

on the other, to the understanding of international affairs. Read in this way, the debate featured much less of an unbridgeable divide than might have at first appeared: everyone wanted to be “scientific” in the broad sense, and to produce coherent and orderly knowledge, but they disagreed as to which techniques were actually “scientific” in the relevant way. However, it is significant that this was *not* Bull’s rhetorical strategy; instead of defining and defending a broad account of science against the more elaborate and specific account advanced by his (largely American) opponents, Bull in effect *conceded* the notion of “science” to his opponents and took his stand elsewhere. The fact that Bull’s broad definition of science is buried within the sixth of his seven critiques of formalist quantification and the quest for general propositions indicates something of how far it was away from the main thrust of his argumentative strategy.

Thus, the actual, if unintended, result of the “second great debate” in IR was to link “science” with quantification, formal models, and general propositions, replacing Carr and Morgenthau’s vague notion of science with something more precise, while retaining the cultural prestige of the notion. Singer, Levy, and other self-identified “scientists” made numerous references to the successes of physics and economics, holding out hope that IR could enjoy similar successes by becoming equally “scientific.” The editors of the volume containing many of the important essays constituting the controversy even pioneered a strategy of reconciling the two approaches under a common banner, a strategy that further reinforced the equating of “science” with the formulation of general propositions:

[W]hy could not the traditionalists take on the burden of casting their conclusions in the form of hypotheses testable in other situations? This would not undermine their inquiries, but it would maximize their possible contribution to the work of their more scientific colleagues. Likewise, why could not the scientists append summaries to their studies that straightforwardly identify their major propositions and findings? Such additions would not jeopardize their procedures, but they would make the products of their research more accessible to those who prefer nonscientific modes of inquiry.

(Knorr and Rosenau 1969, 18)

Notice that, in this passage, the main “burden” falls on the traditionalists, who have to adopt a form of presentation that makes their claims ready for evaluation by the techniques preferred by self-identified “scientists.” The only thing that the “scientists” have to do, apparently, is to produce a plain-English account of their study—a communicative, rather than a methodological, modification. Testable hypotheses and general claims are thus portrayed as almost unquestionable goals of IR scholarship, hardly even needing the label “science” to distinguish them from alternatives. But the label continues to serve a useful function in reaffirming the status of those fundamental assumptions—as when, a quarter-century later, King, Keohane, and Verba declared that “the social science we espouse seeks to make descriptive and causal inferences about the world” (King, Keohane,