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Exoticism, Erasure, and Complex Peripherality: Ukrainian IR in Global Disciplinary Space

Abstract: Despite Ukraine's heightened salience since 2022, its International Relations (IR) discipline remains largely absent from debates on "national IR." This article asks why Ukrainian IR attracts so little attention and argues that self-reflexive IR structures visibility around the benchmark of cultural-civilizational exoticity, i.e., a criterion that marginalizes the Ukrainian case. To address the latter issue, the article develops the concept of "complex peripherality," offering a more fine-grained account of how such marginalization is produced within self-reflexive discourse. Framing Ukrainian IR through this lens not only explains the scale of its neglect more fully but also identifies it as a critical case for advancing the "third-wave" sociology of IR. Finally, the article sketches a research agenda for engaging Ukrainian IR as a wartime discipline, focusing on communication practices, career trajectories, curricular adaptation, bibliometric shifts, and transnational scholarly exchanges under conditions of external shock.

Key words: epistemic asymmetries, epistemic marginalization, CEE, IR in Ukraine, sociology of IR, Russo-Ukrainian War

Introduction

The discipline of International Relations (IR) has witnessed a marked rise in self-reflexive scholarship. The body of respective work ranges from large-*n* bibliometric analyses of leading journals (Maliniak, Peterson, Powers, Tierney, 2018) to studies on critical southern pedagogy (Tripathi, 2021) and classroom reflexivity (Wemheuer-Vogelaar et al., 2020). A specific substrand of this literature addresses the socio-epistemic biases embedded in the discipline's ideational and theoretical landscape (Sondarjee, 2023).

Within this (self-)reflexive turn, the study of national IR disciplines has a long pedigree, dating back to Hoffmann's (1977) reflections on the "Americanness" of IR, and subsequent examinations of scholarly communication patterns within the field (Holsti, 1985; Wæver, 1998). The most comprehensive, and by now almost classical, consolidation of this tradition is found in Wæver and Tickner's (2009) global survey of IR scholarship. Since then, research has increasingly scrutinized the variance of IR's disciplinarity across various national cases, however, Ukraine's IR remains conspicuously absent from this global conversation. Aside from a handful of domestic studies (Byk, 2013; Kopyyka, 2013; Krapivin, Todorov, 2013; Kruhlashov, 2013) and a single "invited" TRIP-survey replication available internationally (Koval, Gomza, 2019), the Ukrainian discipline has

received little systematic attention. This absence is particularly striking given Ukraine's elevated international profile following Russia's full-scale invasion in 2022.

This article argues that Ukrainian IR's omission from the "national disciplines" conversation is neither accidental nor benign. In our view, the disparity between Ukraine's current international visibility and its marginal position within self-reflexive IR debates is rooted less in "domestic" shortcomings, such as weak institutional foundations or an underdeveloped disciplinary identity (Gomza, Koval, 2019, p. 57), than in the internal intellectual dynamics of reflexive IR itself.

Therefore, the article's primary aim is to critically reconsider Ukrainian IR's "relative absence" from the national disciplines literature beyond the explanatory factors found in the general literature on "national schools." Central to this reconsideration is the idea of Ukrainian IR's "non-exotic" character, which is subsequently elaborated in this article via the idea of the local discipline's "complex peripherality." The latter notion enables us to highlight the distinctiveness of the Ukrainian case beyond its reduction to a Central-East European "latecomer" who lacks cultural-epistemic "exoticity" and struggles to "catch up" (Gomza, Koval, 2019, p. 55) with the Western mainstream. We conclude our article by turning to the current condition of Ukrainian IR as a wartime discipline through proposing a rough thematical sketch of a possible self-reflexive research program, which might ensure a fruitful empirical reengagement of self-reflexive IR with the local Ukrainian discipline.

Methodologically, our inquiry is exploratory, analytical, and comparativist. It is exploratory in that it tackles a largely unmapped thematic terrain: the absence of Ukrainian IR in self-reflexive debates, despite the Russo-Ukrainian war's global salience. It is analytical in that it interrogates the internal contradictions of self-reflexive IR, especially the disjunction between its progressive rhetoric and its patterned practices of exclusion. It is comparative in that it situates Ukraine's case within the wider literature on national IR communities and critically evaluates the conventional explanatory triad (geopolitical status, institutionalization, and cultural difference) through a set of cross-national comparisons of IR communities. This threefold approach, in turn, allows us to move beyond the mere disciplinary common-sense explanations toward theorizing Ukraine's "complex peripherality" as a layered condition of disciplinary marginality.

An absent IR community: a conventional explanatory framework

With Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, mainstream IR scholarship quickly fit "Ukraine" into familiar paradigmatic quarrels (Smith, Dawson, 2022). At the same time, self-reflexive studies approached the war outside the paradigmatic-debates frame (Dutkiewicz, Smolenski, 2023), linking the shortcomings of generalist IR to imperial intellectual dominance, Northern epistemic biases (Hendl et al., 2023), "intentional knowledge distortions" (Tyuska, 2023, p. 644), Eastern Europe's epistemic "in-betweenness" (O'Sullivan, Krulisova, 2023, p. 663), and the mainstream's inclination toward "Westplaining" (Smoleński, Dutkiewicz, 2022).

Nonetheless, despite Ukraine's sustained visibility in global media, policy debates, and the aforementioned paradigmatic quarrels, its IR discipline remains largely absent from international self-reflexive scholarship. Beyond a single "invited" TRIP replication

(Koval, Gomza, 2019) and a handful of domestic studies (Byk, 2013; Kopyyka, 2013; Krapivin, Todorov, 2013; Kruhlashov, 2013), there is little English-language, systematic work on Ukrainian IR. This neglect is puzzling given IR's long-noted externalism, namely its tendency to read disciplinary change through international events (Wæver, 1998, p. 691). If headline salience and geopolitical stakes are assumed to channel epistemic attention, Ukraine should register far more strongly. In fact, this gap is sharper when contrasted with the extensive self-reflexive focus on Russian IR (Lagutina et al., 2023; Tsygankov, 2022, 2023, 2024).

Fortunately, to make sense of this attention asymmetry, the self-reflexive literature offers a serviceable exploratory frame which, despite its case-specific causality, nevertheless identifies three recurrent explanatory factors.

First, IR's epistemic attention to national disciplines tends to track the home state's international status and capabilities (Smith, 2002, p. 69). In this sense, IR's externalism, coupled with its fixation on the spatial distribution of power (Macmillan, 2012, p. 133), yields what Ersoy (2022, p. 517), in a slightly different context, terms "epistemic gravity": communities linked to more powerful states attract disproportionate attention from the rest of the discipline. In other words, intellectual-institutional hierarchies in both generalist and self-reflexive IR tend to mirror global power distributions (Acharya, Buzan, 2007, p. 288). By this logic, pre-2022 Ukraine – rarely treated as a pivotal actor even after Crimea and the Donbas – generated limited pull. In turn, post-2022 visibility does not automatically convert into reflexive inquiry on its national IR, since that visibility did not entail an increase in Ukraine's power capabilities. Hence, Ukraine's earlier appearance in the TRIP database looks more like an epiphenomenon rather than a direct outcome of a post-Maidan increase in international visibility.

Second, self-reflexive attention is shaped by domestic institutionalization, characterized by a coherent disciplinary identity, i.e., clear boundaries vis-à-vis cognate fields, and an internalized role in the global academic division of labor (Corry, 2022). Here, Ukrainian IR faces familiar East-Central European constraints (Drulák, Königová, 2002), namely underfunding, weak policy-academia linkages, and fragile institutions, which are compounded by legacies of Marxist-Leninist censorship and historical disconnection from Western IR traditions (Koval, Gomza, 2019, p. 78). Domestic self-reflections exist but typically aim to articulate a "local school" (Byk, 2013; Kopyyka, 2013; Krapivin, Todorov, 2013; Kruhlashov, 2013) rather than to position Ukraine within comparative mappings of national disciplines. Again, with such a backdrop, the TRIP-survey entry appears driven by the nexus between individual initiative and institutional demand for case coverage rather than a systemic increase in visibility.

Third, much self-reflexive work assumes that cultural difference underwrites epistemic pluralism. Treating the international as plural social worlds (Makarychev, Morozov, 2013), scholars often seek non-Western standpoints as contributions to disciplinary pluralism (Inayatullah, Blaney, 2003; Tickner, Wæver, 2009, p. 6; Acharya, 2014). This can produce a paradoxical hierarchy: the farther a community sits from the Eurocentric core, the more theoretical value it is presumed to add to the self-reflexive debates. Therefore, Ukrainian IR, while read as culturally European and proximate to Polish, Czech, German, or Russian IR, is thus seen as offering little additional epistemic difference and slides off the radar of the former conversation.

Taken together, low epistemic gravity, weak institutionalization, and cultural-difference heuristics render Ukraine's limited coverage unsurprising when treated as a checklist. However, precisely because the absence seems overdetermined, it can conceal more intricate dynamics that warrant targeted, initially analytical, and then empirical work on Ukrainian IR, rather than continued inference from regional proxies and conventional self-reflexive narratives.

A critical reproachment: geopolitical status and institutional setting

As just noted, while conventional explanations would have made Ukraine's marginalization appear predictable, they also invite a closer test of their explanatory power. Do the same factors consistently shape the visibility of other national IR communities? And if not, what does their uneven application reveal about the Ukrainian case? To probe these questions, the following section revisits each explanatory factor in turn and situates Ukraine within a broader set of comparative cases drawn from the national disciplines literature.

First, if geopolitical status and power capabilities drive epistemic attention, then IR communities from "non-great/middle-power" countries should be largely absent from reflexive mapping. Nonetheless, much of the early national disciplines literature focused on Central and Eastern Europe (Drulák, Königová, 2002). In particular, Slovakia (Bátora, Hynek, 2009), Slovenia (Roter, 2009), the Czech Republic (Kubálková, 2009), and Poland (Czaputowicz, 2012) have all produced sustained self-reflexive accounts beyond a mere singular encounter with the global self-reflexive IR. Similarly, within the broader continental context, several communities with evidently limited geopolitical weight are nonetheless well-represented in the literature: Norway (Leira, Neumann, 2007), Greece (Makris, Mikelis, 2008), and Portugal (Ferreira-Pereira, Freire, 2009), as well as similar non-European geopolitical lightweights such as Chile (Oyarzún-Serrano, Fuentes-Julio, 2023), Nigeria (Aluko, 1987), or Nepal (Khatrī, 2001). Accordingly, while geopolitical status may be necessary for overrepresentation, e.g., Russia or Iran (Moshirzadeh, 2018), it is insufficient to account for Ukraine's underrepresentation.

Second, if institutionalization and disciplinary identity are decisive, then weakly institutionalized communities should contribute little to reflexive debates. Nevertheless, the Baltic (Berg & Chillaud, 2009) and post-Yugoslav states' disciplines (Ejduš, Kovačević, 2021) – despite few research institutions, limited programs, and constrained autonomy – have generated visible and substantive self-reflexive accounts.

Conversely, several better-resourced or core-adjacent cases do not map neatly onto the prediction: the German discipline remains largely absent from the national schools conversation, while the Italian has marginal visibility, and the very local IR community lacks its own national association (Lucarelli, Menotti, 2006). In a similar vein, the French case is even more puzzling, with no national association, a split between political science and law, and no independent classification within the National Council of Universities (CNU) (Breitenbauch, 2013). Finally, the Dutch discipline, despite one of Europe's most solid institutional settings and membership in the global core (Turton, 2020, p. 23), is scarcely present in national schools mapping. Accordingly, institutional

strength seems to correlate inconsistently with reflexive visibility, that is, institutionally strong communities can be quiet, while weak ones can be vocal.

There is scarcely an IR community worldwide (at least outside of the US and UK) that does not attribute its developmental challenges to issues of institutional infrastructure and disciplinary identity. Thus, these concerns may be more closely related to issues of IR's global disciplinarity in general, rather than to specific peripheral scholarly communities (Corry, 2022). From this perspective, attributing the global self-reflexive absence of Ukrainian IR to these factors seems more like an identity-driven discourse rather than a reflection of the actual mechanisms at play.

Ukrainian IR and non-exotic erasure

As a final factor, we critically consider cultural difference as an explanation for the absence of Ukrainian IR from self-reflexive debates. As has already been mentioned, the latter IR discourse is notably skewed toward disciplines positioned in the so-called "non-West". Chinese (Nymalm, 2022) and Indian (Bayly, 2021) IRs are prominent here, and this visibility reflects a composite pull: well-established institutional structures, geopolitical salience, and perceived civilizational difference.

In turn, East Asian disciplinary communities, such as those in South Korea and Japan (Seo, Cho, 2021; Do, 2019), despite their comparatively small size (especially relative to France or Germany), also maintain a substantial presence in the literature. This further underscores an attention pattern in which communities need not be large or globally dominant if they can plausibly claim cultural difference. Turkish and Latin American IRs occupy a middle ground in this respect, i.e., proximate to Greco-Roman foundations of the "West," yet compensated by robust domestic self-reflexive industries. African and Islamic approaches are also acknowledged, although often with a notable scarcity of "local" voices. As a result, many accounts are authored by scholars based in the Western core, raising concerns about the appropriation of African and Islamic differences rather than genuine representation (Bakir, 2022).

Interestingly, Russia blurs the line between non-Europeanness/Westernness in a particular respect: despite a distinctly European civilizational context and an intellectual history rooted in European Marxist-Leninist autarky, Russian IR receives substantial attention in self-reflexive IR. On one reading, this can be explained by a reference towards the previous two factors, geopolitical status and size of the local community: it is a regional great power with nuclear capabilities and revisionist ambitions, and its IR field, at least in terms of the number of scholars, departments, and professional self-framing, is far from an underdeveloped periphery.

However, the tricky point is that the rhetorical footing of Russian self-reflexivity leans heavily on cultural difference: Russian IR scholars often assert a state-civilization status (Tsygankov, 2023), a register that aligns with Kremlin narratives. More paradoxically still, self-reflexive IR, which foregrounds challenges to knowledge hierarchies and combats epistemic marginalization (Sidarchuk, 2024), readily accepts such claims from Russian IR despite their essentially neo-imperial and/or ethnocentric underpinnings. Nevertheless, whatever the drivers of this intellectual strategy of Russian IR (Morozov,

2009; Morozov, Makarychev, 2013), and whatever sustains reflexive IR's "romance" with it, the case demonstrates that the performative proclamation of "non-Westerness," when backed by geopolitical status and solid institutional bases, can override a discipline's evident Europeanness.

Overall, this comparative record lends cultural difference a distinctive explanatory status. China and India demonstrate that cultural difference, when paired with status and institutional depth, can yield overrepresentation in self-reflexive literature, while Korea and Japan illustrate that even when one of these conditions is weaker, cultural difference still amplifies presence. Conversely, the appropriation of Islamic and African "international thought" indicates that neither status nor institutional foundations are necessary for inclusion when "difference" is narratively available. The Russian case exposes the ambiguity of non-Westerness in cultural-difference discourse, highlighting the scope for intellectual opportunism and political-strategic motives.

This dynamic echoes some of the long-standing critiques of the self-reflexive scholarship. In particular, parts of the field, while seeking progressive emancipation, seem to risk inverting the colonial "standard of whiteness," and, combined with professional incentives for novelty and critique (Baele, Bettiza, 2021), slip into a paradoxical commodification of exoticity (Huggan, 2001). Much scholarship that foregrounds "culture" and "difference" ends up reinforcing an inverted imperial framework of racialized distinction. In other words, the quest for epistemic pluralism (Vasilaki, 2012, p. 6), intended to democratize the field, thus risks devolving into postcolonial particularism and epistemological relativism (Makarychev, Morozov, 2013, p. 346).

Accordingly, Ukraine's near-absence can be seen as an effect of "indifference" toward East-Central European in-betweenness (Mälksoo, 2021, pp. 811–812): Ukraine is treated as a peripheral extension that blends into Russia's purported "civilizational" context. In this optic, Ukrainian IR becomes the ultra-periphery of "white man's IR" (Lake, 2016), both institutionally and ideationally.

In consequence, and quite ironically, self-reflexive IR's stance toward Ukraine turns out to mirror mainstream IR's instrumentalism. The global reflexive literature – consumed by meta-theoretical critique – utilizes Ukraine and its scholars as material for yet another "round of deconstruction" (Alejandro, 2021, p. 1010). Hence, to paraphrase Barthwal-Datta (2023, p. 4), despite Ukraine's "(hyper)visibility" generated by Russian aggression, its national discipline remains nearly invisible to self-reflexive IR. The paradox is stark: Ukraine, and by extension its discipline of IR, are treated as an epistemically disfranchised "location" (Haastrup, Hagen, 2021, p. 28) that does not even deserve to be studied.

Ukrainian IR and its "complex peripherality"

For our purposes, this indifference amidst hypervisibility is a regrettable state of affairs. As shown above, the self-reflexive literature's preoccupation with difference (Inayatullah, Blaney, 2003) can paradoxically obscure disciplinary difference, with Ukrainian IR being a salient case. At the same time, we still do not treat cultural difference as the sole, or even the primary, explanation for Ukraine's position in self-reflexive debates. While we ac-

knowledge East-Central Europe's cultural-civilizational context and its effects on self-reflexive attention, our account of Ukrainian IR's silence is deliberately less burdened by culturalized or racialized lenses. Contrary to much of the sociology-of-IR literature, for this purpose, we foreground overlapping socio-historical contexts that shape Ukrainian IR. In this respect, following Mäklsoo's (2021, p. 812) account of CEE's epistemic "in-between-ness," we develop the notion of Ukrainian IR's "complex peripherality" to offer a more fine-grained elaboration of the reasons for the latter "invisibility" within the self-reflexive conversation. The subfield's preoccupation with cultural difference is only one facet of this condition, which we use to conceptualize Ukraine's peripheral status, both relative to the mainstream and self-reflexive core of the discipline of IR.

By complex peripherality, we mean a layered condition of marginality in which multiple historical-intellectual dependencies intersect to determine a field's global (in)visibility. For Ukrainian IR, these layers include: Soviet-era institutional and ideational subordination to the Muscovite disciplinary hub; the translation of that subordination into a post-Soviet disciplinary dependency alongside contemporary Russian epistemic imperialism; the reduction of Ukraine to an object rather than a subject of IR knowledge production; omission from self-reflexive debates due to a perceived lack of cultural "exoticity"; and an oscillating placement within competing regional geopolitical and disciplinary imaginaries. In what follows, we briefly examine some of these elements to show how they combine to produce the distinctive "epistemic location" of Ukrainian IR within the global discipline.

First, Ukrainian IR's complex peripherality is rooted in its place within the "Soviet study of IR" (Light, 1989), which produced nested and curated peripheralities. Nested, because Ukrainian IR was subordinated to the Muscovite hub, which itself was semi-peripheral to the Western mainstream due to Marxist-Leninist "ideological shackles" and Cold War limits on exchange and collaboration. In effect, Ukrainian IR was doubly subordinated (to Moscow and, indirectly, to the West) while remaining disconnected from other peripheral disciplines (e.g., Czech, Indian, Brazilian, or Turkish IR). Curated, because even its access to "Western IR" was mediated by Moscow not only institutionally (resources, textbooks, translations) but also intellectually: Moscow functioned as the key mediator (and, crucially, the interpreter) of Western IR for Ukraine and the wider Soviet space (Gomza, Koval, 2019, pp. 56–57).

Subsequently, this Soviet-era subordination partially translated into a post-Soviet regional dependency vis-à-vis Russian IR. Despite a proclaimed Westernization of the local field, much of its intellectual infrastructure long relied (and in places may still rely) on Russian disciplinary resources (theory textbooks, canons, conceptual vocabularies). Independence lifted formal subordination and expanded Ukraine's institutional ties to the global discipline, however, Russian IR continued to operate as the primary "translator" of the mainstream for domestic audiences. Even today, aside from a new cohort of ultra-elites socialized directly into Western IR, the imprint of Russian disciplinary traditions "on the ground" remains an open empirical question.

Now we turn to the interplay between this history of dependency and Russia's contemporary "epistemic imperialism" toward Ukraine (Sonevytsky, 2022). This dynamic helps explain the persistent denial of Ukraine's agency in knowledge production and its recasting as an object of external expertise more broadly. Here, epistemic imperialism

denotes a historically conditioned situation in which the Russian imperial periphery, of which Ukraine was a part, was constituted as an exclusive domain of scholarly authority for Russian academics. The effect is a tacitly accepted (by Western scholarship) Russian peripheral Orientalism: an institutionalized knowledge production about a subjugated Other (Said, 1995, p. 3). Consequently, routine Westplaining of Ukraine (Smoleński, Dutkiewicz, 2022) is reinforced by the higher status accorded to knowledge produced by Russian scholars about Ukraine, relative to that of Ukrainian scholars. Ukrainians are implicitly cast as not-fully rational subalterns, mired in ethno-national grievances, while Russians are positioned as possessing the requisite distance and “civilizational” standards for objective, globally relevant scholarship.

Hence, this configuration introduces a distinctive structure to the previously discussed absence of self-reflexive IR engagement with Ukraine and its national discipline. Beyond Ukraine’s lack of “non-Western exoticity,” a paradox emerges: while Ukraine is dislocated from familiar racial hierarchies (Sonevytsky, 2022, p. 22), Russian scholarship accrues the epistemic gravity of normative “whiteness” (Sabaratnam, 2020, p. 7) when “explaining” Ukraine, while Ukrainian voices remain epistemically discounted.

A further layer of Ukrainian IR’s complex peripherality has two interlinked dimensions. Externally, contemporary geopolitical imaginaries code Ukraine through the rubric of “New Eastern Europe” (Plokhly, 2011, p. 764), namely a geo-cultural euphemism for the “old-new” European segment of Eurasia and an ostensibly “natural” sphere of Russian influence (Kushnir, 2021, pp. 112–113). This frames Ukraine, and by extension its IR discipline, as Eurasian rather than European, reinforcing distance from CEE. Internally, i.e., relative to the self-reflexive spatial imaginaries of IR, CEE is itself a peripheral constellation of peripheral/semi-peripheral fields, and Ukrainian IR, despite its increasing intraregional contacts, remains marginal relative to the region’s “Western flank” (Gomza, Koval, 2021). Coupled with the semi-peripheral pull of Russian IR, these two dimensions produce a discipline that is too connected to be a classic periphery and also too marginal and fragmented to consolidate a heartland, tugged simultaneously by Western-CEE integration and Russian disciplinary legacies.

Taken together, these elements of Ukrainian IR’s complex peripherality support our claim that Ukraine is not merely another entry in the “exploring the periphery” literature but a solid lever for advancing the “third wave” sociology of IR (Kristensen, 2017). Beyond material-institutional factors, this peripherality is produced by concrete mechanisms, i.e., imperial mediation/translation, Orientalism, geopolitical re-coding, and regional disciplinary in-betweenness, that shape how national disciplines accrue status and visibility. Methodologically, this calls for a qualitative, analytical case-studies program complemented by bibliometrics and network analysis, if not a more demanding ethnography of social sciences. In short, Ukrainian IR is a critical case for theorizing how epistemic hierarchies are reproduced, and potentially remade, within the global discipline of IR.

The Wartime discipline

If the preceding section defined complex peripherality as the structuring framework of Ukraine’s self-reflexive under-representation, then its status as a “wartime discipline”

offers a plausible option for overcoming the former. In fact, it creates unique opportunities for empirically driven research on disciplinary dynamics, both institutional and ideational, under conditions of war. On this basis, we extend our call to empirical work by proposing a short thematic research roadmap that, in our view, identifies the most promising avenues for re-engaging Ukrainian IR as a scholarly community and for tracing its adaptive strategies and transformative processes.

To begin, one line of inquiry should address the issue of communication between academia and society. Here, the task would be to examine whether and how Ukrainian IR scholars have shifted toward social-media platforms and other rapid channels, partly by-passing and temporarily ignoring conventional scholarly and academia-society communication. A second line, in turn, should focus on changes in and specifics of professional trajectories and scholarly socialization, including those of refugee scholars, to examine how careers, mentoring, and role expectations are being renegotiated under conditions of urgent adaptation. In a different thematic register, it would be pertinent to look into how programs and faculties have adapted curricula and educational processes to the ongoing war. This includes tracking changes to course syllabi driven by instructors' interpretations of the present events and shifts in how they and students alike perceive the IR canon. In addition, autoethnographic accounts of teaching and learning IR in wartime conditions might shed some extra light on specifics of classroom practices, as well as pedagogical sense-making as part of the discipline's self-reflection.

A further strand of empirical research might involve bibliometric and thematic analyses of Ukrainian IR, focusing on how wartime conditions have affected research agendas and publication/citation patterns. In fact, some local scholars will likely continue to focus on traditional IR topics consistent with their pre-war orientations, while others will shift toward areas directly related to the conflict. This divergence would allow us to gain insight into the specific mechanics of external shocks, such as the Russo-Ukrainian War, in terms of catalyzing thematic and theoretical diversification within the discipline.

Building outward from these themes, another promising research register would concern changes in the local discipline's patterns and channels of communication with the "global" one, as well as various parts of its regional and national elements. A conventional starting point for such research would be the focus on formal scholarly communication, i.e., submissions to international journals, participation in conferences and seminars. Of similar importance, however, would be subsequent attention to informal scholarly networks, ranging from individuals and communities assisting displaced Ukrainian scholars (such as accommodation, legal advice, and language proofreading) to routine professional exchanges (including collaborative research, project discussions, and ad hoc workshops). Crucially, the primary focus should not rest solely on refugee scholars abroad but on the informal connections maintained by those who remained in Ukraine and continue to engage foreign colleagues under constrained conditions.

Finally, another promising and interesting line of inquiry lies in tracing "textually" or "verbally" palpable shifts in Ukrainian IR scholars' attitudes and conceptual-theoretical framings of Russia's geopolitical role and status, both in research and in teaching. More specifically, and in substantive terms, this would entail a careful study of how individual and collective scholarly positionalities interact with the discipline's repertoires, i.e., from invocations of particular paradigms and research orientations to subtler choices of

terminology and narrative-stylistic devices, as well as the emotional markers surfacing in representations of Russia.

This is not a comprehensive or exhaustive list. Instead, it is a programmatic and quite raw sketch, namely a call to pursue a particular research agenda. Otherwise, presenting any fixed set of orientations for a discipline amid a full-scale war would risk appearing hubristic and self-regarding. In truth, the topics to be examined are effectively open-ended, limited only by the research imagination of self-reflexively minded IR scholars.

Conclusion

Our article has critically examined the persistent absence of Ukrainian IR within the discipline's global self-reflexive conversation. We have critically reconsidered the conventional explanatory framework of self-reflexive IR, which would have attributed such exclusion predominantly to domestic factors, such as a fragile institutional base and a weak local disciplinary identity, and external ones, such as the geopolitical "weight" of the discipline's home country and the foreign-policy focus of the major powers within the international system. Instead, we argued that the main weight of Ukraine's IR marginalization is rooted primarily in the epistemic hierarchies and professional-intellectual dynamics that structure the self-reflexive IR subfield. More specifically, we argued that the latter privileges IR communities exhibiting greater cultural divergence from the presumed West, hence inadvertently sidelining scholarly communities akin to Ukrainian IR, i.e., those disciplines that fail to conform to its dominant narratives of exoticism.

Our notion of Ukrainian IR's "complex peripherality" elaborates overlapping socio-historical contexts which shape the local discipline's image as a non-promising case for the self-reflexive IR literature. In this light, the case of Ukrainian IR demonstrates how, albeit under a different ideational framework, and despite its emancipatory proclamations, self-reflexive IR continues to reproduce the very epistemic hierarchies of the mainstream that it claims to resist.

Unfortunately, this neglect of Ukrainian IR means that self-reflexive conversations overlook the unique disciplinary dynamics taking place under wartime conditions. The war has generated a host of transformative processes within the local discipline that still await systematic identification and analysis. Hence, the case of Ukrainian IR offers as yet unexplored but fertile ground for those interested in how academic fields evolve in times of socio-political crisis. In fact, by tracing near real-time shifts in communication patterns, professional trajectories and practices, as well as curricular and research orientations, future studies can build a more comprehensive understanding of disciplinary development in relation to external geopolitical shocks.

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Egzotyzm, wymazywanie i złożona peryferyjność: dyscyplina Stosunków Międzynarodowych na Ukrainie w globalnej przestrzeni dyscyplinarnej

Streszczenie

Mimo wzrostu zainteresowania Ukrainą po 2022 r. – także w obszarze stosunków międzynarodowych – tamtejsza dyscyplina Stosunków Międzynarodowych (SM) pozostaje w dużej mierze nieobecna w debatach o „narodowych dyscyplinach SM”. Autorzy stawiają pytanie, dlaczego rozwój SM na Ukrainie spotyka się z tak ograniczoną uwagą, i argumentują, że samorefleksyjny dyskurs dyscypliny konstruuje widoczność poszczególnych dyscyplin narodowych poprzez kryterium kulturowo-cywilizacyjnej egzotyczności. Kryterium to prowadzi do marginalizacji dyscypliny SM na Ukrainie. Aby naświetlić ten mechanizm, autorzy proponują koncepcję „złożonej peryferyjności”, która w bardziej precyzyjny sposób wyjaśnia procesy wykluczania w obrębie samorefleksyjnego dyskursu. Takie ujęcie pozwala nie tylko lepiej zrozumieć skalę pominięcia ukraińskiej dyscypliny w debatach nad „narodowymi dyscyplinami SM”, lecz także ukazuje ją jako przypadek kluczowy dla rozwoju „trzeciej fali” socjologii SM. W zakończeniu artykuł przedstawia program badawczy, który traktuje ukraińskie studia

SM jako dyscyplinę czasu wojny, skupiając się na praktykach komunikacyjnych, trajektoriach kariery, adaptacji programów nauczania, zmianach bibliometrycznych oraz transnarodowej wymianie akademickiej w warunkach zewnętrznego szoku.

Słowa kluczowe: asymetrie uwagi, marginalizacja epistemiczna, Europa Środkowo-Wschodnia, stosunki międzynarodowe na Ukrainie, socjologia stosunków międzynarodowych, wojna rosyjsko-ukraińska

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