Genealogy as a research tool in International Relations

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Abstract. This article considers the status of genealogy among research methods currently taught, learned and used in International Relations (IR). The article makes two claims. The first is that genealogy is a unique research tool, but not radically different from the rest of the qualitative-interpretative arsenal more commonly found in the discipline. The second is that genealogy can be used in the pursuit of epistemologically varied truth-claims, including those regarding causal connections.

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History does not belong to us, but rather we belong to it.

Gadamer, *Truth and Method*

As Nietzsche pointed out long ago, we cannot help putting forth truth claims about the world.

Price and Reus-Smit, 'Dangerous Liasons?'

As a tool for social and political research, genealogy was first developed by Friedrich Nietzsche in his nineteenth century critiques of representational metaphysics. Nietzsche argued that reality had no autonomous ontological status aside from human activity and called for the replacement of science by genealogies – historical-philosophical accounts of how reality comes into being. A century later, genealogy became associated with Michel Foucault, who used it to write 'political histories of truth' and so demonstrate how knowledge and power were inseparable and that there were no universal truths in history, only the 'regimes of truth'. International Relations (IR) is eminently familiar with this research tool. Ever since James Der Derian's *On Diplomacy* appeared in 1987, hardly a year passed in the discipline without at least one publication with the word genealogy in one of its titles.[1] And yet, IR is still largely undecided on what genealogy is, what it does,

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[1] A useful, but dated literature review can be found in Jennifer Milliken, 'The Study of Discourse in International Relations: A Critique of Research and Methods', *European Journal of International Relations*, 5:2 (1999), pp. 246–8.

and how it differs from other research tools for qualitative-interpretative inquiry. Methods textbooks rarely discuss it, if ever,[2] and the same can be said for graduate school syllabi and professional conferences.[3] As for the authors of IR genealogies themselves, their tendency has been to provide no more than a couple of paragraphs on their research tool of choice. What further mystifies it are differing interpretations: on the one side of the continuum, genealogy is primarily a method/methodology for historicising social items; on the other, it is a political and ethical intervention above all.

The purpose of this article is to bring attention and discussion to genealogy as a research tool in IR. I argue that genealogy is a distinctive historical, interpretative research tool suited for the making of epistemologically varied truth-claims. I develop this argument in two steps. In the first, I begin by situating genealogy in the philosophy of science, whereby I consider two readings of its Foucauldian origins: a 'political' reading which stresses the problems related to the representational nature of knowledge and a 'methodological' reading which allows for the possibility of 'truth with adjectives'. On the basis of the latter reading, I then submit that the difference between genealogy and more mainstream social science methodologies is in degree, not in kind. Its grounding in the power/knowledge nexus and its foregrounding of the 'three E' techniques of inquiry – episodes, examples and effectiveness – make genealogy distinctive, but not radically different from more mainstream social science tools for qualitative-interpretative inquiry.

In the second part of the article, I take the 'methodological' reading of Foucault and genealogy to IR. Using illustrations drawn from select applications of this research tool, I suggest that even the seemingly anti-methodological approaches tend to design and execute their genealogies by following commonplace methodological procedures. Then I posit, again by the way of illustrations from IR, that genealogy is indeed compatible with both causal and constitutive analysis. A genealogy that first analyses how social items become possible and then – or simultaneously – moves to examine their consequences in the social and political world can logically account for both causation and constitution. I submit that procedures and goals like operationalism, inference to best explanation and causation need not be associated with 'positivism'. In this view, the epistemological distance between staunchly post-positivist approaches like post-structuralism and 'residual positivist' ones like constructivist IR tends to be overdrawn: explanation may embody understanding and *vice versa* and neither needs to be seen as logically prior to the other.

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[2] For a notable exception, see, Audie Klotz and Cecelia Lynch, *Strategies for Research in Constructivist International Relations* (Amronk, New York: M. E. Sharpe, 2007), pp. 30–5.

[3] In my sample of sixty two recent 'research methods' course syllabi written by IR instructors for their graduate students only two devoted any portion of the course to genealogy as a research method. Sampling was not scientific: I accessed and collected them in order in which they were listed by an online search engine. All contained the English word 'methods' and were authored by self-identified IR scholars in the period between 2000 and 2007. My review of the programmes of the last four annual conventions (2003–2007) of American Political Science Association, International Studies Association, British International Studies Association and European Consortium on Political Research found no panels dedicated to genealogy. IR scholars were much more likely to discuss genealogy at more specialised and multidisciplinary conventions, such as those organised by groups such as the History of Political and Social Concepts Groups or the History of the Present.

Some clarifications are in order before we start. First, I believe that we should welcome different Foucaults to our discussions. This article first summons the so-called 'American Foucault'[4] and then constructs an 'IR Foucault' – the one associated with IR's current critical realist moment at that.[5] In these moves, Foucauldian purists will see yet another attempt to colonise (positive, trivialise. . .) their man, but what I seek is pluralism; indeed, I welcome attempts to detach Foucault's ideas from epistemology, scientism, modernism, IR or any other intellectual project that might be lurking in the text below. I also recognise that genealogy is but one among several Foucauldian historical-critical perspectives for interpreting the social and political world.[6] Second, though methodology and method are usually deployed interchangeably, methodology is a theory on how research is or should be done, given the assumptions regarding the status of reality (ontology) and/or its place in a knowledge domain (epistemology). Methods, in turn, are techniques for accessing data on that which exists to be known. Third, by traditional social science, I mean epistemic science – a practice defined in terms of analytical rationality, systematicity and truth-claims.[7] By traditional social science methodologies, I refer to the ideas on how research should be done within the epistemic science, but not necessarily positivist epistemology; positivism, in turn, relates to the analytical procedures and goals of operationalism, inference to

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[4] The appellation comes from Vincent Descombes, cited in Bent Flyvbjerg, *Making Social Science Matter: Why Social Inquiry Fails and How It Can Succeed Again* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 98. On the many Foucaults (including the dominant Foucaults in the US-centric disciplines), see, François Cusset, *French Theory: Foucault, Derrida, Deleuze & Cie et les mutations de la vie intellectuelle aux Etats-Unis* (Paris: Éditions La Découverte, 2003); Eric Paras, *Foucault 2.0: Beyond Power and Knowledge* (New York: Other Press, 2006), and Paul Veyne, 'The Final Foucault and His Ethics', trans Catherine Porter and Arnold I. Davidson, *Critical Inquiry*, 20:1 (1993), pp. 1–9.

[5] As practiced in IR, critical realism believes that unobservable phenomena are in principle subject to reliable knowledge. For ontological discussions relevant to my argument, see, especially, Colin Wight, *Agents, Structures and International Relations: Politics as Ontology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Gary Gutting, *Foucault: a Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Jonathan Joseph, 'Foucault and Reality', *Capital & Class*, 82:2 (2004), pp. 141–63, and Heikki Patomäki, *After International Relations: Critical realism and the (Re) construction of World Politics* (London: Routledge, 2002). To appreciate the variable status of reality, materiality as well as causation in the readings of Foucault, compare and contrast the following passages: Linda Alcoff, 'Foucault's Philosophy of Science: Structures of Truth/Structures of Power', in Gary Gutting (ed.), *Continental Philosophy of Science* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2005), pp. 215–6; Geoff Danaher, Tony Schirato and Jennifer Webb (eds), *Understanding Foucault* (London: Sage, 2000), pp. 57–8; Thomas Diez, 'Speaking "Europe": The Politics of Integration Discourse', in Thomas Christiansen, Knud Erik Jørgensen, Antje Wiener (eds), *The Social Construction of Europe* (London: SAGE, 2001), pp. 89–90; Norman Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992), pp. 60–6; Thomas Flynn, 'The Philosopher-Historian as Cartographer: Mapping History with Michel Foucault', *Research in Phenomenology*, 29:1 (1999), pp. 37–8; Gary Gutting, *Foucault*, pp. 40–1; C. G. Prado, *Starting with Foucault: An Introduction to Genealogy* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2000), pp. 25–30, p. 109, fn. 98, and Gavin Kendall and Gary Wickham, *Using Foucault's Methods* (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, 1999), pp. 39–46.

[6] As Martin Saar observed, Foucault developed and used genealogy only in his middle period. Saar, 'Genealogy and Subjectivity', *European Journal of Philosophy*, 10:2 (2002), p. 232. See, above all, Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison,* trans. Alan Sherdian (New York: Vintage, 1979) and Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. I and II. trans. Robert Hurley* (New York: Vintage, 1990). Among Foucauldian perspectives used in IR, governmentality is currently more popular than genealogy. For the reasons of space, I cannot discuss these other tools or how geneology relates to other Foucauldian concepts (for example, biopolitics, historical *a prioris*, state racism, etc.).

[7] Flyvbjerg, *Making Social Science Matter*, p. 57.

best explanation and causal inference. And by qualitative-interpretative inquiry, I mean any research that seeks to induce meaning from data or, as most genealogists would put it, an archive.[8]

My Foucault, my genealogy

In terms of the broader debate on the status of socio-historical knowledge, Foucault can be read in two ideal-typical ways. In the first, Foucault comes off as an arch-opponent to epistemology, a slash-and-burn anti-foundationalist, a 'denier', a 'prophet of extremity' and a 'nihilist'.[9] In nominalist ontology, any research tool is always a social item and therefore subject to genealogy, rather than to some definition. Here, the point behind genealogy is therefore not a codification of distinctive techniques of inquiry, but an attempt to open the intellectual and political space for resistance to the dominant regimes of truth and the emancipation of marginalised forms of knowledge. The proponents of this reading point out how Foucault himself described his research tools as 'non-defined method' or 'anti-science'.[10] Consequently, genealogy can thus never be a methodology, only an 'analytics' aimed at liberation.[11]

The 'antiscientific' reading of genealogy appears plausible: if there is no epistemic truth (or inherent truth's value for that matter), only the regime or politics of truth, then it follows that all judgments are political and/or ethical. Geneology is by necessity a political-ethical critique of values and Foucault's own genealogies formulated no shortage of significant and subtle political and ethical lessons.[12] But what matters here is that Foucault drew these lessons on the basis of certain epistemic truth-claims, not on the basis of some unfettered, subjective

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[8] For the reasons of space, I cannot consider the status of these definitions in the philosophy of science. Anecdotally, they appear to resonate at the usual disciplinary/disciplined sites such as the Institute for Qualitative Research Methods or the European Consortium for Political Research Summer School in Methods and Techniques. For claims of unity/difference between qualitative and interpretative methods in the social sciences, see the contributions in Dvora Yanow and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea (eds), *Interpretation and Method: Empirical Research Methods and the Interpretive Turn* (Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2006).

[9] See, respectively, Larry Shiner, 'Reading Foucault: Anti-Method and the Genealogy of Power-Knowledge', *History and Theory*, 21:3 (1982), p. 397; Allan Megill, *Prophets of Extremity: Nietzsche, Heidegger, Foucault, Derrida* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), chap. 5, and Barry Allen, *Truth in Philosophy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press), 1993, chap. 8.

[10] Citations in Claire O'Farrell, *Michel Foucault* (London: Sage, 2005), p. 52 and Shiner, 'Reading Foucault', p. 396. Some of his students also added, with various degrees of approval, the following descriptions: 'non-general method', '*ad hoc* method', 'un-method', 'non-method', 'anti-method'. See, *inter alia*, Paul Brass, 'Foucault Steals Political Science', *Annual Review of Political Science*, 3 (2000), pp. 305–30; Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault, Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics, with an Afterword by and an Interview with Michel Foucault* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 1983; Shiner, 'Reading Foucault', Megill, *Prophets*, and Michael S. Roth, 'Foucault's "History of the Present"', *History and Theory*, 20:1 (1981), pp. 32–46.

[11] Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault*, p. 184.

[12] But these lessons are subject to wide interpretations. On the status of the 'why resist?' question and Foucault, see, *inter alia*, Richard Bernstein, *The New Constellation* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1994), chap. 5; Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault* trans. and edited by Seán Hand (London: Athlone, 1988); Sara Mills, *Discourse* (London: Routledge, 2004), chaps 4–5; Timothy O'Leary, *Foucault and the Art of Ethics* (London: Continuum, 2006); Paras, *Foucault 2.0*; Saar, 'Genealogy and Subjectivity', pp. 234–7; Veyne, 'The Final Foucault', and David Wood, *The Step Back: Ethics and Politics after Deconstruction* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2005).

opinion. In this sense it is misleading to say that Foucauldian genealogy rejects epistemological universalism in favour of political and/or ethical expressions. In the rest of this section I want to argue that genealogy not only accepts the possibility and utility of historical representation, but that it also stands in line with traditional social science and its methodologies.

Let us begin with Linda Alcoff's 'Foucault as an epistemologist' perspective.[13] In this interpretation, while Foucault denied that there can be such thing as a scientific truth defined as propositional correspondence with reality, he nonetheless accepted that there *can* be a scientific truth that explicitly recognises the temporal, spatial and cultural domains in which the regimes of truth are made. To paraphrase one of Felipe Fernández-Armesto's titles, truth has a history, too.[14] It is here that we can situate Foucault as a minimalist, local or commonsense foundationalist, 'suspicious' and a 'modest' epistemologist and, last but not least, as a self-declared 'happy positivist'.[15] Quite apart from politics, the aim of this version of genealogy is to produce what can be called the truth with adjectives – 'local', 'contextual', 'situational', 'secondary', 'regime', 'relative', 'procedural', 'working', or 'small-t'.

From Foucault the epistemologist there is only a short step to Foucault the methodologist. To drive home his favourite point that research should be problem-driven, not method-driven, Foucault frequently insisted that he only wrote *about* methodology, never *a* methodology.[16] It was in this context that his toolbox metaphor gained fame and commonplace currency in history and social sciences: 'I would like my books to be a kind of toolbox that people can rummage through to find a tool they can use however they wish in their own area [...] I don't write for an audience, I write for users, not readers.'[17] If anything unifies this toolbox it is the concept of discourse – an anonymous collective consciousness within the human language through which meaning is given to subjects and objects.[18] In turn,

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[13] Linda Alcoff, 'Foucault as Epistemologist', *The Philosophical Forum*, 25:2 (1993), pp. 95–124.

[14] Felipe Fernández-Armesto, *Truth: A History and a Guide for the Perplexed* (New York: Dunne Books/St Martin Press, 1999).

[15] Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*, trans. A. M. Sheridan (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), p. 234. For the standard interpretative squabbles over Focault's alleged positivism, compare, *inter alia*, Dreyfus and Rabinow, Michel Foucault, p. 105; Catherine Elgin, 'Epistemology's End', in Linda Martin Alcoff (ed.), *Epistemology: The Big Questions* (London: Blackwell, 1998), pp. 26–40; Gary Gutting 'Foucault and the History of Madness', in Gary Gutting (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 64–9; Rekha Mirchandani, 'Postmodernism and Sociology: from the Epistemological to the Empirical', *Sociological Theory*, 23 (2005), pp. 91–2, 109–10; Saar, 'Genealogy and Subjectivity', p. 233, and Bernard Williams, *Truth & Truthfulness: an Essay in Genealogy* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2002), pp. 64–5.

[16] See, for example, the discussion of Foucault's 'Questions of Method', in Kendall and Wickham, *Using Foucault's Methods*, pp. 3–4, 151; O'Farrell, *Michel Foucault*, pp. 52, 139, and Gutting, 'Foucault', pp. 64–9.

[17] There are multiple citations, with slightly varying translations. Gutting, *Foucault* pp. 112–3. Less famous is Foucault's description of his books as 'surgeon's knives, Molotov cocktails or, galleries in a mine [...] to be carbonized after use.' Quoted in Steven V. Hicks, 'Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Foucault: Nihilism and Beyond', in Alan Milchman and Alan Rosenberg (eds), *Foucault and Heidegger: Critical Encounters* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), p. 102. Referencing Foucault 'properly' is becoming an exercise in scholasticism and will not be pursued in this article.

[18] On the evolution of this concept, see Jacob Torfing, 'Discourse Theory: Achievements, Arguments and Challenges', in David Howarth and Jacob Torfing (eds), *Discourse Theory in European Politics: Identity, Policy and Governance* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2005), pp. 5–9, 24.

virtually all Foucauldian research tools embody and the idea that history is the recovery of discourses and discursive contexts.

Let us briefly sketch the two main elements of this historical-philosophical perspective. First, discourses constitute subjects – subjectivities, subject positions, identities – in two continuous ways: they enable/constrain what is 'thinkable' in a given discursive context and they reward/punish ideas, institutions, and practices that are congruent/deviant with the pre-set political boundaries of inclusion/exclusion. The thinkability thesis is not Foucault's alone – think of the earlier histories of geocentrism, the platypus and the like – but it Foucault who linked thinkability to subjectivity. His histories of European asylums, sexuality, prisons, medicine and policing showed not only how discourses materially restricted reality and knowledge, but also how they ordered and re-ordered citizen populations and other subjectivities.[19] Equally important in this approach are the notions that discourse and its contexts are mutually constituted and that power implies resistance. Here, discourses might be cumulative and aggregating, but new developments in the discursive and extra-discursive contexts can and do impose on and, to varying degrees, transform old meanings. Subjectivising power is never final because each context is characterised by multiple discourses – some discourses are dominant (hegemonic, governing, ruling), while others as challenging (counter-hegemonic, resisting, alternative or subaltern). This multiplicity means that discourses are open to mutual contestations, critiques and, ultimately, change; for one, every discourse implies expectations about future courses of action, which are, in principle, always open-ended.[20]

This particular historical-philosophical perspective is the context for the well-known 'three E' definition of genealogy – a reference to episodes, examples and effectiveness. The first two features are common. Episodes – also known as historical series, epochs, events or moments – are meant to periodise the history of an object under study. Each episode is narrated though examples, which are themselves reconstructed in a discourse analysis of historical documents ranging from diaries left behind by marginal authors to programmatic or pioneering statements on how to maintain social order. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault offers that a key episode in the development of the contemporary 'carceral' society is the eighteenth century debate between two discourses of punishment disciplinary/corporal vs. reformist. The famous example analysed within this episode was Jeremy Bentham's *Panopticon* – an essay which prescribed an efficient disciplinary penal regime. The *Panopticon* refers to a prison where individual cells surround a central control tower producing a sense of constant surveillance and control – the panoptic 'gaze'. In Foucault's analysis, these disciplinary micro-tactics represented

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[19] Foucault never fully developed a theory of politics, but thanks to his insights, we can now better understand why the Haitian revolution, the successful black slave rebellion in Saint-Domingue, was unthinkable in Europe in its time or why systematic studies of UFOs do not exist. See, respectively, Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), and Alexander Wendt and Raymond Duvall, 'Sovereignty and the *UFO*', *Political Theory*, 36:4 (2008), pp. 607–33.

[20] What constitutes a non-discursive context is a much-debated question among Foucault's acolytes. For critical realists, reality is socially constructed in the sense that people construct their interpretations of the non-discursive real. See, especially, Joseph, 'Foucault and Reality', and Jonathan Joseph and John Michael Roberts, 'Introduction', in John Michael Roberts and Jonathan Joseph (eds), *Realism, Discourse and Deconstruction* (London: Routledge, 2004), pp. 1–19.

a distinctly modern type of power, which modified the behaviour of society without the use of physical force.[21]

The rationale behind using these particular episodes and examples should be familiar to qualitative researchers versed in the theory of case studies. Though Foucault never explicitly offered selection criteria for his episodes and examples, some of the users of his toolbox have concluded that such criteria must follow more-or-less standard social science casing techniques, even if only implicitly. For one, there is no logical distinction between the word case and the word episode as both parcel history into discrete moments.[22] More important, to the extent that one purpose of genealogy is to demonstrate the diversity and specificity of battles between different interpretations of social items, purely random selection of episodes and examples is self-defeating. In short, to the extent that genealogy serves to show how the reality could have been different if certain social and political constructions in history had been different, then it *must* rely on a comparative method.

As numerous readers have noted, Foucault's own episodes and examples are not randomly chosen, but as hard/least likely, easy/most likely, maximum variation or anomalous/extreme/deviant/outlying or paradigmatic.[23] The judiciousness of empirical shifts the classical to modern episodes or from the examples of Bentham's *Panopticon* to a prison warden's private diary suggest that Foucault paid a great deal of attention to the variability in the scope, depth, and duration of social phenomena under investigation. Drawing from Foucault's own work, it follows that specifying or even standardising the selection criteria for episodes and examples does not necessarily clash with genealogy's critical aims. The mechanics of writing genealogy are similar to an interpretative study based on historical case studies: episodes break into examples which in turn relate back to the overall analysis. When it comes to case selection writ large, the between genealogy and other qualitative-interpretative social science methods can be seen as practical, rather than principled.[24]

The last of the 'three E' – effectiveness – is not as straightforward from the perspective of mainstream social science methodologies. In brief, effective genealogies are those that focus on a 'problem' – a social phenomenon that appears (seems, feels) normal or true (commonplace, natural, intuitive) and then turns it into a question, that is, it asks how it came about in the light of contingency and power.[25] Here, the purpose of research is not 'accurate' correspondence between

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[21] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, pp. 135–228.

[22] In general, far more intellectually defensible is the rejection of casing when the latter is put forward as the statistical method writ small, a qualitative method without qualitative methodology, so to speak.

[23] See the discussion in Jacob Torfing, 'Discourse Theory' and Flyvbjerg, *Making Social Science Matter*, chap. 6; Also see Jens Bartleson, *A Genealogy of Sovereignty* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 8, 76, and Lene Hansen, *Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War* (London: Routledge, 2006), chap. 6.

[24] Saar, 'Genealogy and Subjectivity', pp. 238–40.

[25] Contrary to the conventional wisdom, effective history is not the same as *Wirkungsgeschichte*, as in Gadamer's (and so perhaps Heidegger's) hermeneutics, but from Nietzsche's (and so perhaps Rousseau's) *wirkliche Historie* (real or true history); here, Machiavelli's *verita effettuale* (effective truth) is a possible predecessor as well. Flyvbjerg, *Making Social Science Matter*, p. 114). Also misleading are claims of identity between genealogy and *Begriffsgeschichte* of Reinhart Koselleck and others and/or Cambridge contextualism of Quentin Skinner and others; neither one of these is

history and objective reality, but 'problematization' of the socially constructed reality and knowledge – the 'disruption', 'de-stabilization', 'devaluation' or 'deciphering' of what we know or, to paraphrase the first epigraph, our belonging to history. Put differently, the effectiveness of genealogy depends on two factors: first, the ability to foreground how the conventional assumptions about the world have implications for our present-day reasoning and, second, to suggest, directly or indirectly, alternative ways to constitute the aspect of humanity under study. In turn, each task hinges on the ability to analyse and critique power relations.[26]

So defined, effectiveness was Foucault's main goal in his many attempts to 'intervene' in the past to 'diagnose' the present.[27] His historical analyses of clinics, prisons, asylums and hospitals in European history can all be seen as effective because they each clearly demonstrated how and why some subjects and social items were brought about and not others, what became forgotten and with what consequences for the present. It was in *Discipline and Punish*, his first book-length genealogy, that Foucault discovered how 'power and knowledge directly imply one another'.[28] His argument that knowledge is not simply socially constructed but also co-constituted with power became known simply as 'power/knowledge' (*pouvoir-savoir*), Foucault's main claim to fame. In the same study, Foucault identified genealogy as a 'history of the present', a definition that led to much confusion, grammatical and otherwise, but the phrase implied that genealogy serves to show the contingency of the present, against biological necessity, rational design, teleology, liberal progress narratives and similar *schemas* once present in the putative traditional history.[29]

In *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault noted that classical Greek civilisation recognised only sexual acts, not sexual identities, and that the subsequent evolution of human sexuality followed the vagaries of history, not biology.[30] Here, Foucault borrowed his theory of history from Nietzsche, who famously argued that 'origins' are never metaphysical (origin-as-*Ursprung*), but always contingent (origin-as-*Herkunft/Entstehung*), such that subjects and social items evolve in and through

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identical with the 'history of concepts' that Foucault read under Georges Canguilhem. Gutting, *Foucault*, pp. 8–10. Cf. Mark Bevir, 'Begriffsgeschichte', *History and Theory*, 39:2 (2000), pp. 273–84. On historical knowledge before and after Foucault in the discipline of history, see, *inter alia*, Robert Berkhofer, *Beyond the Great Story: History as Text and Discourse* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995); Fernández-Armesto, *Truth*; and Elizabeth A. Clark, *History, Theory, Text: Historians and the Linguistic Turn* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2004).

[26] This pre-theory of power – its 'apparatus', 'dispositif' – is what makes genealogy an 'upgrade' to archaeology, Foucault's earlier tool for historical-interpretative analysis. There is a debate to what extent Foucauldians should regard these two as different. Compare Mitchell Dean, *Critical and Effective Histories: Foucault's Methods and Historical Sociology* (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 32–4; Dreyfus and Rabinow, *Michel Foucault*, p. 104; Gutting, *Foucault*, pp. 45–6; David Couzens Hoy, *Foucault: a Critical Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), pp. 6–7; O'Farrell, *Micheal Foucault*, p. 129; Paras, *Foucault 2.0*, pp. 68–9.

[27] See the discussions in Richard Bernstein, 'Foucault: Critique as a Philosophic Ethos', in Michael Kelly (ed.), *Critique and Power: Recasting the Foucault/Habermas Debate* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1994), pp. 222–5; Kendall and Wickham, *Using Foucault's Methods*, p. 4; Flynn, 'The Philosopher-Historian', p. 42; and Roth, 'Foucault's "History of the Present"', p. 43.

[28] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 27.

[29] Ibid., pp. 30–1. Cf. Dreyfus and Rabinow, Foucault, p. 118; Gutting, *Foucault*, p. 10, and Roth, 'Foucault's "History of the Present"', pp. 37–40.

[30] Foucault still concluded that ancient Greeks were less libertarian in their sexual practices than late moderns. Foucault, *Archealogy*, Vol. II, p. 39. Foucault's analyses were also effective because they shifted the study of the human body in history, but, once again, that is another story.

circumstances that come together in particular times and contexts.[31] In short, while a traditional historian might have been concerned with 'what happened and why?', a genealogist is expected to ask 'how did X get here?' or 'how did Y become possible?'

It is important to clarify that in genealogy, contingency does not imply that anything goes. So while a subject or a social item can be genealogised through a series of shifts that do not add up to a progression of the origin-rise-decline-fall sort, each subsequent shift logically entails legacies from the past, otherwise there would be no historical continuities and no need for genealogy. Discourses, after all, make *some*, not *any* thoughts and actions possible. So viewed, effective history departs little from Weberian social science, specifically, the emphasis on counter-factuals and contingencies in historical-institutional analysis. Counterfactuals refer to the 'what ifs' and 'might-have beens' of history – the idea that history could have been and could be otherwise. Traditionally, counterfactuals were dismissed as purely speculative guessing-games; today, few historians would deny that they project alternatives to events and developments in order to better explain chronological patterns. In social science, too, counterfactuals are now regarded as inevitable tools for making causal judgments (outside the experimental setting, at least). Max Weber explained it a century ago: a cause of an event cannot be determined without imagining the effect of the absence of conditions that lead to it in the first place.[32]

Historical-institutional analysis is most directly related to genealogy through Weberian research tradition on the role of 'unintended consequences'.[33] This is obvious in virtually of institutionalist analysis. In this research community, institutions are seen as 'rules of the game' which are subject to path dependence and critical junctures and the purpose of the analysis is to how institutional equilibria endure and change in interaction with other institutions, exogenous shocks and, importantly, with their own unintended consequences.[34] At the time when he wrote, Foucault rejected institutionalism because of its narrow concep-tualisation of power.[35] He was right. Most institutionalists then, not unlike many institutionalists now, focus on who gets what over whom, when, where and in what proportion. While these questions are central to political analysis, they do not necessarily lead the genealogist to the productive dimensions of power.

Luckily, institutionalist research programmes have greatly evolved since Foucault wrote such that there is now no shortage of those who argue that

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[31] See, Michel Foucault, 'Nietzsche, Genealogy, History', in Paul Rabinow (ed.), *The Foucault Reader* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), pp. 81–3. Cf. Saar, 'Genealogy and Subjectivity', and Hans Sluga, 'Foucault's Encounter with Heidegger and Nietzsche', in Gary Gutting (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 210–39. In the liberal Kantian tradition, contingency can be understood as subject-centred agency – the capacity of a human actor to make judgments and decisions despite structural conditions (whereby agency is proportional to contingency). On Kant's conceptions of causation, see Eric Watkins, *Kant and the Metaphysics of Causality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

[32] For major controversies and issues, see Philip Tetlock and Richard Ned Lebow, 'Poking Counterfactual Holes in Covering Laws: Cognitive Styles and Historical Reasoning', *American Political Science Review*, 95:4 (2001), pp. 829–43.

[33] Kendall and Wickham, *Using Foucault's Methods*, p. 6.

[34] In principle, rationalist approaches focus on choices as opposed to teleological outcomes, too. Jon Elster, *Explaining Social Behavior: More Nuts and Bolts for the Social Sciences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

[35] Flyvbjerg, *Making Social Science Matter*, pp. 117–8.

institutions, like discourses, also impact the 'who' in 'who gets what?' The emergence of discursive and constructivist institutionalisms in recent years can be seen as a welcome rapprochement between Weberian institutionalism and Foucauldian ideas on the social and political construction of reality and know-ledge. According to Colin Hay, these new institutionalisms are desirable because they promise to 'interrogate and open up the often acknowledged and yet rarely explored question of institutional dynamics under disequilibrium conditions'.[36] The awareness that all knowledge is fundamentally uncertain and politically consequen-tial has become more salient since Foucault, but it can also be found elsewhere the history of humanities and social sciences. Particularly well-documented is the way in which Weber build on Nietzsche's insight that history is stained with an idealised portrayal of the present such that historical discontinuities are silenced or assumed away. Along the same lines, Weber's idea of 'interior authority' recognised the links between the social and institutional which later became the mainstay of sociological constructivism, to say nothing of its constructivist and discursive cousins.[37] Now let us review how genealogies are executed and evaluated in IR from the perspective of Foucault the methodologist.

Reading genealogy in IR

In IR, genealogy tends to be associated with two broad schools of thought, post-structuralism and constructivism.[38] Without going into overly detailed (and hackneyed) moments of disciplinary identity politics, let us posit that post-structuralists and constructivists share a basic ontology (in which reality and knowledge are socially constructed) and empirical research practices (centred on the interpretation of texts and the observations of lived practices). What they do not share is epistemology: while both constructivists and post-structuralists agree that the promise of positivism is false and argue in favour of interpretation (in the sense of Giddensian double hermeneutics), many constructivists are happy to appropriate some broadly positivist standards for making truth-claims about the political world; specifically: operationalism, inference to best explanation and causation. In other words, post-structuralists and constructivists agree that objects of social science are also subjects, yet they disagree on theories of knowing. Different epistemologies, in turn, lead them to different theoretical and empirical *foci:* the former tend to privilege the political construction of knowledge (power/knowledge), while the latter tend to focus on the social construction of reality.[39] When it comes to executing and evaluating genealogy, I will now argue,

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[36] See Colin Hay, 'Constructivist Institutionalism', in R. A. W. Rhodes, Sarah Binder and Bert Rockman (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Political Institutions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 56–75.

[37] Phillip Woods, 'Building on Weber to Understand Governance: Exploring the Links Between Identity, Democracy and "Inner Distance"', *Sociology*, 37:1 (2003), pp. 143–63.

[38] See, especially, Jan Selby, 'Engaging Foucault: Discourse, Liberal Governance and the Limits of Foucauldian IR', *International Relations*, 21:3 (2007), pp. 324–45.

[39] Richard M. Price and Christian Reus-Smit, 'Dangerous Liaisons? Critical International Theory and Constructivism', *European Journal of International Relations*, 4:2 (1998), p. 268.

the difference between constructivist and post-structuralist IRs tends to be overdrawn.

Let us begin with a brief and stylised review of genealogical arguments made in IR, beginning with Jens Bartelson's *Genealogy of Sovereignty*, a book still regarded as a how-to guide for making genealogical arguments in IR. Bartelson famously declared that his methodology must not be taken 'too seriously', but then he still went on at some length to discuss the rationale for selecting his episodes and generating his archive.[40] Next consider David Campbell's *Writing Security*. In this classic on the mutual determination between the state and foreign policy, the author began by describing genealogy as an 'attitude' and then passionately defended his US case study as paradigmatic in the study of International Relations: 'No state possesses a prediscursive stable identity [. . .] Yet for no state is this condition as central as it is for America.'[41] Similarly seminal was Richard Price's *Chemical Weapons Taboo*. Here, the author began by asking what made chemical weapons 'morally illegitimate', then, using a combination of counterfactual reasoning and historical analysis of key episodes, he showed – against two alternative explanations – how the chemical weapons taboo was a product of the constructions of identity and order at various points in history.[42]

By mid-2000s, methodological discussions of genealogy became *de rigueur* in the post-structuralist tradition. In *Civilizing the Enemy*, Patrick T. Jackson showed how the Marshall Plan and NATO were made possible by a discourse of a 'Western civilization' which identified Germany as a friend, as opposed to a vanquished enemy. Methodologically, Jackson's genealogy is remarkable for the way its author first establishes the dominance of this discourse in American and West German policy circles and then moves on to trace its productivity at a set of specific policy debates in the 1944–1955 period.[43] In the same sense even more impressive is Lene Hansen's *Security as Practice*, a genealogy of the Western debates on the Balkans from the 1870s to 1995. In order to strengthen her narrative on how different representations of Bosnia and the Balkans produced different Western interventions in the 1992–1995 Bosnian War, Hansen commits an entire chapter, and then some, on methodological trade-offs in genealogical scholarship.[44]

From the perspective of this review, and in line with my argument in the first section, a rejection of an abstract methodological template does not necessarily imply some sort of free rein. Genealogies, whether authored by Foucault or IR

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[40] See, *inter alia*, Jennifer Sterling-Folker, *Making Sense of International Relations Theory* (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2006), pp. 172–5, 329–30, and Milliken, 'The Study of Discourse', pp. 246–8). Bartelson famously declared that his methodology must not be taken 'too seriously', but then he still went on at some length to discuss the rationale for selecting his episodes and generating his archive. Bartleson, *Genealogy*, p 78 vs. pp. 7–11, 78–87.

[41] David Campbell, *Writing Security: US Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), pp. 14, 91, cf. p. 275, n. 5. Paradigmatic cases are unique for being chosen on intuition, as they are meant to set the selection standard, rather then being selected on a standard Flyvbjerg, *Making Social Science Matter*, p. 80.

[42] Richard Price, *The Chemical Weapons Taboo* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1997), p. 1.

[43] Patrick T. Jackson, *Civilizing the Enemy: German Reconstruction and the Invention of the West* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006), pp. 73–8.

[44] Hansen commits an entire chapter, and then some, on methodological trade-offs in genealogical scholarship. Hansen, *Security as Practice*, pp. 52–92, 217–20.

scholars, are historical accounts justified by historical evidence which must be validated in some way. The nature of that evidence of course depends on the specific research question, but what is common is a need to develop a genealogical argument in a systematically coherent and logically consistent way, such that the conclusions follow from the overarching explanatory logic.[45] What is more important for my argument, some form of operationalism and some anticipation of alternative explanations was present in every genealogy reviewed above. Now I want to propose that genealogy can be seen as a tool for making standard social science causal inferences, broadly construed.

Foucauldian purists rarely fail to point out to Foucault's own definition as contingency as anti-causation and argue, on this basis, that genealogy simply does not do 'ideas as causes'.[46] Here, too, my argument hangs on a local/minimal foundationalist, methodological reading of Foucault, which can, in principle, accommodate a broader idea of causation.[47] Consider Price's and Jackson's books again. As a genealogy, Price's *Chemical Weapons Taboo* was remarkable because its stated aim was to resolve a puzzle for IR theory: if states seek to survive at any cost, why, then, did they discriminate against the use of lethal gas as a weapon of war in World War II?[48] For one, why did Hitler – he who ordered the use of cyanide gas against civilian prisoners in Auschwitz – refused similar chemical weapons against the Allied onslaught in 1945? In answering these questions, the author first shelved the conventional wisdom on the general non-use of lethal gas in war – the arguments that poisonous gas is ineffective on the battlefield *or* that it is a result of some genetic revulsion towards asphyxiation shared by all humankind – and then showed how chemical warfare became delegitimised by the rise of the specific *jus in bello* norms emergent from World War I. Jackson was even more upfront about the causal claims he made. His *Civilizing the Enemy* centred in a triple 'why?': why was a German state reconstructed after 1945? Why did the US lead the reconstruction? And why was West Germany treated as an equal in the Marshall Plan and NATO? The answer to each had to with the invention of a 'Western civilization' that included West Germany. This framing 'made possible' not only the creation of the Federal Republic of Germany, but also its integration into the Euro-Atlantic institutional mainstream.[49]

In their genealogies, both Price and Jackson used the language of causation and embraced causation as the matter of ontological principle. As openness to the ontological complexity of causal relationships is not a characteristic of many social science research tools, this feature could be genealogy's next claim to fame. Before we get to the conceptualisations of causation, let us briefly reconsider the re-occurring *Methodenstreit*, the old epistemological debate between explanation

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[45] On coherence in genealogy, see Gutting, *Foucault*, pp. 66–7.

[46] Foucault, *Archaeology*, pp. 10–14. Cf. Kendall and Wickham, Michel Foucault, p. 5; Torfing, 'Discourse Theory', p. 19; Jens Henrik Haahr and William Walters, 'Introduction', in Haahr and Walters (eds), *Governing Europe: Discourse, Governmentality and European Integration* (London: Routledge, 2005), p. 17.

[47] See, especially, Gary Gutting's interpretation of genealogy as a 'historical causal explanation that is material, multiple, and corporeal'. Gutting, *Foucault*, p. 47. While Foucault's conceptualisation of causation varied, he always clearly rejected monocausality (that is, direct correspondence between discourse and action) and idealism (that is, 'collective unconscious') and there is an inconsistency in his claims that there is 'nothing outside discourse'.

[48] Price, *The Chemical Weapons*, p. 4.

[49] Jackson, *Civilizing the Enemy*, p. 3.

and understanding, which has long been familiar to IR.[50] The 'positivist' camp typically defines causation as 'invariance under treatment' – a mechanistic sequence of empirical occurrences which can be *explained* in terms of law-like patterns. In this view, to the extent that the researcher can meet the Humean requirements of independent existence, covariance, temporal asymmetry and counter-factuality, she can also draw causal inferences about the necessary and sufficient conditions under which empirical occurrences obtain. The opposing, 'post-positivist' camp typically argues that that causation is constitutive, not 'direct', such that the primary research questions are the 'how-possible?' and 'what?', and not 'why?' and 'how?' Here, the task of causal analysis is to *understand* how human actors think and act in given situations.

The *Methodenstreit* is still alive in the philosophy of social science, having weathered numerous attempts to synthesise the explanation-understanding distinction and/or to subsume one vision with another. In IR, the latest manifestation of this debate is the question whether constitutive theory can or should be seen as a form of explanation. Among the various affirmative answers, the most famous and the most controversial is Alexander Wendt's 'via media'.[51] In this approach, constitutive theory is said to contribute to explanation by helping identify the conditions of possibility for social phenomena. Knowing what X is or how X is possible in the first place greatly facilitates how or why X causes Y. So far, post-structuralist theorists have rejected this reading as an attempt to further positivise IR.[52] Causation, epistemologically speaking, runs directly counter to constitution and all social phenomena, including the putatively causal effects of taboos and rhetorical coercion, can be seen as the manifestations of constituted realities.[53] The critique in fact goes back to Foucault and his bid to overthrow representational metaphysics; for Foucauldian purists, therefore, the goal of political inquiry is not causation, but the 'power analysis' of the ways in which subject positions are constituted, starting with IR and its claim to scientism.

And yet, the relationship between causation and power analysis is more complex than mere incommensurability. Recall that in a local/minimalist foundationalist reading of Foucault, the subject remains capable of resisting and choosing among the discursive practices that constitute it, if ever so slightly. The conditions

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[50] IR has long been overloaded with reflections on large and old philosophical debates on human experience, and the understanding-explanation debate goes back at least to Wilhelm Dilthey. For a widely-read statement, see Martin Hollis and Steve Smith, *Explaining and Understanding International Relations* (Oxford: Oxford Clarendon Press Paperbacks, 2004).

[51] Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 77–89.

[52] Steve Smith, 'Wendt's World', *Review of International Studies*, 26:1 (2000), pp. 151–63. By attempting to walk his via media, Wendt was also attacked by positivists who contend that constitution is already part of explanation, either as description or as a task of specifying antecedent conditions (permissive/deep causes) that permit a later outcome to occur (proximate/shallow causes). For the ongoing debate, see, *inter alia*, the contributions in Stefano Guzzini and Anna Leander (eds), *Constructivism and International Relations: Alexander Wendt and His Critics* (London: Routledge, 2006); David Dessler and John Owen, 'Constructivism and the Problem of Explanation: A Review Article', *Perspectives on Politics*, 3:3 (2006), pp. 1–15; Jorge Rivas, 'Realism is Not a Via Media between Positivism and Interpretivism: Assessing Wendt's Version of Scientific Realism', Paper presented at the annual meeting of the ISA's 49th Annual Convention, San Francisco (2008). On file with the author.

[53] See, *inter alia*, Karin Fierke, 'Critical Methodology and Constructivism', in Karin Fierke, *Diplomatic Interventions: Conflict and Change in a Globalizing World* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p. 12; Campbell, *Writing Security*, pp. 217–8; Hansen, *Security*, pp. 1, 10–1, 25–8.

under which this capability (contingency, creativity, etc.) varies in time and space cannot be assumed away but must be subjected to empirical scrutiny. Herein lies the potential for making causal claims in interpreting history. For ontological reasons, these claims are not likely to be Humean – his criteria for causal inferences are impossible in the socially constructed world. But the philosophy of causation offers other criteria – Aristotelian, Cartesian, Gallilean, Kantian and others. In his genealogy, Jackson, advocated the Weberian school of 'adequate causation'. Here, causal factors are not variables in the sense of necessary-and-sufficient conditions, but 'reasons' in the sense of historically situated 'configurations' which 'simultaneously give rise to both actions *and* the actors that carry them out'.[54] In short, Jackson's book, like Price's, shows how genealogies can make causal claims, too.

So we come back to epistemology again: while it is of course correct to argue that any criteria are always formulated within certain regimes of truth, be they positivist, post-positivistic, political, artistic, religious and so on, it is equally correct to point out that criteria are always necessary in order to halt the infinite regress and the paradox of denying all truth-claims that constitute knowledge. As the epigraph to this article says, we cannot help but make truth-claims about the world. This point can in fact be restated is the nature-of-language terms: in order to talk about reality at all, we not only have to reduce it to symbols expressed as words, but we also have to assign certain chronological and geographical stability to each of these words.[55] Such stabilisations are an inescapable part of our language – and so of our historical interpretations – in anything from conceptual labels to full-blown formalisation of empirical occurrences in terms of time, space, intensity, magnitude, presence/absence, similarity/difference, continuity/change, and, indeed, cause and effect.

In post-structuralist IR, such stabilisations usually appear as mere 'analytical shortcuts', 'acts of faith', 'arrestations', 'temporary reifications' or 'strategic essentializations' and other seemingly practical, pragmatic and pedagogical moves.[56] Not everyone of course likes it: a review of Hansen's *Security as Practice* protested such stabilisations as unnecessary concessions to mainstream IR.[57] My view is exactly the opposite. These concessions are indeed necessary: while genealogy makes no stabilisations in principle, in practice it must, regardless its

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[54] Jackson, *Civilizing the Enemy*, p. 41. Also see, Edward Keene, 'Reconstructing the English School's Conceptual Vocabulary: An Ideal-Typical approach', Paper presented at the Annual ISA Convention, Chicago (2007). On file with the author. For philosophical discussions of the 'reasons as causes' debate, see, especially, Stephen Asma, 'Darwin's Causal Pluralism', *Biology and Philosophy*, 11:1 (1996), pp. 1–20; Nancy Cartwright, 'Causation: One Word, Many Things', *Philosophy of Science*, 71:5 (2004), pp. 805–51; Daniel Little, *Varieties of Social Explanation: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Social Science* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1991); Paul Roth, 'Beyond Understanding: The Career of the Concept of Understanding in the Human Sciences', in Turner and Roth (eds), *The Blackwell Guide to the Philosophy of the Social Sciences* (London: Blackwell Philosophy Guides, 2002), pp. 311–33; Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1979), and Stephen P. Turner and Paul A. Roh, 'Ghosts and the Machine: Issues of Agency, Rationality, and Scientific Methodology in Contemporary Philosophy of Social Science', in Turner and Roth (eds), *The Blackwell Guide to the Philosophy of the Social Sciences* (London: Blackwell Philosophy Guides, 2002), pp. 1–18.

[55] From an epistemological standpoint, a claim that *all* meaning is unstable is indefensible: even the most anti-epistemological analysis must value some intellectually evaluative criteria – spelling and grammar in the exposition, consistency of the narrative and evidence.

[56] Hansen, *Security as Practice*, p. 19, fn. 1.

[57] Laura Shepherd, 'A User's Guide: Analyzing Security as Discourse', *International Studies Review*, 8 (2006), pp. 656–7.

claims of frivolity.[58] Even Foucault understood that in order to inquire about some inter-subjective systems of meanings, one had to assume the stability other inter-subjective systems of meanings. To go back to a point made earlier, the human language is successive, not simultaneous, and for that reason no meaningful analysis can make all meaning unstable at the same time.

Let me now bring the epistemological and ontological propositions together. In my reading, the genealogies authored by Price and Jackson demonstrate how the same research design, based on common evidentiary base can make both constitutive (for example, the constitution of subjectivity in the nexus of technology and morality; the constitution of the Western civilisation) and causal inferences (for example, Hitler's non-use of chemical weapons against Allied soldiers, the failure of isolationism in the post-1945 US). While constitutive theory tends to more systematically reflect back on the meaning of any stabilisation made by theory, both causal and constitutive theories stabilise meanings since their foremost ontological task is to account for historically specific conditions in which subjects and objects are constituted. Once the theorisation of being is stabilised, research can move onto epistemologically varied pursuits. For post-structuralists, this is typically a theorisation of the mutually constitutive relationship between agents and structures (or agents and agents). For constructivists, this is typically a theorisation of the causal conditions present in such relationships. Whether these conditions are seen as necessary-and-sufficient *or* as something else ('permissible', 'productive', 'generative', 'adequate') entirely depends on the researcher's conception of causation.

As I said earlier, the conceptualisation of causation in terms of necessary-and-sufficient conditions is usually associated with the Humean successionist theory of causation. Constructivists and post-structuralists agree that this conceptualisation of causation is too 'rigid'.[59] This anti-Humean revolution is welcome, but, as always, revolutionaries should be careful. For one, there is no such thing as a single Humean model of causation. The 'invariance under treatment' theory has indeed dominated, via positivism, the mainstream social science for many decades. But there are several 'new Hume' readings of Hume which question the invariance under treatment theory.[60] More important, the revolution might lead to ironical outcomes: a post-structuralist call to abandon Hume in conceptualising causation might in fact hurt post-structuralism more than the putative positivist mainstream. Put differently, causal pluralism has a potential to render a post-structuralist claim that constitutive theory is strictly non-causal *less* defensible or even paradoxical.

Consider the Aristotelian model, which is currently the main significant 'Other' to the Humean conception of causation in IR. For the Aristotelians, causal questions are primarily ontological, not epistemological, which implies that constitutive analysis is simply one 'form' of causal analysis, but that is 'inseparable' from causal analysis.[61] The idea of the productivity of discourse is a case in point.

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[58] Again, see Bartleson, Genealogy, p. 78. William Walters called his genealogy 'unapologetically superficial'. Walters, *Unemployment and Government: Genealogies of the Social* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 10.

[59] Hansen, *Security as Practice*, pp. 10, 25.

[60] Rupert Read and Kenneth A. Richman (eds), *The New Hume Debate* (London: Routledge, 2007).

[61] The terms come from Milja Kurki, 'Causes of a Divided Discipline: Rethinking the Concept of Cause in International Relations Theory', *Review of International Studies*, 32:2 (2006), pp. 211–2. Here, anything that produces a certain reality is causation. For earlier calls to 'broaden and deepen' the conceptualisation of causation in IR, see Price and Reus-Smit, 'Dangerous Liaisons?', pp. 278–9,

To say that discourses make the boundaries of social identity by rewarding/
punishing actions that are congruent/deviant with those identities as well as by
enabling/constraining what is possible is to imply that constitutive discourses are in
some way causal. In this reading, every time one writes that a discourse X
'produces' – or even '(re)produces' – an identity Y, one is in fact making a causal
truth-claim. The same goes for other ways of linking X to Y: 'rewards/punishes',
'enables/constrains', 'implies', 'directs', 'shapes', 'favors', 'X has consequences/
implications for Y' or 'Y is dependent on X'. Some self-identified constructivists –
as well as some self-identified post-structuralists – accept that such relationships
can be seen as causal or at least 'quasi-causal'.[62]

From a post-Humean perspective on causation, this is a sensible position. But
it is also logical from the perspective of research practice: as per ontological
assumptions, X and Y are always mutually constituted, but empirical analysis
usually focuses on one side of the relationship, while temporising or bracketing the
other. As I said earlier, no matter how ontologically tentative X and Y, once we
write them down we always invest them with analytically operational (that is,
stabilised) identities and interaction patterns. Another reason to refuse calling the
X-Y relationship non-casual lies in the impossibility of falsifying the null
hypothesis – that the relationship is, in fact, causal in the Humean sense. A strictly
non-causal claim would be X (probably) means Y, but (probably) not Z.[63] The last
irony is the possibility that greater causal pluralism in IR might lead to a
formalisation of constitutive analysis. How such formalisation may develop is
another subject entirely and I do not wish to argue that constitutive analysis should
be formalised. But consider the following logic: because there are multiple
legitimate social scientific questions to pose about a single evidentiary base, even
traditional causal claims should not be denied, put aside or even temporised. So
while post-structuralists are right to argue that explaining causation cannot be
divorced from understanding meaning, they should also recognise the flip side of
their argument – any understanding of the meaning-making processes cannot
proceed without causal inferences.

The very word 'because', H. Stuart Hughes once noted, 'gives warning that
causal explanation is at hand'.[64] Causal claims might indeed be frequent and
familiar, but what constitutes a causal explanation continues to be debated in the
philosophies of history and social science. In recent decades, promising in both
history and social science are explanations based on 'causal mechanisms' –
'frequently occurring and easily recognisable causal patterns that are triggered
under generally unknown conditions or with undeterminate consequences.'[65] From

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282; Patomäki, *After International Relations*, pp. 76–82; Wendt, *Social Theory*, pp. 55–6, 84–7,
165–8, and Ibid., 'Why a World State is Inevitable: Teleology and the Logic of Anarchy', *European
Journal of International Relations*, 9:4 (2003), pp. 494–5.

[62] Hansen, *Security as Practice*, p. 31.

[63] X, Y, and Z are not to be confused a type of constitutive analysis that focuses on the inter-subjective
context 'C'. See, especially, John R. Searle, *The Construction of Social Reality* (New York, Free
Press, 1995). Here, an analysis of the relationship between discourse 'X' and outcome 'Y' leads to
a conclusion that that X renders Y in C. For instance, a same-sex couple from Whitehorse was
constituted as married (Y) by a decision of the Supreme Court (X) in Yukon Territory (C).

[64] H. Stuart Hughes, 'The Historian and the Social Scientist', *The American Historical Review*, 66:1
(October 1960), p. 28.

[65] Elster, *Explaining Social Behavior*, p. 36; Cf. Peter Hedström and Richard Swedberg, eds., *Social
Mechanisms. An Analytical Approach to Social Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

this perspective, the goal of a causal explanation is to account for the workings of human agency located within historically specific structures and processes. In principle, the idea of causal mechanisms can be regarded as compatible with multiple, non-naturalistic models of causation, which, for good or ill, could prove to be a major advantage to the advancement of epistemic science.[66]

One general drawback to thinking in terms of binary oppositions such as causal vs. constitutive theory, understanding vs. explanation or, for that matter, constructivism vs. post-structuralism is the lack of sensitivity to possible complementarities. Given the ontological complexity of the social world, any theory should prefer the pluralistic 'both-and' over the dualistic 'either-or'. And while no single research design should ever be expected to answer all ontologically relevant questions concerning any given phenomenon – the whys, the hows, the whats, and the how-possibles? – a composite methodology which seeks to account for constitution and causation should be seen as both possible and useful. Based on the preceding arguments, genealogy may be exactly one such methodology. Because it is able to shift emphases among different kinds of causal inferences, genealogy can be applied anywhere from highly contextualised understandings of constitutions to historical causal explanations. Arguably, epistemologically varied truth-claims may come to yield an explanatory whole greater than the sum of its parts.

In lieu of summing up this section, let me refer to Jan Selby's recent argument that Foucault's ideas had long been 'pigeonholed' by post-structuralist IR, 'while being generally ignored or critiqued by those of other theoretical persuasions'.[67] The argument was prompted by Selby's own research on Israeli water policy, where the author discovered many complementarities between Foucauldian and Marxist approaches. One of these is a division of research questions: Foucauldians could get the how-possibles, while Marxists get the whys. Another mutually enriching convergence is methodology: 'both the Marxist tradition and Foucault share a sensitivity to historical disjunctures and transformations, and a corollary hostility to a historical and positivist modes of analysis, which set them apart from orthodox IR'.[68] Selby's argument is likely to spark debate on Foucault and IR, which is good for the discussion of genealogy.[69]

Conclusion

Each research programme positions itself – and keeps its uniqueness – by making theoretical arguments, not by claiming sovereignty over its preferred research tools. In this sense, no methodology should be epistemologically disabled *a priori*. Based on local or minimalist foundationalism, any justification of truth-claims in social science hangs on the demonstration of the empirical evidence that exists to validate or refute these truth-claims. Here, rather than an anti-science, genealogy can be

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[66] Compare Jackson, *Civilizing the Enemy*, pp. 43–5 and Wendt, *Social Theory*, pp. 81–5, 153–4.
[67] Selby, 'Engaging Foucault', pp. 339, 341.
[68] Ibid., p. 340.
[69] To the extent that IR, like Marxism, is ultimately interested in evaluating realities most conducive to emancipation (meaning the human subject's pursuit of goals in ways that do not stop other subjects from doing the same), then Foucauldian research tools must also be ready to engage questions such as 'what is right, just or fair?', 'what is to be done?' or 'what could work?'

seen as a research strategy for making standard social science truth claims similar to the mainstream qualitative research tools. While genealogy's focus on episodes and examples may be seen as an ordinary research procedure, its search for effectiveness in analysing the power/knowledge nexus allows it to adjudicate empirical claims not normally accessible by any other methodology. It is in this sense can genealogy be seen as a distinctive research tool of qualitative-interpretative inquiry.

In IR, genealogy is typically employed to analyse the ways in which agents and structures are constituted within historically and culturally specific sites, by drawing attention to contingency and, especially, the productive power of discourse. The methodological status of genealogy, however, is similar across applications. Despite an occasional anti-methodological posturing by post-structuralists, a typical gene-alogy authored in IR tends to carefully interrogate the evidentiary base, operation-alise its concepts, and delineate the scope and domain of its truth-claims, often against specific alternative explanations as well. In the reading offered here, there is also nothing to prevent a genealogist from exploring puzzles and providing new and/or alternative narratives on a variety of research problems. So while genealogy can be seen as a principle – and principled – research tool for tackling the 'how-possible?' and 'what?' questions, it can also be seen as tool for dealing with the 'why?' and 'how?' questions. Using concrete examples from the literature, I have shown that IR scholars have already used their genealogical archives to make truth-claims in more than one ontological and/or causational domain. I have then suggested that genealogy has a potential to yield a more complete causal inference overall. Such broader view of genealogy is desirable precisely because the political and ethical commitments that follow our analysis never come from either explanation or understanding, but usually from both at once.

From a genealogical perspective, any number of discourses, policies, institu-tions, discursive practices or events may count as valid empirical puzzles in IR. As I have shown in the research on state sovereignty, Western civilisation, chemical weapons or military interventions, asking how and why actors invest their world with meaning can generate novel and useful knowledge on the ways in which the world hangs together. Subsequent questions might include why does the 'Black Atlantic' matter for world politics? Who is a refugee, when and why? How did individual criminal accountability at the international level become possible and what effects does it have on interstate relations? What are transnational networks and how did they emerge in a realm hitherto defined by the modes of organisation exclusively centered on states? How did the environment go global or Asia-Pacific regional? The processes through which individuals and other non-state actors have gained and lost agency, authority and power in world politics always require some form of historical and comparative evaluation. Precisely because it is a method-ology that can be equipped to carry multiple narratives simultaneously – political, ontological, epistemological and ethical – genealogy could come to be elevated as a research tool of first resort in IR.