Note by the editors

Symposium: The Return of Human Nature in IR Theory?

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This is our first symposium. Besides providing a common theme for a set of articles, our symposia aim at making contributors communicate with each other during the entire process. Hence, we first asked a number of scholars whether they wanted to participate. The group then responded on their respective first drafts before the manuscripts were sent out into the referee process. The final articles took into account the critiques of the referees, our editorial comments and a further round of exchange within the group. In this way, we use *JIRD* as a vehicle to connect scholars and foster direct intellectual exchanges among them.

The choice of Human Nature in IR as the theme of the symposium is less far-fetched than it might appear at first sight. There has been a growing dissatisfaction among many IR theorists about most structural theorizing and also unit-level analyses, since they do not thoroughly investigate their foundations. This applies both to constructivist and materialist approaches. The latter rely on assumptions of rationality and self-interest (whether they admit it or not), which can no longer be taken-for-granted. On the constructivist side, 'Identity' has become a buzzword in its theories, and yet is a difficult concept to handle, be it for risks of reification or for the repeated anthropomorphization. Obviously, questions about Human Nature, usually unresolved, linger beneath such discussions. Moreover, the issue of Human Nature has been particularly problematic and hence often sidelined in the different attempts to build theoretical bridges between constructivism and rationalism. As a result, besides occasional and truly laudable attempts (not the least by authors participating in this symposium), the discussion has not pursued very systematically. We hope the present symposium partly redresses this situation.

We were glad to see Annette Freyberg-Inan, Rodney Bruce Hall, Jonathan Mercer and Jennifer Sterling-Folker join as participants in this symposium. Their exchange starts with a discussion of the reasons for the long-lasting neglect of such issues in IR, and continues with a series of critical probes into existing Human Nature assumptions such as rationality, perfectionism and

egoistic self-interest. The symposium ends with a note on a crucially missing assumption, namely the role of emotions for the general understanding of rational (or perhaps: reasonable) behaviour.

Although the authors do surely not recoil from criticizing their particular targets, the symposium also shows the need to think and work together, if we wish to come to grips with so fundamental an issue.