



Dr. Jacqueline Anne Braveboy-Wagner is Professor of Political Science at City College and the Graduate Center. She teaches courses on foreign policy and theories of international relations. She is the author or editor of eleven books and more than a hundred articles, book chapters, reports and papers. Among her recent publications is *Diplomatic Strategies of Nations in the Global South: The Search for Leadership* (2016). In addition to her scholarly work, she has held leadership positions in the Caribbean Studies Association and the International Studies Association (ISA), and founded the Global South Caucus of the ISA.

Ayşe Obali: Your work mostly draws on theories of international relations and foreign policy. What could policymakers learn from IR theory and what could theorists learn from policy?

Dr. Jacqueline Anne Braveboy-Wagner: My real interest is foreign policy, which by nature is highly policy relevant. IR theory has traditionally been system-oriented, so there I focus on extracting what is useful for understanding foreign policy. The policymakers I meet think of IR as foreign policy. Insights we offer to policymakers include ideas about grand strategy, bureaucracy and government, the framing of national interests, the role of leadership, and the interwoven nature of society, culture, and governmental policy. By the same token, we as scholars obviously formulate our theories based on what we see in the so-called “real” world.

AO: What do you think about the “rise of the rest” today? How did the international system change since you published your most recent book?

JBW: My book reflects the power transition which is occurring in the world today: the change from the domination of the West to a more diffuse system in which not only the BRICS but also leading regional states are becoming more influential. But I think that one has to be cautious about this process, which is obviously happening in fits and starts as some countries backtrack economically and sometimes politically. But the process will continue, no doubt. It’s not the same world as in the early 1990s.

AO: What led you to become interested in your area of research, especially in the concept of the Global South?

JBW: My entire career has been devoted to studying the Third World (now “Global South”) which is where I am from. Nothing has changed, except perhaps that the international relations community has finally become more sensitive about the gaps in mainstream IR theorizing when it comes to including Africa, Asia and Latin America. It amazes me that my 2003 book on Global South foreign policy is being listed as pioneering in the use of the term “GS.” But it is really those practical folk at the UN who pioneered the term “South” well before that.

AO: You have been at CUNY for quite some time. What changes have you witnessed here?

JBW: When I first came to the GC, we had many more students and more diversity, largely because of the Ralph Bunche Fellowship program as well as our proximity to the UN. There were enough “Third World” students for me to run a Caribbean seminar for persons in and outside CUNY on regular Fridays, and there was the Africa seminar as well. The problem is that diversity has to occur not just at the student level but at the faculty level. That has not happened at CUNY really, but then again there aren’t many minority faculty in IR nationally anyway. IR remains a very conservative field, but many of us remain hopeful that it will become more inclusive in our lifetimes.