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**Week 2: Historiography, Ontology, Epistemology and Methodology of IR**

For a better and clearer understanding of any subject, there is the need to have knowledge about the historiography and all that covers the subject. Before the 19th century, there was not much documented on the discipline of international relations as it went through various stages. The last stage was when it was under political science. On the history of international relations, there is more information and controversy now that there was half a century ago.

International relations have metamorphosed since after World War II. Brian Schmidt (2013) in the **Handbook of International Relations** addressed the various interpretations of how development in the field had been. International relations (IR), according to the widely documented story came to be an independent discipline in 1919 with the founding of a chair for the study of international politics at the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth. Before 1919, IR was a part of political science. There are still arguments that IR is still a child of Political Science and that there was no need for it to be independent. Over time, especially since after WWII, IR as a discipline has taken a modern turn to a discipline that will be universal with intellectual ideas and theories that cut across social sciences and the humanities. At the early stage, theories in IR were propounded through Great Debates. These debates helped to shape the discipline, but it has evolved into what Tim Dunne (2013) would call “a period in which theory-building has largely been replaced by the much narrower activity of hypothesis testing “.

Over time IR has taken a multiplicity nature. This shows the pluralistic nature of the discipline and it affects scholarships. The consequences of the multiplicity of IR include co-existence, differences in geographical location, interaction of different societies, combinations of local patterns of development and dialectical changes. According to Justin Rosenberg (2016), these five consequences of multiplicity tell us that the international is something much larger than a sub-field of politics – or even Political Economy.

The article, **International Relations: The Story So Far** by Ken Booth gave a detailed account of the birth of the academic discipline of IR. It is significant to note that this account is Eurocentric. IR has really come a long way and has been instrumental in postulating and explaining global realities. Celebrating the past sets the pace to work harder to achieve more and better in the future. This can be achieved by paying more attention to the present challenges facing the discipline and proffering contemporary solutions.

While History, Geography, Sociology and other disciplines have firm and distinct points through which they view the world, IR is still grabbling. This is portraying IR to still be in the Prison of Political Science as there are no core phenomena to explain the ontology of the discipline. The multiplicity nature of IR should be a platform to discover a new ontological entrance that would unlock the prison of Political Science that IR is in. while multiplicity is seen as a state of anarchy for the discipline, it is necessary for anarchy to exist as it could help to develop an argument for the emancipation of IR. For a better IR in the 21st century, the discipline should be universal and the international should not be limited to the North alone. There is need to create space and room for others in the South and their perspective given equal attention.

Some scholars are of the opinion that IR should be made International Studies as a discipline in the academia. This could help the discipline have a global view rather than the Eurocentric view that it is having.

Ursula Daxecker et al (2020) argues that IR scholars must employ ‘interdisciplinary’ insights to ensure the future dynamics and innovation of the field. This argument is important because there is no way that one would study IR in isolation without referring to other disciplines in Humanities and Social Sciences. For instance, we cannot discuss the origin of IR without looking into the History books of documented works in the past.

Theories are the one of the major ingredients that are needed for a better understanding of the discipline of IR. The formulations of theories did not end with the Great Debates. There are even more theories being propounded by scholars now based on the realities of the present time. New theories such as Feminism and Racism are being propounded with the realities of the time. The Great Debates could have died but theories are not dead. Rather, they are taking a more modern approach.

QUESTION:

1. Are there any other account of the history of IR?