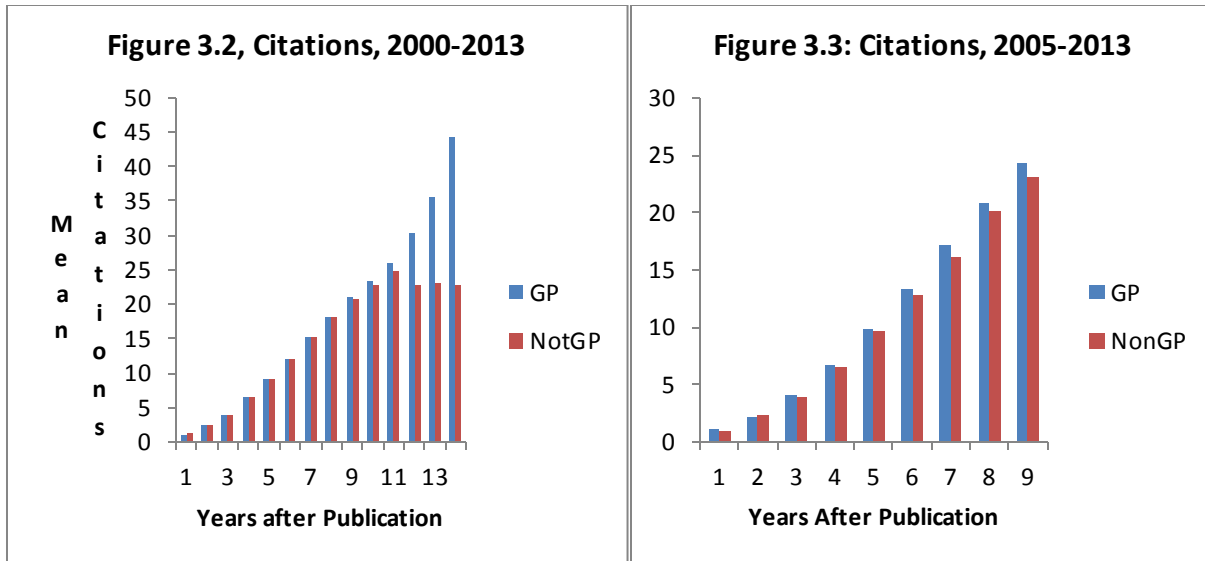
### 3. What do IR Scholars Cite?

Thus far, we have considered what IR people do and what they perceive. Patterns of citations can tell us which theories are really being engaged and have lasting value in shaping the discourse. Combining the *TRIP Journal Article Database* with data on citations provided by Dan Maliniak,<sup>17</sup> we can consider whether grand theory and non-grand theory have similar or different patterns of citation. Figure 3.1 displays the mean cumulative citations of grand theory and work that is not grand theory. The figure shows an eventual decline rather than a steady increase as many articles in the database were published in the middle or end of the timespan of the dataset. So, a very well cited piece written in 1990 will not contribute to the mean of the cumulative citations 25 years after publication yet.



The figure does demonstrate grand theory tends to be more widely cited than other kinds of work. However, this figure does not tell us about changes over time—whether grand theory’s citations are a function of the past. So, to test the M&W assertion about the most recent trends, see below Figures 3.2-3.3 which illustrate the patterns from 2000 to 2013 and then 2005-2013.

<sup>17</sup> See Maliniak, Powers and Walter, “The Gender Citation Gap in International Relations,” *International Organization* forthcoming.



One could interpret Figure 3.3 as suggesting that the gap between mean citations of recent grand theory and recent non-grand theory is narrower than in the past. However, given the patterns in the Figures 3.1-3.2, the more likely explanation is that the mean grand theory article gets more cited in the long run, and the long run has not happened yet to the most recent articles.

The next step is to try to ascertain the correlates of citation. The dependent variable will be citation count in 2011 for articles published between 1980 and 2011. Since it is nonnegative count variable where the variance is larger than the mean, I use negative binomial regression. The independent variables will be:

- Grand theory to test assertions about what shapes its citation and then Grand Theory Broadly defined to include work that takes seriously grand theory but is not actually within a particular school;
- Year of publication, to control for the general trend that older work has more time to be cited than newer work;
- Big 3, as articles in APSR, AJPS and JOP tend to get more heavily cited;
- American, as it may be the case that journals published in the U.S. may be more heavily cited;
- Security, to see if International Security and Security Studies are cited differently;
- Quant Methods, to see if quantitative work has different citation patterns;
- Positivist, to see if positivist work is more cited;
- Rank of Author (first author for co-authored work), as senior people are more likely to be cited;
- Gender (first author for co-authored work), as studies have shown that women are cited less (Maliniak, Powers, Walter forthcoming).

Table 3.1 reports the incident ratios, akin to the odds ratios in the logits reported above, of the negative binomial regressions of citations counts.

**Table 3.1: Correlates of Citation Counts**

Variable	1980-2011	2005-2011
<b>Grand Theory</b>	1.57***	.98
<b>Year</b>	.98***	.67**
<b>Big3</b>	1.39***	1.29**
<b>Security (IS/SS)</b>	.50***	.59***
<b>American Journal</b>	2.22***	1.25**
<b>Quant Methods</b>	1.14**	1.19**
<b>Rank of First Author</b>	1.11***	1.11**
<b>Gender</b>	.98	1.10
constant	2.69 e14	.
N	3175	893
Lr Chi2	453.89	425.3
Prob > chi <sup>2</sup>	.0000	.0000
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	.0180	0.0707

\* =  $p < .1$ , \*\* =  $p < .05$ , \*\*\* =  $p < .01$

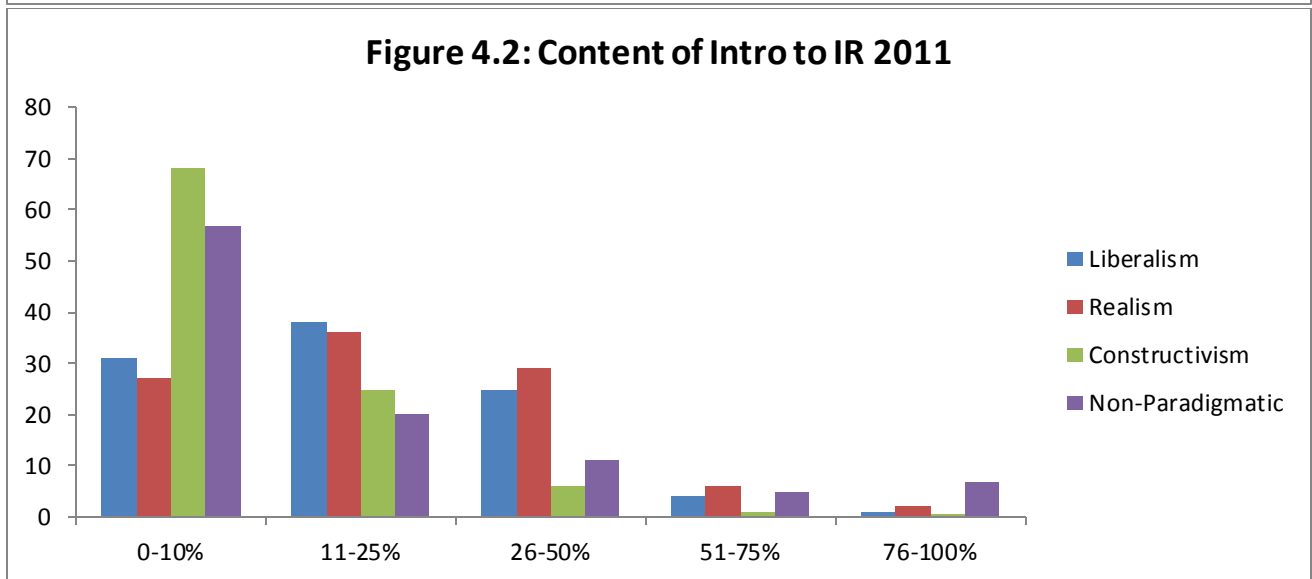
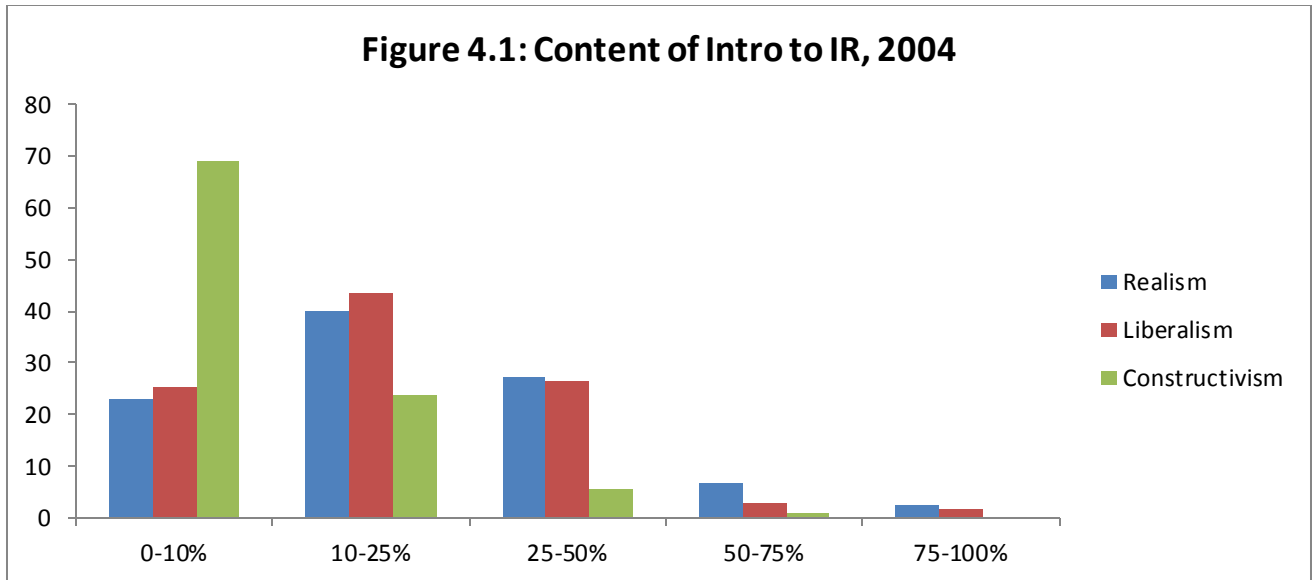
Over the entire time frame of this study, articles that are coded as grand theory have sixty percent more citations. However, grand theory articles are not significantly more cited more recently. However, given the general patterns of citation counts, we ought to expect the grand theory pieces of today to be cited more than non-grand theory pieces in ten years. Still, it may be the case that grand theory is not quite the citation-bait it used to be. Younger articles are less cited. Articles in the big three Americanist journal have thirty or more percent higher citations. Articles in International Security and Security Studies have forty to fifty percent less citations, which may feed a sense of under-appreciation by those who focus these two journals. Rank and methodology have a distinct impact, raising citation counts by ten or more percent, but gender seems not to matter significantly. Again, the amount of variation accounted for by the model is quite low. In terms of the question at hand, it seems to be the case that grand theory produces more citations although more recent trends raise some doubts.

#### **4. What do IR Scholars Teach?**

Of course, the way in which most IR scholars influence the most people is not through their research but through their teaching. Introductory classes to IR are standard and can range from scores of students to hundreds, and not just political science majors but students across the disciplines who have an interest in international relations. Over the years, a professor teaching an Intro IR class can reach thousands of students who then go on to work in governments, the media, education and other fields, so we ought to consider the trends in these classrooms, as they will ultimately shape how people view IR.

The TRIP survey asked questions about the content of classes. For this paper, the focus is on how much of the paradigms were taught in Intro to IR classes. Figure 4.1 illustrates the percentage of class dedicated to a particular approach to IR in the 2004 survey, and Figure 4.1 reports the 2011 survey's answers.

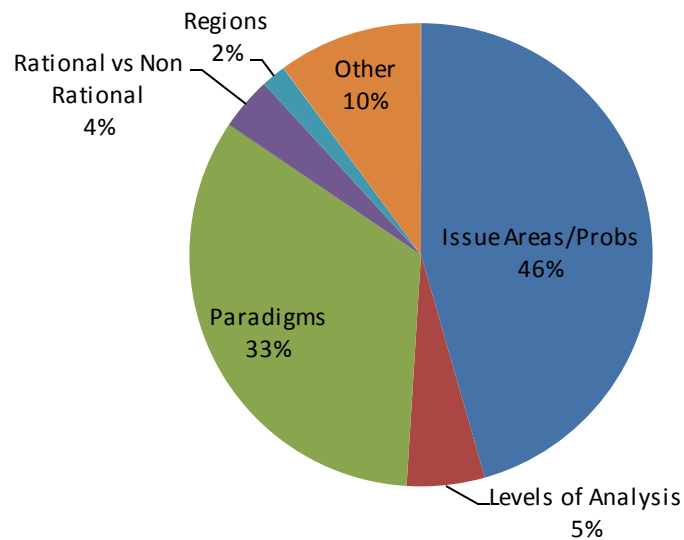




Both figures show that the main grand theoretical approaches were well represented in most Intro to IR classes taught in the U.S. in 2004 and again in 2011. Realism and Liberalism rarely made just a token showing, and in many classes, they represent a significant chunk of the material: about one third of IR classes devoted between a quarter and a half of the content to either Liberalism or Realism. Non-paradigmatic work makes up a much smaller slice of most Intro to IR syllabi. Grand theory has clearly maintained its place in the Introductory International Relations classes.

The 2011 Survey does not ask similar questions for graduate classes, but does ask how people organize their PhD level IR courses, with the results displayed in Figure 4.3.

**Figure 4.3 Approach to Teaching IR PhD Course, 2011**



One third of graduate IR classes are organized around the major paradigms, which might be less than one might have expected. However, the way the question is worded, it applies to all IR graduate classes. If one asked how one organized the IR core class, I would think we would find a different answer.

Once again, the question turns to what factors are associated with emphasizing grand theory or not. Because the 2004 and 2011 distributions are so similar, as Figures 4.1 and 4.2 illustrate, the focus here is on the more recent survey. Like the analyses in Table 2.1, the analyses in Table 4.1 take the available data to ascertain whether one's own identification and stances shape what one includes in their introductory courses (first four columns) and graduate IR courses (fifth column).

**Table 4.1: Factors Shaping the Content of IR Courses**

Variable	Realism 2011	Liberal 2011	Con 2011	Non-Paradigm 2011	Grad Course
<b>Realist</b>	1.09***				-.22
<b>Liberal</b>		1.04***			.34
<b>Constr</b>			.99***		1.54***
<b>Non-Parad</b>				.57**	-1.22**
<b>Epistem</b>	.09	.09	-.06	.08	.02
<b>Quant</b>	-.12	-.37*	-.62**	.58**	-.59**
<b>Basic vs. Applied</b>	.11*	.09	.10	-.10	
<b>Cut/1</b>	-2.28	-2.06	-.62	-.34	-.25
<b>Cut/2</b>	-.64	-.42	1.00	.38	
<b>Cut/3</b>	1.09	1.37	3.02	1.46	
<b>Cut/4</b>	3.40	3.57	4.90	2.23	
<b>Cut/5</b>	5.07	5.17	6.86	2.78	
<b>N</b>	613	616	597	406	374
<b>LR chi2</b>	37.60	38.87	57.39	21.90	39.88
<b>Prob &gt; chi2</b>	.0000	.0000	.0000	.0002	.0000
<b>Pseudo chi2</b>	.0213	.0223	.0368	.0171	.0825

\* =  $p < .1$ , \*\* =  $p < .05$ , \*\*\* =  $p < .01$

In Table 2.1, we found that people tend to see themselves in the field—realists think that realism is prevalent, liberals think that liberalism is prevalent and so on. In these analyses, we find that **IR scholars tend to teach what they think**. Realists have more realist content, Liberals have more Liberal content, Constructivists have more constructivist content, and those who view themselves as not doing paradigmatic work tend to assign work that is non-paradigmatic. To be fair, in analyses I do not report here, Liberals are more likely to have higher Realist and Constructivist content, and Realists are more likely to have more Liberal content. Thus, those positively inclined towards any of the big three paradigms are more likely to assign grand theory in greater proportion in Intro to IR classes. Among those identifying as belonging to a paradigm, Constructivists are more likely to organize their graduate courses by paradigms while non-paradigmatic scholars and quantitative scholars are more likely to use an alternative organizational scheme.

I added a variable to include one's stance on Basic versus Applied research, and found that those who lean towards more applied work tend to assign more Realist content. Scholars who tend to rely more on quantitative work are less likely to have much paradigmatic content in their undergraduate classes (although they are no more or less likely to assign Realism) and less likely to organize their graduate classes along paradigms.

Again, there is much little variance accounted for in these analyses. Still, the general pattern emerges: people tend to develop their IR courses based in what they themselves do. This is not a huge surprise. It also probably provides some additional anxiety for M&W since there are more non-paradigmatic scholars than there used to be. On the other hand, again, this is really about the tent getting bigger rather than any one approach losing badly. The next generation of IR students will still be getting heaps of grand theory while they are also likely to be exposed to more non-paradigmatic work.

## Caveats and Conclusions

To be sure, this work just scratches the surface. The analyses do not really explain much of the variance. In the next round of revisions, I plan to re-code the data collected on institutional affiliations since I think Path Dependence and Socialization may have a great deal of impact on how people think of the field and of what works they assign. To make things comparable with the 2004 datasets, I largely focus on American scholars. In the next round, I will see how much it matters to be working in the U.S. or elsewhere. We could also collect different data such as the CV's of the newly tenured to assess what is being rewarded. We could also collect article data from some of the policy-oriented journals such as *Foreign Affairs* to determine trends there. In terms of dissemination, are the blogs getting the most traffic those that fit into one paradigm, that tend to produce grand theory or those that are more focused on problem-oriented work?

Still, the data provided by the TRIP project does give us significant insights into the state of the field now. Based on the data I worked with on the articles published over the last thirty years and the TRIP surveys, we can find good news for both those who fear that grand theory is fading away and for those who are worried that there is not enough more grounded work. Mearsheimer and Walt are wrong to fear the decline of the paradigms. There is just as much grand theory being published, scholars still identify as belonging to one of the major paradigmatic approaches, and grand theory tends to be cited more than other work, and it still is quite prevalent in the classroom. Realism may be somewhat less prevalent in publications these days, but Realists still are a major part of the discipline, at least given how they identify themselves, and Realist work is very prevalent in Introductory Courses.

There is clearly good news for those who do not consider themselves as belonging to a paradigm or who argue that the "isms" are evil (Lake 2011). The trends show quite clearly that there is more non-paradigmatic work being published than ever before, that one quarter of the field describe themselves as non-paradigmatic, that non-paradigmatic work is getting cited, and such work is making it into the classroom. I have not tried to tie this kind of work to policy-oriented work (that is a paper for another day), but those concerned about work being too abstract probably have less to fear than ever.

There is simply more IR in more outlets with all kinds of work being represented. This might be bad news for those who think that pluralism in scholarly work is bad. For those who believe that there are multiple ways to think about things, that engagement across a myriad of divides—among the big paradigms, along rationalist/non-rationalist, among different methodologies, not to mention subjects—can only lead to productive confusion. We are not singing from the same song-sheet, and that is all to the good. The tensions within and between the various ways of thinking, doing and teaching IR are productive, forcing us to refine our arguments.

One may fear that one's approach to the field is not being taken seriously, but the figures and tables demonstrate quite clearly that the tent is only getting bigger and its inhabitants are somewhat more diverse. There is plenty of room inside for all of the grand theorizing, including the cranky Realists.

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