



**BRIDGING THE DISCIPLINARY GAP: UNVEILING THE EPISTEMIC  
INDIFFERENCE BETWEEN HISTORY AND INTERNATIONAL  
RELATIONS IN CHILEAN ACADEMIA BY 2023**

**PREENCHENDO A LACUNA DISCIPLINAR: DESVENDANDO A  
INDIFERENÇA EPISTÊMICA ENTRE HISTÓRIA E RELAÇÕES  
INTERNACIONAIS NA ACADEMIA CHILENA ATÉ 2023**

**CERRANDO LA BRECHA DISCIPLINARIA: DEVELANDO LA  
INDIFERENCIA EPISTÉMICA ENTRE HISTORIA Y RELACIONES  
INTERNACIONALES EN LA ACADEMIA CHILENA HACIA EL 2023**

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**ABSTRACT**

This article delves into the historical evolution of International Relations (IR) to understand its distancing from History, revealing a disciplinary divorce marked by mutual indifference. Through a scrutiny of two Chilean scientific journals, the evident epistemic gap and lack of theoretical development is highlighted, which influences the nation's foreign policy. In the same way, the development of the subdiscipline of History of International Relations (HIR) in Chile is encouraging, emerging as a bridge between disciplines. To conclude, the article questions the existence of a "Chilean School of International Relations", suggesting the presence of a distinct foreign policy style rather than a cohesive "school of thought,"

**Keywords:** International Relations; History, disciplinary divorce; History of International Relations; School of International Relations.

**RESUMEN**

Este artículo profundiza en la evolución histórica de las Relaciones Internacionales (RRII) para comprender su alejamiento de la Historia, revelando un divorcio disciplinario marcado por la indiferencia mutua. A través de un escrutinio de dos revistas científicas chilenas, se destaca la evidente brecha epistémica y la escasez de desarrollo teórico, lo que influye en la política exterior de la nación. De la misma forma, el desarrollo de la subdisciplina de Historia de las Relaciones Internacionales (HRRII) en Chile resulta alentador, surgiendo como un puente entre las disciplinas. Para concluir, el artículo cuestiona la existencia de una "Escuela Chilena de Relaciones Internacionales", sugiriendo la presencia de un estilo de política exterior característico más que una "escuela de pensamiento" consolidada.





**Palabras clave:** Relaciones Internacionales; Historia; divorcio disciplinar; Historia de las Relaciones Internacionales; Escuela de Relaciones Internacionales.

## RESUMO

Este artigo aprofunda na evolução histórica das Relações Internacionais (RRII) para compreender seu afastamento da História, revelando um divórcio disciplinar marcado por indiferença mútua. Através de uma análise de duas revistas científicas chilenas, destaca-se a evidente lacuna epistêmica e a escassez de desenvolvimento teórico, influenciando a política externa da nação. Da mesma forma, o desenvolvimento da subdisciplina de História das Relações Internacionais (HRRII) no Chile é encorajador, emergindo como uma ponte entre as disciplinas. Para concluir, o artigo questiona a existência de uma “Escola Chilena de Relações Internacionais”, sugerindo a presença de um estilo característico de política externa mais do que uma “escola de pensamento” consolidada.

**Palavras-chave:** Relações Internacionais; História, divórcio disciplinar; História das Relações Internacionais; Escola de Relações Internacionais.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

When studying international affairs, we refer to media -press, television, radio- or expert publications or try a combination of both sides, after which an intellectual dissatisfaction appears. On the one hand, we find abstract, superficial analyses without anchorage or that do not delve into the causes of the phenomena; on the other hand, we find studies that are too deep, expose a distant reality, and fail to deliver the practical implications of the events. This reflects a degree of disconnection between two disciplines that need to complement and communicate: International Relations (IR) and History.

In the academic sphere, specialists in various fields of study argue that international analysts use history in “depth” only when it allows them to generate, test, or refine a theory, while for the historian, its construction and verification are secondary. Others claim that historians describe and explain the connections of a specific event, while IR theorists formulate and verify universal theoretical propositions about the relationships between variables or types of events (Elman & Elman, 2001, p. 7; Schroeder, 1997, 64-74). This disciplinary distancing impact in diverse areas beginning in academic production, impact subsequent historical accounts and have repercussions on diplomatic practice. In this way, contemporary international events are approached through “ahistorical” visions,





which, when examined from their “distant” causes, are presented as part of broader political and social processes (Harvey, 2017, p. 48).

In this sense, analyzing Chile’s international behavior in the face of complex problems, we have evidenced -due to different external and domestic dynamics- a scarcity of immediate political debate, which led to a lack of analysis from the perspective of IR, generating a theoretical vacuum and secondary sources, conditions that over time grow and are transformed into historiographical gaps, which ends up impacting on the formulation and conduct of foreign policy without a basis on past experiences (Medina & Harvey, 2021).

The above circumstances embody a complex scenario. IR theorists need to set a dialogue with the past, examine previous processes and outcomes of international events, and pursue analogies to support their thesis. However, this material only exists occasionally, a problem for which tools from other discipline are required. Therefore, when exploring earlier international relations passages, tension manifests itself in how to analyze, from the perspective of IR, events that have not been “told” from the perspective of History. The path of this crossroads is plagued by stumbling blocks and bumps between two approaches, the historical and the theoretical, a constant contradiction between “narrating” or “analyzing”, and difficulties between “letting” or “making” the sources dialogue. This “clash” between historical events and their contemporary expression reveals the mutual necessity between the two disciplines.

Therefore, under current conditions a disciplinary encounter is unlikely to come to pass. On the contrary, as will be seen later, these difficulties will continue to arise and increase, affecting academia and foreign policy. The first step towards establishing a dialogue is to understand the problem. For this reason, we will recall the origins of the estrangement of these disciplines; then, we will review the tensions between them. We will analyze their manifestations in Chilean publications to conclude with a discussion regarding a possible Chilean School of IR.

## 2 THE CONSTANT DISTANCING: UNDERSTANDING THE GAP BETWEEN HISTORY AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS





A consensus on the origin of IR as a discipline has not been established, and it is a subject of constant academic discussion. There are four approaches, which, far from being contradictory, complement each other by reflecting the long path of this field of study. The first affirms that they began with Thucydides in his accounts of the Peloponnesian War. Another view states that it would have begun with the birth of the Nation States after the Peace of Westphalia (1648), the agreement that ended the Thirty Years' War. A third proposal points to the chair of IR at the University of Aberystwyth in Great Britain in 1919, after the end of the Great War (Lozano, 2019, p. 9-10). The last states that after Second World War it materialized into a specific discipline, with its own category which began to be systematically cultivated in faculties and research centers" (Ortiz, 2000, p. 7).

Traditionally, there have been two central theories in IR, Liberalism and Realism, which have stressed persistently from other approaches, but harsh reality force to go back to disciplinary basics, which have made them endure and establish as the foundations of the discipline. Liberalism was referred to as a "utopian" theory and, to some extent, is still recognized as such. Its advocates view human beings as innately good, professing that peace and harmony among nations are attainable and desirable. In the late 18th century, Immanuel Kant developed the idea of universal liberal values, which would eliminate the sources of conflict so that the more liberal states there were in the world, the more peaceful it would become since they were governed by their citizens, who are rarely willing to go to war (Kant, 2005).

From the foundations of Kant, liberals profess the idea of eliminating war. Practicing such ideas, Woodrow Wilson, at the end of World War I in January 1918, proposed the creation of a general association of nations, which became the League of Nations in 1920, with the mission of supervising inter-state affairs, implementing and maintaining international peace (David, 2016). However, with its collapse due to the outbreak of World War II, the facts contradicted his theories. As a result, Liberalism was overtaken, and a new perspective emerged to explain the continued presence of armed conflicts, especially the two global ones of the twentieth century. That approach became known as Realism.





Realism came into its own during World War II when it explained how and why the most widespread and deadly war in known history unfolded after a period of supposed peace (Carr, 1946). Although its name was coined in the 20th century, many realists look back to the past, to the ancient world, where similar patterns of human behavior were evident. As its name implies, proponents of Realism claim that it reflects the “reality” of the world, which would more effectively explain the vagaries of international politics.

It should be noted that Realism finds in Hans J. Morgenthau, one of its leading exponents and thinkers, who in his most representative work pointed out that this theory “resorts to historical precedents rather than abstract principles”, along with presenting a “theoretical concern for human nature as it is, and for historical processes as they have occurred, [for which] it has been called realist” (1986, p. 12).

In other words, IR, or at least its realist side, was born from historical conscience, founded on historical processes and nourished by the discipline of history. In that sense, at what point did the divorce between them occur? The answer could be found in Morgenthau himself, who endowed the theory with a predictive character in the first principle of political realism, where he established that it “assumes that politics, like all of society, obeys objective laws rooted in human nature” (1986, p. 12) that “can only emerge from the analysis of political facts [...] and of the foreseeable consequences [from which it is possible] to ascertain the objectives” of the statesman (1986, p. 13).

However, we consider that the reason for the disciplinary distancing is not based on the above but on the fact that the “six fundamental principles [of Realism] have often been misinterpreted” since Morgenthau constantly reinforces the idea of an “imperfect and partial” theory (1986, p. 12), that its mode of validation “must be empirical and pragmatic before being aprioristic and abstract [less through] concepts detached from reality [for which] a double system of verification must be found” (1986, p. 11). Likewise, he warns against pompous elaborations in IR, pointing out that “novelty is not necessarily a virtue [so that, when faced with] something completely new [it is necessary] a precaution against it rather than a favorable prejudice regarding its soundness [and it must be submitted] to the double test of reason and experience” (1986, p. 12).

It is crucial to quote Morgenthau directly since only from him could one assimilate his most categorical vision when thinking about IR: “To discard a theory simply because





it flourished several centuries ago means incurring in a modern prejudice that takes for granted the superiority of the present over the past. Likewise, exhuming a theory for reasons of fashion or extravagance implies recognizing that in politics, we can have opinions but not truths” (1986, p. 12).

Then, we return to our question about the separation of IR and history. To tell the truth, although it may seem paradoxical, historical processes have separated the waters of the international sea. Indeed, this phenomenon can be understood from the logic and dynamics of the international events of the 20th century. Out of the blue, reality forced a transition from an analysis based on historical awareness to a concern for understanding current circumstances and their repercussions through creating and experimenting with various methods and analytical tools (Pereira, 2001). With this, the discipline gradually matured and acquired an autonomous scientific position. However, as this desired effect occurred, a distancing from History and a historical consciousness began to develop.

In this sense, we consider that the Second World War ended up cracking the relationship between these disciplines since once it was over, Europe turned its efforts to understand how, in less than a century, it had become the scene of two world wars. In this way, a new historical approach began to crystallize, which, through its institutionalization and academic socialization, gained a place in the social sciences. Mainly, through the work and the academic and intellectual task of Renouvin and Duroselle (2000), outlined and conceptualized based on the notion of “underlying forces”, which would cement the content and contours of the History of International Relations (Pereira, 2001, p. 11).

The United States, on the other hand, was shaping a discipline based on academic concerns to avoid the dramas produced during the first half of the 20th century, together with visualizing a future within a framework of international coexistence that would guarantee peace based on the values of Liberalism (Pereira, 2001, p. 15). In the same way, it is appropriate to remember that, overnight, it found itself dominating -at least- half of the world, facing an adversary that tried to dispute its authority, a scenario that was read in a military key -considering that the Secretary of State, between 1947 and 1949, was General Marshall and the influence of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in foreign policy- whose logic imposes to anticipate the opponent’s maneuvers (Yarmolinsky, 1971, pp. 110-133).





The picture we have proposed to reveal in these lines, attached with the consolidation of Political Science -and its influence on international studies, its evolution, and theoretical and methodological approaches- ended up divorcing History and IR, deviating their paths in the study of similar interactions and phenomena.

### 3 CONFLICTING PERSPECTIVES: UNRAVELING TENSIONS AT THE CROSSROADS OF HISTORY AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

As we have explained, from the disciplinary strangeness, IR specialists resort to the immediate past as a way of proving or disproving their hypotheses and look back to “deep” history or the distant past to the extent that they consider it relevant to the research objectives and allows them to generate, test or refine theory. For historians, constructing and testing theoretical proposals are secondary since understanding past events is essential. From Antonio Niño’s point of view, the above means that:

Institutional collaboration is practically non-existent, and personal collaboration is exceptional. Even more serious: this scarce communication often turns into an explicit disdain for the work of the other. It is not uncommon to find historians who take pleasure in highlighting the failure of political scientists to come up with theories capable of foreseeing events, or who pour sarcastic comments on the ambitious generalizations of theorists (Niño, 2001, p. 137).

This simple description of facts reflects a “divergent epistemology”, a clear division of the fields of action of each discipline when analyzing the same “object”, which we will point out as the “main tension”, to which we add various “secondary tensions”, such as:

- Methodology: a focus on secondary versus primary sources.
- Objectives: Identification of regularities, patterns of behavior, schemes of analysis, mechanisms, and continuities versus the rescue of events and phenomena.
- Orientation: nomothetic versus ideographic.
- Approach to the problem: analytical versus temporo/spatial.

As we have pointed out, this divorce transcends the planning and conduct of foreign policy. However, we perceive that neither the academy nor the Chilean “decision makers”





have glimpsed this epistemological crossroads, nor its practical “descent,” which has a series of explanations, ranging from the development of national IR, the lack of historical perspective, to the disconnection between the real world and the academy.

This problem is not recent; it was first seen within the American academic community in the seventies of the last century. It materialized in the form of criticism of researchers on international issues; given the complexity of identifying works that complemented those approaches, the dichotomy generated was problematized, noting that while some “seek the construction of theory, they are relatively disconnected with the real application of their work”, others are “mainly concerned with the political implications of the theoretical work of others” (Young, 1977, p. 5).

Years later, the appeal was directed to theorists and historians when analyzing the management of international crises. It was pointed out that the former generally lose perspective of time by ignoring events, discarding sources of evidence -concentrating mainly on US experiences- renouncing depth and variety, and avoiding complex historical facts in favor of abstract models. While the latter are reluctant to explore observable behavior patterns, examine the immediate past or assimilate the nomenclature and analytical concepts of theorists (Lauren, 1979, p. 542).

The important thing is that we still have time to join the debate, as this dilemma continues to this day, as stated by US Ambassador William J. Burns, emphasizing the need for historical knowledge to recompose the “art” of his country’s diplomacy, pointing out that the members of the State Department “are early warning radars” to anticipate problems and opportunities, as well as to build and restore relationships. These tasks require a nuanced understanding of history and culture. He also argues that a new emphasis on the craft and rediscovering diplomatic history is needed to sharpen negotiating skills and make the lessons of successful and unsuccessful negotiations available to diplomats (Burns, 2019, p. 104).

Now, from the point of view of history, John Lewis Gaddis visualizes the same complexity when reflecting on his “Politics and Strategy” classes, both at the U.S. Naval War Academy and at Yale University, where a large part of his methodology is based on the analysis of historical case studies. Thus, he wonders how to take advantage of the “intellectual capital” accumulated by great leaders, concluding that academics have a







responsibility to shape the thinking of students and that “a gap has opened up between the study of history and the construction of theory, [disciplines] which are needed if the means are to be aligned with the ends [in the elaboration of a ‘grand strategy’],” This distance is generated because historians, knowing their field rewards specialized research, “tend to avoid generalizations,” representing the primary input for generating theories. On the other hand, Theorists, predisposed to be considered social “scientists,” seek “reproducibility” in their results, simplifying the phenomena’ complexities in pursuit of a predictive capacity. This causes “both communities deny the ‘relations’ between ‘the general and the particular,’ between ‘universal and local knowledge,’ which cultivates strategic thinking.” (2018, p. 23).

## 4 PUBLICATION DIVIDES: A CLOSER LOOK AT TWO CHILEAN ACADEMIC JOURNALS

As mentioned above, this debate -or the identification of this detachment- still needs to be positioned in the Chilean academy. Therefore, it is convenient to briefly review the two leading national publications from Political Science and IR that have established doctrine in their respective disciplines<sup>1</sup>. We will also consider the latest advances in the History of International Relations (HIR), a historiographical line in which we visualize a substantial contribution to disciplinary distension. Our starting point will be previous balances since we intend to expose a reality employing a representative sample, not to record the totality of the published works. This task would represent an ambitious effort, different from the object of these lines.

### *a. Revista de Ciencia Política (RCP)*

Professor Claudia Heiss elaborated a complete exploration of the development of Political Science as an independent discipline in Chile in 2015, where she pointed out that

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<sup>1</sup> It is not intended to detract from other publications that contribute to the development of political science and international relations.





the theoretical approaches of this discipline in the period we are dealing with were almost exclusively focused on the analysis of “the breakdown of democracy, democratization processes, authoritarian enclaves or the relationship between civilians and the military” (p. 49), from what -understandably- we infer resulted in a disinterest in international affairs to benefit domestic political processes, although with a vital comparative component.

This apathy towards international issues is because IR did not form a part of Political Science at the Pontifical Catholic University but was only included for institutional reasons. Therefore, it was marginalized because it was considered methodologically unsophisticated.<sup>2</sup> In terms of academic production, this is still the case, as reflected in the topics presented in the *Revista de Ciencia Política* (RCP), a triannual publication of the Institute of Political Science of this university, which promotes knowledge of the different areas of this discipline: political theory, comparative politics, international relations, research methodology and public policy. However, this definition as an academic showcase is not in line with its contribution to the IR.

In figures, from 2015 to 2023, this prestigious publication has edited 25 issues, totaling 216 articles, of which 11 (5.1%) have been devoted to the analysis of international issues, considering 3 (1.39%) contributing to IR theory (T)<sup>3</sup>, 6 (2.78%) to describe diplomatic practices and foreign policies (D), and 2 (0.93%) developed in historical logic (HIR). In contrast, 205 (94.9%) have studied domestic political processes (Dom.) -of Chile and other countries in the region-, which could be grouped into intra-state power relations, electoral processes at all levels, state of democracies, transparency and corruption; party systems; religion and politics; constitutional foundations and processes; gender issues and human rights; and lately issues concerning the covid pandemic.

Table 1. RCP publications between 2015 and 2023.

T	D	HIR	Dom.	TOTAL
3	6	2	205	216
1.39%	2.78%	0.93%	94.9%	100%

Source: own elaboration.

<sup>2</sup> Commentary by Dr. Carsten Schulz, Editor of the RCP.

<sup>3</sup> This category considered articles that: 1) generate theoretical or conceptual constructs, 2) challenge existing theories, or 3) establish patterns that lay the foundation for future theories.





**b. Revista Estudios Internacionales (REI)**

Narrowing the analysis, precisely as it concerns the discipline of IR, we refer to the first and most representative showcase for Chilean international knowledge, the *Revista Estudios Internacionales* (REI) of the Institute of International Studies of the University of Chile, which -uninterruptedly since 1967- has devoted its pages to works in this discipline, from a multidisciplinary approach, mainly from the political, legal, economic and historical perspectives.

Following equivalent reasoning to that applied in the case of the RCP, the academic production of REI, from 2015 to 2023, has generated 98 articles distributed in 16 issues. Taking into consideration that the vast majority of them contribute to the understanding of international affairs (91.8%), it was necessary to make a more detailed subdivision regarding the focus of each work, which we classified into four categories: theoretical (T), descriptive (D), from the HIR and on domestic policy issues without impact on the IR (Dom.).

Table 2. REI publications between 2015 and 2023.

T	D	HRRII	Dom.	TOTAL
23	104	14	18	159
<b>14.47%</b>	<b>65.41%</b>	<b>8.8%</b>	<b>11.32%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: own elaboration.

The data presented have different readings. However, we understand that the main one lies in confirming the separation on which we have problematized. It also clearly shows an undesired conclusion, which we will discuss later, that reflects that IR in Chile has been unable to take off or show significant development in the last eight years.

**5 BRIDGING THE DISCIPLINARY GAP: THE HISTORY OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AS A UNIFYING FORCE**





We consider it pertinent to point out that this section was not included in the original version of the article, which was previously presented in an academic workshop<sup>4</sup>, where Dr. Mauricio Rubilar started a discussion about the role of the HIR in the attempts to build bridges between the disciplines of History and IR. In a specific historiographic line, we will briefly review some of the primary authors of this subdiscipline from Chile.

Considering that in 2012, the first balance on the development, authors and most relevant topics of this subdiscipline in Chile was elaborated, which exposes in detail the national “state of the art.” We believe the necessity to complete and update its path since then, specifically in what we consider a “historiographical turn.” Considering that when this portrayal was set up, it was assessed that the national HIR was coming out of a period of lethargy, allowing its rediscovery, which was mainly due to “political changes and international reinsertion that occurred in Chile from 1989 [although this failed] to fully explain the interest aroused by the study of this subdiscipline” (Medina, 2012, p. 184).

From our point of view, the above was explained from another global event, moderately simultaneous with the end of the military government in Chile, together with the attempts of the following administration to reinsert the country in the international context; we refer to the fall of the Berlin Wall (1989). In 2012, what Medina assessed as an embryonic “influence of the historiography of the Cold War” (p. 185), today manifests itself as a solid and robust “corpus” of the Chilean subdiscipline, cemented on the scaffolding of the contributions made by Olga Ulianova and Joaquín Fernandois, among others.

Indeed, after the end of the Cold War, history -from different approaches- has recognized the need to analyze it through the prism of local conflicts developed in the “periphery”, so its narrative has acquired a more comprehensive interpretative range, breaking the barriers of the analysis and historiographies dominated by the superpowers (Del Arenal, 2014; Gilbert & Spencer, 2008). This historiographic awakening has enabled to analyze the conflict from the perspective of countries considered secondary, path began with Odd Westad’s work (1992, 2000, 2005), which complemented by the massive

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<sup>4</sup> Workshop “Chilean foreign policy in the transition to democracy,” November 19, 2019. Fondecyt Regular Project N° 1170184 “History of Chile’s international relations. The Honecker case. International tensions and internal conflicts in the post-Cold War. Chile 1988-1994.”





declassification of archives in the US and the Soviet Union, allowed to revisit the events, along with contributing to the “historical revisionism” initiated in the US academy, gradually irradiating towards Latin America and achieving virtuous effects in the Chilean sphere (Hogeboom, 1970; De Mussy, 2007, p. 29).

In this way, Chile has developed a perspective that shows a country -participant and autonomous- facing a world policy since its republican origin (Fermendois, 2009, p. 39). Consequently, if we look back and reinterpret the effectiveness and modality of the interventionist practices of the powers, we will see that they failed to consistently achieve their goals by modifying the tendencies of internal political developments (Ulianova, 2009, p. 255). Confirming that our country was a “field of forces [difficult to mold] by the will of the great powers, in case they wanted to be puppeteers”, but society itself and its internal forces that were compelled during the Cold War (Fermendois, 1998, p. 151). That is to say that the efforts -political, economic, military- deployed from Washington (Fermendois, 2005, p. 301) or Moscow (Ulianova, 1998, pp. 113-148), would not come to alter -in a significant way- the Chilean political dynamics themselves.

It also should be remarked that once Medina’s account was concluded, Ulianova (2014, 2017) and Fermendois (2016, 2018, 2024) continued contributing to the development of the subdiscipline, the former until her early death and the latter until the present, which has been an incentive for researchers who have delved into Chile’s behavior in that turbulent second half of the twentieth century.

As a result of this virtuous momentum, there has been a particular interest in delving into early post-Cold War issues, which coincides with the end of the Chilean dictatorship and the beginning of the first democratic elected government in 17 years, and its need to reinsert Chile into the international community.

The principal authors can be grouped into lines of research and periods as follows:

Table 3. Principal HIR authors on Chile in the Cold War and early post-Cold War (2012-2023).

AUTHOR	GENERAL LINE OF RESEARCH	PERIOD
Fernando Estenssoro	Environmental debate in world politics	Entire Cold War
Alfredo Riquelme	Local - global linkages	
César Ross	Chile - Asia relations	
Iván Witker	Chile - East Germany relations	





AUTHOR	GENERAL LINE OF RESEARCH		PERIOD
Alejandro San Francisco	History of Chile - Political history of copper		
Cristián Medina	Chile - USSR Relations		1944
Ángel Soto	Government of González	Political history of copper	1946-1952
Cristián Garay	Videla		
Juan Mendoza	Chile - Bolivia and Peru relations		
Raffaele Nocera	Italian-Chilean Christian Democrats relations		1960-1973
Hugo Harvey-Valdés	U.S. foreign policy - ALPRO		
Javier Castro			
Froilán Ramos	ALPRO - Chilean and Venezuelan military thought		1961-1970
Fernando Purcell	ALPRO and Peace Corps		
Erna Ulloa	Chile in the UN Security Council		1962
Sebastián Hurtado-Torres	Government of Frei M. - Military governments in Latam		1964-1970
Rafael Pedemonte	Cuban influence in Latin America - Latin American political thought		
Antonia Fonck	United States foreign policy towards Chile		1970-1973
Gustavo Gajardo	Chile - East Germany Relations		1971-1993
Cristián Medina	Chile - East Germany Relations		1988-1994
Hugo Harvey-Valdés	Honecker affaire		1991-1992
Alessandro Santoni	Chilean-European left-wing connections		1973-1991

Source: own elaboration.

Nevertheless, the large number of works related to the Cold War period is not a sign of the culmination of the subject; on the contrary, there are still documents to be discovered that will reveal unexplored events, new approaches to the past, and new aspects to be analyzed.

Returning to the initial question, HIR reduces the disciplinary gap mentioned since the “underlying forces” it analyzes and the logic under which it articulates them (Renouvin & Duroselle, 2000, pp. 9-10), represent a “tailor-made” input for IR and the best language for establishing dialogues. Nevertheless, HIR remains a subdiscipline of History.

## 6. MAPPING THE LANDSCAPE: UNRAVELING THE DEBATE ON THE CHILEAN SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS





As we have stated, disciplinary remoteness materializes in several areas. It begins in the academy; then the historiographic work is hampered, then we lack the inputs to generate our theory, we adopt foreign models, and finally, diplomatic practice and the management of foreign policy are shaped by “ahistorical” approaches.

Now, we consider that in a certain way, the leaders and advisors have avoided addressing foreign policy issues from a vision closer to history since they would inevitably move towards a realistic view, which is associated with a conception of international relations based on the struggle of powers, so it is more “politically correct” to adopt a discourse towards the future, to speak of integration paths, open regionalism and a set of optimistic unifying concepts that in times of crisis have been strained. However, both approaches are compatible and complementary, requiring external management based on a solid theoretical foundation, our own reality, history, and prestige to gradually shape a Chilean School of IR.

In this sense, we disagree with Heine and Aguirre on the existence of a Chilean School of IR, born during -what they call- the “Concertacionista Republic”, where the tendency was for “the Chancellor and at least part of his immediate collaborators and the heads of key missions to be specialists in international relations” (2019, p. 190). According to Joseph Tulchin:

It represents the conscious and deliberate adaptation of external knowledge to the study of foreign policy in a Latin American nation. And, when they take positions in the new government, it becomes the deliberate adoption of very specific ways of thinking to the formulation and execution of Chilean foreign policy and strategic doctrine (2010, p. 436).

Indeed, of the nine foreign ministers between 1990 and 2018, four have been political scientists and three of them specialists in IR, a trend that has allowed a successful global integration, an unprecedented trade exchange and position Chile in the international concert, as a result of “the close interweaving between theory and practice that has occurred in the country’s foreign relations from 1990 onwards” (Heine & Aguirre, 2019, p. 168).

It is undeniable that the imprint exerted by former Foreign Ministers José Miguel Insulza, Juan Gabriel Valdés, Ignacio Walker and Heraldo Muñoz contributed to Chile’s current strategic bearing, which was based on a combination of international academic prestige, contact networks -in high spheres and diverse areas-, study and analysis of diverse international dynamics, internal structures and decision-making processes, and





putting their intellectual baggage into practice. Likewise, the achievements of political scientists and internationalists who made their knowledge available to the country, materializing and facilitating foreign policy from Chilean embassies abroad, are tangible (Heine & Aguirre, 2019, p. 188).

However, the precedents do not manage to “make a school” but rather reflect a professional and cultural performance style with a specific manner of conducting foreign policy, undoubtedly solidly based on theory and, in many cases, thriving (Durán, 2009; Álvarez & Ovando, 2020). Of course, the same diplomatic practice has shown some missteps, especially with our neighboring countries, during the same period. In this line, although we do not agree completely, it is pertinent to refer to Witker’s analysis carried out in 2005, in which he evidenced:

a chronic tendency to make uncritical imports of paradigms and theoretical bodies [resulting in the] quasi-absence of an epistemic community independent of political power, acting as a critical mass (p 51).

Following Heine and Aguirre, who rescue Pierre Bourdieu’s concepts for the conformation of a “theory of practice”, what Witker stated is in line with the logic and apprehensions of this French sociologist regarding the adoption of foreign postulates:

The fact that texts circulate without their context, that they do not bring with them the field of production of which they are a product, and the fact that the addressees, who are in a different field of production, reinterpret the texts according to the structure of the field of reception, are facts that generate some formidable misunderstandings and that can have good or bad consequences (Bourdieu, 1999, p. 221).

## Practice or Theory: The Essence of a School of International Relations

As indicated above, we assume that reasoning about the existence of a School of IR requires us to dwell on an ontological problem, asking ourselves what we understand by “School,” For this purpose, we believe that it is appropriate to inquire into how a School of IR is conceived in other more developed theoretical contexts, which leads us to the “English School of IR”, which is understood as:







[...] a school of thought, constituting the main current in the study of International Relations in Britain, united by general similarities of disposition, initiated by C. A. W. Manning and followed by Alan James, F. S. Northedge and Hedley Bull. There are a considerable number of teachers and students who were influenced directly or indirectly by the teaching of these four scholars (Linklater & Suganami, 2006, p. 13).

For his part, Wilson, citing a series of published articles, evidences an acceptance among IR scholars of a group of writers who should be recognized as a distinct school of thought called the English School (1989, p. 49). However, for Murray, there must be a methodological framework to test the principles of the School and whether its recent literature adheres to the basic assumptions of its creators, without which there would only be a discourse on international society, institutions, and law, without a coherent and organized school of thought (2013, p. 69).

Without entering into the discussion as to whether the English School of IR deserves to be called by that name, the fact is that when referring to this approach to international reality, reference is made to a “school of thought”, which leads us to reflect on what is meant by “thought”, in this case, “international thought.” Nonetheless, at this point a problem arises with the Spanish language, because the term *pensamiento* refers to “thought” and “thinking” at the same time.

In this sense, after an analysis of the concept of “international thought”, we can affirm that it needs to be clearly defined; since there is only a general understanding of what it considers, and even those publications titled with this term do not manage to delineate it and diffusely present its contours. Thus, to reach a common understanding, we must differentiate *pensamiento* in abstract from *pensamiento* as the action of thinking to “distinguish rigorously between what belongs to the field of psychology and logic” (Ferrater, 1970, p. 279).

The dictionary of the Royal Academy of Spanish (RAS) gives four meanings for *pensamiento*: (1) faculty or capacity to think; (2) action and effect of thinking; (3) activity of thinking; and (4) set of ideas proper to a person, a group or an era. These could be grouped into two categories, one related to *pensamiento* as the “action of thinking” in a psychological field in the formation of a judgment, in the words of John Dewey, a “reflection” (1998, p. 8) and a second with a connotation of *pensamiento* as a product of





the act of thinking, being this action performed by individual or collective entities (Mira & López, 1966, p. 19).

For Karl Popper, thought is knowledge, and in his search for an objective theory of knowledge, he distinguished between knowledge in the subjective sense and objective knowledge, the latter being a set of problems, theories, and arguments (1962, p. 345). Similarly, he established an analogy between production and product to understand better this separation. Production would be subjective knowledge, and product would be objective knowledge (Rojas, 2001, p. 101). The philosopher Gottlob Frege follows the same logic since he understands by thought not the subjective act of thinking but the objective content, “one thing is the act of thinking and another what is thought, the content of thought” (González, 2000, p. 90).

From the above, we visualize a dual character in what is understood by *pensamiento* in Spanish and consequently in Chile. However, from an epistemological approach, a product is entailed. Therefore, considering the meanings of *pensamiento* given by the RAS, and line them together with its scientific application and the differentiation of concepts made in English, we could consider that when speaking of *pensamiento* within a discipline, we refer to “thought” as a “set of ideas or notable sentences of a person or group, product of the act of thinking, which generate an objective knowledge, which considers a set of problems, theories and arguments,”

Returning to our discussion on the presence of a “Chilean School of IR” that is a “school of thought”, we could affirm that there is no such school. Considering also that Tulchin, in order to justify its existence, refers to an adaptation of “external knowledge”, which becomes a “deliberate adoption” of concrete forms of “thinking” (2010, p. 436), we consider that there is a “Chilean praxis” in the materialization of foreign policy.

We believe this discussion is directly related to Bernal-Meza’s evidence that when contrasting ideas, values or principles with the praxis of foreign policy there are great divergences and contradictions between formulation and application (2015, p. 21). In his own words:

“there is no epistemic-academic community [in Chile] that has formulated its own theoretical-methodological frameworks and analytical categories [which means that] the great tradition of thought has not given rise to a systematized school of thought” (p. 22).





Without a doubt the existence of a “Chilean School of IR” deserves further reflection and discussion. However, we believe that whether to establish or to consolidate it, in terms of elaborating “Chilean theoretical constructs” that facilitate the understanding of the complex international vicissitudes and support decision-making processes, it is necessary to follow what Heine and Aguirre indicate:

[...] to analyze IR [in light of] the performances of the actors who conduct them, that is, their conduct, which is something different from their beliefs and/or discourses. These practices, in turn, reflect certain regularities over time, and can be carried out competently or incompetently (2019, p. 170).

In this sense, considering that Chile’s international success has been based -to a great extent- on the experience and academic production of the responsible actors, who have corroborated or refuted the most varied theses empirically, we need their significant contributions to be crowned by crystallizing their “diplomatic lessons learned” into native “theories of practice” that will make Chilean IR take off.

This again guides us to the need for the IR to turn to History in order to establish those “performances”, “behaviors,” or “regularities over time”, to analyze the “long tradition of statesmen-thinkers in international matters, who have made significant contributions” (Heine & Aguirre, 2019, p. 170) for the benefit of achieving a higher stage in Chile’s IR.

## 5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

]In delving into the intricate relationship between History and International Relations (IR), our exploration has brought to light a profound epistemological distance resulting from the growing gap between these fundamental disciplines. This divide, notably impactful on Chile’s foreign policy, necessitates a concerted effort to address, understand, and ultimately bridge these disparities.

Tracing the historical evolution of IR, we discerned its roots embedded in History. Despite a shared ancestry, the trajectories of these disciplines have diverged, creating a regrettable divorce marked by mutual indifference. Our analysis of Chile’s academic landscape further underscores this separation, revealing a clear manifestation of





disciplinary boundaries and an underdeveloped IR theoretical framework tailored to the nation's unique challenges. However, we discovered encouraging signs. The subdiscipline of History of International Relations (HIR) emerged as a unifying force, offering fertile ground for convergence between IR and History.

Engaging in self-critique, we provocatively questioned the existence of a "Chilean School of IR," suggesting the presence of a distinct foreign policy style rather than a cohesive "school of thought", recognizing the need for future debates on this evolving concept.

The metaphorical bridges connecting these disciplinary shores find their stability in the deep foundations of HIR. It becomes evident that HIR serves as an interpreter, bridging the gap between IR and History, facilitating a shared dialogue that transcends the solid walls erected in the national academic context.

Finally, as we heed Gaddis' call to respect the boundaries between disciplines, we see an opportune moment to transform solid walls into dynamic bridges (2004, p. 104). The potential for theoretical development lies within the interpretative prowess of HIR, presenting a promising leap towards a synthesis that harmonizes the distinctions between IR and History in the national context.

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