


# Chapter 15

## The War in Ukraine and the Limits of International Relations Theory

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### ABSTRACT

*The text presents possibilities for improving IR theory by increasing the importance of analytical competences in the process of scientific training and research. The war in Ukraine indicates that traditional IR concepts are no longer sufficient, and it is necessary to concretize them for the study of current political events. The author states that analytical training would allow for more effective research on international processes and strengthen the authority of science in the era of new technologies, where companies, think tanks, and the media already have advanced tools for assessing reality. The author believes that if scientists do not develop new ways of working, their work will potentially become redundant.*

### INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study is to indicate the limitations of the application of international relations (IR) theory in the analysis of real events and to propose a solution to the problem in the form of the development of international analytics in the process of training IR graduates. My perspective engages the postulates of analytical eclecticism, formulated in 2005-2010 by R. Sil and P. Katzenstein (Sil and Katzenstein, 2005 & 2010). According to these authors, connections between different scientific approaches (paradigms) should be sought. Analytical eclecticism means combining

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(1) theory, (2) real-world problems and (3) practical own research. According to these postulates, theories should be supplemented by empirical research. I also make the pragmatic assumption that knowledge is an instrument of action, which means that our beliefs, concepts and explanations should be assessed in terms of their practical application (Kratochwil, 2009). Therefore, if a certain concept does not allow us to satisfactorily explain a given research problem, we look for another one. The purpose of research is to expand our knowledge. Sometimes the research goal may also involve testing methods or applying research findings to practice.

What are the theorist's aims in all this? The basic task is to create a theory, i.e. a justified set of statements about social reality. These statements should be inter-subjectively verifiable and communicable. To achieve this, the theorist must consciously draw on the ontological and epistemological perspectives shared by most researchers. Therefore, he/she must choose a specific subject of study (ontology) and recognize what he/she wants to know (epistemology). For decades, IR theorists have focused on ontology: designing concepts to describe a fragment of reality that interests them. Currently, attention should move to the sphere of epistemology, i.e. focus on the research process. Unfortunately, most theorists are reluctant to do this because it requires enormous efforts. Synthesis should be limited in favor of more difficult analysis, which requires completely different work techniques.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This article is the result of many years of research in the area of IR theory and studies on its usefulness in international relations research over several decades. The methodology proposed in this text refers to analytical eclecticism. Secondary analysis was used in the research process. The author uses concepts from different paradigms to provide new explanations (Deschaux-Dutard, 2021). Meta-analysis also allows you to compare the achievements of various research programs and outline future prospects. The analytical framework is based on the findings of the philosophy of pragmatism. The author assumes that a theory must work well in action, i.e. in explaining social phenomena. If we cannot solve a research problem, then we must look for another explanation. Concepts “have to work” and constantly adapt to reality. According to pragmatists, there is no final state of knowledge. A political scientist is like a teacher, doctor or lawyer who must use his knowledge in a specific case (Kratochwil, 2009). Therefore, most of our research is inductive and based on case studies. Meanwhile, the hypotheses suggested by most IR theories suggest deductive reasoning that ignores the historical specificity of social phenomena. To make our knowledge sufficient to study contemporary problems, the author suggests increasing the interest of scientists in social analytics techniques.

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