



All Azimuth

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In This Issue

Our new issue presents a culmination of the scholarly discussions exchanged during our 7th Annual All Azimuth Workshop on Global IR, which was held on October 15, 2022, and hosted by Yıldız Technical University, but we are also pleased to include several other projects. Our first four articles focus largely on broader questions about theory-development, engaging both non-Western scholarship but also mainstream theories in making sense of the discipline, theory-building potential, and the diffusion of homegrown research. The latter three, meanwhile, home in on a diagnostic agenda aiming to reveal theoretical, methodological, and pedagogical hindrances to the Turkish IR discipline, as well as sociological trends.

Our first article titled "Global IR Research Programme: From Perplexities to Progressions," by Deepshika Shahi, delves into the Global International Relations (IR) research program to reflect on the problems of approaching the discipline in the fulcrum of either a Western, monolithic, and universalist lens, or a non-Western and parochial one. The article underscores the limitation of local, non-Western knowledge-forms in comprehending the broader global scenario, attributing this challenge to ingrained philosophical conditioned reflexes rooted in Kantian dualism. These reflexes create dichotomies between phenomena-noumena, science-metaphysics, and the West-non-West paradigm. In this context, the article draws inspiration from Chinese, Indian, and Japanese cosmovisions. By doing so, it aims to break down the cognitive barriers perpetuated by the 'one world versus many worlds' mindset. Through this philosophical shift, the research program aspires to propel progressive developments, fostering a more inclusive and interconnected understanding of international relations beyond traditional dichotomies.

Our second article, by Engin Sune, titled "University Western-Centric Moments in Homegrown IR Theories: Dependency, Chinese, and African Schools" critically examines the pervasive influence of Western-centric perspectives in shaping international relations theories. It argues that the historical prevalence of unequal power relations has established the Western world at the core of the global political landscape. This centrality, influenced by Western hegemony, has led to the diffusion of Western political institutions, economic structures, and ideological norms worldwide, particularly impacting the social structures of the Global South. The article argues that homegrown IR theories, while aiming to uncover local motives for theory-making, inherently carry a Western-centric moment due to the uneven spread of Western social structures. To substantiate this claim, the article employs a scientific realist approach to analyze the structure/agent relationship and evaluates the role of non-Western actors. In particular, it critically assesses homegrown theories from Latin America (Dependency School), China (Chinese School of International Relations), and Africa (African School), revealing embedded Western-centric elements within these diverse theoretical initiatives.

Our next article, titled "Realism's Timeless Wisdom and its Relevance for the Global South," by Nicolas A. Beckmann and Onur Erpul, addresses the ongoing efforts to globalize and pluralize the discipline of International Relations (IR). Acknowledging concerns about the Euro-centered nature of IR and the dominance of Anglo-American theories, the article argues against overlooking the enduring value of traditional contributions to the field. While recognizing the importance of contextualizing and critiquing existing theories, the article contends that structural, neoclassical, and especially classical realism offer diverse arguments that directly resonate with audiences in the global South. Emphasizing the relevance of realist

scholarship for the developing world, the article explores commonalities between classical realism and postcolonial theory, suggesting a potential avenue for systematic engagement between these approaches. It advocates for a more balanced approach in globalizing IR, asserting that a discipline solely focused on critiquing classical theories would be incomplete, and the journey toward a globalized discipline should incorporate the valuable insights and reflections of traditional theory.

Jacqueline De Matos Ala provided our fourth article, titled "Are We There Yet? A Global Investigation of Knowledge Inclusion in International Relations Theory Curricula." Her article addresses the prevalent Western-centric foundations of International Relations (IR) theories and the slow but noticeable shift towards incorporating knowledge from the global South. While scholarship has critiqued the Western-centric nature of IR theory and recognized contributions from the global South, the article highlights that the impact and implications of this shift for IR theory curricula have not received sufficient attention. The study investigates whether the demand for knowledge plurality in IR theory research has translated into the development of knowledge plural IR theory curricula. It examines the choices and interpretations made by educators globally in creating such curricula, seeking to understand the factors shaping these decisions. The article reflects on the implications of increased knowledge plural curricula for fostering greater diversity within the discipline, emphasizing the need to explore how this shift manifests in pedagogy across different geographical contexts.

Our next set of articles are broadly interested in exploring IR's disciplinary, pedagogical, and sociological issues in the Turkish context. Our fifth article, by Haluk Özdemir, "The Dark Side of the Moon: An Ever-Fragmenting Discipline and Turkish IR in 'the Outer Periphery,'" investigates the potential of Turkish IR programs in Turkey's "periphery" universities to contribute to the IR discipline, exploring the ways in which a variety of factors stand as an obstacle. The paper thus highlights a significant challenge: the periphery is not only affected by the general core-periphery fragmentation but, as the Turkish case shows, is also collapsing within itself. This internal fragmentation makes the core and periphery appear more integrated, concealing a real division between the periphery and the outer periphery. The outer periphery, largely overlooked by the core, has tangible effects in IR practice, yet its issues remain unaddressed in current literature. Using the Turkish example, the paper identifies four major problems within the outer periphery that impact the periphery and restrict its potential for original contributions. These problems include apathy towards western IR, conspiracy theorizing, chronological historicism, and the outer periphery's influence on the mainstream periphery. The solution to the crisis may require the IR periphery to integrate its outer periphery before we can achieve a more-even playing field in a global and plural discipline.

Our penultimate article, by Cem Savaş, titled "Disciplinary Boundaries and Methodological Issues of Teaching Geopolitics in Turkey" critically examines the portrayal of geopolitics education at Turkish universities, encompassing both undergraduate and graduate levels of Political Science and International Relations (IR) curricula. Geopolitical analysis, traditionally linked to interstate rivalries, is explored beyond a state-centric and hard realist perspective, acknowledging its relevance to intrastate conflicts across various territorial scales. The study challenges the prevalent misconception of geopolitics in Turkey and advocates for a broader, multi-level analysis with a focus on geographical and historical reasoning. Through

a qualitative case study, the article assesses weekly schedules, learning outcomes, content, and objectives of courses within the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) on university websites. The article's main goal is to diagnose problems in the way Turkish IR departments approach geopolitics to help elevate their quality.

Our final article "Socializing IR: Turkish IR Scholars and their Twitter Interactions," authored by Hakan Mehmetcik, Eric Lease Morgan, Melih Kölük, and Galip Yüksel, explores the transformative impact of online social networking services, particularly Twitter, on the engagement patterns of Turkish International Relations (IR) scholars. Acknowledging the profound influence of social media on global communication habits, the study aims to conduct a nuanced analysis of Turkish IR scholars' interactions on Twitter. It recognizes the increasing importance of social media analysis in political science and international relations, utilizing approaches such as network analysis, topic modeling, descriptive statistics, and regression analysis. The study operates under the premise that a collective network exists among Turkish IR scholars, connecting them through interactions, attitudes, and opinions, which can be identified through the analysis of their Twitter data. However, the findings do not support this working assumption, prompting a deeper exploration of the dynamics and nuances within the online interactions of Turkish IR scholars on Twitter.

The All Azimuth Team

Global IR Research Programme: From Perplexities to Progressions

Deepshikha Shahi

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Abstract

Our basic expectations vis-à-vis 'the international' have turned our phenomenal existence into two seemingly irreconcilable cognitive prisons: 'one world' with homogenizing propensities (dominated by the West) and 'many worlds' with heterogenizing predispositions (embodied by the non-West). Every so often, these cognitive prisons—oscillating between the extreme homogenizing propensities of the West and heterogenizing predispositions of the non-West— become obstacles in implementing effective global partnerships that are required to tackle the challenges thrown by global crisis-situations, e.g., the likelihoods of world war, financial crisis, climate change, pandemic, and the like. The agenda of the 'Global IR research programme' has emerged to demolish these cognitive prisons. To this end, this agenda finds rational support from multiple auxiliary theories that derive stimulus from hitherto denigrated knowledge-forms thriving in different corners of the world: e.g., Tianxia (all-under-heaven) from China, Advaita (non-duality) from India, and Mu No Basho (place of nothingness) from Japan. Nevertheless, the conditioned reflexes of many IR researchers compel them to receive the emergent knowledge-forms by correlating their 'source' and 'scope': generally, the knowledge-forms having their source in the West are granted a global scope, whereas the knowledge-forms having their source in the non-West are given a local scope; it is often suspected that the local non-Western knowledge-forms cannot grasp the larger global scenario. Philosophically, these conditioned reflexes emanate from Kantian dualism, which forms disconnected opposites of phenomena-noumena, science-metaphysics, West-non-West etc. This article reveals how the Global IR research programme—inspired by the Chinese, Indian and Japanese cosmovisions—strives to demolish the cognitive prisons of 'one world versus many worlds', thereby ensuring the prospective progressions of this research programme.

Keywords: Global IR, Lakatosian research programme, Chinese IR, Indian IR, Japanese IR

1. Introduction

We are born with our basic expectations; with them we turn the world into 'our world' but must then live for ever in the prison of our world... But [then again], it is we who create our 'prisons' and we can also, critically, demolish them.¹

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¹ Imre Lakatos, "Falsification and the Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes," in *The Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes: Philosophical Papers – Volume 1*, ed. John Worrall and Gregory Currie, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 20.

Our basic expectations vis-à-vis ‘the international’ have turned our phenomenal existence into two seemingly irreconcilable cognitive prisons: ‘one world’ with homogenizing propensities (dominated by the West) and ‘many worlds’ with heterogenizing predispositions (embodied by the non-West). Every so often, these cognitive prisons—oscillating between the extreme homogenizing propensities of the West and heterogenizing predispositions of the non-West—become obstacles in implementing effective global partnerships that are required to tackle the challenges thrown by global crisis-situations, e.g., the spectres of world war, financial crisis, climate change, pandemic, and the like. Of late, several IR scholars have emphasized the need to craft innovative pathways to territorially de-center IR knowledge and rationally reconcile the West–non-West binaries. Against this backdrop, the ‘Global IR research programme’ has emerged as a resourceful framework. As the Global IR research programme seeks to territorially de-center IR knowledge and rationally reconcile the West–non-West binaries, it finds intellectual support from multiple auxiliary theories that derive stimulus from hitherto denigrated knowledge-forms flourishing in different corners of the world: for instance, one can mention *Tianxia* (all-under-heaven), *Dao* (the way), and *Guanxi* (relationality) from China; *Advaita* (nonduality), *Anvikshaki* (science of enquiry), and *Dharma* (right conduct) from India; *Mu No Basho* (place of nothingness), *Basso Ostinato* (recurrent underlying motif), and *Engi* (occurring relationality) from Japan; *Gumannyi Sotsializm* (humane socialism) from Russia; *zikir*, *tekrar*, and *tevil* (repetition, lack of repetition, interpretation) from Turkey; *Margén de Maniobra* (search for latitude) and *Runa* (human and non-human) from Latin America; and *Ubuntu* (collective personhood) from Africa, among others.

Nonetheless, the conditioned reflexes of many IR researchers and practitioners compel them to receive the emergent knowledge-forms by constrictively correlating their ‘source’ and ‘scope.’ Generally, the knowledge-forms having their source in the West are granted a global scope, whereas the knowledge-forms having their source in the non-West are given a local scope. These conditioned reflexes hinder the progress of the Global IR research programme. Because the state-of-the-art Global IR research programme remains expansively enriched with the knowledge-forms having their source in the non-West, it is usually suspected that these local non-Western knowledge-forms cannot grasp the larger global scenario. Philosophically, the cognitive prisons of ‘one world versus many worlds’ emanate from Kantian dualism that forms the rigid disconnected opposites of phenomena-noumena, science-metaphysics, subject-object, self-other, West–non-West, and so on. Going beyond the standard Kantian dualism, this article intends to substantiate how the Global IR research programme—driven by a cluster of Chinese, Indian, and Japanese cosmovisions—can activate a set of heuristic techniques to reconnect the Kant-inspired disconnected opposites, thereby demolishing the cognitive prisons that separate the one and many worlds. In this context, it is important to bear in mind that the selective focus on Chinese, Indian, and Japanese cosmovisions has been maintained for brevity purposes only. That is to say, the theoretical and praxeological scope of the Global IR research programme is in no way restricted to these cosmovisions; many more hitherto underexplored (non-)Western knowledge-forms can come forward to contribute to the Global IR research programme.

This article is divided into three sections. The first section explains the persisting perplexities related to the Global IR research programme. It offers an overview of how the cognitive prisons of ‘one world versus many worlds’ lead to an ambiguous appraisal of Global

IR, which, in turn, points to some unsettled disputes in IR study: namely, (i) homogenous versus heterogenous, (ii) nationalism versus internationalism, and (iii) geographical versus philosophical. The second section locates the Kantian thinking at the source of IR's familiar cognitive prisons, and then clarifies how the de-Kantian auxiliary theories can overcome these cognitive prisons, thereby vindicating Global IR from its alleged ambiguities and allowing it to transform some of the unsettled disputes in IR study. Finally, the third section sets out to enumerate several heuristic techniques for the prospective progressions of the Global IR research programme.

2. Global IR Research Programme: The Persisting Perplexities

One of the persisting perplexities facing the Global IR research programme is to rationalize how we concomitantly inhabit the one and many worlds. In conventional IR study, the answer to the question of one-and-many-ness of the world oscillates between two incompatible poles: (i) one world with many theories; and (ii) many worlds with many theories. A few IR scholars argue that we live in the 'one world' of globalizing capitalism that revolves around a single hegemonic power.² This one world (historically dominated by the West) can be explained via different theoretical approaches that perform a 'multi-level' or 'multi-regional' enquiry of world politics.³ Customarily, the liberal, realist and constructivist theoretical approaches inform policy debates.⁴ By contrast, other scholars call for an openness to 'many worlds' that struggle for 'a just world peace' and incorporate the voices of indigenous people often relegated to the realm of myths/beliefs.⁵ Though these voices are occasionally heard to prevent strategists from the temptation of hassled closure in policy-framing, they barely constitute real policy-measures.⁶ Still, these voices result in 'worlding', i.e., the making of many worlds (also embodied by the non-West).⁷

Noticeably, the making of one and/or many worlds breeds rival theories. As these rival theories (that intensify the contestations of 'one world versus many worlds') aim to develop a multifaceted understanding of world politics, they end up creating the problem of epistemological relativism. Cristina Inoue and Arlene B. Tickner warn:

'Worlding' entails not only processes by which... 'we' determine who we are in relation to 'others'...but also, how such sense-making exercises...actually constitute the worlds that we inhabit...While pluralizing the International Relations discipline is highly desirable, a few dilemmas emerge, such as how to avoid falling into spiral of epistemological relativism, how to construct a hybrid space between uniformity and difference...and how perhaps to create a middle path.⁸

It is the goal to construct this 'middle path' or 'hybrid space' between uniformity and difference that steered the schemes of Global IR. To begin with, the agenda to 'bring the non-

² Andrew Hurrell, "One World? Many Worlds? The Place of Regions in the Study of International Society," *International Affairs* 83, no. 1 (2007): 127-146.

³ Carmen Gebhard, "One Word, Many Actors: Levels of Analysis in International Relations," in *International Relations*, ed. Stephen McGlinchey, (Bristol, UK: E-International Relations Publishing, 2017), 32-45.

⁴ Stephen M. Walt, "International Relations: One World, Many Theories," *Foreign Affairs*, no. 110 (1998): 29-46.

⁵ Amaya Querejazu, "Encountering the Pluriverse: Looking for Alternatives in Other Worlds," *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional* 59, no. 2 (2016): 1-16.

⁶ Lorenzo Zambonardi, "Politics Is Too Important to Be Left to Political Scientists: A Critique of the Theory-Policy Nexus in International Relations," *European Journal of International Relations* 22, no. 1 (2016): 3-23.

⁷ Arlene B. Tickner and David Blaney, *Claiming the International* (New York City, NY: Routledge, 2013).

⁸ Christina Inoue and Arlene B. Tickner, "Many Worlds, Many Theories?" *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional* 59, no. 2 (2016): 2.

West in' became the pivotal point of Global IR.⁹ Nonetheless, the agenda to bring the non-West in—or 'include the non-Western perspectives'—was shared by some parallel strands of non-Western IR, including post- and de-colonial IR. Edward Said's notion of 'contrapuntal reading' tried to mix the 'global moment of humanism' with the 'postcolonial moment of listening-to-and-hearing the voices of/from alternative loci of enunciation';¹⁰ in effect, it attempted to achieve an 'anti-universalizing' fusion between Western exceptionalism and non-Western exceptionalism.¹¹ Also, Walter D. Mignolo's concept of 'delinking' expected the non-Western knowledge-forms to dissociate from two foremost Western-centric macro-narratives: capitalism and communism. As this plan of de-linking backed pluriversality, it propagated 'plural local exceptionalisms', not 'plural global universalisms.'¹² Far from the intent to demolish the cognitive prisons of 'one world versus many worlds', the 'non-assimilative stance' of post/de-colonial IR restored them by replicating Kantian dualism: the Western IR separated Western worlds (as subject) from non-Western worlds (as object), whereas the post-/de-colonial IR reversed this knowledge-situation and separated non-Western worlds (as subject) from Western worlds (as object).¹³

Marco Vieira draws inspirations from the ideas of Frantz Fanon and Jacques Lacan to suggest that the attempts to recover non-Western forms of self-identification are an illusory psychological mechanism to stabilise hybrid postcolonial subjectivities, not an actual restoration of non-colonial purified forms of existing in the world.¹⁴ He argues that 'the asymmetrical encounter between the colonised and the coloniser has fundamentally and extensively redefined human subjectivity in a way that largely negates decolonial emancipatory projects. This is the result of the all-encompassing penetration of Western coloniality (in its political, economic and cultural representations) into the spaces of pre-colonial or uncolonised forms of subjectivity.' According to Kosuke Shimizu, many post-/de-colonialists have already pointed out that the 'Western worlds' (as subject) frequently condemned the so-called outdated, barbaric and uncivilized characteristics of the 'non-Western worlds' (as object).¹⁵ Nevertheless, in the eyes of the non-Western worlds, Western modernity was problematic. This was because the non-Western worlds (as subject) wanted to find a way for the reconciliation between Western modernity and their local cultures by problematizing the Western worlds as 'other' (or object). But then, in its attempt to find a way for the reconciliation between Western modernity and their local cultures by problematizing the Western worlds as 'other' (or object), the post-/de-colonial scholarships of the non-Western worlds ended up embracing the same Western Kantian style of dualist knowledge-production that endorsed subject-object separation. That is the reason why Richard Ned Lebow argues that 'even postcolonialism [and de-colonialism], are Western in origin, reflect

⁹ Amitav Acharya, "Advancing Global IR: Challenges, Contentions, and Contributions," *International Studies Review* 18, no. 1 (2016): 4-15.

¹⁰ Geeta Chowdhry, "Edward Said and Contrapuntal Reading: Implications for Critical Interventions in International Relations," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 36, no. 1 (2007): 101-116.

¹¹ Joan Cocks, "A New Cosmopolitanism? V.S. Naipaul and Edward Said," *Constellations* 7, no. 1 (2000): 46-63.

¹² Lucy Taylor "Decolonizing International Relations: Perspectives from Latin America," *International Studies Review* 14, no. 3 (2012): 386-400.

¹³ Deepshikha Shahi, *Sufism: A Theoretical Intervention in Global International Relations* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2020).

¹⁴ Marco Vieira, "The Decolonial Subject and the Problem of Non-Western Authenticity," *Postcolonial Studies* 22, no. 2 (2019): 150-167.

¹⁵ Kosuke Shimizu, "A Non-Western Attempt at Hegemony: Lessons from the Second-Generation Kyoto School for International Pluralism and Its Discontents," *Global Studies Quarterly* 2, no. 4 (2022): 1-8.

Western concerns, Western ways of thinking, and Western-conceived projects.’¹⁶

Though Global IR made efforts to break free from the shackles of Western-conceived projects, it was lamented that Global IR was attempting to ‘reinvent the wheel’ by imitating what was initiated by post-/de-colonial IR. Some scholars suggested that instead of being a loose platform to support the normative concerns of prevailing non-Western perspectives, Global IR must focus on ‘being not only normative but also intellectual.’¹⁷ Here, the recommendation of ‘being intellectual’ implied the search for Global IR’s distinctive ‘conceptual cores’¹⁸ or ‘ideological-theoretical dimensions.’¹⁹ Though several offshoots of Global IR succeeded in forming ‘middle-range-theories’, the dominance of American-based scholars vetoed the making of new full-fledged IR theories. John J. Mearsheimer remarked:

The dominance of American-based scholars is reinforced by the fact that they have developed a rich variety of theories that are very useful for comprehending the politics of the international system... This means... there is not a lot of room for new theories or even major twists on existing theories... there are limited opportunities in 2015 for scholars outside the United States – as well inside it – to develop wholly new theories.²⁰

This skeptical attitude toward the prospects of forming new full-fledged IR theories led to the apprehension that Global IR’s ‘project of turning Hoffman’s “American science” into something more sensitive to alternative... approaches [was merely a general cry] ... translating this general cry into real theoretical proposals [was] far more difficult.’²¹ Even when Global IR managed to build concepts from non-Western contexts and wanted to apply them not only locally but also to the larger global canvas, the importance attached to the use of local concepts created the confusion that Global IR demanded ethnocentric national traditions. Audrey Alejandro noted:

By incentivising the internationalisation of IR around the ‘national’ traditions, the ‘Global IR’ literature essentialises and legitimises certain positions as being the national – i.e., ‘the Indian/[Chinese/Japanese]’ – tradition... By doing so, it not only collapses the complexities of the co-construction of identities on the ground, but also subsumes it to the image of ‘Indianness/[Chineseness/Japaneseness]’ that the critical literature projects on to Indian/[Chinese/Japanese] scholars... I argue that Global IR is an ethno IR... Quoting a sentence from Amitav Acharya as an illustration: ‘Alienation occurs when one is asked to view the world through a Waltzian, Gramscian or Foucauldian prism instead of a Gandhian or Fanonian one’... This posture is not only damaging intellectually, it is also flirting dangerously with ethnicism.²²

Alejandro’s annotations suffer from three severe slipups. First of all, they not only presume that any reference to ‘the national’ (e.g., Indianness, Chineseness, Japaneseness etc.) is bound to bear a homogenous tone, but also misconstrue ‘the national’ (with possible

¹⁶ Richard Ned Lebow, “Reason, Cause, and Cultural Arrogance,” *E-International Relations*, April 11, 2023. <https://www.e-ir.info/2023/04/11/reason-cause-and-cultural-arrogance/> (accessed date July 1, 2023)

¹⁷ Michael N. Barnett and Kathryn Sikkink, “SIS Global IR Dialogues, Session 1,” *School of International Service, AU*, February 24, 2021. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F5v0PbJfjGE> (accessed date July 1, 2023)

¹⁸ Patrick T. Jackson, “SIS Global IR Dialogues, Session 1,” *School of International Service, AU*, February 24, 2021. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F5v0PbJfjGE> (accessed date July 1, 2023)

¹⁹ Felix Anderl and Antonia Witt, “Problematising the Global in Global IR,” *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 49, no. 1 (2020): 32-57.

²⁰ John J. Mearsheimer, “Benign Hegemony,” *International Studies Review* 18, no. 1 (2016): 148.

²¹ Jordi Q. Arias, “Towards a Truly Global IR Theory?: The Middle East and the Upcoming Debate,” *Insight Turkey* 18, no. 2 (2016): 184.

²² Audrey Alejandro, “The National and The International,” in *Western Dominance in International Relations? The Internationalization of IR in Brazil and India* (New York City, NY: Routledge, 2019), 118-119; Alejandro, “The Recursive Paradox,” 181-182.

baggage of ethnicism) and ‘the international’ as mutually discordant domains. Second, they restrictively correlate the terms Waltzian, Gramscian, Foucauldian, Gandhian, Fanonian etc. with their ‘geographical sources’, not to their ‘philosophical forms.’ And third, they fail to distinguish between ‘non-Western IR’ (including post-/de-colonial IR) and ‘Global IR’, thereby furnishing an inaccurate account of the Global IR undertakings.

Global IR neither imagines ‘the national’ as a homogenous conceptual category nor establishes ‘the national’ and ‘the international’ as mutually discordant domains. Indian IR emphasizes the need to ‘avoid a monolithic conception of IR that emerges from India.’²³ Acknowledging the fundamental ‘solidarity of life’ in the national and international domains, Indian IR argues that the ‘progress in the national [local] domain demands progress in the [international/] global domain and vice versa.’²⁴ Announcing the absence of a singular Sinocentrism, Chinese IR confirms that the ‘Chinese ideas enter into IR theory...not as the singular solution, but as one of many options.’²⁵ Making an effort to synchronise the physical, psychological and institutional aspects of worldly existence, Chinese IR introduces the principle of ‘world-ness’ that transcends the norms of (inter-)nationality: the principle of world-ness instructs to analyse the affairs of the world by a ‘world standard’ rather than a ‘national standard.’²⁶ Furthermore, Japanese IR asserts that “there is no such thing as Japanese IR theory...there is a variety of ways of thinking relations between the self and the other, the West and the East...local and global. They become political only when interpreted in a particular space-time intersection. This is what we call singularity.”²⁷ Exceeding this understanding of singularity, Japanese IR enquires how IR discourses cause suffering by victimizing peoples for the sake of temporally-spatially fixed ideals of national sovereignty or world order which are nothing more than passing ‘temporal visions’ or ‘subjective snapshots.’²⁸

In fact, the call for Global IR underlines the need to avoid ethnocentrism and exceptionalism irrespective of ‘source and form’: as such, the ‘Global’ credentials of any given theoretical frameworks (e.g., Waltzian, Gramscian, Foucauldian, Gandhian, Fanonian, and so on) have to be judiciously assessed on the basis of not only their ‘geographical sources’ (e.g., Western or non-Western) but also their ‘philosophical forms’ (e.g., dualist or monist).²⁹ While varied shades of dualist and monist philosophical forms have their geographical sources in the West and the non-West, the qualifications of Global IR theoretical frameworks rest on their ability to thrash the ‘West-non-West binary’: the impact of colonialism yesterday and globalization today have diluted the pristine origins of the labels ‘Western’ and ‘non-Western’; in the Global IR debate, these labels lose their analytical significance and exist only as terms of

²³ Siddharth Mallavarapu, “Theory Talk #63: Siddharth Mallavarapu – Siddharth Mallavarapu on International Asymmetries, Ethnocentrism, and a View on IR from India,” *Theory Talks*, February 09, 2014. <http://www.theory-talks.org/2014/02/theory-talk-63.html> (accessed date July 1, 2023)

²⁴ Deepshikha Shahi, “Advaita in International Relations: A Philosophical Restoration,” in *Advaita as a Global International Relations Theory* (New York City, NY: Routledge, 2019), 28-29.

²⁵ Linsay Cunningham-Cross and William A. Callahan, “Ancient Chinese Power, Modern Chinese Thought,” *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 4, no. 4 (2011): 362.

²⁶ Zhao Tingyang, “Rethinking Empire from a Chinese Concept of ‘All-Under-Heaven’ (Tian-xia).” *Social Identities* 12, no. 1 (2006): 29-41.

²⁷ Atsuko Watanabe and Felix Rösch, “Introduction: Japan as Potential: Communicating across Boundaries for a Global International Relations,” in *Modern Japanese Political Thought and International Relations*, ed. Atsuko Watanabe and Felix Rösch, (London, UK: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018), 9.

²⁸ Kosuke Shimizu, “Buddhism and the Question of Relationality in International Relations,” *Uluslararası İlişkiler Dergisi* 18, no. 70 (2021): 36.

²⁹ Amitav Acharya, “Global International Relations (IR) and Regional Worlds,” *International Studies Quarterly* 58, no. 4 (2014): 647.

convenience.³⁰

Contrasting a few premature works that engaged with non-Western knowledge-forms and ended up fixating on national schools with an inward-looking character, more recent literature on Global IR adopts an ‘embedded observer approach’ wherein the non-Western scholarships are treated as those ‘situated dialogues’ that seek to creatively open up spaces for critical discussions with counter-hegemonic potential both locally and beyond; surely, this kind of approach appreciates the non-Western agency without reproducing ethnocentrism and exceptionalism.³¹ Belying Mearsheimer’s forebodings, several scholars have aroused a range of non-ethnocentric Chinese, Indian, and Japanese cosmovisions to form new full-fledged Global IR theories. Chinese IR borrowed from the Confucian worldview to design the Tianxia theory (‘all-under-heaven’).³² Though this theory is criticized for having an uncritical attitude toward ethnocentrism, Xiaoting Li explains how the ‘dialogic spirit’ enables this theory to ‘keep exceptionalism at bay’:

Zhao...states candidly that Tianxia is a utopian ideal...that has never really existed in Chinese history...Nevertheless, in Zhao’s...opinion, that a utopia is hard to realize does not detract from its latent significance, which lies in reminding us of the discrepancy between ideal and reality. Zhao...admits that such discrepancies were nothing new in the historical Chinese empire, which failed to live up to the ideal of Tianxia in many quarters...this admission undercuts exceptionalist claims about China’s ability to make this world a better place...if China is no paragon in pursuing the realization of Tianxia, then there is no reason why Tianxia must become a Sinocentric order...Zhao’s more recent understandings of Tianxia...can serve as an intellectual bulwark against exceptionalism...the need for more...productive dialogues is more pronounced than ever among the entire East Asian IR community.³³

While the Tianxia principles can serve as an intellectual bulwark against exceptionalism (including the potential danger of nativism associated with ‘national schools’), it is significant to keep in mind that there was much less interest in India in developing an IR school of its own because such a theoretical mission seemed to accentuate the likelihood of self-centrism. Acharya reported that this risk was foreseen by Kanti Bajpai, before anyone took note of India’s rise, when he warned that efforts to develop an IR theory out of India might carry the perils of lapsing into unsuspecting nativism or pursuing some essentialist Indian prophecy.³⁴ Yet, the awareness of the potential danger of nativism related to ‘national schools’ did not undervalue the promises of cultural and spiritual knowledge for crafting an Indian IR theory. When Deepshikha Shahi and Gennaro Ascione explored the ancient Indian philosophy of Advaita (‘non-duality’) for formulating a post-Western IR theory, they explicated how the ‘Advaitic philosophical insights surmount the narrow confines of nativism, ethnocentrism and other forms of ideological essentialism’:

The Indian scholars are apprehensive about the supposed nativist outlook [of] a ‘dualist’ form of knowledge wherein Indian IR theory could acquire an ethnocentric overtone: an Indian or

³⁰ Amitav Acharya and Barry Buzan, *The Making of Global International Relations* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

³¹ Sinan Chu, “Fantastic Theories and Where to Find Them: Rethinking Interlocutors in Global IR,” *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 50, no. 3 (2022): 700-729.

³² Zhao Tingyang. *All Under Heaven: The Tianxia System for a Possible World Order*, trans. Joseph E. Harroff, (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2021).

³³ Xiaoting Li, “Saving National IR from Exceptionalism: The Dialogic Spirit and Self-Reflection in Chinese IR Theory,” *International Studies Review* 23, no. 4 (2021): 1408-1409, 1419.

³⁴ Amitav Acharya, “Dialogue and Discovery: In Search of International Relations Theories beyond the West,” *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 39, no. 30 (2011): 619-637.

Hindu or Asian or Eastern theory of IR in opposition to the non-Indian or non-Hindu or non-Asian or non-Eastern theory of IR. However, the very possibility of looking at knowledge through the prism of ‘Advaitic monism’ eliminates the likelihood of manufacturing a dualist form of knowledge...Unfortunately those who pejoratively shout ‘Nativism!’ have no notion at all of unfallen or monist regenerative nativism...the monist regenerative nativism is Advaita...*atmanubhuti* [non-dual self-consciousness] in all its forms...Advaita, which makes allowance for a merger between the ‘self’ and the ‘other(s)’ at the level of consciousness, qualifies as a non-nativist...epistemological resource for theorising post-Western IR.³⁵

As the Advaita theory appeals to invest in ‘dualism-monism reconciliation’ as an unexplored dialogic strategy to ‘induce a Global spirit in IR,’³⁶ Japanese IR theory—enriched with multiple knowledge-forms (including Nishida Kitaro’s philosophy)—advises to ‘reframe’ the idea of dialogue while communicating across boundaries for a Global IR. Notably, Nishida’s focus on abstract theorising makes it difficult to assess if he was sufficiently attentive to those neighbouring countries whose perception of Japan’s leadership role might be different from his own, but he never supported Japan’s imperialist monologue. Refuting an ‘imperialist gaze of IR’, Atsuko Watanabe and Felix Rösch opine:

Aiming to going global...might paradoxically run the risk of reiterating rather than dissolving the imperialist gaze of IR by falling back to a hegemonically imposed monologue...To avoid the risk...the dialogue we want to investigate is a product of “difference”...communicating globally and therefore beyond boundaries does not merely refer to what is generically common and human; rather it considers humanity to be the product of fruitful intercourse between its members...mankind’s division into many cultures...Our interest is therefore “excess”...“different pathways” to understand difference as excess...Better paraphrased as “universal singularity”...Nishida’s emphasis on *Kobutsu (das Einzelne)*...maintains that the “universal” is not fixed or timeless, but an open-ended project to be built according to the given historical circumstances by all those who share a commitment to the subversion of relations of domination within and beyond IR.³⁷

These non-ethnocentric/non-exceptionalist Chinese, Indian, and Japanese auxiliary theories approve multiple dialogic pathways to boost the research agenda of Global IR—i.e., the agenda to *territorially de-center IR knowledge* and *rationally reconcile the West–non-West binaries*. In so doing, they enable the Global IR research programme to transform the ongoing disputes in IR study: i.e., (i) homogenous versus heterogenous, (ii) nationalism versus internationalism, and (iii) geographical versus philosophical. The next section revisits these ongoing disputes and enlightens how the aforementioned Chinese, Indian, and Japanese auxiliary theories of the Global IR research programme are better equipped to transform them.

3. Global IR Research Programme: The Conceivable Comebacks

When IR study gets involved with divergent Western and non-Western voices in the process of responding to global crisis-situations engulfing the present-day neoliberal world order, it inevitably faces a core unresolved tension: i.e., the tension between the ‘single/homogenous’ and ‘plural/heterogenous’ depictions of political realities. F. V. Kratochwil states:

³⁵ Deepshikha Shahi and Gennaro Ascione, “Rethinking the Absence of Non-Western International Relations Theory in India: ‘Advaitic Monism’ as an Alternative Epistemological Resource,” *European Journal of International Relations* 22, no. 2 (2016): 317.

³⁶ Deepshikha Shahi, “The Advaitic Theory of International Relations: Reconciling Dualism and Monism in the Pursuit of the ‘Global,’” in *Advaita as a Global International Relations Theory* (New York City, NY: Routledge, 2019), 111.

³⁷ Watanabe and Rösch, “Introduction,” 2-3

[Q]uite different from the...argument that we are part of just another episode of the [single/homogenous] relentless historical process leading to ever more inclusive forms of political organization, the spread of universalism [by Western IR] is counteracted by the strong assertion of particularities [pluralities/heterogeneities by non-Western IR] ...because the packed imagery of the visionary global culture is either trivial or shallow.³⁸

In Western IR, the imagery of a single/homogenous global culture rides on a logical divide between the domains of ‘national/hierarchical’ and ‘international/anarchical’: one begins by accepting the conceptual dichotomy that the national and international domains are governed by separate organizing principles of hierarchy and anarchy respectively; in due course, the wearing away of nation-state’s territorial trap flattens this hierarchy-anarchy divide, thereby making more room for a global culture. M. N. Barnett and K. Sikkink elaborate:

[IR] was organized around the concept of anarchy [absence of world government]...and state [container of hierarchy], radiating power from the center to the territorial border, where it comes to a dead halt...anarchy narrative shaped a post-Second World War research agenda... Under the shadow of the cold war...when the once-neglected study of international political economy finally got the attention it deserved...a defining theme was...how the rise of global corporations could undermine the state’s autonomy and sovereignty. Beginning in the 1980s, and picking up steam in the 1990s, [there was a] desire to find an exit option from the [nation-state’s] territorial trap (Agnew 1994) ... [After] the end of the cold war...though the label of [IR] has had clear staying power, scholars of [IR] have gone global as they have become more comfortable with operating outside the [nation-state’s] territorial trap.³⁹

By operating outside the nation-state’s territorial trap, IR scholars of the West (or global North) perceive a disciplinary move away from the infamous hierarchy-anarchy-divide: when IR relaxes the national/hierarchical and international/anarchical divide, the planet shrinks and the interaction between different parts of the world increases, thereby marking the arrival of a single/homogenous global culture. But IR scholars of the non-West/global South push for a plural/heterogenous global culture and hold another opinion: ‘the nation-state in the global North was an accomplishment, while in the global South it was a project, needing to solidify its territorial base...[Consequently], scholars of the global South developed a range of theories – including dependency, postcolonial, world-systems...for them, hierarchy and not anarchy seemed to be the defining organizing principle of IR; [furthermore, IR] was always global.’

For IR scholars of the non-West/global South, IR was always global not only because the hierarchized positionality of the non-West/global South in the colonial period had worldwide impacts, but also because the rise of the non-West/global South against the decline of the West/global North in the post-2007 financial crisis phase is likely to have worldwide effects. But these ‘worldwide impacts/effects’—understood as ‘the global’ in post-/de-colonial or other non-Western IR theories—feed on the same Kantian ‘time-space-bounded’ human identities as expressed in Western IR theories. Like Western IR theories, these non-Western IR theories adhere to Kantian geographical-centrism, whereby human beings are scientifically placed in the phenomenal world-in-appearance (and prohibited from metaphysically entering into the noumenal world-in-itself). In the phenomenal world-in-appearance, human beings cannot experience an absence of time and space: Kant assumes that human beings always experience

³⁸ Friedrich V. Kratochwil, “Politics, Norms and Peaceful Change,” *Review of International Studies* 24, no. 5 (1998): 215.

³⁹ Michael N. Barnett and Kathryn Sikkink, “From International Relations to Global Society,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Science*, ed. Robert E. Godin, (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2011), 748-768.

in time and space.⁴⁰ So, the geographically-centred time-space-bounded categories of cultures, civilizations, societies, regions, states, etc., become necessary for determining human identities.⁴¹ So long as human identities are determined via geographically-centred time-space-bounded categories, the technologically meditated realities of ‘the global’ (unfolding in the global North or global South) are best defined as ‘compression of time and space’ or ‘annihilation of space by time.’⁴² But then, this technologically meditated compression/annihilation is not enough to break free from the territorial trap. One still grapples with the ‘territorial trap of the territorial trap:’⁴³ even if a state’s territory is not taken as a political ideal, the subsequent trap of understanding territory largely as the ‘physical substratum’ of the sovereign nation-state persists. Thus, a kind of re-territorialization occurs, whereby the West and the non-West continue ‘to be seen as [time-space] bounded [categories]...defined by their difference from the other places which lay outside their borders.’⁴⁴ Not surprisingly, some scholars identify a ‘West-West divide’ when they allocate the ‘Kantian paradise’ to the Europeans and the ‘Hobbesian world’ to the Americans.⁴⁵ What is more, other scholars detect a ‘West–non-West divide’ when they grapple with the problems of a ‘transcultural Kant’: e.g., the problems of reception that lead to a deliberate restructuring of Kant’s philosophy in Asia.⁴⁶ Since the Kantian dualist knowledge-situation, along with its polarities of phenomena-noumena, science-metaphysics and subject-object, supplies a hackneyed IR theory/practice that remains anchored in geographically-centred ideas of territorialization, this kind of ‘West-West divide’ and ‘West–non-West divide’ is logically expected in the reception of Kant’s philosophy.

In a nutshell, the geographically-centred ideas of territorialization arising from Kantian dualism continue to control plural homogenous and/or heterogenous human identities; ‘any notion of deterritorialization involves traumatic losses of meaning and very real identity crisis.’⁴⁷ Undeniably, Kantian dualism—manifesting itself as rigid polarities between phenomena-noumena, science-metaphysics and subject-object, etc.—exercised a longstanding impact on IR study.⁴⁸ Kant chose to cut off the noumenal world (‘moral reasons’) from the phenomenal world (‘causal chains of constant conjunctions’) with an objective to establish peace in a cosmopolitan world order. However, his causal explanations of the phenomenal world were fraught with ‘ethical dilemmas’, which in turn, ended up naturalizing a ‘divisive politics.’ Analysing from a *Tianxia* perspective, Zhao Tingyang stated:

Kant [planned]...the ideal order of the commonwealth of autonomous sovereign states. [However], such perspectives cannot deal with the challenges of the deep conflicts of self-interest and culture... Before the world becomes a *world of shared co-existence*... Kant’s ideal could perhaps be put into practice in relatively favourable [homogenous] cultural

⁴⁰ Andrew Ward, *Kant: The Three Critiques* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2006).

⁴¹ Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy, *What Is Civilization? And Other Essays* (Great Barrington, MA: Lindisfarne Press, 1989).

⁴² Justin Rosenberg, “Globalization Theory: A Post Mortem,” *International Politics* 42 (2005): 2-74.

⁴³ Nisha Shah, “The Territorial Trap of the Territorial Trap: Global Transformation and the Problem of the State’s Two Territories,” *International Political Sociology* 6, no. 1 (2012): 57-76.

⁴⁴ Doreen Massey, “Part Two: Unpromising Associations,” in *For Space* (London, UK: SAGE, 2005), 40.

⁴⁵ Stuart Elden and Luiza Bialasiewicz, “The New Geopolitics of Division and the Problem of a Kantian Europe,” *Review of International Studies* 32, no. 4 (2006): 626.

⁴⁶ Alain-Marc Rieu, “The Kantian Model: Confucianism and the Modern Divide,” in *Cultivating Personhood: Kant and Asian Philosophy*, ed. Stephen R. Palmquist, (Berlin, GER: De Gruyter, 2011), 741.

⁴⁷ James McDougall, “Reterritorializations: Localizing Global Studies in South China,” *Global-E*, March 23, 2017. <https://globalejournal.org/print/pdf/node/2761> (accessed date July 1, 2023)

⁴⁸ Heikki Patomäki and Colin Wight, “After Postpositivism? The Promises of Critical Realism,” *International Studies Quarterly* 44, no. 2 (2000): 213-237.

conditions (like Europe) but is powerless to address adequately the political problems of the entire [heterogenous] world – [e.g.,] civilizational clashes, global financial warfare... The concept of human rights implies all sorts of ‘ethical dilemmas.’ Since every individual’s rights are absolute, then what to do about disputes between different individuals involving the violation of their rights? And what if the human rights of one geographic region and another geographic region were to come into conflict?...Modern politics...is obsessed with drawing all sorts of “borders” ...Individual rights are a boundary for individual and sovereignty is a boundary for nation-states...these are part of a basic logic that splits up the world...to protect all these boundary divisions, modern politics is focused in seeking out external enemies...To clearly demarcate oneself from another, one need only to turn the original state of [noumenal] non-opposition into one of [phenomenal] oppositional conflict.⁴⁹

For Kant, a scientific enquiry occurs when the ‘subjects’ encounter the geographically-centered phenomenal things that they give to themselves as ‘objects’ of knowledge-production. Surely, the moral-ethical knowledge does not originate from an encounter between the subjects and the geographically-centered phenomenal things, but from a noumenal metaphysical critique (often specified as ‘metaphysics of morals’ by Kant). Though Kant is not dismissive of metaphysics in favour of science, he endorses a discrepancy between the phenomenal and noumenal process of knowledge-production: while the phenomenal zone permits scientific knowledge-production, the noumenal zone allows metaphysical knowledge-production. But this Kantian dualism, which limits the ability of the subjects (i.e., actors or scholars who study actors) to a divisive politics that remains driven by a phenomenal geo-centric temporal-spatial logic, becomes blind not only to diverse forms of behaviour, dynamics and actors in world politics, but also to its own restricted scientific outlooks.⁵⁰ Instead, the scientific-metaphysical-project of Advaita discloses that the subjects can surpass the divisible temporal-spatial logic of phenomenal many-ness and act in accordance with the indivisible noumenal oneness: here, the subjects as ‘*jivanmukta*’ are defined as disinterested observers of the changing phenomenal world who remain unaffected by the fortunes of their personal lives and the vicissitudes of worldly temporal-spatial settings. Deepshikha Shahi clarifies:

The subject (as *jivanmukta*) acts in the phenomenal world, but does not derive inspirations from the divisible temporal-spatial logic of phenomenal many-ness...it is significant to be mindful of the continuous existence of a vast populace (subjects/actors) across the globe who have been demonstrating the capabilities to transcend the divisible temporal-spatial logic of phenomenal many-ness, and to act in accordance with the monist principle of indivisible noumenal oneness...a few Americans who encountered the charges of sedition...for speaking out against the divisible temporal-spatial logic of the First World War...a few Germans affiliated to the groups like White Rose who...confronted the charges of execution while protesting against the...Nazi Germany and defending the *temporally-spatially indivisible conscience of humanity* during the Second World War...[the] Indians who lost their lives while...chasing Gandhi’s policy which declared that the freedom from British colonialism could be attained not by the assertion of temporally-spatially divided identities, but by losing them...the Advaita Global IR theory affirms that we...regularly can and occasionally do derive direct inspirations from noumenal oneness.⁵¹

This ‘noumenal oneness’ finds expression in Nishida Kitaro’s conception of ‘pure experience’, a reality that precedes the subject-object division of the phenomenal world and

⁴⁹ Tingyang, “Introduction – A Redefinition of *Tianxia* as a Political Concept: Problems, Conditions, and Methods,” 15-16.

⁵⁰ Morten Valbjørn, “Before, During, and After the Cultural Turn: A ‘Baedeker’ to IR’s Cultural Journey,” *International Review of Sociology* 18, no. 1 (2013): 55-82.

⁵¹ Shahi, “The Advaitic Theory of International Relations,” 125-128.

calls for a political responsibility to recognize the flexible identities of human beings, nations, and regions (including the West and the non-West). Kosuke Shimizu writes:

[Unlike Kant], the concept of experience Nishida developed is not an experience we usually assume in everyday life. Rather it is 'pure' that means before any existence... The pure experience does not have meanings... There is no human being prior to an experience, and the subject and the object are before the division in the pure experience... If human beings are constructed every single moment of pure experience, how could one have an identity, which is presumably continuous?... Nishida answered to this question [of human identity] with his idea of *mu no basho* (*place of nothingness*)... He argued that the place of nothingness encompasses everything within it but does not exist in a fixed form... The pure experience is given meanings through the interpretation process of which language has importance... pure experience is rather unspeakable... However, we can search for expressions coming close to it. What are they in IR?... Nishida's philosophy is substantially influenced by Buddhism... In Buddhism... *Koan* is a... practice of dialogue. It appears in the form of 'an absurdity, paradox, or non sequitur'... This unconventional style of dialogue disturbs the conventional use of language, and reminds the practitioners the fragility and unfixedness of [the Western or non-Western] identity.⁵²

Evidently, the de-Kantian undercurrents running through these Chinese, Indian and Japanese theories assist in transmuting the disagreements over 'homogenous versus heterogenous', 'nationalism versus internationalism', and 'geographical versus philosophical.' Tianxia theory emphasizes the need to re-envision *a world of shared co-existence* to resolve the ethical dilemmas of homogenous and/or heterogenous individual, cultural and regional identities. Advaita theory recognizes the *temporally-spatially indivisible conscience of humanity* that devalues the divisive politics based on the temporal-spatial logic of nationalism and internationalism. Japanese IR theories introduce the idea of *mu no basho* (*place of nothingness*) to start a philosophical dialogue that problematizes the geographical fixity of human identities. To overcome the shortfalls of Kantian dualism, these Chinese, Indian and Japanese theories try to reunite the polarities of phenomena-noumena, science-metaphysics, subject-object etc. While these Global IR theories suggest some heuristic techniques to reunite these polarities, they remain capable of continual inter-theoretical-adjudication and join forces for guaranteeing the prospective progressions of the Global IR research programme.

4. Global IR Research Programme: The Prospective Progressions

Kant played a key role in devising a separation between science and metaphysics. In due course, science (as 'knowledge' about observable phenomena) became 'Western', and metaphysics (as 'cosmology/worldview' about unobservable noumena) became 'non-Western.'⁵³ Besides, the idea of science as an 'object-centred view' of phenomena came to regulate the beliefs and interests of different 'international subjects.'⁵⁴ Marwa Elshakry informs:

The history of science itself started off by asking if science was the specific product of Western civilization... Early scholars argued that it was not, while current historians don't bother to ask the question... [One must ask] ... What did people outside Europe make of the

⁵² Kosuke Shimizu, "Do Time and Language Matter in IR?: Nishida Kitaro's Non-Western Discourse of Philosophy and Politics," *The Korean Journal of International Studies* Vol 16, no. 1 (2018): 503-505, 516-517.

⁵³ Stanislaw Iwaniszewski, "Did I Say Cosmology? On Modern Cosmologies and Ancient World-Views," *Cosmology Across Cultures* 409, (2009): 100-106.

⁵⁴ Bentley B. Allan, "From Subjects to Objects: Knowledge in International Relations Theory," *European Journal for Philosophy of Science* 13, no. 1 (2023): 1-24.

idea of “Western” science? How did their understanding of this change ideas, practices, and disparate categories of knowledge?... the discipline of the history of science itself was very much shaped by the search for a global narrative; but in the process it also invented a notion of Western science that flattened out knowledge communities and traditions and placed them into a single historical teleology. Perhaps by appreciating what was lost in the historicization of the idea of science...we may come to see how to write more genuinely global histories in the future.⁵⁵

With a resolve to disseminate the ‘global histories of science’, the auxiliary theories of the Global IR research programme take a de-Kantian turn and function in accordance with the following hard-core assumptions: *the realm of ‘the international’ is a fusion of phenomena (world-in-appearance with subjective many-ness) and noumena (world-in-itself with objective oneness), and it is humanly possible to reconcile the visible many-ness of the phenomenal world with the invisible oneness of the noumenal world.* To protect these hard-core assumptions, the auxiliary theories of the Global IR research programme suggest some heuristic techniques that seek to unveil the monist continuum interlinking the polarities of phenomena-noumena, science-metaphysics, subject-object, etc. Voicing an urge to reconnect these polarities, which, in turn, might bring together the one world (dominated by the West) and many worlds (embodied by the non-West), Amitav Acharya observes:

Scientific knowledge...must be intended to produce worldly knowledge...But one has to be careful here. A good deal of [insights] one might bring into IR...from the non-Western world may indeed be ‘worldly knowledge.’ But...[their] sources could be religion and cultural... They may lie at some vague intersection between science and spirituality or combine the material with the spiritual...Can we bring these insights into IR knowledge if we insist on a [Kantian] conduct of enquiry that demands a strict separation between this- and other-worldliness? ...There are lots of alien [de-Kantian] ways of producing knowledge out there, including the wisdoms of other civilisations...which are wonderfully and creatively ‘unscientific.’⁵⁶

In fact, the urge to reconnect the polarities of science and metaphysics (and, by extension, the polarities of phenomena and noumena, subject and object, etc.) is very much reflected in Lakatos’s design of a research programme. Lakatos articulates:

[Any aspirational research] programme consists of methodological rules: some tell us what paths of research to avoid (*negative heuristic*), and others what paths to pursue (*positive heuristic*)...One may point out that the negative and positive heuristic gives a rough (implicit) definition of the conceptual framework...the history of science is the history of conceptual frameworks... Even science as a whole can be regarded as a huge research programme...But what I have primarily in mind is not science as a whole...I go much further...in blurring the demarcation between ‘science’ and ‘metaphysics’: I do not even use the term ‘metaphysical’ any more...I only talk about scientific research programmes whose hard core is irrefutable not necessarily because of syntactical but possibly because of methodological reasons which have nothing to do with logical form ...‘metaphysics’ is a vital part of the rational reconstruction of science.⁵⁷⁵⁸

Obviously, a Lakatosian research programme remains willing to employ metaphysics for the rational reconstruction of science and systematic development of a conceptual framework

⁵⁵ Marwa Elshakry, “When Science Became Western: Historiographical Reflections,” *ISIS* 101, no. 1 (2010): 99, 109.

⁵⁶ Acharya, “Dialogue and Discovery,” 633-636.

⁵⁷ Lakatos, “Falsification and the Methodology,” 47.

⁵⁸ Lakatos “History of Science and its Rational Reconstructions,” 96, 115.

that surpasses the established logical form and sets up its own distinctive methodological rules. How do, then, the Chinese, Indian and Japanese auxiliary theories engage with metaphysics for the rational reconstruction of Western science? And how does this rational reconstruction of Western science surpass the Kantian logical form for designing a novel conceptual framework? Also, what are the methodological rules (or heuristic techniques) that these auxiliary theories postulate for protecting their conceptual framework from possible anomalies, thereby ensuring prospective progressions of the Global IR research programme? The inclination to mobilize metaphysics for restructuring the Kantian Western science has recurrently resonated in the writings of Chinese, Indian, and Japanese scholars. Chinese IR has gone beyond Kant by reinvigorating Confucianism as a ‘metaphysical component’ to formulate a Global IR theory.⁵⁹ Indian IR has revived the extra-Kantian ‘metaphysical ethos’ of Advaita to formulate a Global IR theory.⁶⁰ Correspondingly, Japanese IR has examined how the non-Kantian ‘metaphysical notion of historical consciousness’ can serve as a guideline to build a Global IR theory.⁶¹

The conceptual framework arising from these Chinese, Indian and Japanese Global IR theories revisualizes a world which is concurrently ‘one and many’: that is to say, the noumenal unity of a single world lies underneath the phenomenal diversity of plural worlds. Remarkably, the metaphysical reality of noumenal unity preserves the scientific reality of phenomenal diversity. As such, the metaphysical foundation of the conceptual framework of Global IR theories, which asserts the compulsory coexistence of ‘one and many worlds’, is not averse to science; it rather seeks to reconfigure the Kantian logical form of Western science by launching ‘integrated scientific-metaphysical research.’ The *Tianxia* theory is based on the metaphysics of the ‘way of nature’: it argues that the way of nature (*tian*/heaven) ‘does not require any confirmation because it is already wholly manifest in the modes of existence of myriad things’; while the metaphysical reality of *tian* (heaven above) has perfectly harmonious order, the *tianxia* (heaven below) must scientifically strive for a perfectly harmonious order. Thus, *tianxia* is a place where the ‘metaphysical and empirical converge.’⁶² The Advaita theory endorses a strategy of ‘science-metaphysics conflation’: as it ascends from a ‘blurry juncture between science and metaphysics without rendering the phenomenal and noumenal realms and procedures of knowledge-production as mutually incommensurable’, the Advaita theory calls for the need to ‘find commonalities in scientific and metaphysical attitudes that otherwise seem to come from two disciplines at either end of the spectrum, namely Western science or Eastern religion.’⁶³ The Japanese theories are influenced by Nishida Kitaro, who intends to have a metaphysical perspective that goes beyond both Eastern and Western traditions,⁶⁴ and Tosaka, who synthesizes scientific morality and technological spirit.⁶⁵ As such, these theories maintain that the combination of scientific

⁵⁹ Thøger Kersting Christensen, “Joining the Club: The Place of a Chinese School in the Global IR Academy,” *Asia in Focus* 7 (2019): 6.

⁶⁰ Sudhanshu Tripathi, “Chapter 1: Introduction,” in *India’s Foreign Policy Dilemma Over Non-Alignment 2.0* (New Delhi, IN: SAGE, 2020), 40.

⁶¹ Graham Gerard Ong, “Building an IR Theory with ‘Japanese Characteristics’: Nishida Kitaro and ‘Emptiness,’” *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 33, no. 1: 35-58.

⁶² Tingyang, “The *Tianxia* Conceptual Story,” 51; Tingyang, “The Encompassing *Tianxia* of China,” 173; Tingyang, “The Future of *Tianxia* Order,” 237.

⁶³ Shahi, “Advaita in International Relations,” 28, 32; Shahi, “The Advaitic Theory of International Relations,” 135.

⁶⁴ K.O. Hojo, “The Philosophy of Kitaro Nishida and Current Concepts of the Origin of Life,” *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 988, no. 1 (2009): 353-358.

⁶⁵ A. Kasai, “Tosaka Jun Ni Okeru Kagaku Dotoku To Gijutsu Seisin [Scientific Morality and Technological Spirit of Tosaka Jun],” *Fukushima Kosen Kenkyu Kiyo* 52 (2011): 63-68.

perception with metaphysical fantasies makes it possible for socio-political problems to reach ordinary people with diverse values, thereby letting them analyse those problems as their own and make sense of the complex contemporary world affairs.⁶⁶

While Global IR theories propose an integrated scientific-metaphysical research programme to make sense of the complex contemporary world affairs, they may come across some anomalies (or ‘counter-evidence’, to use Lakatos’s terminology). Broadly speaking, these anomalies may appear as varying expressions of any (or all) of the following ‘unjustifiable claims’:

first, there exists a fundamental *methodological discontinuity* between Western science and non-Western metaphysics that the Global IR theories tend to ignore;

second, the Global IR theories *reproduce binaries* by emphasizing the dissimilarities between Western metaphysics (dualism) and non-Western metaphysics (monism); and

third, the Global IR theories seem more abstract (metaphysical) and less factual (scientific) and, thus, they exhibit a predisposition toward *policy-irrelevance*.

Several crisis-situations of world politics may be brought forward to exemplify these types of unjustifiable claims that enforce estrangements between the one and many worlds, or assume knowledge hierarchies between the West and the non-West. D. Andreucci and C. Zografos illustrate how the policy-responses to global climate crisis are routinely based on some of these unjustifiable claims that assume ‘West–non-West knowledge hierarchies’:

[D]ominant actors...mobilize “expert” knowledge that discursively constructs certain [‘other’] territories and populations as in need of improving ...Representations of the ‘other’ are plural...however, knowledge production is imbued with...asymmetries of power. Critically unpacking colonial constructions of the other...is not to entail that other cultures [as ‘objects’] are the supine creations of the modern...while the ‘objects’ of such discursive constructions are not blank spaces that await the projection of colonial imageries, imagining such a blank or “uninscribed earth”...is intrinsic to colonial ways of “worlding”... Modern-colonial ways of seeing and mapping the earth and its inhabitants – as reproduced in contemporary development practice by institutions like the World Bank – do not take place independently of the pre-existing cultural and geographical diversity. Yet, they do filter such diversity through dominant – arguably neo-colonial and neo-liberal – systems of [scientific-] knowledge, with their own classification hierarchies...which divide up people and resources depending on their economic (or, at best, conservation) value.⁶⁷

To counter such West–non-West knowledge hierarchies, the Global IR research programme must activate some heuristic techniques. At the outset, the Global IR research programme knows that the mainstream IR scholars express a preference for empirical theories comparable to natural science theories that remain free of moral/metaphysical judgments.⁶⁸ Disproving those who claim a methodological continuity between science and metaphysics,⁶⁹ these mainstream IR scholars emphasize a science-metaphysics methodological discontinuity

⁶⁶ Kosuke Shimizu, *The Kyoto School and International Relations: Non-Western Attempts for a New World Order* (New York City, NY: Routledge, 2022).

⁶⁷ Diego Andreucci and Christos Zografos, “Between Improvement and Sacrifice: Othering and the (Bio)Political Ecology of Climate Change,” *Political Geography* 92 (2022): 3.

⁶⁸ Fred Chernoff, “International Relations and Scientific Criteria for Choosing a Theory,” in *Theory and Metatheory in International Relations: Concepts and Contending Accounts* (New York City, NY: Palgrave MacMillian, 2007), 79-130.

⁶⁹ Milena Ivanova and Matt Farr, “Methods in Science and Metaphysics,” in *The Routledge Handbook of Metametaphysics*, ed. Ricki Bliss and J. T. M. Millet, (New York City, NY: Routledge, 2021), 447-458.

and question the utility of metaphysics *per se* by proclaiming that the metaphysicians (unlike scientists) fail to generate consensus due to the absence of external methodological validation: allegedly, there is no external/additional methodological vantage point from which to evaluate the achievements of metaphysics, so the metaphysicians can only rely on *a priori* judgments to do so.⁷⁰ While the anomalies related to this alleged science-metaphysics methodological discontinuity may continue to produce puzzlements regarding the relative merits of science and metaphysics, the Global IR research programme must remind how the entire Kant-inspired Western science is itself situated upon the considerations of ‘time’ and ‘space’ as the subject’s *a priori* intuitions that apply to the knowledge of the phenomenal world only in so far as this world is perceived by the subject as an appearance: glaringly, there is no external methodological validation for the Kantian premise that human beings cannot experience the phenomenal world beyond time and space, and, thus, the geographically-centered time-space-bounded categories of cultures, civilizations, nation-states, etc., must be needed for determining human identities.⁷¹

In fact, all kinds of science (Western or non-Western) have ‘metaphysical preconditions.’⁷² Above and beyond, the ‘science of metaphysics’ is logically prior to the ‘particular sciences’ (Western or non-Western).⁷³ Rather than passing value-judgements on the relative merits of science and metaphysics, the scholars working on the Global IR research programme must expose how the science-metaphysics dichotomy has formed false records of rational disparities between the West and the non-West. In this context, one must raise some underexplored questions as proposed by Yiftach Fehige:

Is the science that Christianity in the West has been interacting with over the past 500 years ‘Eastern’ in important respects?... The predominant narrow focus on Western Christendom in the scholarly analysis of the relationship between science and religion may be partly a function of the Eurocentrism... The more work is done on the relationship between science and religion [or metaphysics] at the intersection of East and West, the clearer it becomes that the modern science’s relation to religion and the East is more intrinsic than is commonly portrayed.⁷⁴

To ensure progressive shifts in the Global IR research programme, an equally fruitful exercise is the mapping of the intersecting trajectories of Western and non-Western metaphysics. Appreciating the value of this exercise for fostering a harmonious West–non-West relationship, Kenneth K. Inada narrates:

The world has indeed become one, but nations and cultures of the world are still at variance with each other... There must be a unifying factor to show the way to harmonious relationship. One of the ways... is to reassess the nature and function of metaphysics... [In Western metaphysics], human minds began to concentrate on the obvious tangible entities which seem to give the impression of durability and stability... [the] attempt to crown human reason/mind over the total nature of human perceptions... accelerated the rise of the sciences... Yet we have begun to see signs of displeasure from the sciences... The reason for this is that the realm of the tangibles alone does not inform all that there is in nature... while

⁷⁰ Simon Allzén, “Against methodological Continuity and Metaphysical Knowledge,” *European Journal for Philosophy of Science* 13, no. 1: 1-20.

⁷¹ Lucas Riberio Vollet, “The Transcendental Problem of Space and Time,” *Studia Kantiana* 11, no. 15 (2013): 135-152.

⁷² Stephen Mumford and Matthew Tugby, “Introduction: What is Metaphysics of Science?” in *Metaphysics and Science*, ed. Stephen Mumford and Matthew Tugby, (Oxford, UK, Oxford University Press, 2013), 3-28.

⁷³ R. G. Collingwood, *An Essay on Metaphysics* (London, UK: Oxford University Press, 1940).

⁷⁴ Yiftach Fehige, “Introduction,” in *Science and Religion: East and West*, ed. Yiftach Fehige, (New York City, NY: Routledge, 2016), 1-2.

Western experience is still essentially based on tangible and rationally deducible nature in perception...the Eastern experience is essentially built on an organic metaphysics [that] is two-faceted: one facet...relates to human endeavours in the realm of the senses, the other in subtle ways refers to the realm beyond human endeavours...the senses and non-sense realms reveal different natures but both are infrastructural and united...There is no dualism involved here, nor is there a monism for that matter. These terms, dualism and monism, are rigid metaphysical absolutes which the Chinese [or] Indians...did not conceive of from the very beginning.⁷⁵

It is this ‘organic metaphysics’ (or ‘naturalistic metaphysics’) that the auxiliary theories of the Global IR research programme invoke to perform a holistic study of worldly realities: ‘logically speaking, *tianxia* designates the entire world, i.e., both a *natural world* and a *political world*’;⁷⁶ Advaita ‘professes that the human beings are primarily *natural beings*, and secondarily *socio-political beings*’;⁷⁷ and the Japanese theories divulge that the ‘world’ (composed of *natural beings*) exists as ‘one unified society’; the historicization of natural law [makes sure that] any dividing line [is] never stable but always in flux.’⁷⁸ For sure, these auxiliary theories call for a methodological merger of ‘epistemological monism’ (i.e., metaphysical precondition of noumenal unity) with ‘ontological pluralism’ (i.e., scientific postcondition of phenomenal diversity). This methodological merger implies the presupposition of an ‘always-already connected world.’ The *Tianxia* theory proclaims that the ‘existence presupposes co-existence.’⁷⁹ The Advaita theory argues that ‘the perpetually connected world along with its multiple subjects and objects has no separate existence apart from [the presumed originating point of] *brahman*, the ‘single hidden connectedness.’⁸⁰ And the Japanese theories accept that individual existence is in contradiction with an all-encompassing universal existence, but the ‘transcendental existence’ of selfhood always includes otherhood; thus, ‘to be morally aware is to see the self as the other.’⁸¹ While these auxiliary theories varyingly arouse non-Western metaphysics (epistemological monism) as a substitute for Western metaphysics (epistemological dualism), they may be accused of reproducing binaries by positioning the Western and non-Western forms of metaphysics as polar opposites. Dismissing such misleading impressions, Deepshikha Shahi simplifies:

The thematic reinforcement of monism in Chinese IR, or Japanese IR, or Indian IR might create possible misleading impressions that the non-Eurocentric parts of the globe are emerging as flag-bearers of monism ‘in opposition to’ the traditional dualism of Eurocentric IR. Nevertheless...Global IR advocates a downright dismissal of such possible misleading impressions. It, rather, calls for a revolutionary reconciliation of dualism with monism in IR theory and practice, thereby confidently putting forward the argument that the ‘dualism-monism debate’ (which anticipates a reallocation of the epistemological hierarchies in IR theorization) is...expressive of the extent to which a reconciliation of ‘Eurocentric dualism’ with a few up-and-coming models of ‘non-Eurocentric monism’ could leverage a ‘Global’ theoretical-practical spirit in IR.⁸²

Even as the Global IR research programme proposes a reconciliation of dualism with

⁷⁵ Kenneth K. Inada, “A Review of Metaphysics: East and West,” *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal* 4, no. 7 (1991): 361-367.

⁷⁶ Tingyang, “The *Tianxia* Conceptual Story,” 45.

⁷⁷ Shahi, “The Advaitic Theory of International Relations,” 135.

⁷⁸ Watanabe and Rösch, “Introduction: Japan as Potential,” 38.

⁷⁹ Tingyang, “The Future of *Tianxia* Order,” 232.

⁸⁰ Shahi, “Reality, Appearance and Unreality of International Politics: An Advaitic Review,” 62.

⁸¹ Shimizu, *The Kyoto School and International Relations*.

⁸² Shahi, “The Advaitic Theory of International Relations,” 137.

monism to leverage a ‘Global’ theoretical-practical spirit in IR, it may be suspected that the abstract meta-theoretical gesture of this research programme is bound to thwart its policy-relevance. While some scholars may argue that only factual (not abstract) theories are policy-relevant,⁸³ other scholars may mention that the vision of separate scientific development might result in the execution of separate policy agencies, programmes and standard evaluation criteria in the West and the non-West.⁸⁴ Though the Global IR research programme does not shut out the need for contextual sensitivity (or say, historical, socio-cultural, or politico-economic sensitivity) when it seeks to adjoin the local and global pictures of different worlds, it discards the obligation to pursue a predetermined geo-centric ‘unit-of-analysis or level-of-enquiry method’ in the process of policy designing and implementation. The Advaita theory declares that ‘the relations between the constituents of the world cannot be understood by following a rigid unit-of-analysis or level-of-enquiry: individuals and institutions at any political level (local, international or global) bear the same symptom of connectedness.’⁸⁵ Congruently, the Tianxia theory warns that ‘the research policies totally aimed at defeating the enemies [at the local, international or global level] are powerless in resolving international conflicts.’⁸⁶ And the Japanese theories instruct that a nation must plan its policies in accordance with the thought that it operates as an intermediary between the levels of universal humanity and individuals.⁸⁷

5. Concluding Remarks

The Global IR research programme seeks a methodological merger of epistemological monism with ontological pluralism to adjoin the local and global pictures of different worlds before moving ahead with the process of policy designing and implementation. Yet, the predicaments pertaining to the possible parameters of ‘policy-responsibility’ is a concern-area that needs a sort of inter-theoretical adjudication. Though the auxiliary theories of this research programme unanimously share an anti-authoritarian (or anti-imperialist) policy-thrust, there seems to be an element of haziness regarding the expanse of policy-responsibility that they aspire to fulfill. The Tianxia theory shows an eagerness to undertake the policy-responsibility to pre-empt ‘the failure of the political.’ To do so, it raises an alarm that ‘as long as the world is oppositionally divided and conflicted, all societies will suffer the negative consequences of such exteriority.’⁸⁸ For the purpose of avoiding the negative consequences of such exteriority, the Advaita theory adopts the policy-responsibility of ‘*lokasamgraha*’: i.e., the ‘supra-moral activity of the preservation of the natural world order’ by avoiding the regular approach of ‘defining self-identity in terms of non-identity with others.’⁸⁹ While one needs to further sharpen the relatedness of these obscure policy-orientations to the realities of contemporary world politics, the Japanese scholarship draws attention to a firm tension between ‘pluralism in theory’ and ‘universalism in practice’: it counsels that ‘the takeaway for our current age of “Western” decline and “non-Western” rise is that we must resist any utopian temptation emanating from any moral-ethical system to say “we will save the world”...before jumping into the engagement of “us” as non-Westerns to “change the

⁸³ Walt, “International Relations.”

⁸⁴ Alexandra Hofmänner and Elisio Macamo, “The Science Policy Script, Revised,” *Minerva* 59 (2021): 331-354.

⁸⁵ Shahi, “Conclusion,” 151.

⁸⁶ Tingyang, “Introduction,” 12.

⁸⁷ Shimizu, *The Kyoto School and International Relations*.

⁸⁸ Tingyang, “The *Tianxia* Conceptual Story,” 114.

⁸⁹ Shahi, “Introduction,” 4; Shahi, “The Advaitic Theory of International Relations,” 134.

world,” we need to stop at the question of who “we” really are...and...whether the “West” and the “East” are really divided.⁹⁰ In accordance with Lakatos’s edict that ‘one must treat budding programmes leniently; programmes may take decades before they get off the ground and become empirically progressive’, only time will tell how these auxiliary theories inter-adjudicate and set clear-cut parameters of policy-responsibility for proficiently protecting and progressing the Global IR research programme.⁹¹

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⁹⁰ Shimizu, “A Non-Western Attempt at Hegemony,” 1-8.

⁹¹ Lakatos, “Introduction: Science and Pseudoscience,” 6.

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Western-Centric Moments in Homegrown IR Theories: Dependency, Chinese and African Schools

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Abstract

The modern international system has been shaped by long-standing historical practices of unequal power relations, which have positioned the Western world at the center of the political universe. Due to the centrality of the Global North in the international system, any IR theory that aims to portray a true picture of the “globe” necessarily situates the West at the center of scientific inquiry. Furthermore, the form of universality generated by Western hegemony has been diffused throughout the world over centuries, spreading Western political institutions, economic structures, and ideological norms in an uneven setting. As a result, the social structures of the Global South have developed through an uneven form of relationship and dialectical interaction with the West. Therefore, homegrown IR theories, which uncover local political, philosophical, or cultural motives as sources for theory-making, in fact, concentrate on stratified forms of the universal reality that is diffused through the uneven spread of Western social structures. In this sense, there is a Western-centric moment in any homegrown IR theory. Accordingly, this article develops a scientific realist account of the structure/agent relationship in order to analyze the material grounds of Western-centrism in the field of international politics and to evaluate the role of non-Western actors. Additionally, it critically evaluates distinctive homegrown theories produced on three different continents to reveal the aforementioned Western-centric moments in these theoretical initiatives. Namely, the Dependency School of Latin America, the Chinese School of International Relations, and the African School are respectively scrutinized to disclose the embedded Western-centrism in these theoretical initiatives.

Keywords: Western-centrism, Scientific Realism, Dependency School, Chinese School, African School

1. Introduction

Globalizing IR has predominantly evolved into an effort to raise the voices of peripheries and seek their “unique” experiences as a source for theory-making.¹ Thus, the main endeavor to globalize IR has been focused on developing homegrown IR theories emanating from different corners of the political universe.² In order to globalize IR, as Buzan and Little

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¹ Ersel Aydın and Gonca Bıltekin, “Introduction: Widening the World of IR,” in *Widening the World of International Relations: Homegrown Theorizing*, eds. Ersel Aydın and Gonca Bıltekin (London: Routledge, 2018), 2.

² Pınar Akgül, “Non-Western International Relations Theories,” in *Critical Approaches to International Relations: Philosophical Foundations and Current Debates*, eds. M. Kürşad Özekin and Engin Sune (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 217-239.

state,³ “much more needs to be known about the development of international relations in the different regions...” By revealing how colonial practices influenced knowledge production in the social sciences, post-colonial studies⁴ have endeavored to present the perspectives and agential capacity of the post-colonial world. Furthermore, from Latin America to Africa, from Anatolia to China, various efforts have been expended to challenge Western-centrism by developing a homegrown IR theory.

Despite these efforts, there is still no advanced homegrown theory that succeeded in replacing the hegemony of Western-centric IR approaches with an alternative understanding of international politics. In their perennial study aimed at “introducing non-Western IR traditions to a Western audience,” Acharya and Buzan⁵ ended up questioning why there is no non-Western theory. As Tickner, Wæver, and Blaney stated,⁶ in the distinct regions of the world, the study of IR does not seem much different from the mainstream IR theories. Despite Chinese IR scholars’ call for a new and distinctive theoretical opening in IR, as noted by Peng,⁷ the Chinese School failed to produce a viable alternative to Western-centric concepts. In her analysis of theoretical innovations from Africa, Smith⁸ articulates that, for a better comprehension of IR, homegrown theories do not need to be completely different from mainstream IR theories.

Indeed, not all non-Western approaches in IR strive to overthrow Western-centric perspectives. For some, the objective of homegrown theories is to pluralize or globalize the conceptual universe of IR, which is overwhelmingly dominated by Western ideas. For instance, Peng underlines that the Chinese School should establish an efficient communication with Western IR to achieve a scientific output.⁹ In this setting, the intent of homegrown theories is not to supplant Western-centric theories, but rather to resolve their shortcomings through a mutual learning process. In a similar vein, in their analysis of the Chinese School, Nielsen and Kristensen¹⁰ state that Chinese scholars blend Western-centric IR with Chinese IR knowledge, resulting in a hybrid theory that integrates local and global, or particular and universal. Nonetheless, not all homegrown theorists attempt to complete or globalize Western-centric IR theories. As Peng emphasizes, some Chinese scholars endeavor to replace Western-centrism in IR with Sino-centrism.¹¹ Likewise, Demir asserts that Chinese scholars reject Western ontology and epistemology, aiming to replace them with Chinese ones.¹²

³ Barry Buzan and Richard Little, “World History and the Development of non-Western International Relations Theory,” in *Non-Western International Relations Theory: Perspectives on and beyond Asia*, eds. Amitav Acharya and Barry Buzan (New York: Routledge, 2010), 214.

⁴ Chowdhry Geeta and Nair Sheila, “Introduction: Power in a Postcolonial World: Race, Gender, and Class, International Relations.” in *Power, Postcolonialism and International Relations: Reading Race, Gender, and Class*, eds. Geeta Chowdhry and Sheila Nair (London: Routledge, 2002), 1-32; Siba N. Grovogui, *Beyond Eurocentrism and Anarchy: Memories of International Order and Institutions* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006); Sanjay Seth, *Postcolonial Theory and International Relations: A Critical Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2013).

⁵ Acharya and Buzan, *Non-Western IR Theories*.

⁶ Arlene B. Tickner and Ole Wæver, eds., *International Relations Scholarship around the World* (London and New York: Routledge, 2009); Arlene B. Tickner and David Blaney, eds., *Thinking International Relations Differently* (London: Routledge, 2012).

⁷ Lu Peng, “Chinese IR Sino-centrism tradition and its influence on the Chinese School Movement,” *The Pacific Review* 32, no. 2 (2019): 151.

⁸ Karen Smith, “Reshaping international relations: theoretical innovations from Africa,” in *Widening the World*, 143.

⁹ Peng, “Chinese IR Sino-centrism,” 151.

¹⁰ Ras Tin Nielsen and Peter Marcus Kristensen, “You need to do something that the Westerners cannot understand: The innovation of a Chinese school of IR,” in *Chinese Politics and International Relations: Innovation and Invention*, eds. Nicola Horsburgh, Astrid Nordin, and Shaun Breslin (London: Routledge, 2014), 97-118.

¹¹ Peng, “Chinese IR Sino-centrism,” 150-167.

¹² Emre Demir, “Chinese School of International Relations: Myth or Reality?” *All Azimuth: A Journal of Foreign Policy and Peace* 6, no. 2 (2017): 98.

This study, on the other hand, contends that developing a radically distinct homegrown theory devoid of Western-centrism entails structural limitations. By employing a scientific realist account of the international structure, this article aims to reveal material foundations of Western-centrism within the discipline of IR. Throughout the study, it is asserted that Western-centrism is unescapable to a certain extent, since the West is positioned at the center of the political universe. The argument is presented that the “international” has been formed by enduring historical practices of unequal power relations executed by Western actors. However, this standpoint does not validate Ken Booth’s argument that if IR as a discipline had been founded not in Wales but somewhere in Africa, the understanding of the discipline would markedly differ.¹³ On the contrary, this study contends that the Western-centrism of IR is not based on the ideational primacy or supremacy of the West over the rest, but rather on the central role of the Global North within the material foundations of the international system.

Due to this centrality, any IR theory that aims to portray a true picture of the “globe” inevitably situates the West at the center of scientific inquiry. Furthermore, the form of universality generated by Western hegemony has diffused Western political institutions, economic structures, as well as cultural and ideological norms across the world over centuries. As a result, the social structures of the Global South have developed through an uneven form of relationship and dialectical interaction with the West. Therefore, theorizing the “international” emerges as an initial objective and a fundamental prerequisite for the endeavors of globalizing the IR discipline.

A closer examination of non-Western approaches exposes that they reproduce Western-centric concepts and theories to a certain extent. Bilgin¹⁴ reduces this phenomenon to a mimicry process occurring between West and non-West. She posits that non-Western IR conceptualizations are not devoid of Western theories, since Western and non-Western experiences have been blended over centuries.¹⁵ This study, on the other hand, with its scientific realist understanding of the globe, asserts that it is the structure/agent relationship that fuses Western concepts and theories into the conceptual framework of non-Western theories. This, in turn, generates an inherent Western-centric moment in any homegrown theory.

To uncover the mechanisms functioning behind these “Western-centric” moments in homegrown IR theories, the following section analyzes the structure-agent relationship in IR from a scientific realist perspective. The historical materialist understanding of the structure puts forth why IR as a scientific field cannot elude Western-centrism, given that the modern international system is formed and dominated by the Global North. However, this does not automatically imply that homegrown IR theories are incapable of broadening and deepening the conceptual framework and vocabulary of IR. In this sense, the concept of “agency,” as conceived by Roy Bhaskar, is examined to demonstrate that the nature of the “international,” which is dominated by the West, is stratified and variegates in different geographies due to the strategic activities of the actors in the Global South. In order to reveal the unique contributions, as well as Western-centric moments in non-Western IR theories, this study scrutinizes three theoretical initiatives originating in three distinct continents. The

¹³ Ken Booth, “Human Wrongs and International Relations,” *International Affairs* 71, no. 1 (1995): 103-126.

¹⁴ Pinar Bilgin, “Thinking Past Western IR?” *Third World Quarterly* 29, no. 1 (2008): 5-23.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 6.

Dependency School, the Chinese and the African Schools of IR are analyzed to illustrate that while these schools are capable of enriching the vocabulary of IR by revealing the stratified forms of social reality experienced in their continents, they are still not devoid of Western-centric moments.

2. Stratified Forms of International and Western-Centric Moments in Homegrown Theories

In the last three decades, tremendous effort has been made to globalize the IR discipline through the various branches of critical and homegrown theories. Still, there is no consensus either on the origins of or on the potential paths to transcend Western-centrism. Western-centrism in IR generally refers to the fact that the discipline has been formulated in alignment with the problems, concepts, language, agenda, and policies of the West.¹⁶ Within this context, Western institutions and intellectuals have acquired the ability to define the scope and content of the field, thereby excluding experiences, perspectives, and interpretations from the non-Western world in the IR discipline and theorizing.¹⁷ Western-centric IR theories consider the West and Western civilization as the sole, superior, and ideal reference object of the international field. Within this setting, the Western world is exalted through values such as rationality, science, progress, development, and universality, while any alternative/critical perspectives are suppressed under the guise of objectivity.¹⁸ Any perspective or alternative conceptualization that fails to align with the Western criteria finds itself marginalized within the field of IR. Thus, the discipline's agenda, focal geographical areas, and omitted subjects in theoretical analysis have all been shaped by unequal power relations dominated by the West. The dominant narratives concerning the history of the discipline, the myths propagated by hegemonic theories, and the ontological reduction of IR to the power relations between states have collectively limited the scope of alternative theoretical possibilities and perpetuated Western-centrism in IR.

This study, on the other hand, places the structure-agent debate in IR at the forefront, aiming to recognize and criticize the material underpinnings of Western-centrism within the field. In this context, the study introduces scientific realism's conceptualization of structure,¹⁹ since it facilitates the analysis and critique of the "material" foundations of Western dominance within the IR discipline and global politics by revealing that Western-centrism is not solely rooted in ideational factors. This study sets this fact on the basis of the inherently Western-centric moments present in non-Western IR theories.

Bhaskar defines social structures as generative mechanisms that condition social practices.²⁰ In this sense, social structures are a collection of settled social relations, with their political, economic, and ideological dimensions, which determine the observable activities of agents. Therefore, conceptualizing the form of the structure stands as the primary objective in comprehending any social practice. In other words, social structures determine

¹⁶ Acharya and Buzan, *Non-Western International*.

¹⁷ Grovogui, *Beyond Eurocentrism*, 6.

¹⁸ Faruk Yalvaç, "Karl Marx: Marksizm ve Uluslararası Tarihsel Sosyoloji," in *Tarihsel Sosyoloji ve Uluslararası İlişkiler*, ed. Faruk Yalvaç (Ankara: Nika 2017), 40.

¹⁹ Faruk Yalvaç, "Eleştirel Gerçekçilik: Uluslararası İlişkiler Kuramında Post-Pozitivizm Sonrası Aşama," *Uluslararası İlişkiler* 6, no. 24 (2010): 3-32.

²⁰ Roy Bhaskar, *The Possibility of Naturalism: A Philosophical Critique of the Contemporary Human Sciences* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Press, 1989).

the characteristics of the world that we interact with. As Marx stated,²¹ “Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given, and transmitted from the past.” In this sense, social structures have the capacity to either enable or limit certain occurrences. For example, while the global structure enables the smooth spread of Western social norms, it curtails the capacity of the Global South to determine the course of global politics. Given that social structures determine the activities of agents, the international structure should be conceptualized as the determining factor and generative mechanism that dictates how states interact.

As Joseph states,²² even though social structures depend on human activity to reproduce themselves, they still have an objective existence independent of how agents conceptualize them. In this regard, this materialist conceptualization differs significantly from the intersubjective understanding of structure advocated by conventional constructivists.²³ In the constructivist formulation, the “structure is meaningless without some intersubjective set of norms and practices...”²⁴ In reality, this ideational definition provides more room for homegrown theories in IR, because if “structure” is conceptualized as an intersubjective reality, then it is meaningful and possible to overcome Western-centrism merely at the ideational or theoretical level. According to the materialist interpretation, on the other hand, since Western-centrism in the international system is founded on enduring historical/material grounds, IR theory cannot challenge it only by questioning Western-centric theories. Undoubtedly, this point of view does not preclude the capacity of critical theories to question existing power relations at the ideational level or to interrogate the dominance of Western-centric theories at the theoretical level. In fact, the materialist interpretation of structure by uncovering the underlying material foundations of Western-centrism affords critical theory the capacity to transcend the confines of Western-centric theories. In this regard, by questioning the underpinnings of existing social and power relations, critical theories have established the framework for efforts aimed at globalizing the IR discipline. For instance, the Dependency School, through its critique of the exclusive focus of the mainstream theories on the core capitalist countries, has expanded the horizons of the discipline, shifting the attention of scholars to the peripheral... regions. In a similar vein, by revealing the unequal global division of labor and the hierarchical structure of the international system, the World Systems Theory not only challenged Western-centric IR theories’ conceptualization of anarchy, but also stood as one of the significant endeavors in the process of globalizing the discipline. In a comparable manner, through criticizing colonialism and revealing the agential capacity of the Global South, post-colonial theory has radically challenged Western-centrism at the theoretical level. However, in this materialist conceptualization, contrary to its ideational definitions, the international structure is formed through long-standing historical practices of unequal power relations, generating durable constraints and incentives for agents in the international system. Moreover, the domestic sphere in the Global South is formed through its interaction with the international. In this regard, seeking domestic political, philosophical, or cultural motives as sources for homegrown theory-making is misleading, since these

²¹ Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (New York: Die Revolution, 1852).

²² Jonathan Joseph, “Hegemony and the Structure-Agency problem in International Relations: A Scientific Realist Contribution,” *Review of International Studies* 34, no. 1 (2008): 110.

²³ Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

²⁴ Ted Hopf, “The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory,” *International Security* 23, no. 1 (1998): 173.

elements engage in a dialectical relationship with international structures. Therefore, a closer examination of homegrown theories reveals that while they apply to the domestic sources for theory-making, they still, to a certain extent, reproduce the premises of mainstream Western-centric IR theories.

In this sense, IR is a Western-centric discipline not only due to the dominance of Western-centric theories, but also due to the centrality of the West within the international system. In other words, the modern international system is constructed upon imperialist, exploitative, and unequal forms of relationships predominantly controlled by the Global North, positioning the West at the center of the political universe. As Joseph maintains,²⁵ the hegemon has a central role in the reproduction of social structures, since it has a mediatory role between the structure and agent. The Western-centrism of IR theories is primarily established on Western hegemony, which holds the ability to dictate the content of the international system. Therefore, any IR theory aiming to portray a true picture of international politics cannot neglect the centrality of the West within the global structure. As Tadjbakhsh states,²⁶ “the search for non-Western IR theories needs to both recognize the context of Gramscian hegemony of so-called universally accepted systems of knowledge as well as the current international political order and the discourses it has given rise to.” This also implies that as long as Western hegemony prevails, challenges to the dominance of Western-oriented social structures and Western-centric theories are very limited given the fact that Western actors set the social reality of the political universe. In other words, as long as the content of the current international structure is determined by the Western actors, these uneven power relations may reflect themselves in theory-making, casting IR as a Western enterprise. Indeed, critical theories have made significant contributions to the efforts of globalizing the IR discipline by engendering an intensive interrogation of Western-centrism. The explication of the stratified characteristic of the international system, wherein the hierarchical structure burgeons under the dominance of the Western countries, stands as an ontological challenge to the established paradigms in IR. The proposition that Western-centrism is not established merely on an intersubjective reality but rests upon the position of the West within the hierarchical global order also stands as an epistemological challenge to mainstream and post-positivist theories’ understanding of structure. Additionally, critical theories contest Western-centrism by propounding perspectives, experiences, and agential capacity of the non-Western world. In this regard, overcoming Western-centrism does not necessitate developing an IR theory that abandons analysis of the centrality of the West at the international. On the contrary, the Bhaskarian formulation of the structure reveals that the substantive essence of the international system has been formed around enduring historical, material, and ideational factors that positioned the West at the center. Therefore, developing a non-Western IR theory to globalize the discipline does not inherently entail abolishing the centrality of the West at the theoretical level. In this regard, as long as Western hegemony and its privileged status in the international structure sustain, homegrown IR theories should consider this centrality and the form of universality it creates, which generates a Western-centric moment in every IR theory.

The radical influence of the Western-centric international structure on global social

²⁵ Joseph, “Hegemony and the Structure-Agency,” 110.

²⁶ Shahrbanou Tadjbakhsh, “International Relations Theory and the Islamic Worldview,” in *Non-Western International Relations Theory Perspectives on and beyond Asia*, eds. Amitav Acharya and Barry Buzan (New York: Routledge, 2010), 176.

relations does not imply that actors have no choice but to adhere to the directives originating from the structure, as neorealism posits. For neo-realists, states as the actors of the international system passively adapt themselves to the dynamics of the international structure, granting states no ontological status or agential power.²⁷ Neorealism posits that structures are not products of the interactions among the units, but rather by-products of their unintended actions.²⁸ In contrast, in the scientific realist formulation, “since structures are the reproduced outcome of human activity then the possibility exists not merely of reproducing but of transforming them.”²⁹ Although the international structure sets the stage for agents to interact, and determines the rules of their interaction, agents have the capacity and are always in motion to shape, change, and mold the forces emanating from the international structure. Therefore, while the hegemony of the Global North over the international structure facilitates the diffusion of Western political, economic, and ideological norms throughout the globe, the form of universality generated by this diffusion takes different national forms due to the strategic activities of actors in distant geographies. In other words, the dialectical relationship between the universal and the local creates a metamorphic form of universality in various national spheres.

In this regard, any IR theory that considers the West and its social structures as the ideal reference point for analyzing the rest of the world will fall short of achieving a global theory, as the globe itself is an uneven structure. Within this framework, the Western form of political institutions, ideologies, and institutional structures varies due to the strategic activities of agents. However, any theory that does not concentrate on the West may also overlook the fact that the form of the international structure is predominantly shaped by the Western states, and this structure, as a generative mechanism, influences all social formations. Hence, any homegrown IR theory that aims to transcend Western-centrism must inevitably commence with an analysis of the West to present an accurate depiction of IR. However, the construction of the international structure under the hegemony of Western states does not mandate that IR solely concentrates on great powers, as mainstream IR theories often do. Although the dominance of Western states in the formation and reproduction of the international structure is an undeniable fact, it is crucial not to overlook the contributions of other societies to this setting. From this perspective, in understanding and theorizing international relations, the political struggles within colonies hold as much significance as the impact of Western colonialism. This broader perspective goes beyond the agency conceptualization found in the mainstream IR theories that solely concentrate on great powers, thus perpetuating Western-centric views within the discipline. Therefore, the exposure of the agential capacity of the non-Western world, as discussed within homegrown theories, represents a substantial contribution to the endeavor of challenging Western-centrism and globalizing IR. Additionally, as universality is stratified and variegated in different geographies, homegrown IR theories have the potential to globalize IR by exploring the dominance of the West on the international structure and its impact on different geographies. They are also valuable in revealing the hierarchical global structure and diversified global reality in distant geographies. In this regard, by revealing the centrality of the West, scientific realism’s conceptualization of structure-agent dialectics is worthwhile for understanding Western-centrism in IR, and homegrown theories have the

²⁷ John M. Hobson, “Realism,” in *The State and International Relations* (New York: Cambridge, 2003), 24.

²⁸ David Dessler, “What’s at Stake in the Agent-Structure Debate?” *International Organization* 43, no. 3 (1989): 450.

²⁹ Joseph, “Hegemony and the Structure-Agency,” 118.

potential to overcome Western-centrism by exploring how this universality takes different forms in various geographies as a result of the strategic actions of the agents. These elements are highly observable in distinct homegrown IR theories as they are scrutinized below.

3. Contributions of the Dependency School and its Western-Centric Moments

Since the Dependency School originated from outside the IR discipline, it does not actively engage in direct dialogue with Western-centric mainstream IR theories, such as Realism and Idealism. Instead, its central focus is on scrutinizing the underdevelopment of the third world and critically examining its relevance within the context of Western dominance in global political and economic relations. Therefore, the primary objective of the Dependency School is not to formulate a non-Western IR theory, rendering any evaluation of its success in this regard misguided. Moreover, as the premises of the Dependency School have been developed by theoretical contributions from various distinct geographies and disciplines, it is challenging to categorize it as a pure homegrown theory. However, being one of the first theories to interrogate global inequalities, the North-South divide, and the functioning mechanism of the international system, it has not only questioned Western-centrism but also acted as a source for homegrown theories. As indicated below, both the Chinese and African Schools of IR have been inspired by the theoretical deliberations of the Dependency School. Since the Dependency School has had a great impact in other underdeveloped parts of the world, it warrants substantial attention in this study.

Dependency studies,³⁰ which emerged in Latin America during the 1960s and 1970s, drew the attention of IR scholars to global inequalities and asymmetrical power relations, establishing the first theoretical corpus that problematized the dominance of the West within the global structure. The most pivotal contribution of the Dependency School lies in its criticism of liberal modernization theories, which take the developmental level of the West as an ideal reference object and present the economic-political structures of the West as a model for the rest of the world.³¹ The Dependency School also argues that both traditional Marxist theories and studies of imperialism are Western-centric.³² It maintains that Marxist theories reproduce the discourse of stages of development present in modernization debates and analyze capitalism by concentrating on Western cases, especially that of Britain. Dependency theorists have also criticized Marxist imperialism theories for focusing only on the relations between the core capitalist states,³³ similar to how Western-centric theories solely concentrate on super powers. Thus, the Dependency School advocates a theoretical initiative that focuses on global social relations rather than exclusively on relations between core countries. With this initiative, the focus of IR began shifting from the interactions among developed Western states to the unequal relationships between the core and periphery. In this respect, by emphasizing differences among states, unequal global economic relations, and underdevelopment, the Dependency School holds a pioneering status within the IR discipline as one of the first theoretical initiatives that originated directly from the Global South.³⁴

The Dependency School, which has garnered a substantial audience across the

³⁰ Paul Baran, *The Political Economy of Growth* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1968); Andre Gunder Frank, *Latin America: Underdevelopment or Revolution* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1969).

³¹ Cristobal Kay, *Latin American Theories of Development and Underdevelopment* (London: Routledge, 2011).

³² Ronaldo Munck, "Dependency and Imperialism in the New Times: A Latin American Perspective," *European Journal of Development Research* 11, no. 1 (1999): 56-74.

³³ M. Kürşad Özekin, "The Achievements of Dependency Approach as a Critical IR Theory," in *Critical Approaches*, 70-94.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 74.

Global South, has broadened the theoretical capacity of IR by expanding the discursive and spatial perception within the discipline. By directing scholars' attention to the legacy and continuity of colonialism, the Dependency School has highlighted the importance of political economy, in contrast to Western-centric IR theories' exclusive focus on security-related issues. The emphasis on core-periphery relations, revolving around political interventions, economic exploitation, and other forms of uneven relationships, has enabled the Dependency School to acknowledge the material foundations of Western-centrism in the IR field. By revealing that both development and underdevelopment are products of a single process in which the West progressed through the dispossession of the rest, dependency theorists have demonstrated that Western-centrism in the world is rooted in material factors like trade and production.³⁵ In other words, according to the Dependency School, Western-centrism is not based on the ideological superiority or theoretical hegemony of the West. Instead, this theoretical dominance by the West stems from enduring historical practices of asymmetrical power relations imposed by the core. In this sense, homegrown theories face significant constraints in challenging Western-centrism unless the centrality of the Global North in the international economic and political system is denounced radically.

Despite this first theoretical challenge, the Dependency School has had a limited direct impact on overcoming Western-centrism in IR. As previously indicated, since the Dependency School did not originate from the IR discipline, it has not engaged in a direct dialogue with the Western-centric mainstream IR theories. Therefore, the Dependency School theorists did not aim to formulate a homegrown theory with the competence to challenge Western-centrism in IR. Furthermore, even though Dependency theorists have directed IR's attention towards core-periphery relations, they also concentrate on a singular category of periphery and core. This parallels the mainstream IR theories' emphasis on a single type of actor (i.e., the great powers), which overlooks the divisions within both core and periphery countries themselves.

Apart from these shortcomings, the Dependency School is inclined towards Western-centric moments in its analysis of the "international." Even though the Dependency School takes the "world economy" as a unit of analysis to present an accurate depiction of the "international," its analysis inevitably shifts towards examining the great powers, given that the governance of global capitalism is orchestrated by the Western core capitalist countries. In this sense, the material foundation of Western-centrism within the "international" system gives rise to Western-centric moments in Dependency studies. These instances of Western-centric moments also hinder the Dependency School from offering a comprehensive account on peripheries. As Martin³⁶ states, the Dependency School's emphasis on concepts such as global trade relations and production chains, which are developed through analyzing the economies of core countries, faces difficulties in explaining the social reality in countries where wage labor is not as developed as in the West.

Furthermore, the Dependency School reproduces the modern/traditional dichotomy of modernization theories under the rubric of the core/periphery or capitalist/precapitalist dichotomy. Even though the Dependency School underlines that the rise of the West should

³⁵ Andre Gunder Frank, "The Development of Underdevelopment," in *Sociological Worlds Comparative and Historical Readings on Society*, ed. Stephen K. Sanderson, (New York: Routledge, 2013), 135-141.

³⁶ William G. Martin, "The World-Systems Perspective in Perspective: Assessing the Attempt to Move Beyond Nineteenth-Century Eurocentric Conceptions," *Review* 17, no. 2 (1994): 160.

not be sought in the elements unique to Europe, the categories of core and periphery do not contribute to the efforts of overcoming Western-centrism. Detecting that the rise of the West is rooted in global dynamics rather than its internal factors does not go beyond uncovering the “Eastern origins of Western-centrism,” which strives to discover the East’s role in the rise of the West.³⁷ In this sense, the Dependency School problematizes the negligence of contributions from the periphery to the core’s development, rather than questioning the West’s centrality in the international system. Anievas and Nişancıoğlu state that in this formulation, “social transformations from the 16th century onwards are understood in the Eurocentric terms of linear developmentalism,” wherein “the West is ... presented as the pioneering creator of modernity, and the East as a regressive ... entity that is incapable of capitalist self-generation.”³⁸ The Dependency School also examines the history of the non-Western world by integrating it into the history of the West, reproducing the Western-centric historiography of IR. However, this is mainly a reflection of the material centrality of the Global North in the international system, which fosters a Western-centric moment in non-Western IR theories.

Despite these limitations, Dependency studies have significantly contributed to broadening the scope of IR by revealing how the centrality of the West in the international system generates a variegated form of reality in the non-Western world. In this sense, through its analysis of the non-Western world, the Dependency School was able to demonstrate that the “universal modernity” of the West is established on “underdeveloping” the rest. Even though the Dependency School perceives non-Western agents as primarily passive which is subjected to the control by the core, it explores the contributions of these passive agents to the development of the modern international system.

4. The Chinese School’s Pursuit of a Counter-Hegemonic Theory and its Western-Centric Moments

The current efforts to develop a Chinese School of IR date back to the 2000s. Even though Marxism had been the dominant paradigm to analyze international politics since the communist revolution of 1949, with Deng Xiaoping’s reformative and opening-up policies, American and English IR theories gained popularity as well. As stated by Wang,³⁹ “internationalism with class struggle as the guiding principle before reform and opening-up has been replaced since the 1980s by rationalism with national interests at the center.” Since the 2000s, when China started to challenge U.S. domination in the discipline and international politics as the world started to transform from single-centeredness to multi-centeredness, calls for the formation of a Chinese School of IR have become more widespread.⁴⁰ Since then, an IR theory with Chinese characteristics began to be formed mostly around the concepts of peace, harmony, and sovereignty. As indicated by Liu,⁴¹ terms of equality, common development, and a harmonious world have become the key concepts in Chinese IR studies.

To this extent, the main motivation behind the establishment of a Chinese School of IR

³⁷ See; John M. Hobson, *Eastern Origins of Western Civilization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

³⁸ Alexander Anievas and Kerem Nişancıoğlu, “The Transition Debate: Theories and Critique,” in *How the West Came to Rule: The Geopolitical Origins of Capitalism* (London: Pluto Press, 2015), 17.

³⁹ Yiwei Wang, “China, between copying and constructing,” in *International Relations Scholarship around the World*, eds. Arlene B. Tickner and Ole Wæver (London: Routledge, 2009), 106.

⁴⁰ Xiao Ren, “Grown from within: Building a Chinese School of International Relations,” *The Pacific Review* 33, no. 3 (2020): 388.

⁴¹ Yongtao Liu, “Security theorizing in China Culture, evolution and social practice,” in *Thinking International Relations Differently*, eds. by Arlene Tickner and David Blaney (London: Routledge, 2012), 84.

was to develop a systemic IR theory that serves China's national interest.⁴² The primary objective was to show that China's ascent is peaceful and will bring a harmonious world structure. It was believed that the prevailing Western-centric IR theories failed to explain China's true intentions and portrayed its rise as a threat to the existing balances in the international system. Thus, Chinese scholars endeavored to formulate an IR theory capable of explaining China's foreign policy practice, rooted in the principles of peace and harmony. However, this does not imply that Chinese scholars totally rejected Western theories; instead, they sought to create a theory without directly absorbing the existing theoretical studies. Thus, they engaged in a constant dialogue and exchange with Western-centric theories to glean insights from others' knowledge, with the hope that "Western theories dominating the world of IR theory will hopefully be altered and a healthy Chinese alternative perspective may emerge."⁴³

Based on these motivations, a Chinese IR theory that is grounded on Chinese questions, norms, and practices has begun forming. In pursuit of this, Chinese scholars have turned to the teachings of Confucius, which had waned in popularity during the Cultural Revolution.⁴⁴ Leveraging this new Confucianism, several conceptual capacities have been developed to explain Chinese IR theory. One of the most well-known of such concepts is the Chinese worldview of Tianxia,⁴⁵ which suggests that all people in the world live under the same heaven; therefore, they are united as sisters and brothers. This notion of Tianxia is based on the belief that human nature is benevolent, reminiscent of Idealism.⁴⁶ The Tianxia understanding posits an ontology of coexistence and seeks to reveal the feasibility of a harmonious and peaceful world.⁴⁷ Through the concept of Tianxia, Chinese scholars aim to overcome Western conceptualizations of "enemies vs friends." With its principle of "all-inclusivity," Chinese scholars wish to demonstrate that the world system is founded on an ontology of coexistence.⁴⁸ Parallel to the Dependency School, Tianxia theory concentrates on the system level, rather than the national level, asserting that people are united above national borders. Tianxia, therefore, transcends internationality and develops a political principle of worldness.⁴⁹ In this case, unlike the Realist conceptualizations of IR that envision a constant conflict among the units of international politics, the Chinese theory of Tianxia emphasizes a harmony between individuals and states.

In close contact with the concept of peaceful coexistence, Chinese scholars have also developed the "relational theory of world politics." In this paradigm, diverging from the individual rationality of Western-centric theories, the Chinese School brings forward the logic of relation. According to them, international politics is a realm of interrelated elements, which in turn transforms actors into "actors in relation," given that their actions are guided by their relations in the first place.⁵⁰ This position relocates the level of analysis from the state

⁴² Ren, "Grown from within," 389.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 392.

⁴⁴ Liu, "Security theorizing in China," 72.

⁴⁵ Zhao Tingyang, *All Under Heaven: The Tianxia System for a Possible World Order*, trans. Joseph E. Harroff, (California: University of California Press, 2021).

⁴⁶ See; Ken Booth, "Navigating the Absolute Novum": John H. Herz's Political Realism and Political Idealism," *International Relations* 22, no. 4 (2008): 510-526.

⁴⁷ Tingyang, *All Under Heaven*, 4.

⁴⁸ Ren, "Grown from within," 404.

⁴⁹ Zhao Tingyang, "Rethinking Empire from a Chinese Concept 'All-Under-Heaven' (Tian-xia)," *Social Identities* 12, no. 1 (2006): 29-41.

⁵⁰ Ren, "Grown from within," 399.

to the relations themselves. Therefore, Chinese theorists assert that ideational, institutional, material, and identity-related differences are not really relevant in international politics, as relations are based predominantly on reciprocity and harmony.

Another corollary of the efforts to generate a Chinese School of IR is seen in the concept of “moral realism.” This approach, while rejecting the Realist notion of Machiavellian morality, underlines the importance of rulers’ moral actions. In other words, according to the Chinese School, rulers’ actions should be guided by moral principles.⁵¹ Even though this approach accepts the Realist notions of power and interest, it delves into the role of morality in becoming a real international power. Therefore, Chinese IR scholars underline the role of political leadership and national power as crucial components of moral realism. Based on this understanding, Chinese scholars concentrate on China’s golden age from 770 to 222 BC to draw policy lessons for China’s recent rise. For them, the success of a rising power lies in its capacity to act morally and in accordance with its strategic reputation, as these factors contribute to the international political power of states. Consequently, it is argued that the new world order, wherein China might rise as a new power, will be built on principles of equality, justice, and civility, as Chinese leaders will act morally instead of solely based on their limited national self-interests.

Chinese IR theorists also critique the Western conceptualizations of actors as selfish entities seeking their limited interests and searching for power. In contrast to this conceptualization, Chinese scholars advanced symbiotic theory, underscoring the diversity of actors. Rather than portraying the state with a fixed and eternal identity, the symbiotic theory adopts a pluralistic worldview where multiple values, cultures, and habits coexist.⁵² While the Realist theory envisages a single type of actor constantly in conflict with others, symbiotic theory envisions diverse actors coexisting peacefully on the basis of equality. In this setting, the size and power of states lose their importance, as each distinct actor occupies an appropriate place within the international setting. Within this “multiple worlds” perspective, actors engage in constructive interactions for a mutual benefit.⁵³

Since Chinese symbiotic thinking acknowledges and respects differences among identities, cultures, and civilizations, the concept of sovereignty emerges as an integral component of the Chinese IR theory. As indicated by Wang,⁵⁴ “the principle of non-interference is seen as more central by Chinese scholars than by most in the West, a view that China advocates in international relations.” The Chinese School’s support for the Westphalian sovereign state system has been reflected on several occasions when China objected to or vetoed practices of humanitarian intervention. In the symbiotic theory, all the actors with different identities have equal rights to determine their own domestic policies and national development strategies. In this sense, the Chinese School supposes an international sphere where interstate disputes are dealt with on the basis of sovereign equality, without intervening in the internal affairs of other states.⁵⁵

Despite these theoretical contributions and innovations, it is still possible to detect a Western-centric moment in the Chinese School of IR as well. As stated by Nielsen and

⁵¹ Liu, “Security theorizing in China,” 75.

⁵² Ren, “Grown from within,” 405.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 406.

⁵⁴ Wang, “China, between copying,” 106.

⁵⁵ Liu, “Security theorizing in China,” 82.

Kristensen,⁵⁶ despite its quasi-Marxist conception of history and critique of the Western conceptual framework, there is no pure Chinese theory that is completely free of Western elements. In several cases, for instance, it is possible to come across liberal premises when scrutinizing the Chinese School. When discussing the concept of anarchy, Chinese theorists embrace a position similar to liberal thinking. They see international law, international norms, and international institutions as generating a sort of order in the international system, which transforms international society into a more peaceful environment.⁵⁷ Along with the emphasis on sovereignty, this multilateral worldview envisions joint governance of the “international” through inter-state cooperation. The difference between the Western-centric use of these concepts and the way that they are reformulated by Chinese scholars is mostly based on their philosophical starting points. Feger,⁵⁸ for instance, disputes the connection between Kantian and Confucian concepts and strives to reveal the radical differences between the Western universalism of Kant and the Eastern universalism of Confucius. For the author, while the Kantian universalism and ethics are based on an individualistic ontology, the Confucian tradition of Tianxia envisions a relational system derived from responsibility and care.⁵⁹ However, when the author analyzes the political impact of these different philosophical roots, he states that Tianxia generates moral behavior in political action, which is the basis of a harmonious universal social order. The Machiavellian morality of Realism has been criticized by liberals in a very similar tone,⁶⁰ asserting that there is a universal morality in democratic state affairs, which prevents the constant conflict in international politics. The concept of a “peaceful rise” also indicates that liberalism is infused in the Chinese School of IR.⁶¹ In the Confucian thinking of Chinese IR scholars, states can cooperate to generate mutual benefit in a harmonious world structure. This evokes the liberal conceptualizations of security, which discredit unilateral security arrangements and attach importance to coordination in security policies.⁶² Therefore, when non-Western philosophical discussions are transmitted to the IR discipline, they do not automatically generate an alternative non-Western theory.

In this sense, the original contributions by the Chinese School end up with similar claims as those proposed by liberalism. As stated by Liu,⁶³ there is a “flavor of idealism” in the Chinese School of IR, as ontologically, Confucianism is also based on the assumption that human nature is benevolent. In this sense, for the Chinese School, harmony and progression are possible in the international arena. Moreover, imprints of behaviorism can be traced within the “scientization” debate in the Chinese School. As Ren indicates,⁶⁴ the School aims to develop a “third culture” of social science that integrates humanistic and scientific approaches. The humanistic position adopts the post-positivistic vision of intersubjective reality that underscores the geo-cultural aspects of social theory. Within this framework, differences among experiences, habits, and ways of thinking generate different perspectives, which makes a Chinese theory not only possible, but also inevitable. The scientific approach, on the other hand, reflects the infusion of American behaviorism in the Chinese

⁵⁶ Nielsen and Kristensen, “You need to do something,” 100.

⁵⁷ Ren, “Grown from within,” 393.

⁵⁸ Hans Feger, “Universalism vs. ‘All Under Heaven’ (Tianxia) – Kant in China,” *Yearbook for Eastern and Western Philosophy*, 4, no. 1 (2019): 193-207.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 195-197.

⁶⁰ Michael Doyle, “Liberalism and World Politics,” *The American Political Science Review* 80, no. 4 (1986): 1151-1169.

⁶¹ Wang, “China, between copying,” 113.

⁶² Liu, “Security theorizing in China,” 80.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 85.

⁶⁴ Ren, “Grown from within,” 398.

School, emphasizing the importance of empirical studies. In this context, the U.S. strongly determines the ontological, epistemological, and methodological universe of IR, motivating others to embrace the American mode of thinking. In this sense, the West has become the dominant subject, both as a unit of analysis and as the hegemonic actor in the formation of the “international,” which generates a Western-centric moment in the Chinese School.⁶⁵

Chinese IR scholars strive to reformulate established IR concepts such as sovereignty, justice, order, and change, and emphasize their profound philosophical divergencies from the Western academic tradition.⁶⁶ However, as indicated earlier, Western-centrism in IR refers to the dominance of Western perspectives, concepts, ideas, and problems in explaining international politics. Even though the Chinese School seeks to highlight different sources and roots for these concepts, the theorizing is still conducted within the same conceptual framework of Western-centric theories, which limits the possibilities for the emergence of an alternative agenda in IR. In this regard, even though the Chinese School breathes new life into the conceptual universe of IR with its neo-Confucian principles of harmony, relationality, peace, and cooperation, the end product remains essentially the same old ideas presented in a new package. In other words, the contributions by Chinese scholars do not present radically different premises from those of Western-centric IR theories. While the Chinese scholars apply original and local historical and philosophical sources to develop an IR theory with Chinese characteristics, they reiterate the mainstream IR narratives reformulated around the concepts of sovereignty, peace, and harmony. Therefore, the Chinese School actually exposes the Eastern origins of Western-centric IR theories by restating the same premises through a focus on entirely different sources.

5. The African School and its Western-Centric Moments

Even though there has been an increase in recent years in studies aiming to construct theories focused on the African experience,⁶⁷ the existence of a uniform African School in IR remains controversial. In fact, it is an exercise in futility to expect that a vast continent comprised of multiple states may produce a homogenous theory. Given the diversity among these countries, there is no single African identity or homogenous native African source to serve as a foundation for the African School of IR.⁶⁸ In this sense, the term African School is employed as a broad label encompassing commonalities within African experiences that have been excluded from the core of IR.⁶⁹ Therefore, Isike and Iroulo state⁷⁰ that the African School is an overarching concept formulated to define “theories that draw from African experience... methodologies that centered on Africa as the subject...and locus of enunciation based on its histories, epistemologies, and worldviews.”

Additionally, African IR studies often prioritize policy-related issues over theoretical studies.⁷¹ Still, there are various studies analyzing how IR is studied and conceptualized

⁶⁵ Wang, “China, between copying,” 109.

⁶⁶ Isaac Odoom and Nathan Andrews, “What/who is still missing in International Relations scholarship? Situating Africa as an agent in IR theorizing,” *Third World Quarterly* 38, no. 1 (2017): 43.

⁶⁷ See; Christopher Isike and Lynda Chinenye Iroulo, “Introduction: Theorizing Africa’s International Relations,” *African and Asian Studies* 22, no. 1-2 (2023): 4.

⁶⁸ Benita Parry, “Resistance Theory/Theorising Resistance or Two Cheers for Nativism,” in *Colonial Discourse/Postcolonial Theory*, eds. Francis Barker, Peter Hulme and Margaret Iversen (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), 172-196.

⁶⁹ Odoom and Andrews, “What/who is still missing,” 47.

⁷⁰ Isike and Iroulo, “Introduction: Theorizing Africa,” 4.

⁷¹ Karen Smith, “Contrived boundaries, kinship and ubuntu: A (South) African view of “the international,” in *Thinking International Relations Differently*, eds. Arlene B. Tickner and David Blaney (London: Routledge, 2012), 302.

in Africa, offering a general framework for comprehending the African perspective on the international.⁷² The main motivation behind establishing an African School in IR is the dissatisfaction with Western-centric IR theories and the conviction that mainstream IR theories are ill-equipped to analyze the political reality in Africa.⁷³ As Isike and Iroulo assert,⁷⁴ mainstream IR theories apply Western-centric concepts such as sovereignty and democracy as a lens through which to view Africa. This often involves uncritically adopting pre-established concepts derived from Western standards, experiences, and perspectives. Therefore, African scholars aim to fashion an IR theory that is more reflective of their political, economic, and social realities.⁷⁵ In this sense, African IR scholars have strived to revise Western-centric IR theories and construct a conceptual framework applicable to events and foreign policy-making in Africa.

Indeed, neo-Marxism and dependency theory were popular paradigms among African scholars, especially for those educated in Western institutions like Samir Amin⁷⁶ and Ali Mazrui.⁷⁷ Regarding its colonial past, it is not coincidental that studies concentrating on the sources of Africa's underdevelopment and global inequalities gained traction on the continent.⁷⁸ However, the current quest for an African School of IR outclasses the premises of the Dependency School, as African scholars criticize the dependency theory for neglecting differences among the countries of the continent.⁷⁹ Furthermore, while the African School intends to reveal the agential power of peripheral states,⁸⁰ the Dependency School envisions very limited agential capacity for them.⁸¹ For African scholars, as stated by Ofuho,⁸² African states are not passive actors whose fate is determined by external powers; instead, they possess active agential power that can enhance their competence to survive. Similarly, while analyzing the IR literature in Ghana, Tiekü defines the African School as a collective effort based on decolonial theory, relational ontology, southern epistemologies, and qualitative research aimed at revealing the agential power of the Global South.⁸³ In this regard, contrary to the assertions that African IR studies lack conceptual innovation,⁸⁴ contemporary theoretical contributions from Africa possess the capacity to unveil how the so-called Western universality is stratified and varies across different geographies. In other words, with its new conceptual openings, the African School discloses their experiences and perspectives on the "international." By focusing on the African knowledge system as the foundation for understanding the continent, the African School forges new pathways in IR centered around

⁷² See; Thomas Kwasi Tiekü, "The Legon School of International Relations," *Review of International Studies* 47, no. 5 (2021): 656-671.

⁷³ Ahmed A. Salem, "A critique of failing International Relations theories in African tests, with emphasis on North African responses," in *Africa in Global International Relations*, eds. Paul-Henri Bischoff, Kwesi Aning, and Amitav Acharya (London: Routledge, 2016), 22-42.

⁷⁴ Isike and Iroulo, "Introduction: Theorizing Africa," 4.

⁷⁵ Cirino H. Ofuho, "Africa: teaching IR where it's not supposed to be," in *International Relations Scholarship around the World*, eds. Arlene B. Tickner and Ole Wæver (London: Routledge, 2009), 76.

⁷⁶ Samir Amin, "Accumulation and development: a theoretical model," *Review of African Political Economy* 1, no. 1 (1974): 9-26.

⁷⁷ Ali A. Mazrui, *Africa's international relations: The diplomacy of dependency and change* (New York: Routledge, 2019).

⁷⁸ Crawford Young, "The Heritage of Colonialism," in *Africa in World Politics: The African State System in Flux*, eds. John W. Harbeson and Donald Rothchild (Colorado: Westview Press, 2000), 9-26.

⁷⁹ Ofuho, "Africa: teaching IR," 74.

⁸⁰ See; Ian Taylor, *The International Relations of Sub-Saharan Africa* (London and New York: Continuum, 2010).

⁸¹ See; Achille Mbembe, "African Modes of Self-Writing," *Public Culture* 4, no. 1 (2002): 239-273.

⁸² Ofuho, "Africa: teaching IR," 80.

⁸³ Tiekü, "The Legon School of International Relations," 656-671.

⁸⁴ Peter Vale, "International Relations in Post-apartheid South Africa: Some Anniversary Questions," *Politikon* 31, no. 2 (2004): 240.

ideas of decoloniality, relationality, and solidarity.⁸⁵ One of these pathways can be observed in the discussions about middle powers, which also reveals the emphasis on the agential capacity of African states. To highlight the distinct characteristics of African agents, scholars have established a differentiation between the “traditional middle powers” from the Global North and “emerging middle powers” like South Africa.⁸⁶ Regarding the position of emerging powers in the international system and their relatively limited economic capacity, they tend to adopt a more neutral stance by promoting regional cooperation and integration. In this context, while the traditional middle powers enjoy a sort of security due to their location in the core, emerging middle powers operate in line with the structural limitations of the semi-peripheral world. Therefore, while the former legitimizes the global structure along with its inherent uneven traits, the latter challenges it by advocating for substantial international reforms.⁸⁷

Another theoretical contribution by African IR theorists is the conception of Ubuntu,⁸⁸ which resonates with the Tianxia worldview of the Chinese School. Ubuntu is an African indigenous worldview that perceives a shared humanity in the universe, emphasizing “collectivist personhood.” Similar to the Chinese concept of “under the same heaven,” Ubuntu anticipates that each member of the community is linked to and responsible for each other. African IR theorists apply the Ubuntu philosophy to the international sphere to explain how African states act. In this setting, Western-centric IR theories with their individualistic ontologies are incapable of comprehending how African states conduct foreign policy since Ubuntu emphasizes solidarity and group thinking.⁸⁹ The indigenous communal culture in Africa is reflected in foreign policy-making, as states in the region value interdependence in contrast to the individualism of Western social theories.⁹⁰ According to Tiekü,⁹¹ this collectivist worldview prevents African ruling elites from seeing themselves as atomistic and independent entities, encouraging them to think and behave in relational terms. For African scholars, this perspective cannot be captured by Western-centric IR theories. Therefore, Western-centric IR theories inevitably conceptualize African actors as irrational, as they fail to grasp how the collectivist vision affects African states’ foreign policy, which is based on “cooperation, mutual understanding, and collective well-being.”⁹²

Based on the findings of Ubuntu, African IR scholars assert that Western-centric IR theories’ distinction between the international sphere and the domestic is irrelevant in the African context.⁹³ As underlined by Odoom and Andrews,⁹⁴ African scholars critically reject this distinction, preferring to concentrate on the sub-state level, which is largely neglected by mainstream IR theories with their state-centric understandings. Since the borders of African states were drawn artificially by outside powers, the inside and outside spheres have always

⁸⁵ Thomas Kwasi Tiekü, “A New Research Agenda for Africa’s International Relations,” *African Affairs* 121, no. 484 (2022): 499

⁸⁶ Smith, “Reshaping international relations,” 143.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Tim Murithi, “Practical Peacemaking Wisdom from Africa: Reflections on Ubuntu,” *The Journal of Pan African Studies* 1, no. 4 (2006): 25-34.

⁸⁹ Smith, “Reshaping international relations,” 148.

⁹⁰ Robert Gaylard, “Welcome to the World of our Humanity: (African) Humanism, Ubuntu and Black South African Writing,” *Journal of Literary Studies* 20, no. 3 (2004): 265-282.

⁹¹ Thomas Kwasi Tiekü, “Collectivist Worldview: Its Challenge to International Relations,” in *Africa and International Relations in the 21st Century*, eds. Scarlett Cornelissen, Fantu Cheru, and Tim Shaw (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 42.

⁹² Smith, “Reshaping international relations,” 150.

⁹³ Smith, “Contrived boundaries,” 301.

⁹⁴ Odoom and Andrews, “What/who is still missing,” 48.

been loosely separated in the region. The legacy of colonialism, along with the philosophy of Ubuntu, encourages African states to have a multi-layered perception of the international, in which kinship or shared values have tremendous effects on societies. Despite rejecting the distinction between domestic and international, the African School highlights the crucial importance of sovereignty and non-intervention in the internal affairs of states, akin to the Chinese School of IR. This emphasis on sovereignty is, again, a reflection of the colonial past of the region, which still influences African states' attitudes toward the West. In this sense, for African scholars, the real distinction in IR should not be between the domestic and international spheres, but rather between the industrialized North and underdeveloped South.⁹⁵

Despite these theoretical contributions, a closer examination of the African School reveals that it is not devoid of Western-centric moments, as visible in other homegrown IR theories. While reading the international through the lens of the philosophy of Ubuntu is an original contribution, the premises built upon this philosophy do not go beyond the findings of Western-centric IR theories. While Ubuntu is an indigenous worldview that perceives Africa as a collectivist social entity united around shared norms, rules, and humanity, its application to IR does not present a radically different proposition from the “international society” conception of the English School. According to the English School, states interact in an environment where they are bound by common interests, values, and a set of rules.⁹⁶ In this context, the African School's emphasis on the concept of a “collectivist social entity” does not bring a real theoretical opening to IR. This is evident in Ngcoya's critique of Western cosmopolitanism and its reformulation under the philosophy of Ubuntu.⁹⁷ Ngcoya compares Kantian cosmopolitanism with the emancipatory cosmopolitanism of Ubuntu and states that Kantian cosmopolitanism assigns the “responsibility to act” to the states, which is itself the source of the problem.⁹⁸ For the Ubuntu philosophy, on the other hand, the source of responsibility stems from its conceptualization of humanity as an interdependent existence. According to this view, while the non-humanistic cosmopolitanism of Kant's universalism assigns the responsibilities of protection to certain states, Ubuntu's cosmopolitanism suggests a dialogic approach to fostering ties among units.⁹⁹ In this sense law-based Kantian discussions on the responsibility to protect are reformulated as a political phenomenon. Despite this radical ontological divergence in the understanding of humanity, both liberalism and Ubuntu philosophy confine the conceptual discussions in IR to the responsibilities of humanity towards others. In this sense, the African School does not radically expand the conceptual universe of Western-centric IR, nor does it alter the dominant agenda of the discipline.

Apart from the English School, the concept of Ubuntu also shares common ground with the neo-liberal theory due to its emphasis on cooperation and non-state actors. African theorists utilize the concept of Ubuntu to reveal that the Realist perception of never-ending conflict among states is a mistaken premise, and that cooperation among states is not only possible, but also inevitable. While these scholars aim to refute the Realist theory by demonstrating

⁹⁵ Ibid, 307.

⁹⁶ Tim Dunne, *Inventing International Society: A History of English School* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998).

⁹⁷ Mvuselelo Ngcoya, “Ubuntu: Toward an Emancipatory Cosmopolitanism?” *International Political Sociology*, 9, no. 3 (2015): 248-262.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 254.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 250.

that multilateralism is a preferred policy for African states, they approach the liberal theory that underlines the possibility of cooperation under anarchical rule.¹⁰⁰ In a similar vein, the Ubuntu philosophy shares some common ground with liberal theory by highlighting the impact of citizens in foreign policy-making. In other words, since all units of a collectivist entity are interdependent in Ubuntu, all components should be analyzed to understand state relations. In this sense, the African School also aligns with liberal theory by underlining the role of non-state actors.¹⁰¹

Finally, the Ubuntu philosophy, with its emphasis on common humanity, rediscovers the liberal conceptualizations of the responsibility to protect. As Smith states,¹⁰² “while Ubuntu is different in many ways from Western concepts” of humanism, it exhibits rooted similarities with liberal conceptualizations of human rights. As Africans perceive humanism as a communal concept in which all members of different societies are interdependent and responsible for each other,¹⁰³ the African School presents a human rights understanding that is based on obligations towards all individuals. As indicated, this position confirms the contemporary liberal notions of the responsibility to protect, which assign a certain mission to the “international community” for the protection of human rights. It is contradictory that while the African School underlines the importance of state sovereignty and non-intervention, it inevitably legitimizes interventions in the name of human rights with its conceptualization of Ubuntu.

In this regard, since the efforts by African scholars to use original and indigenous sources to generate an IR theory end up with similar premises to the Western-centric IR theories, the end product turns into finding the Eastern origins of Western-centric theories. In other words, the adoption of radically different sources than the West does not yield a brand-new theory. In fact, as Salem underlines,¹⁰⁴ the real effort by the African School is not to produce a substitute for Western-centric IR theories, but to complete them. This is why Marxism as a theory is perceived as less Western-centric and has gained more recognition from African scholars, as its critique of global inequalities and exploitation is believed to explain the political and economic circumstances in Africa.¹⁰⁵ As indicated before, the domestic sphere in the Global South is shaped through its interaction with the international; therefore, the material control of the West over the “international” has not only transformed the political and economic reality of the continent, but also its ideational structures. In other words, to analyze their socioeconomic vulnerabilities and their position in the international system, African scholars inevitably concentrate on the West to a certain extent. Moreover, utilizing domestic elements for an alternative understanding of the international results in a combination of imported Western ideas with homegrown theoretical resources. In this sense, whilst African scholars try to overcome Western-centrism and dominance, the reproduction of Western intellectual tools in an African context generates an ironic hybridity.

¹⁰⁰ See; Robert Powell, “Anarchy in International Relations Theory: The Neorealist-Neoliberal Debate,” *International Organization* 48, no. 2 (1994): 313-344.

¹⁰¹ Ofuho, “Africa: teaching IR,” 80.

¹⁰² Smith, “Contrived boundaries,” 314-315.

¹⁰³ Richard H. Bell, *Understanding African Philosophy: A Cross-Cultural Approach to Classical and Contemporary Issues* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

¹⁰⁴ Salem, “A critique of,” 36.

¹⁰⁵ Sankaran Krishna, “Narratives in Contention: Indian, Sinhalese, and Tamil Nationalism,” in *Postcolonial Insecurities: India, Sri Lanka, and the Question of Nationhood* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 12.

6. Conclusion

The analysis of the three non-Western theoretical initiatives from three different continents reveals that all of them inevitably place the West at the center of inquiry at certain moments and unconsciously reproduce Western-centric perceptions to a certain extent. This study criticizes neither these Western-centric moments, nor the reproduction of Western-centrism, but aims to highlight the inevitability and necessity of this process. While the inevitability stems from the hegemonic position of the Western world in the global structure, the necessity arises from the agential activity of the Global South.

In this context, the largest structural challenge facing non/counter-hegemonic theories is their necessity to engage in a dialogic process with the hegemonic theory in order to determine their own positions. This inevitability compels non/counter-hegemonic theories to legitimize and incorporate the position/ideas of the hegemonic one to a certain extent. Conversely, the hegemonic theory always enjoys the privilege and material capacity to disregard or marginalize alternative positions. While such a capacity is lacking for homegrown IR theories, they strive to determine the boundaries of their own identity by positioning themselves against the Western identity. Therefore, reducing Western-centrism into an ideational dominance results in attempts to overcome it solely on the ideational level, inadvertently legitimizing Western identity to a certain extent by reproducing the “us vs. them” dichotomy in a different context.

This study took the discussion one step further by revealing the materiality of Western-centrism in IR, which situates the West at the center of the international structure. Therefore, overcoming Western-centrism solely at the theoretical level seems a futile task. Instead of striving to generate a counter, non-Western IR theory, homegrown theories should concentrate on reflecting the impact of the centrality of the West in different parts of the political universe. In this sense, homegrown theories are valuable and possess the potential to reveal the impact of the international system in their own geographies. Furthermore, they may unveil their own experiences and perspectives by illustrating how the so-called Western universality metamorphizes in distant geographies. For instance, they can highlight how Western-centrism is rooted in the legacy of colonialism or unequal representation in the international system. Alternatively, while Western-centric security studies have mostly concentrated on state security and nuclear issues for years, the real challenge for the Global South has been insecurities related to sustainable development, food, clean water, etc. In this sense, homegrown theories have the potential to enrich the vocabulary and subject matter of IR by exploring the stratified reality emanating from the international system. However, to depict a true picture of IR, homegrown theories should be considered alongside Western-centric IR theories.

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Realism's Timeless Wisdom and its Relevance for the Global South

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Abstract

Since the numerous calls for developing a truly global and plural IR discipline, a growing spate of IR studies have sought to contextualize and critique the Euro-centeredness of the field. One of the most significant problems scholars have pointed out is the hegemonic status of Anglo-American IR theories, which seemingly assert an ontological preeminence and universality at the expense of local knowledge and homegrown theories. While the present article shares many of global IR's concerns, it nevertheless proposes that in our quest to teach IR and develop homegrown theories, we should not lose sight of the importance of traditional contributions to the field. Our argument is based on a series of reflections about the relevance of realist scholarship for the developing world. Through an analysis of the major criticisms of classical IR theories, we seek to show that classical and, to a lesser extent, structural and neoclassical realism contain several and diverse arguments that speak directly to audiences in the global South. Classical realism, in particular, shares some interesting commonalities with postcolonial theory, which could pave the way for a more systematic engagement between the two approaches. Therefore, we argue that a global IR founded primarily on critiquing classical theories would be an impoverished IR, and "the thousand small steps" to a globalized discipline ought not neglect the valuable insights and reflections of traditional theory.

Keywords: IR theory, global IR, realism, postcolonialism

"What is this thing called international relations in the 'English speaking countries' other than the 'study' about how 'to run the world from positions of strength'?"

E. H. Carr¹

1. Introduction

The starting point for our analysis is global IR's difficult and unresolved relationship with the core canon of IR literature. While Acharya's seminal 2014 article argued that global

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¹ Michael Cox, "Introduction," in *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919-1939* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, [1939, 1946, 1981, 2001] 2016), xxix.

IR “subsumes, rather than supplants, existing IR theories and methods,”² other voices of the global IR debate are more critical.³ Many of the critiques have pointed out the Western-centeredness of major IR theories and their limited relevance to audiences in the global South. According to Tickner and Smith, “A typical challenge faced by professors of IR, particularly in global South classrooms, but increasingly in the North too, is how to teach theories, concepts and issues in ways that make sense to students, given the strong disconnect that exists between what we have grown accustomed to labeling the ‘ABC’ or the ‘canon’ of the discipline, on the one hand, and lived realities on the ground, on the other.”⁴

The present article applauds the critical engagement with traditional IR theory as a necessary step to raise awareness about its biases and shortcomings. Yet, we argue that many of the concerns raised understate the richness and usefulness of traditional contributions to the field. To substantiate our argument, we first provide a brief summary of the most important critiques of traditional IR theory. Second, we respond to these critiques by discussing the virtues of realism, a theory that has often been associated with hegemonic interests and is a main recipient of global IR’s critiques, for the global South. In this exercise, we seek to build a solid case for realism’s relevance beyond the North, focusing first on structural realism and neoclassical realism. We then proceed to classical realism as the most promising realist framework from a global IR perspective. One of our most interesting findings is a largely overlooked affinity between classical realism and postcolonial theory, especially in the way they address power and (a)morality in world politics. The main difference is realism’s pessimism and, perhaps, resignation to contingency, injustice, and expediency over genuine normative transformation. However, the apparent lack of progress in world politics and international relations renders realism’s pessimistic and cautionary axioms valid.⁵ We end our discussion by addressing valid concerns to our argument and providing a brief reflection about the benefits of a more systematic engagement between classical realism and postcolonialism.

2. Global IR’s Critique of Mainstream IR Theories

The global IR conversation reflects the culmination of long-brewing discontent towards several issues with the mainstream discipline, related but also distinct from the extant inter-paradigmatic debates that have shaped the field. Global IR challenges mainstream theorizing through its engagement with the interrelated issues of international, substantive, and epistemic hierarchies resulting from its Eurocentrism. *International* because of the disproportionate influence of the Anglo-American academe and U.S. geopolitical objectives;⁶ *substantive* because of an inevitable concentration on subject materials rooted in the geopolitical experiences of the West; and *epistemic* due to the lack of genuine globality, diversity, and

² Amitav Acharya, “Global International Relations and Regional Worlds: A New Agenda for International Studies,” *International Studies Quarterly* 58, no. 4 (2014): 649.

³ E.g., Anna M. Agathangelou and L. H. M. Ling, “The House of IR: From Family Power Politics to the Poesies of Worldism,” *International Studies Review* 6, no. 4 (2004): 21-49; Phillip Darby, “A Disabling Discipline,” in *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations*, eds. Christian Reus-Smit and Duncan Snidal (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 94-105; L. H. M. Ling, *The Dao of World Politics: Towards a Post-Westphalian, Worldist International Relations* (London & New York: Routledge, 2014).

⁴ Arlene B. Tickner and Karen Smith, eds., “Preface,” in *International Relations from the Global South: Worlds of Difference* (London & New York: Routledge, 2020), xvi.

⁵ Joshua Foa Diebing, “Pessimistic Realism and Realistic Pessimism,” in *Political Thought and International Relations: Variations on a Realist Theme*, ed. Duncan Bell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 169.

⁶ Robert W. Cox, “Social Forces, States, and World Order: Beyond International Relations Theory,” *Millennium* 10, no. 2 (1981): 126-155; Stanley Hoffman, “An American Social Science: International Relations,” *Daedalus* 106, no. 3 (1977): 41-60.

pluralism in the point of origins of mainstream IR theories, which are eschewed in favor of a false universalism predicated on Eurocentric assumptions about the social world.⁷ Institutional hierarchies also persist and must be a part of any conversation about the problems in the IR discipline since most of the top schools, major avenues of publication, and funding opportunities are located in the Anglo-American core and greatly incentivize the publication of paradigmatic or (neo)positivist research written in highly specialized English.⁸

While the authors of this article share global IR's concerns about the discipline's international, substantive, epistemic, and institutional hierarchies, we also uphold that some of the critiques of mainstream IR theories go too far. This is not to say that IR's major paradigms are free of serious problems, nor that they are the only viable theories to teach international or global politics around the world. What we try to show, instead, is that realism, a mainstream and heavily critiqued body of IR theory, contains numerous useful insights that are relevant to the global South and often overlooked by global IR scholars. Hence, the following paragraphs examine criticisms of mainstream IR in some detail.

Mainstream theories of IR are often labelled as grand theories or paradigms that present relatively coherent views about which types of actors are the most important ones in global politics (states, international organizations, social forces, multinational businesses, etc.) and the nature of their relationships (harmonious, cooperative, conflictive, etc.). These approaches occupy the intellectual heights of the discipline, enjoying a commanding position in the intellectual hierarchy despite a recent disciplinary gravitation towards publishing mid-range theories.⁹ Their dominant position is reflected in publications and bibliometric trends, as well as their presence in syllabi and other pedagogical material.¹⁰ According to several authors within the global IR movement, mainstream theories are Eurocentric at their core, reflecting the biases of the global North, resulting not only in epistemic violence, but also in ahistorical IR research that ignores local agency outside the West. Steeped in Eurocentric assumptions and biases, such IR research then fails to capture unique local dynamics, and therefore impoverishes the discipline as a whole.¹¹

According to global IR scholars, mainstream IR theories are Eurocentric because their research agendas are largely rooted in the fascinations of scholars from the global North concerning the origins and fundamental make-up of contemporary world politics. Firstly, the world-building of mainstream IR theories takes the Peace of Westphalia as a starting point for the modern state and international system, upon which the axioms of the major

⁷ Acharya, "International Relations Theories and Western Dominance: Reassessing the Foundations of International Order," in *Rethinking Power, Institutions and Ideas in World Politics: Whose IR?* (London: Routledge, 2013): 25; Amitav Acharya and Barry Buzan, "Why Is There No Non-Western International Relations Theory? Ten Tears On," *International Relations of the Asia Pacific* 17, no. 3 (2017): 341-370; Arlene B. Tickner, "Core, Periphery and (Neo) Imperialist International Relations," *European Journal of International Relations* 19, no. 3 (2013): 627-646.

⁸ For recent overviews of core-periphery divisions in the discipline, see, Peter M. Kristensen, "Revisiting the 'American Social Science'—Mapping the Geography of International Relations," *International Studies Perspectives* 16, no. 3 (2015): 246-269; Helen L. Turton, "Locating a Multifaceted and Stratified Disciplinary 'Core'," *All Azimuth: A Journal of Foreign Policy and Peace* 9, no. 1 (2020): 177-210. Regarding recent trends in publications, see, Wiebke Wemhauer-Vogelaar, Peter M. Kristensen, and Mathis Lohaus, "The Global Division of Labor in a Not So Global Discipline," *All Azimuth* 11, no. 1 (2022): 3-27.

⁹ David A. Lake, "Theory is Dead, Long Live Theory: The End of the Great Debates and the Rise of Eclecticism in International Relations," *European Journal of International Relations* 19, no. 3 (2013): 567-587; Lake, "White Man's IR: An Intellectual Confession," *Perspectives on Politics* 14, no. 4 (2016): 1112-1122; Ersel Aydinli and Onur Erpul, "The False Promise of Global IR: Exposing the Paradox of Dependent Development," *International Theory* 14, no. 3 (2022): 419-459.

¹⁰ Lake, "Theory is Dead,"; Daniel Maliniak, Amy Oaks, Susan Peterson, and Michael J. Tierney, "International Relations in the US Academy," *International Studies Quarterly* 55, no. 2 (2011): 439; Rudra Sil and Peter Katzenstein, *Beyond Paradigms: Analytics Eclecticism in the Study of World Politics* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

¹¹ Melody Fonseca, "Global IR and Western Dominance: Moving Forward or Eurocentric Entrapment?" *Millennium*, 48, no. 1 (2019): 58.

paradigms are founded.¹² Secondly, this would not be an issue if not for the problem that mainstream theories often fashion themselves as major research paradigms and operate from a narrow perspective of epistemological positivism in which timeless and universal knowledge about world politics is accumulated through hypothesis testing.¹³ The realist paradigm, and neorealism specifically, is considered to be particularly culpable because its conceptualizations of the state, anarchy, and the international system, among other key concepts, are rarely contextualized historically and geographically.¹⁴ This is exacerbated not only by the realists' self-professed "timeless wisdom" that envisions a world politics driven by power politics,¹⁵ but also by the resoluteness of its hard-nosed theorists about the "foolishness" of disregarding international anarchy and the balance of power.¹⁶ For critics, realism's "timeless wisdom" is nothing more than a reproduction of a racist caricature of a premodern anarchy.¹⁷ Thirdly, regarding contemporary world politics, mainstream theories' research agendas and assumptions are driven by the vicissitudes of American hegemony, as evidenced by the problematization of international anarchy and what can be done (by the U.S. and its allies) to transcend geopolitical inconveniences.¹⁸ Finally, and as a natural consequence of their geopolitical agenda, mainstream theories are problem-solving theories to the extent that their research agendas are intractably linked to the policy goals of the hegemonic state.¹⁹ For these reasons, mainstream theories' apparent commitment to an intellectual status quo and paradigmatic research render them as "imperial" scholarship.²⁰

According to many critics, the Eurocentrism of mainstream theories also recreates international hierarchies within the discipline in the form of substantive hierarchies. One need only inquire about how the global South figures into the narratives about the core canon of IR and its relationship to the global North. Its relative distance from the lofty heights of present-day great-power politics results in the global South going unnoticed, except to the extent that its constituent states are amicable or adversarial to the hegemon. This is amply evidenced by a bloated literature on the prospects of conflict between rising and status-quo powers.²¹ Obsession with great-power politics also distorts analytical boundaries when considering the validity of theoretical assumptions, as immortalized by Waltz's admission that his automatic balance of power theory is predicated on great-power states alone because

¹² Siba N. Grovogui, "Regimes of Sovereignty: International Morality and the African Condition," *European Journal of International Relations* 8, no. 3 (2002): 316.

¹³ Jill Steans, "Engaging from the Margins: Feminist Encounters with the 'Mainstream' of International Relations," *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 5, no. 3 (2003): 432.

¹⁴ John M. Hobson, "Part 1: Traditional Theories of the State and International Relations," in *The State and International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010): 17-63.

¹⁵ Barry Buzan, "The Timeless Wisdom of Realism," in *International Theory: Positivism and Beyond*, eds. Steve Smith, Ken Booth, and Marilya Zelewski (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 47.

¹⁶ Dale Copeland, "The Constructivist Challenge to Structural Realism," *International Security* 25, no. 2 (2000): 187-212; John J. Mearsheimer, "The False Promise of International Institutions," *International Security* 19, no. 3 (1994): 5-49; Mearsheimer, *The Great Delusion: Liberal Dreams and International Realities* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018); Randall Schweller, "Fantasy Theory," *Review of International Studies* 25, no. 1 (1999): 147-150; Schweller, "The Problem of International Order Revisited," *International Security* 26, no. 1 (2001): 161-186; among others.

¹⁷ Errol A. Henderson, "Chapter 2: Africa's Wars as New Wars – Dubious Dichotomies and Flattening History," in *African Realism? International Relations Theory and Africa's Wars in the Postcolonial Era* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017), 81-82; Robert Vitalis, *White World Order, Black Power Politics: The Birth of American International Relations* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015).

¹⁸ Grovogui, "Sovereignty in Africa: Quasi Statehood and Other Myths of International Theory," in *Africa's Challenge to International Theory*, eds. Kevin C. Dunn and Timothy M. Shaw (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 29-45; Ekkehart Krippendorff, "The Dominance of American Approaches in International Relations," *Millennium* 16, no. 4 (1987): 207-214.

¹⁹ Cox, "Social Forces," 123-155.

²⁰ Aydinli and Erpul, "The False Promise," 419-459.

²¹ Mearsheimer, "China's Unpeaceful Rise," *Current History* 105, no. 690 (2006): 160-162; Daniel Vukovich, *China and Orientalism: Western Knowledge Production and the PRC* (London: Routledge, 2013).

it would be “as ridiculous to construct a theory of international politics based on Malaysia and Costa Rica as it would be to construct an economic theory of oligopolistic competition based on the minor firms in a sector of an economy.”²² By the same token, Denmark, a country from the global North, “doesn’t matter” due to its diminutive military and economic capabilities.²³ Stephen Krasner, meanwhile, points out that no one “gives a damn” about Luxembourg because “Luxembourg ain’t hegemonic.”²⁴

Critics of Eurocentrism also charge mainstream theories—particularly realism—with overlooking the rest of the international system on substantive grounds, and assert that such theories ignore important nuances in world politics since the behavioral tendencies of great-power states *inter se* since the 17th century hardly constitute a timeless and universal explanation of international regularities.²⁵ Substantive hierarchy is not limited to realism since many of the most widely read contributions of the liberal and constructivist paradigms reify American hegemony and assert the primacy of liberal, and “Western” values on international relations.^{26,27} Empirical and data-driven enterprises that monitor and rate states on the virtues of their regime types and governance qualities only reinforce this notion.²⁸

The global South, meanwhile, retains its substantive usefulness for mainstream IR theories as a laboratory in which mainstream theories can be honed and tested. An interesting consequence is that when this issue is considered in tandem with the institutional realities and publication trends of IR, it results in a specific genre of research, particularly produced by local scholars, that fleshes out a local case from the global South to test its (inevitable) complementarity with imperial scholarship.²⁹ This essentially consigns the non-Western theorist to the role of a technician that applies Western ideas to a local curiosity; they become native informants.³⁰ This brings us to Eurocentrism’s final consequence: that IR theories inflict epistemic violence by imposing Western-centric knowledge on other parts of the world, thereby creating hierarchies and exclusions of non-Western epistemologies.³¹ The fixation on a canon of IR texts originating from Anglo-American IR in the 20th century, all of which has

²² Kenneth N. Waltz, “Chapter 5: Political Structures,” in *Theory of International Politics* (Boston: Addison-Wesley, 1979): 73.

²³ Waltz, “Chapter 5,” 73-74; Cox, “Towards a Post-Hegemonic Conceptualization of World Order: Reflections on the Relevancy of Ibn Khaldun,” in *Governance without Government: Order and Change in World Politics*, eds. James N. Rosenau and Ernst-Otto Czempiel, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992): 143.

²⁴ Richard Higgott, “Toward a Non-Hegemonic IPE: An Antipodean Perspective,” in *The New International Political Economy*, eds. C. Murphy and R. Tooze, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1991): 99.

²⁵ To do so would equate to what Hobson calls “subliminal Eurocentrism” (Hobson, “Constructing Civilization: Global Hierarchy, ‘Graded Sovereignty’ and Globalization in International Theory, 1760–2010,” in *The Eurocentric Conception of World Politics: Western International Theory, 1760–2010* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012]: 320). See, also, Powel’s discussion on tempocentrism (Brieg Powel, “Blinkered Learning, Blinkered Theory: How Histories in Textbooks Parochialize IR,” *International Studies Review* 22, no. 4 [2020]: 957-982).

²⁶ Acharya, “How Ideas Spread: Whose Norms Matter? Norm Localization and Institutional Change in Asian Regionalism,” *International Organization* 58, no. 2 (2004): 239-275; Jennifer Folker-Sterling, “All Hail to the Chief: Liberal IR Theory in the New World Order,” *International Studies Perspectives* 16, no. 1 (2016): 40-49; Amaya Querejazu Escobari, “Violencias encubiertas de la gobernanza global [Covert violence of global governance],” *Estudios Políticos* 49, (2016): 148-166.

²⁷ In fact, Folker-Sterling argues that Liberalism might be more preponderant than Realism because of its status as the official ideology of American hegemony (Folker-Sterling, “All Hail,” 45). See, also, Martin Griffiths, “Introduction: Conquest, Coexistence, and IR Theory,” in *Rethinking International Relations Theory* (London: Palgrave, 2011): 14.

²⁸ For a discussion, see Jeff D. Colgan, “American Bias in Global Security Studies Data,” *Journal of Global Security Studies* 4, no. 3, (2019): 358-371.

²⁹ Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2018).

³⁰ Ersel Aydinli, “Methodology as a Lingua Franca in International Relations: Peripheral Self-reflections on Dialogue with the Core,” *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 13, no. 2 (2020): 289; Kristensen, “How Can Emerging Powers Speak? On Theorists, Native Informants and Quasi-Officials in International Relations Discourse,” *Third World Quarterly* 36, no. 4 (2015): 637-653.

³¹ Gayatri Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak,” in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, eds. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 271-313.

ossified into paradigms and shares Eurocentric axioms about world politics and the nature of science, naturally creates a hierarchy in terms of which theorizing and which theorists matter more. Not only are mainstream theories considered to be the pinnacle of IR research, but all forms of distinct or homegrown theorizing are also regarded as inferior by necessity.³²

What results is a discipline in which the experiences of the global South rarely figure into mainstream scholarship, except in the most circumscribed of ways. The paradigmatic and problem-solving aspects of mainstream theories lead to a discipline largely shaped by the experiences of a narrow set of countries in a limited period. According to global IR scholars, we are thus confronted with severe problems, like the irrelevance of mainstream IR theories for explaining or predicting anything of consequence for the rest of the international system outside of the Anglo-American core. The epistemic hierarchy inflicted by mainstream theories and exacerbated by institutional incentives results in an impoverished IR that has much to say about the relative applicability of the IR paradigms on a range of issues around the world but is also exclusionary of genuine homegrown scholarship that can offer original insights and novel formulations.

Pedagogically, mainstream theories tend to stifle creativity too. For the Anglo-American core, the narrow fixation on a Western historical experience, starting with Thucydides, advancing with Machiavelli and Hobbes, and finally arriving at modern Anglo-American and émigré scholars, presents a neat and uniform narrative linking antiquity to the modern age. Apart from neglecting the multiple points of origin of IR concepts, a narrow focus on the West prevents aspiring IR scholars in the core from achieving a deeper engagement with the rest of the world. As Colgan notes, this has resulted in a “distort[ion of] the conclusions and inferences we draw in important ways.”³³ This is because Western IR theories occupy a central position in teaching not only in the U.S., but all around the world.³⁴ Accordingly, students in the global South must rely on Western theories grounded in Western histories for their IR learning, resulting in a need to interpret their own national and historical contexts through the fulcrum of Western IR. Without a well-developed corpus of local texts, instruction of theory is achieved through imported theories, often applied to local contexts by academic compradors. In fact, the ubiquity of mainstream theories in the global South, as opposed to critical and homegrown research, underscores intellectual dependency.³⁵

It may appear that the present article is proceeding on a fundamentally false premise per Acharya’s statement that global IR seeks to subsume rather than supplant conventional theories.³⁶ Yet, the claim that “IR has largely limited itself to the study of issues of relevance to the global North” is a common theme within the global IR debate.³⁷ Hence, our goal is to show that conventional theories, particularly realism, retain their analytical utility, while several of IR’s core readings are less ethnocentric than global IR scholars claim. Our focus on realism is justified by the fact that it has been at the center of the critiques of many global IR scholars, while its spread has been associated with a neocolonial or imperial project.³⁸ To

³² L. H. M. Ling and Carolina Pinheiro, “South-South Talk,” in *International Relations from the Global South*, 317-340.

³³ Colgan, “American Perspectives and Blind Spots on World Politics,” *Journal of Global Security Studies* 4, no. 3 (2019): 307.

³⁴ Thomas J. Biersteker, “The Parochialism of Hegemony: Challenges for ‘American’ International Relations,” in *International Relations Scholarship Around the World*, eds. Arlene Tickner and Ole Wæver (London: Routledge, 2009): 322-341; Colgan, “Where Is International Relations Going? Evidence from Graduate Training,” *International Studies Quarterly* 60, no. 3 (2016): 486-498.

³⁵ Aydinli and Erpul, “The False Promise,” 419-459.

³⁶ Acharya, “Global International Relations,” 649.

³⁷ Tickner and Smith, eds., “Introduction: International Relations from the Global South,” in *International Relations from the Global South*, 2.

³⁸ Álvaro Morcillo Laiz, “The Cold War Origins of Global IR. The Rockefeller Foundation and Realism in Latin America,”

contest this claim, we first focus on the theory's two most recent and popular strands, structural and neoclassical realism. As we illustrate below, even neorealists like Kenneth Waltz and John J. Mearsheimer, whose theories are, at first sight, further detached from concerns of the global South, have been at the forefront of criticizing excesses of U.S. foreign policy, while highlighting that the U.S. is not morally superior to other states.³⁹ We then proceed to develop a strong case for classical realism as the most promising realist framework. We first outline ontological and epistemological affinities between classical realism and the positions defended by global IR scholars. We then identify a strong connection between classical realism's theoretical core and postcolonialism. Overall, we seek to show that realism can be seen as less of a hard case for global IR than generally assumed.⁴⁰

3. The modest case for structural and neoclassical realism

Structural or neorealism is arguably the most controversial strand of the realist school of thought. To our mind, neorealism is rightly criticized for its almost irreverent dismissal of cultural and ideational factors in world politics, its rigid ontology, and its imposition of a particular and universalist understanding of science and the operation of the social world.⁴¹ Yet, while global IR scholars often dismiss core theories as ethnocentric, we claim that it is precisely structural realism's insistence on universality that offers scholars and decision-makers valuable tools for overcoming ethnocentric thinking.

For instance, by invoking analogies like the billiard ball model of international politics, neorealists envisage a framework of international politics in which military and economic capabilities define political outcomes in world politics to enable analytical precision and predictability.⁴² Furthermore, states' motives are simplified into indistinct "black boxes." While this simplification undermines the analytical utility of neorealism and similarly oriented structural theories,⁴³ it is important to note that these assumptions advocate an inherent equality and similarity between states, especially in terms of their motives and (a)morality. The billiard ball model, the black box of the state, and Wolfers' analogy of the house on fire, which arguably inspires realist thinking about the immanence of survival and fear as a universal motivator, all point to a world politics in which states and their decision-makers are similar. Neither are particular states seen as morally inferior, nor are specific peoples seen as less capable in their faculties or rational because of their culture and ethnicity.

These principles, of course, do not automatically result in neutral and objective thinking since a certain degree of ethnocentric biases are probably inescapable.⁴⁴ Structural realism's axioms nevertheless offer a sobering view of the inherent sameness of human beings, political actors, and states operating within a heterogenous world. Such a view is valuable given the countless reinventions and rediscoveries of a core of realist thinking across human

International Studies Review 24, no. 1 (2022): 1-26; Vitalis, *White World Order*.

³⁹ Waltz, "America as a Model for the World? A Foreign Policy Perspective," *PS: Political Science and Politics* 24, no. 4 (1991): 670; Mearsheimer, *The Great Delusion*.

⁴⁰ Michiel Foulon and Gustav Meibauer, "Realist Avenues to Global International Relations," *European Journal of International Relations* 26, no. 4 (2020): 1204.

⁴¹ Ole Wæver, "Waltz's Theory of Theory," *International Relations* 23, no. 2 (2009): 201-222.

⁴² Arnold Wolfers, "The Pole of Power and the Pole of Indifference," *World Politics* 4, no. 1 (1951): 39-63.

⁴³ Treating all states and decision-makers as being inherently similar did reduce neorealism's analytical leverage and necessitated many corrections with the inclusion of unit- and individual-level factors. See, for example, Jack L. Snyder, "The Soviet Strategic Culture. Implications for Limited Nuclear Operation," (Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, 1977); Graham T. Allison and Phillip Zelikow, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (New York: Pearson, 1999).

⁴⁴ See, Ken Booth, *Strategy and Ethnocentrism* (New York: Routledge, 1977).

civilizations and history, as well as more contemporary applications of realist theories across the global South.⁴⁵

Furthermore, despite its reputation for eschewing ambitious normative goals and conceptualizing the balance of power as an unintended and automatic process,⁴⁶ even structural realism expounds the normative objective of upholding the balance of power in the name of conflict avoidance, as evidenced by the attempted scholarly interventions into U.S. foreign policy.⁴⁷ Two examples are worth remarking upon.

The first of these embodies the realist principle that the balance of power is conducive to peace. To this end, structural realism's founding father, Kenneth Waltz, was an active proponent of nuclear proliferation, arguing that the destructive capabilities of nuclear weapons can act as equalizers to the balance of power by increasing the destructive capabilities of even weak states and enabling the stabilizing dynamics of nuclear deterrence.⁴⁸ Nuclear proliferation could not only serve international peace, but also offer a bulwark for the states of the global South against Western intervention. Waltz's notion is provocative given that the non-proliferation regime is predicated on maintaining the status quo for the powers already in possession of nuclear weapons and denying the same exclusive rights to aspiring nuclear powers.⁴⁹ Whatever the merits of proliferation, realist propositions aspire to a framework for thinking about balance and fairness for the sake of strategic stability and effective deterrence.

The second example concerns the scholarly reactions to the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003. Among IR scholars, realists were the most vocal critics of U.S. foreign policy through their sustained criticism of the nexus of Wilsonian idealism, liberal internationalism, and unilateralism.⁵⁰ According to them, U.S. foreign policy was hijacked by neoconservatives and resulted in a destructive war that could not be justified from the purview of realism, as Iraq posed no immediate threat to the U.S.⁵¹ This invasion inspired a series of important realist works that significantly scrutinized U.S. grand strategy, helped to coin terms like soft-balancing, and prompted discussion of strategic restraint, among other contributions.⁵²

While most structural realists have not systematically engaged with the debates

⁴⁵ See, for example, Mohammed Ayoob, "Inequality and Theorizing in International Relations: The Case for Subaltern Realism," *International Studies Review* 4, no. 3 (2002): 27-48; Arshid I. Dar, "Beyond Eurocentrism: Kautilya's Realism and India's Regional Diplomacy," *Humanity Social Sciences Community* 8, no. 1 (2021): 1-7; Victor M. Mijares, "Soft-Balancing the Titans: Venezuelan Foreign-Policy Strategy Toward the United States, China and Russia," *Latin American Policy* 8, no. 2 (2017): 201-231; Rajesh Rajogopalan, "Realist Approaches to the International Relations of South Asia," in *Routledge Handbook of the International Relations of South Asia*, eds. Sumit Ganguly and Frank O'Donnell (London & New York: Routledge, 2022), 7-19; Luis L. Schenoni and Carlos Escudé, "Peripheral Realism Revisited," *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional* 51, no. 1 (2016): 1-18; Luis L. Schenoni, "Subsystemic Unipolarities? Power Distribution and State Behavior in South America and Southern Africa," *Strategic Analysis* 41 (2017): 74-86.

⁴⁶ Waltz, "Chapter 5," 88-93. For a discussion, see Schweller, "The Balance of Power in World Politics," *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*. 9 May. 2016. <https://oxfordre.com/politics/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.001.0001/acrefore-9780190228637-e-119>

⁴⁷ Some versions of neorealism challenged this notion in light of the recent Russian invasion of Ukraine.

⁴⁸ Waltz, "More may be better," in *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: A Debate Renewed*, eds. Scott D. Sagan and Kenneth N. Waltz (New York: Norton, 1995): 3-45; Sagan and Waltz, "Is Nuclear Zero the Best Option?" *The National Interest*, no. 109 (2010): 88-96.

⁴⁹ Barry O'Neill, "Nuclear Weapons and National Prestige," *Cowles Foundation, Discussion Paper* No. 1560 (2015).

⁵⁰ Daniel Deudney and G. John Ikenberry, "Realism, Liberalism, and the Iraq War," *Survival* 59, no. 4 (2017): 7-8.

⁵¹ Brian C. Schmidt and Michael C. Williams, "The Bush Doctrine and the Iraq War: Neoconservatives Versus Realists," *Security Studies* 17, no. 2 (2008): 191-220; cf. Deudney and Ikenberry, "Realism, Liberalism," 7-26. The latter account argues that versions of realism are, in fact, as culpable as liberalism in forming and justifying the U.S. invasion of Iraq since realist theories of hegemony do, in fact, provide a theoretical justification for such interventions.

⁵² See, for example, Robert A. Pape, "Soft Balancing against the United States," *International Security* 30, no. 1 (2005): 7-45; Stephen M. Walt, *Taming American Power: The Global Response to U.S. Primacy* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2005); Michael C. Desch, "America's Liberal Illiberalism: The Ideological Origins of Overreaction in U.S. Foreign Policy," *International Security* 32, no. 3 (2007/08): 7-43; Barry Posen, *Restraint: A New Foundation for U.S. Grand Strategy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015).

about global IR,⁵³ Foulon and Meibauer have sought to bridge the divide by arguing that neoclassical realism in particular has much to offer to scholars from the global South.⁵⁴ Their article upholds that, despite its perceived position as a foil to homegrown research, global IR scholars should not ignore Western knowledge production and theories, as this would reinforce the dichotomies between Western and non-Western IR that they challenge.⁵⁵ They further claim that neoclassical realism (NCR) provides interesting avenues for global IR:

We argue that because NCR has a less strict understanding of paradigmatic boundaries compared to neorealism, it can embrace global questions and cases, global thought and concepts, and global perspectives and scholarship. Its use of unit-level intervening variables allows it to broaden its scope beyond the West and take non-Western cases seriously in theory building (not only testing). It is open to reconsidering a wider canon of non-Western scholarship to conceptualize decision-making processes and state behavior.⁵⁶

The present article wholeheartedly agrees that neoclassical realism can contribute to global IR by virtue of its ability to weave together system-level and an assortment of unit-level variables into a transmission-belt model used for theorizing about state behavior.⁵⁷ Yet, three significant obstacles remain. First, despite the emphasis on an imperfect transmission belt, NCR heavily prioritizes neorealism's system-level factors over national or regional dynamics as the main drivers of foreign policies. Second, neoclassical realism embraces a positivist epistemology, and thus privileges conventional methods, which embody IR's Western hegemony and exclusionary practices. Finally, NCR is primarily employed as an analytical, and occasionally predictive, framework for state behavior.⁵⁸ Despite its obvious strengths in aiding a productive research agenda on foreign policy in global South contexts,⁵⁹ it does not easily accommodate reflections about normative concerns and the morality of political actions.⁶⁰ We are, therefore, less confident that NCR and global IR are fully reconcilable. Instead, we seek to develop a strong case for classical realism, which we will lay out in the following section.

4. The strong case for classical realism

Similar to other branches of realism, authors like Carr, Morgenthau, and Niebuhr argue that considerations about power are the heart of international (and national) politics. However, they view human nature, desires, emotions, and intra-group dynamics, rather than the constraints imposed by the international system, as more fundamental to elucidate why political agents strive for power. While their explanations highlight the timelessness of competition over power and clashes of interests, like global IR scholars, they also assert that international

⁵³ An exception is Mearsheimer's short defense of the U.S.'s "benign" hegemony in the IR discipline (Mearsheimer, "A Global Discipline of IR? Benign Hegemony," *International Studies Review* 18, no. 1 [2016]: 147-149).

⁵⁴ Foulon and Meibauer, "Realist Avenues," 1204.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 1204, 1208, 1217, 1220.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 1205.

⁵⁷ Gideon Rose, "Review Article: Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy," *World Politics* 51, no. 1 (1998): 158, 169.

⁵⁸ See, Norrin M. Ripsman, Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, and Steven E. Lobell, "Methodology of Neoclassical Realism," in *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016): 99-138.

⁵⁹ Foulon and Meibauer, "Realist Avenues," 1203-1229.

⁶⁰ As a theory of foreign policy, neoclassical realism's engagement with moral questions about statecraft has been somewhat limited. For a discussion about neoclassical realism's prospects for accommodating normativity in foreign policy, see Gustav Meibauer, Linde Desmaele, Tudor Onea, Nicholas Kitchen, Michiel Foulon, Alexander Reichwein, and Jennifer Sterling-Folker, "Forum: Rethinking Neoclassical Realism at Theory's End," *International Studies Review* 23, no. 1 (2021): 284-287.

politics is messy, contingent, uncertain, and complex. As Morgenthau upholds in *Politics Among Nations*,

Knowledge of the forces that determine politics among nations, and the ways in which political relations unfold, reveals the ambiguity of the facts of international politics. In every political situation contradictory tendencies are at play. One of these tendencies is more likely to prevail under certain conditions. But which tendency actually will prevail is anybody's guess. The best the scholar can do, then, is to trace the different tendencies that, as potentialities, are inherent in a certain political situation.⁶¹

While over the past 20 years, several scholars from Europe have rediscovered classical realism's context-sensitive epistemologies and contributions to the field, this scholarship has not achieved the same recognition as the more recent strands of realism.⁶² However, Jonathan Kirchner prominently claimed that classical realism continues to be relevant as the superior realist approach to reflect on the uneasy relationship between the world's most powerful states, China and the U.S.⁶³ For Kirchner, classical realists recognize that hubris and arrogance often drive great-power behavior. Furthermore, according to him, the approach's "emphasis on uncertainty and contingency" is a more realistic starting point for the study of international affairs than structural realism's determinism.⁶⁴

Classical realism has also contributed to the analysis of the war in Ukraine. For Ross Smith and Dawson, both neoclassical and classical realism provide more complete explanations for Russia's invasion than its purely structural variant as both "can coherently marry material, ideational, and psychological factors into an overarching power-politics framework which can offer useful and convincing realist explanations for the Ukraine war."⁶⁵

The dynamics of great-power competition and the Ukraine war are naturally of relevance to any IR student, expert, and practitioner around the world, including, of course, the global South. To our mind, however, classical realism holds additional potential for the analysis of inter- and transnational dynamics from a global IR perspective. Despite the theory's interest in great-power politics, its ontology leaves a lot of room for human agency and is more flexible than other brands of realism.⁶⁶ Furthermore, while structural and neoclassical realism share a strong commitment to the dominant (neo)positivist methods and language (which many global IR scholars view with skepticism), classical realists have also expressed concerns about the excesses of positivism and the behavioral revolution in the social sciences.⁶⁷ Their sensitivity to the contextual and contingent elements of power politics hence facilitates drawing connections and blending with important strands of political thinking from all parts of the globe.

Apart from the ontological and epistemological proximity, we try to show in the following paragraphs that classical realism's theoretical core speaks directly to audiences in the global South. In fact, there is a common theme among classical realists and postcolonial scholarship,

⁶¹ Hans J. Morgenthau and Kenneth W. Thompson, "Part Two: International Politics as a Struggle for Power," in *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985): 23.

⁶² Felix Rösch, "Realism, the War in Ukraine, and the Limits of Diplomacy," *Analyse & Kritik* 44, no. 2 (2022): 209.

⁶³ Jonathan Kirchner, "The Tragedy of Offensive Realism: Classical Realism and the Rise of China," *European Journal of International Relations* 18, no. 1 (2012): 53-75; Kirchner, "Offensive Realism, Thucydides Traps, and the Tragedy of Unforced Errors: Classical Realism and US-China Relations," *China International Strategy Review* 1 (2019): 51-63.

⁶⁴ Kirchner, "Offensive Realism," 57.

⁶⁵ Nicholas Ross Smith and Grant Dawson, "Mearsheimer, Realism, and the Ukraine War," *Analyse & Kritik* 44, no. 2 (2022): 186.

⁶⁶ Robert Schuett, "The End of Open Society Realism?" *Analyse & Kritik* 44, no. 2 (2022): 220.

⁶⁷ Rösch, "Realism," 209.

both of which argue that great powers tend to act in immoral ways while planting universalist moral discourses to advance their selfish interests. In essence, both approaches tell audiences in the global South to be skeptical about great-power intentions and discourses, which try to hide their egoistic nature in a moralist language.

In E. H. Carr's *Twenty Years' Crisis*, one of IR's most widely read foundational texts, the author delineates the conscious and unconscious mechanisms that dominant states apply to weaken other states' economic development, welfare, and power. As is well-known, in this book, Carr develops a realist critique of inter-war liberalism, which he polemically labels as idealism or utopianism, and its detachment from facts and reality. A large part of his critique is centered around the liberal discourse of a harmony of interest. According to Carr, "the utopian, when he preaches the doctrine of the harmony of interests, is innocently and unconsciously adopting Waleski's maxim, and clothing his own interest in the guise of a universal interest for the purpose of imposing it on the rest of the world."⁶⁸ Hence, "[t]he doctrine of the harmony of interests thus serves as an ingenious moral device invoked, in perfect sincerity, by privileged groups in order to justify and maintain their dominant position."⁶⁹ For Carr, the idea of a harmony of interests was intimately tied to the liberal doctrine of free trade and *laissez-faire* economics, which the industrialized countries sought to impose on the rest of the world. However, "this alleged international harmony of interests seemed a mockery to those underprivileged nations whose inferior status and insignificant stake in international trade were consecrated by it."⁷⁰

To substantiate the claim that the harmony of interests is not harmonious at all, Carr presents strong critiques of the *laissez-faire* discourse by the former Yugoslavian Foreign Minister, Vojislav Marinković⁷¹ (1924 and 1927-1932), and the Colombian President, Alfonso López Pumarejo (1934-1938 and 1942-1945). Both intelligently express the sentiment and frustration of less-developed societies with the constant pressure they faced to apply free market policies, which, according to them, primarily served the interests of industrialized states and undermined their countries' economic and development goals.⁷²

Moreover, although Carr does not go as far as calling out individual writers or statesmen as racist, he takes on the racist, social Darwinist, and imperialist thinking prominent in the "idealist" discourse. According to Carr, the victims of imperialism and great-power politics are systematically depicted as inferior beings through racial theories:

In such theories, sexual abnormality and sexual offences are commonly imputed to the discredited race or group. Sexual depravity is imputed by the white American to the negro; by the white South African to the Kaffir; by the Anglo-Indian to the Hindu; and by the Nazi-German to the Jew. (...) Atrocity stories, among which offenses of a sexual character predominate, are the familiar product of war.⁷³

Carr further elucidates how the "utopians" used social Darwinism and notions of racial superiority to justify imperialist policies: "The doctrine of progress through the elimination of unfit nations seemed a fair corollary of the doctrine of progress through the elimination of

⁶⁸ E. H. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, 1919-1939 (Palgrave MacMillan, [1939, 1946, 1981, 2001] 2016), 71. For example, Carr writes "Bismarck records the remark made to him by Waleski, the French Foreign Minister, in 1857, that it was the business of a diplomat to cloak the interests of his country in the language of universal justice." Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, 69.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 75.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 76.

⁷¹ For a brief period, from April 4 to July 3, 1932, Marinković was also Yugoslavia's Prime Minister.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 54-6.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 68.

unfit individuals; and some such belief, though not always openly avowed, was implicit in late nineteenth-century imperialism.”⁷⁴ According to him, “British writers of the past half-century have been particularly eloquent supporters of the theory that the maintenance of British supremacy is the performance of a duty to mankind.”⁷⁵ The author backs up his claim by direct quotes from Lord Garnet Wolseley, Cecil Rhodes, and Arnold Toynbee, among others.⁷⁶

Carr also demonstrates how the “utopians” increasingly relied on social Darwinism to defend the harmony of interests in light of imperialism and economic policies that only benefitted a few great powers. When it became evident that imperialism and liberal economics created a few winners and many losers, the “idealists” slightly adjusted their message: “The good of the community (or, as people were now inclined to say, of the species) was still identical with the good of individual members, but only those individuals who were effective competitors in the struggle for life.”⁷⁷ Hence, as long as European great powers could thrive and expand, the harmony of interests remained intact. However, as Carr maintains, it “was established through the sacrifice of ‘unfit’ Africans and Asiatics.”⁷⁸ Only after most of the world had been conquered and no additional colonies were left available to be invaded did the idea of a harmony of interests finally begin to fade.⁷⁹

The prior analysis leaves no doubt that, for Carr, the “idealist” discourse that justified imperialism was centered around racist and Darwinist ideas. Therefore, we strongly reject the claim that “E.H. Carr’s framing of the first debate invariably erases race from the disciplinary memory, giving us a racially sanitized version of IR.”⁸⁰

The relevance of early IR scholarship to audiences in the global South would be easier to dismiss if Carr were the only author exposing the hypocrisy and manipulative techniques of the powerful. Yet, other prominent scholars who laid the foundations of the discipline made similar claims. In his seminal work, *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, Reinhold Niebuhr goes to great lengths to expose the hypocrisy of great powers, nations, classes, and other dominant groups. Like Carr, Niebuhr characterizes *laissez-faire* economics as exploitative, and outlines how great powers disguise their selfish interests behind a moral discourse: “No nation has ever made a frank avowal of its real imperial motives. It always claims to be primarily concerned with the peace and prosperity of the people whom it subjugates.”⁸¹ He is particularly critical of the Spanish-American war, which offered “some of the most striking illustrations of the hypocrisy of governments as well as of the self-deception of intellectuals.”⁸² According to Niebuhr, “Though the little junta, of which Theodore Roosevelt and Senator Lodge were the leaders, had carefully planned the campaign of war so that the Philippines would become ours, the fiction that the fortunes of war had made us the unwilling recipients and custodians of the Philippine Islands was quickly fabricated and exists to this day. We decided to keep

⁷⁴ Ibid., 48.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 71.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 71-73.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 47.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 48.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 57.

⁸⁰ Peter Vale and Vineet Thakur, “IR and the Making of the White Man’s World,” in *International Relations from the Global South*, 59.

⁸¹ Reinhold Niebuhr, “The Morality of Nations,” in *Moral Man and Immoral Society: A Study in Ethics and Politics* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2013), 83-112.

⁸² Ibid.

the Philippines against their will at the conclusion of a war ostensibly begun to free the Cubans.”⁸³

Hans Morgenthau, arguably the most renowned classical realist, has elevated Carr and Niebuhr’s claim to one of the guiding principles of his theory. According to his fifth principle of political realism, his theory “refuses to identify the moral aspirations of a particular nation with the moral laws that govern the universe.”⁸⁴ In his explanation of the principle, Morgenthau asserts that

[a]ll nations are tempted—and few have been able to resist the temptation for long— to clothe their own particular aspirations and actions in the moral purposes of the universe. (...) There is a world of difference between the belief that all nations stand under the judgment of God, inscrutable to the human mind, and the blasphemous conviction that God is always on one’s side.⁸⁵

Hence, in its very essence, classical realism is telling audiences in the global South to be skeptical of great powers’ moralist discourses, their intentions, and the conscious and unconscious mechanisms they use to trick them into applying policies that primarily favor industrialized nations. In this sense, the arguments developed by classical realists are strikingly similar to some of the core arguments expressed within postcolonial scholarship. For instance, in his presentation of postcolonialism as an approach to study global politics, Grovogui claims that “liberal and neoliberal institutionalist discourses often appear as rationalizations of hegemony disguised as universal humanism.”⁸⁶ Although it is important to recognize that postcolonialism goes much further in detailing “the techniques of power that constrain self-determinations,”⁸⁷ the core message is almost identical: great powers will do everything they can to advance their interests at the costs of others, while disguising their interests and actions in a moralist language and scientific facade. Hence, both bodies of scholarship agree that states, especially great powers, often act in immoral ways, and develop institutions, laws, and discourses that help them to obtain their goals and undermine weaker powers. A major difference between the two approaches arises in their normative ambitions. While postcolonialism aspires “to transform the international order and associated notions of community, society, and morality,”⁸⁸ realists are much more skeptical about such possibilities since history, for them, is a recurring quest for survival, power, and domination.

5. Final Thoughts

Are mainstream theories of IR, such as realism, a dominant and much-maligned perspective that embodies much of the problems prescribed by global IR, irrelevant? Our analysis attempted to show that realist perspectives are, in fact, sensitive to the issues of the global South, and that they hold assumptions about world politics that challenge the moral righteousness of powerful states and underscore some of the difficulties faced by states and peoples in the global South.

Despite realism’s tragic view of world politics, realist thinking has animated scholars to

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Morgenthau and Thompson, “Part Two,” 13.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Grovogui, “Postcolonialism,” in *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity*, eds. Tim Dunne, Milja Kurki, and Steve Smith, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 252.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 248.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

challenge the worst excesses of their governments and attempt to envision new and fairer systems of international peace, as in the cases of the academic resistance to the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003 and Waltz's advocacy of nuclear proliferation to avoid an interstate war.

Furthermore,

Classical realists for example highlighted the role of emotions in politics, warned of nationalism and the nation state and promoted global communities, they criticized the squandering of natural resources and urged to protect the environment, and classical realists also dismissed modern economies for their greed and for dehumanizing humans by seeing them simply as another resource.⁸⁹

Hence, as highlighted by Michael Cox, "realism might be better understood as a way of criticizing the uses and abuses of power by the powerful."⁹⁰

Critics will be quick to point out some of the recent deficiencies in the realist perspective, as notable realists like Mearsheimer have come under intense scrutiny due to the great-power bias that appears to blight realist thinking. Yet, while a particularly narrow reading of *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* may seek to conceal the most egregious expressions of naked self-interest, a more enlightened and encompassing interpretation of realism can equally expose the hypocrisy of the great powers while reminding students and practitioners around the world about the unavoidable immanence of power. Crucial for scholarly and policy ends, however, is that the practitioner of realism must exercise impartiality and moral detachment with consistency and rigor, because while it is "a dangerous thing to be a Machiavelli; it is a disastrous thing to be a Machiavelli without *virtù*."⁹¹

Another possible critique of our argument may well point out that great-power politics remains realism's most important focus, and that homegrown theories as well as postcolonial scholarship are ultimately better equipped to make sense of the diverse realities of the global South. This is a fair point that we do not seek to dispute. Yet, it is noteworthy that strong warnings to policymakers and societies in the global South to be skeptical of great powers' moralist discourses can be found in the discipline's most influential foundational texts, a point that has gone largely unnoticed within the global IR community. Once again, we are not trying to argue that classical realism offers a superior analysis about the receiving end of great-power politics, but instead that it complements and reinforces some of postcolonialism's key premises, which should make them harder to dismiss. This is not a minor detail given that it is quite common for students, pundits, and policymakers in the global South to side with one of the great powers and repeat their moralist discourses.

Furthermore, it is likely that governments in the global South will increasingly be pressured to take sides in global power struggles and align with one of the great powers. This has led to renewed calls for "active non-alignment"⁹² as a way of maintaining autonomy and sovereignty for many small and midsize countries across the globe. However, such strategies can only be successful if many countries from the global South act as a coherent block. Both classical realism and postcolonialism are helpful in providing such positions with a solid theoretical foundation and have the potential to connect with different audiences in the policy world.

⁸⁹ Rösch, "Realism," 215.

⁹⁰ Michael Cox, "A New Preface from Michael Cox, 2016," in *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, xvi.

⁹¹ Morgenthau, "The Political Science of E. H. Carr," *World Politics* 1, no. 1 (1948): 134.

⁹² Carlos Fortin, Jorge Heine, and Carlos Ominami, eds., *Latin American Foreign Policies in the New World: The Active Non-Alignment Option* (New York: Anthem Press, 2023).

Finally, we believe that drawing more systematic connections between classical realism and postcolonialism is an enterprise that is worth exploring. Postcolonialism provides convincing answers for many of the global South's problems by focusing on colonialism's shameful legacies and the diverse means through which actors from the global North maintain their dominant position in world politics. At the same time, postcolonialists acknowledge that not all of the difficulties and hardships of the global South are exclusively the fault of hegemonic states, be it because of the moral bankruptcy and corruption of postcolonial elites, or because beleaguered decision-makers have to sacrifice among a variety of competing priorities, threats, and expediencies. Through their focus on human nature, psychology, emotions, and inter/intra-group dynamics, classical realists provide additional introspection and clarity when addressing the intricacies of global South politics and offer interesting complementary answers as to why a genuine emancipation and moral transformation remains such a difficult endeavor. What classical realism lacks, however, is a coherent vision of how a viable future could look. As Carr has pointed out:

we cannot find a resting place in pure realism; for realism, though logically overwhelming, does not provide us with the springs of action which are necessary even to the pursuit of thought. (...) In politics, the belief that certain facts are unalterable or certain trends irresistible commonly reflects a lack of desire or interest to change or resist them. (...) Consistent realism excludes four things which appear to be essential ingredients of all effective political thinking: a finite goal, an emotional appeal, a right of moral judgment and a ground for action.⁹³

To our mind, postcolonialism and other strands of political thinking from the global South are well equipped to fill this void. While classical realism addresses the inherent tensions between power politics, clashes of interests, questions of legitimacy, and normative goals, postcolonialism represents an emancipatory approach to global politics, which must be part of the discussion about any of the world's most pressing problems.

What our discussion means for how IR should be taught or introduced to new students around the world is an issue that arguably cannot be resolved in any satisfactory way. We have great sympathy for scholars that are exploring new, innovative, and more global ways of teaching IR and world politics. At the same time, we have sought to show that some of the new approaches do not acknowledge the richness, diversity, and relevance of traditional IR theory to audiences in the global South. Hence, a global IR project that diminishes classical scholarship would be an impoverished IR, short of many valuable insights. Similarly, teaching IR without taking into consideration the numerous implications and insights of the global IR project would do a great disservice to students and professionals.

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⁹³ Carr, "Part Two," 84.

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Are We There Yet? A Global Investigation of Knowledge Inclusion in International Relations Theory Curricula

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Abstract

It is now rather well established that most International Relations (IR) theories are predicated on Western knowledges. This potentially limits their analytical capacity to explain international relations beyond Western ideological values or interests. However, in recent years there has been a substantial increase in scholarship not only critiquing the Western centric nature of International Relations theory but also exploring the contributions that knowledges from the global South make to the field of IR theory. Thus, the status quo is shifting, albeit slowly. Nevertheless, the impact as well as the implication of this shift toward knowledge plurality for the IR theory curricula has not been paid adequate attention. Consequently, this article investigates whether the demand for knowledge plurality in the realm of IR theory research has made inroads into the arena of pedagogy resulting in the generation of knowledge plural IR theory curricula. Moreover, it examines the different choices and interpretations made by educators in endeavouring to create knowledge plural IR theory curricula in various global contexts. Further, it endeavours to discern the factors that have informed and/or shaped respondents' curricula and pedagogical choices pertaining to the selection, structuring and transmission of IR knowledge at tertiary education institutions in different geographical contexts. Ultimately, it reflects on the implications of the increase in knowledge plural curricula for the development of greater knowledge plurality within the discipline.

Keywords: Global International Relations, decolonisation, International Relations theory, IR theory curricula, knowledge plurality

1. Introduction

The theoretical component of the discipline of International Relations (IR) is notoriously knowledge unidimensional, being comprised mostly of knowledge that has either originated in the West or been appropriated as Western by its scholars.¹ The consequence of this is that IR's ontology and epistemology has evolved to prioritize a Western political, economic, and

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¹ Ersel Aydinli and Julie Mathews, "Are the Core and Periphery Irreconcilable? The Curious World of Publishing in Contemporary International Relations," *International Studies Perspectives* 1, no. 3 (2000): 289-303; Arlene B. Tickner, "Seeing IR Differently: Notes from the Third World," *Millennium* 32, no. 2 (2003): 295-324; Tickner, "Core, Periphery and (Neo)Imperialist International Relations," *European Journal of International Relations* 19, no. 3 (2013): 627-646; Naeem Inayatullah and David L. Blaney, *International Relations and the Problem of Difference* (New York: Routledge, 2004); Ole Wæver, "The Sociology of a not-so International Discipline: American and European Developments in International Relations," *International Organization* 52, no. 4 (1998): 687-727.

social agenda in terms of what is deemed researchable, what counts as valid knowledge, and the appropriate ways of conducting research. Furthermore, this situation has been used by members of the Western academy to set the research agenda for the study of IR in the Global South (GS). Their justification for this is that Western theories, being characterised by a broad ontological scope coupled with a strong emphasis on a positivist epistemology, are universally applicable irrespective of geographical space, social context, or time. Nevertheless, this attempt at setting a universal theoretical disciplinary agenda grounded in a narrow perspective of reality has not been without contest.²

Initially, criticism regarding this issue came from those within the Western academy itself who pointed out how this situation impinged on the study of IR in the West itself. However, with the proliferation of the discipline in the GS³, the demand for knowledge diversity that takes account of realities, histories, cultures, as well as philosophies beyond the West has increased. Consequently, there has been an exponential rise in scholarship that clearly shows the necessity of knowledge plurality in the theoretical component of the discipline.⁴ Most of the work in this regard is focused on establishing knowledge plurality within the field of IR theory.⁵ Since it is theory that establishes the discipline's ontological and epistemological scope, achieving transformation here in terms of knowledge plurality can be seen as creating a tipping point. Once knowledge plurality is established as a disciplinary norm within the field of theory, this should inevitably cascade into other areas of disciplinary study.⁶ However, the implications for IR theory curricula of the work currently taking place in the realm of IR theory scholarship have not been expressly considered. In fact, based on the available scholarship, IR theory curricula globally have yet to engage with the pedagogical considerations related to the creation of knowledge-plural curricula in a meaningful way.

The aim of this article, therefore, is to investigate how the demand for knowledge plurality in IR theory has been translated into knowledge-plural IR theory curricula in the context of the curricula reviewed for this study. Further, I wanted to determine what types of actors, agents, and structures motivated, facilitated, or impeded their ability to adopt and effectively deliver a knowledge-plural IR theory curriculum. Additionally, this article defines the concept of knowledge plurality as the co-existence of a multitude of other theories and knowledges

² David L. Blaney and Arlene B. Tickner, "Wording, Ontological Politics and the Possibility of a Decolonial IR," *Millennium* 45, no. 3 (2017): 293-311.

³ I am aware of the inherent complexities of employing the constructs of the 'West' and 'Global South'. They have come to exist in juxtaposition to each other - the West seemingly embodying the near pinnacle of political, economic, and social sophistication and the Global South political, economic, and social dysfunction. These distinctions have emerged because of the continued exploitation through colonization and capitalist hegemony of countries constituting the Global South by those in the West. However, making broad generalization about the political, economic, and social conditions of countries that have come to be associated with these two regions is problematic. Notably, not all countries that are geographically situated in a particular region conform with its associated tropes - certain countries from the GS have more characteristics in common with those designated as 'Western' and visa-versa. Further elements associated with the GS can be found within some regions of countries designated as Western and visa-versa). Moreover, the projection of Western hegemony is not confined to the GS but extends globally. Additionally, the use of these terms may perpetuate stereotypes grounded in colonial thinking. Nevertheless, these constructs are still useful analytical tools if used carefully as they enable researchers to examine not only the interactions between the two regions and their inequalities but also the similarities, differences, and experiences among countries within a region. See Boaventura de Sousa Santos, "Public Sphere and Epistemologies of the South," *Africa Development* 37, no. 1 (2012): 51; Karen Smith and Arlene B. Tickner, "Introduction: International Relations from the Global South," in *International Relations from the Global South* (New York: Routledge, 2020), 5.

⁴ Yaqing Qin, "A Multiverse of Knowledge: Cultures and IR Theories," in *Globalizing IR Theory* (New York: Routledge, 2020), 139-157; Arlene B. Tickner and David L. Blaney, "Introduction: Thinking Difference," in *Thinking International Relations Differently* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 1-24; Smith and Tickner, "Introduction," 1-14; Amitav Acharya and Barry Buzan, "Why Is There No Non-Western International Relations Theory? An Introduction," in *Non-Western International Relations Theory* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 287-312.

⁵ Qin, "A Multiverse of Knowledge," 139-157.

⁶ Tickner and Blaney, "Introduction," 1-24.

having diverse origins and perspectives, thus enhancing our capacity to investigate the multiple realities that constitute the discipline. To quote Querejazu, this approach opens the “possibility of theorizing about the global in uncountable ways”.⁷ Reference to knowledge-plural IR theory curricula within this paper will thus refer to curricula that have selected theories, concepts, philosophies, or knowledges from sources in both the West and the GS.

2. Tracing the Movement Toward Knowledge-Plural International Relations Theory

A key characteristic of IR is its numerous theories. These have been taken to reflect the enormous diversity that exists in how scholars perceive both the literal and figurative worlds that the study of IR encompasses.⁸ However, in this instance, diversity does not equate to inclusiveness or ontological pluralism. Currently, most IR theories are predicated exclusively on the works of Western philosophers, excluding philosophers and philosophies from the GS that possess the potential to provide new perspectives and understanding to the study of international relations. IR theories are reflective of the discipline’s Western-centric ontology and historical narrative and have been formulated to deconstruct and analyse what Western scholars deem significant and worthy of study.⁹ Moreover, these theories reflect and entrench the power, prosperity, and influence of the West.¹⁰ This mono-dimensionality in both focus and interest of most IR theories mitigates claims of their universal applicability despite arguments to the contrary.¹¹ Confining their ontological scope to a Western reality aligned with Western-dominant strategic interests means that these theories conform to the notion of monistic universalism as they are predicated on a homogenous global reality.¹² Thus, the discipline possessing numerous theories is indicative of great epistemological diversity, presenting different ways of knowing a single reality. In contrast, theories that are ontologically plural possess ontological diversity, thus being able to conceive of numerous realities. The fundamental problem with IR theories being monistically universal is that this scope restricts their capacity to assist academics in understanding the multicultural social world we reside in.¹³ Being resistant to including knowledges and different political, economic, and social models from the GS calls into question the relevance of many IR theories, even within Western contexts, as well as potential development of more generative international relations practices and solutions to pressing global problems like climate change.

Western knowledge exclusivity in IR theories that maintains the hegemony of Western disciplinary interests is demonstrated by the fact that knowledges from the GS are underrepresented in terms of journal publications.¹⁴ This is one of the consequences of the

⁷ Amaya Querejazu, “Encountering the Pluriverse: Looking for Alternatives in Other Worlds,” *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional* 59, no. 2 (2016): 4.

⁸ Christian Reus-Smit and Duncan Snidal, “Between Utopia and Reality: The Practical Discourses of International Relations,” in *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 11-12.

⁹ Qin, “A Multiverse of Knowledge,” 139-157; Tickner and Blaney, “Introduction,” 2.

¹⁰ Acharya and Buzan, “Why Is There No Non-Western International Relations Theory?” 287-312.

¹¹ Cristina Inoue and Arlene B. Tickner, “Many Worlds, Many Theories?” *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional* 59, no. 2 (2016): 1-4; Querejazu, “Encountering the Pluriverse,” 1-16; David L. Blaney and Arlene B. Tickner, “International Relations in the Prison of Colonial Modernity,” *International Relations* 31, no. 1 (2017): 71-75.

¹² Amitav Acharya, “Global International Relations (IR) and Regional Worlds: A New Agenda for International Studies,” *International Studies Quarterly* 58, no. 4 (2014): 647-659; Blaney and Tickner, “International Relations in the Prison,” 71-75.

¹³ Acharya and Buzan, “Why Is There No Non-Western International Relations Theory?” 289.

¹⁴ Navnita Chadha Behera, “Knowledge Production,” *International Studies Review* 18, no. 1 (2016): 153-155; Tickner, “Seeing IR Differently,” 295-324; Arlene B. Tickner, “Hearing Latin American Voices in International Relations Studies,” *International Studies Perspectives* 4, no. 4 (2003): 325-350; Fernanda Barasul and André Reis da Silva, “International Relations Theory in Brazil: Trends and Challenges in Teaching and Research,” *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional* 59, no. 2 (2016):

ontological and epistemological delineation of the disciplines that predominantly reflect Western academic research interests that further correspond with dominant Western historical, political, economic, and social narratives. Thus, mainstream IR maintains monopolistic control over theoretical knowledge production by actively suppressing the inclusion of alternative or contrarian views on the grounds that knowledge that does not align with the prescribed ontology or epistemology cannot be considered knowledge, or at least knowledge worth knowing.¹⁵ Moreover, this exclusive method of evaluating and valuing knowledges results in Non-Western ideas, or knowledges that are labelled as parochial or particular and, therefore, non-universal. This creates and reinforces the belief that only Western academics are capable of “universal thought.”¹⁶ In the 2014 Teaching, Research and International Policy (TRIP) survey, IR faculty, irrespective of their geographic location, felt that the discipline reflected the interests of the West or the United States. Though Western academics did not see this as problematic, those from the GS felt that this entrenched Western knowledge hegemony needed to be challenged.¹⁷ Academics from the GS were seldom included when names of scholars who were deemed to have made a significant contribution to the subfield of IR theory were compiled, even when the opinions of GS academics were solicited. However, when evaluating publication output related to theory development, scholars from the GS were as prolific as their Western counterparts. Thus, the dearth of research by academics is clearly not attributable to the absence of knowledges from the GS, but rather demonstrates that their contributions to the subfield are unvalued and underrecognized. Latin American academics counter that IR theories produced in the GS should be afforded the same importance and recognition as those from the West.¹⁸ Refusing to publish theoretical research from the GS due to its ontological and/or epistemological divergence from set Western standards that prescribe academic rigor further entrenches this dominant-subservient intellectual status quo. It also ensures its perpetuation as IR students (future academics) are less likely to encounter theoretical scholarship from the GS in their curricula if this knowledge is seldom selected for publication by mainstream journals.

Although the picture the literature above paints seems bleak, as indicated in my introduction, there is a growing acknowledgement that the status quo needs to be disrupted, and that knowledges from the GS need to be integrated into the discipline’s theoretical canon.¹⁹ Consequently, there has been a discernible increase in journal articles, book chapters, and books within the domain of mainstream IR that have, among other things, demarcated deficiencies in the universalist assumptions of most IR theories, challenged knowledge universality in IR theory as a form of Western neo-colonialism, and debated the mechanism

1-20; Rebecca Hovey, “Critical Pedagogy and International Studies: Reconstructing Knowledge through Dialogue with the Subaltern,” *International relations* 18, no. 2 (2004): 241-254; David L. Blaney, “Global Education, Disempowerment, and Curricula for a World Politics,” *Journal of Studies in International Education* 6, no. 3 (2002): 268-282; Tony Tai-Ting Liu, “Teaching IR to the Global South: Some Reflections and Insights,” *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional* 59, no. 2 (2016): 1-16; Qin, “A Multiverse of Knowledge,” 139-157.

¹⁵ Qin, “A Multiverse of Knowledge,” 141.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 139-157; David L. Blaney, and Arlene B. Tickner, “Introduction: Claiming the International beyond IR,” in *Claiming the International* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 1-24.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 30.

¹⁸ Wiebke Wemheuer-Vogelaar et al., “The IR of the Beholder: Examining Global IR Using the 2014 TRIP Survey,” *International Studies Review* 18, no. 1 (2016): 29.

¹⁹ Acharya, “Global International Relations (IR) and Regional Worlds,” 647-659; Tickner, “Hearing Latin American Voices,” 325-350; Blaney and Tickner, “Introduction,” 1-24.; Blaney and Tickner, “International Relations in the Prison,” 71-75; Qin, “A Multiverse of Knowledge,” 139-157.

and consequences of disciplinary gatekeeping.²⁰ Significantly, academics have also proposed ways they believe to be most conducive to the establishment of knowledge plurality as a fundamental characteristic of IR theory as it evolves and develops. Essential to this, Acharya argues for the discarding of any claims of monistic universalism or a homogeneous reality by existing IR theories.²¹ Instead, he advocates for pluralistic universalism predicated on comprehending and respecting a diverse range of knowledges that is grounded in world history as opposed to only that of the West's making. Western IR theory would not be erased but would be able to coexist with theories arising from knowledges and realities in the GS. Qin, supporting the argument of Acharya and Buzan for this new dispensation, echoes the belief that the inclusion of marginalised voices in theoretical discourses would profoundly enrich IR knowledge, resulting in the production of what could be accurately termed 'global IR'.²² In contrast to Acharya's desire to allow for knowledge diversity within a commonly conceived reality shared with other Western IR theories, scholars such as Querejazu, Blaney & Tickner, Levine & McCourt, Rojas, and Law dispute whether theories from both the West and GS could all claim the same ontological space.²³ These authors contend that some knowledges from the GS, especially those derived from indigenous knowledge, occupy multiple realities. To quote Blaney and Tickner: "it is not only that people believe different things about reality, but that different realities are enacted by different practices."²⁴ Consequently, greater knowledge inclusiveness and plurality entails not forcing knowledges from the GS to conform to the current ontological strictures imposed by colonial modernity but allowing their introduction to diversify understanding.

Despite the growth in the scholarship addressing the need to decolonize or de-Westernize as well as pluralize the knowledge that constitutes IR theory, the same amount of attention has not been given to the aspect of pedagogy. Nevertheless, some of the scholarship listed in this section helps us identify the agents and structures associated with maintenance of the Western knowledge status quo. The scholarship also gives insight into the role such agents and structures play in constructing and shaping what Bernstein calls the field's knowledge structures.²⁵ In investigating whether endogenous Latin American IR theories were included in the curricula taught to Latin American IR students, Tickner's analysis of 12 IR theory courses from 7 countries found that Western-based IR theory constituted most of the curriculum content across Latin America.²⁶ Further critical IR theories were also largely absent. However, she found that Latin American scholars did incorporate endogenous Latin American knowledges when conducting their own research. They had also developed hybrid theories by merging select aspects from a range of theories to either explain or analyse their

²⁰ Arlene B. Tickner, "Core, Periphery and (Neo)Imperialist International Relations," *European Journal of International Relations* 19, no. 3 (2013): 627-646; Inayatullah and Blaney, *International Relations and the Problem of Difference*; Geeta Chowdhry, "Edward Said and Contrapuntal Reading: Implications for Critical Interventions in International Relations," *Millennium* 36, no. 1 (2007): 101-116; Aydinli and Mathews, "Are the Core and Periphery Irreconcilable?" 289-303; Tickner, "Seeing IR Differently," 295-324; Blaney and Tickner, "Worlding, Ontological Politics," 293-311; Wæver, "The Sociology of a Not So International Discipline" 687-727.

²¹ Acharya, "Global International Relations (IR) and Regional Worlds," 649.

²² Qin, "A Multiverse of Knowledge," 139-157.

²³ Cristina Rojas, "Contesting the Colonial Logics of the International: Toward a Relational Politics for the Pluriverse," *International Political Sociology* 10, no. 4 (2016): 369-382; Daniel J. Levine and David M. McCourt, "Why Does Pluralism Matter When We Study Politics? A View from Contemporary International Relations," *Perspectives on Politics* 16, no. 1 (2018): 92-109; Querejazu, "Encountering the Pluriverse," 1-16; Blaney and Tickner, "Worlding, Ontological Politics," 293-311.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 303.

²⁵ Basil Bernstein, *Pedagogy, Symbolic Control, and Identity: Theory, Research, Critique* (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000).

²⁶ Tickner, "Hearing Latin American Voices," 325-350.

findings, as nothing suitable existed in the current cannon. Despite these innovations, the author states that almost none of these models had found their way into Latin American curricula. In 2016, Barasuol and Silva published a study with similar objectives to that of Tickner in that it examined the teaching of IR theory and the use of IR theory in research, but exclusively within Brazil in 14 programmes.²⁷ The research sought to ascertain if the growing demand for theoretical plurality in IR scholarship had produced more research either about producing or utilizing Latin American knowledges, as well as whether more endogenous scholarly knowledge has permeated the curricula. It concludes that Latin American scholars tended to use Western IR concepts related to their field of research to formulate analytical frameworks. Minimal further development of theories derived from local knowledges had occurred in the interim between this and the Tickner study. In terms of curricula, the range of theories taught to students had expanded to include critical Western IR theory, but Latin American theories were still absent. Both Tickner's and Barasuol and Silva's empirical studies indicate that despite the existence of theories derived from Latin American endogenous knowledges, these were still not being selected as curricula content. Further, these studies consider the problems that the exposure to a narrow range of Western-based theoretical perspectives poses for students' academic capacity (which has numerous ramifications in terms of the knowledges they confine themselves to as postgraduates) and their ability to understand and solve problems related to their context. However, they make no recommendations on the expediting of knowledge plurality in curricula, especially through the inclusion of knowledge originating and developed in the GS. Whether similar situations exist in other regions or countries located in the GS cannot be ascertained, as to the best of my knowledge, there is currently no published research that explicitly investigates multiple locations in the GS.

Blaney and Hovey's analyses of IR curricula at US higher education institutions indicate that content that focused exclusively on the international relations of the West prevented students from developing awareness of IR beyond the borders of the United States.²⁸ Consequently, even though students studied International Relations, they remained largely ignorant in their knowledge of the rest of the world. This predominance of Western knowledge within IR curricula failed to equip US students to understand and function in a globalised world.²⁹ Instead, curricula needed to expose Western IR students to non-Western contexts, theories, and concepts, as well as a range of epistemologies to displace this trend of privileging Western knowledge as it provides students with a distorted and parochial perception of the world.³⁰ Facilitating critical student engagement with knowledge from other cultures as well as promoting dialogue with students from other cultures and locations would be beneficial as it would make the power dynamic within IR knowledge structures explicit to students, encouraging them to consider the possibility of establishing pluralist knowledge constructions.³¹

Liu, examining the teaching of IR theory in Taiwan, advocates for curricula content that is inclusive of diverse cultural contexts given the strong representation of foreign students in

²⁷ Barasuol and da Silva, "International Relations Theory in Brazil," 1-20.

²⁸ Blaney, "Global Education," 268-282; Hovey, "Critical Pedagogy and International Studies," 241-254.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Blaney, "Global Education," 268-282.

³¹ Hovey, "Critical Pedagogy and International Studies," 241-254.

Taiwanese IR courses.³² He argues that Western-based IR theories have limited explanatory and analytical capacity for the study of Taiwanese international relations. Moreover, they tend to provide reductionist solutions to problems, hence the need either to modify the ways in which students are required to use these theories, or to develop more suitable alternatives. However, Liu's focus is on the selection and adaption of curricula content. Thus, the study fails to consider how larger issues, such as agency-structure, disciplinary knowledge, knower structures, and student dispositions, that the course seeks to develop should shape these decisions.³³

Andrews' review of the course outlines from sixteen postgraduate courses that contain IR theory (twelve courses from the United Kingdom and the United States and four from Africa) found that most Western courses excluded critical IR theories, postcolonialism, and theories or knowledges from the GS. The foci of these courses were predominantly Western-centric. However, the London School of Economics, Oxford University, and Harvard University did include critical IR theories, scholarship that problematized the exclusion of the GS, and research by scholars from the GS. Nevertheless, these scholars were only cited once or twice across the course outlines, and none made the list of the sixteen most cited authors in the course outlines of the Western and African universities examined.³⁴ Moreover, the four African courses surveyed devoted an equal amount of time to the triad of Realism, Liberalism, and Constructivism as they did to Critical IR theories. Further, the inclusion of Postcolonialism was taken to constitute knowledge and theories from the GS. Nevertheless, scholars from the West were still most cited as required reading in the course outlines.³⁵ Despite the under-representation of course outlines from Africa, the study still concluded that Western theories and knowledges enjoyed pre-eminence in most of the courses reviewed.

Smith and Tickner indicate that the act of selecting specific textbooks and readings for inclusion in an IR theory curriculum confers validity on the knowledge contained therein. These choices convey to students what subject matter does and does not legitimately constitute part of the discipline.³⁶ The authors also problematise the fact that despite acknowledging the exclusionary nature of the field and embracing the call for its de-centring, many academics still include mainstream Western texts in their curricula exclusively, thereby continuing to give students a limited Western-centric account of IR. As most IR textbooks are American or Western-centric not only in terms of their content but also with respect to the nationality of their authors and the location of their publishing houses, this misperception is harder to overcome when the language of education is not English. Moreover, IR introductory textbooks are usually devoid of views and scholarly voices from the GS, reinforcing the perception that only the perspectives of Western scholars matter.³⁷ This confers exclusive agency on these academics as legitimate disciplinary theorists while relegating academics and students from the GS to being consumers of Western knowledge.³⁸

Although the scholarship provides important findings on the extent to which knowledge plurality has characterized IR theory curricula, as well as how and why the status quo is

³² Liu, "Teaching IR to the Global South: Some Reflections and Insights," 139-157.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Nathan Andrews, "International Relations (IR) Pedagogy, Dialogue and Diversity: Taking the IR Course Syllabus Seriously," *All Azimuth: A Journal of Foreign Policy and Peace* 9, no. 2 (2020): 276.

³⁵ Ibid., 276.

³⁶ Smith and Tickner, "Introduction," 2

³⁷ Ibid., 3.

³⁸ Ibid., 3.

problematic in providing students everywhere with the knowledge and related dispositions they require to function in a multicultural, globalized world, these studies usually only considered one or two elements pertaining to the curricula or knowledge choices. They also did not consider larger curricula contexts (probably because most IR academics lack the necessary training in the field of education that would be required for a more comprehensive analysis), nor did they examine more substantive issues related to the inclusion of knowledge from the GS in theory. Building on the above scholarship, this article seeks not only to assess if more IR theory curricula are knowledge-plural but also to identify the factors that encouraged or hindered their realisation.

3. Data Collection, Study Limitations, and Proposed Analytical Framework

Data collection for this article combined a content analysis of course outlines and semi-structured interviews with 9 colleagues who taught IR theory courses or courses containing IR theory at different academic institutions in different countries.³⁹ The interviewees were purposively selected because they have a public-acknowledged interest in the inclusion of knowledge from the GS in mainstream IR as demonstrated in, among others, their publications, conference presentations, and professional reputations. Further, all taught an IR theory course or a course containing IR theory at universities in various locations across the globe. Three interviewees are geographically located in the West, namely, the United States, the Netherlands, and Germany, and six across the GS, namely, Colombia, Morocco, India, Taiwan, and South Africa. Moreover, seven of the nine interviewees are involved in researching various aspects related to realisation of knowledge plurality within the field of IR theory. The sample is representative of both undergraduate and postgraduate courses as well as different years of study within either of these two categories. Interviews were structured to elicit responses on the selection, sequencing, and evaluation of knowledge within the interviewee's curriculum, as well as the rationale for these choices. This structure allowed me to make inferences on how each interviewee was working within the discursive gap to achieve their curriculum objectives. Once interview responses were transcribed, a content analysis was performed on these. Additionally, each interviewee provided a copy of their course outline, upon which a further content analysis was conducted. The semi-structured interviews also allowed the observations emerging from the content analysis of the course outlines to be further explored and elaborated on in greater detail. As this research only evaluates nine course curricula, its findings cannot be taken to be reflective of broader trends pertaining to the degree of knowledge plurality or exclusivity within IR theory curricula in general. For such claims to be made, a substantially larger sample of curricula would be needed. Hence, I have been careful to frame my research questions within the context of this research. This research may be accused of "cherry picking" interviewees who were most likely to have created knowledge-plural courses because of their acknowledged interests in incorporating knowledge from the GS within IR. However, the studies executed by Tickner as

³⁹ According to Pashakhanlou content analysis enables researchers to systematically analyse the content contained in a variety of forms of information, including among others, diaries, speeches, images, interviews, and letters. Krippendorff defines content analysis as a research method "for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use". This research method aligns with the critical realist stance of this research in that content analysis goes "outside the immediate observable physical vehicles of communication and relies on their symbolic qualities to trace the antecedents, correlates or consequences of communication, thus rendering the (unobserved) context of the data analysable." See, Arash Heydarian Pashakhanlou "Fully Integrated Content Analysis in International Relations," *International Relations* 31, no. 4 (2017): 449; Klaus Krippendorff, *Content Analysis: An Introduction to its Methodology* (New York: Sage, 2018), 24.

well as Barasuol and da Silva demonstrated that even though academics utilized knowledge from the GS in their research, this did not result in the incorporation of this knowledge in their teaching, with their curricula continuing to be populated by Western knowledge.⁴⁰ These findings indicate that it cannot be assumed that academics' research will automatically influence their choices related to knowledge selection for their curricula.

To answer my first research objective of assessing whether the demand for knowledge plurality in IR theory as advocated in my colleagues' research had been translated into knowledge-plural IR theory curricula, the content analysis of the course outline would suffice. The theories covered and the assigned literature would reveal if the course was knowledge-plural. However, to determine what types of actors, agents, and structures⁴¹ motivated, facilitated, or impeded colleagues' ability to adopt and effectively deliver a knowledge-plural IR theory curriculum could be harder to determine. Although the effects or outcomes of the operations of these entities may be visible in some instance, their internal functioning is usually invisible. Nevertheless, from a critical realist stance, identifying and understanding the generative mechanism inherent in these entities affords us the capacity to eliminate, transform, or strengthen them for the purpose of eradicating Western knowledge hegemony not only in knowledge production but also in IR theory curricula. To overcome these challenges that accompany this part of my research, I chose to employ Basil Bernstein's concept of the pedagogic device, which is designed to render the knowledge dynamics within an academic discipline visible as it charts the process through which knowledge is selected, pedagogised, and delivered to students. Consequently, it enables the investigation of how these dynamics influence the selection, sequencing, pacing, and evaluation of knowledge for curricula. Further, it elucidates how curriculum choices are shaped by, among other things, the norms of the prevailing socio-political order, as well as the contestations for legitimacy in the field of knowledge.^{42 43}

The pedagogic device models the process of creating educational knowledge.⁴⁴ It depicts the movement of knowledge from the field of 'knowledge production' to the 'field of knowledge recontextualisation' and then finally to the 'field of knowledge reproduction.'⁴⁵

⁴⁰ Tickner, "Hearing Latin American Voices," 325-350; Barasuol and da Silva, "International Relations Theory in Brazil," 1-20.

⁴¹ In probing the power relations that give rise to Western or knowledge plural IR theory curricula, the concepts of agents and structures as well as their interplay in producing curricula outcomes it is important to define these concepts. Agency is recognised as the ability of individuals or groups to exercise free will in that they are not constrained by the influences of external variables in making choices. From this vantage point, agents can affect social changes by their decisions (see, Sharon Hays, "Structure and Agency and the Sticky Problem of Culture," *Sociological Theory* 12, no. 1 (1994): 57-72.). Structure is defined as patterned social arrangements that have an impact on agency. Structures are comprised of social arrangements that govern and influence the action of agents. Hay argues that culture should be understood as a social structure as it is a "durable, layered patterned of cognitive, normative systems that are at once material and ideal, objective and subjective, embodied in artefacts and embedded in behaviour, passes about in interaction, internalised in personalities and externalised in institutions". Structure has both the ability to enable and constrain human choice and actions depending on the context. Moreover, human beings have the capacity to reconstruct or remove structures through their engagement with these structures and the agents that uphold them. It is important also to recognise that the casualty between agency and structure is bi-directional. Further power dynamics encompassed in agency-structure relationships are fluid depending on the context. The dominant knowledge structure within IR theory that favours Western discourses is a construct of Western academic agents and structures. A key mechanism for entrenching the dominance of Western knowledge is by means of IR theory curricula. This dominance is maintained and preserved globally because it is reproduced in the IR curricula of the GS as well as the West. In terms of agency and structure, this research seeks to determine the extent to which counter-hegemonic agents and structures are being developed that allow for the generation of knowledge plural IR theory curricula. Further, it seeks to identify not only why but also how lecturers who have generated knowledge plural IR theory curricula have navigated, engaged, and challenged the Western hegemonic discourses within the discipline. See Hays, "Structure and Agency and the Sticky Problem of Culture."

⁴² The pedagogic device was designed by Bernstein to make manifest the inequality within the British education system.

⁴³ Suellen Shay, "Curriculum Formation: A Case Study from History," *Studies in Higher Education* 36, no. 3 (2011): 317.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 317.

⁴⁵ Suellen Shay, "Curricula at the Boundaries," *Higher Education* 71 (2016): 767-779; Parlo Singh, "Pedagogising Knowledge:

The field of ‘knowledge production’ refers to where knowledge is created, usually in the form of academic scholarship. The field of ‘knowledge recontextualisation’ refers to where knowledge is adapted and integrated into the content of a curriculum. Finally, the field of ‘knowledge reproduction’ relates to where knowledge is presented to the learner. Here, the content and skills are delivered from the educator to the learner. As there is a hierarchical interrelationship between these fields, the forces that influence the research agendas of scholars, together with their ontological and epistemological dispositions in the field of knowledge production, will determine the range of knowledge available for selection in the fields of ‘knowledge recontextualization’ and ‘reproduction.’ Additionally, there are rules within each of the three fields that determine what knowledge gets privileged, as well as what occurs with it as it is selected, recontextualised into a curriculum, and then transmitted to learners through pedagogy and assessment.⁴⁶

The field of knowledge production is subject to distributive rules that determine “who may transmit what kind of knowledge, to whom and under what conditions”,⁴⁷ as well as setting the limits of legitimate discourse.⁴⁸ Moreover, they control who has access to the ‘unthinkable’, meaning the production of new knowledge, and the ‘thinkable’, or official knowledge.⁴⁹ The control and management of the ‘unthinkable’ is confined to agencies of higher education and would include universities, research centres, and professional bodies that regulate research.⁵⁰ In relation to the knowledge production in IR theory, it is dominated by Western academic institutions and predominantly features Western knowledge in mainstream journals and books.⁵¹ This situation is maintained by Western-imposed epistemological constraints that define what types of knowledge produced count as “valid” and thus worthy of mainstream dissemination and publication. It is Western IR’s preference for “positivism” that constrains the epistemological range of knowledges produced that are allowed entrance to the mainstream arena.⁵² This skews what knowledge is deemed as valid and therefore available for recontextualization into curricula.

The recontextualization of knowledge is not a neutral undertaking that merely entails the mechanical selection, editing, and repackaging of the requisite knowledge into bite-sized pieces deemed to be most suitable for intellectual consumption by students. Learning also requires the acquisition of concomitant skills, values, and personal characteristics that allow the knowledge to be of practical use to the individual student and the rest of society. Consequently, part of the recontextualization process is merging these two components. Thus, there is an interlinkage here with agency-structure and student knowing, being and becoming. Bernstein identifies the two pedagogic discourses, which emerge from the process of recontextualization, namely, instructional and regulative discourses. Instructional discourse refers to specialized knowledge and content skills, while regulative discourse

Bernstein’s Theory of the Pedagogic Device,” *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 23, no. 4 (2002): 571-582; Kathy Luckett, “The Relationship between Knowledge Structure and Curriculum: A Case Study in Sociology,” *Studies in higher education* 34, no. 4 (2009): 441-453.

⁴⁶ Shay, “Curriculum Formation,” 316.

⁴⁷ Bernstein, *Pedagogy, Symbolic Control, and Identity*, 131.

⁴⁸ Leonel Lim, “Regulating the Unthinkable: Bernstein’s Pedagogic Device and the Paradox of Control,” *International Studies in Sociology of Education* 26, no. 4 (2017): 356.

⁴⁹ Bernstein, *Pedagogy, Symbolic Control, and Identity*, 114

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁵¹ Tickner and Blaney, “Introduction,” 1-24; Qin, “A Multiverse of Knowledge,” 139-157.

⁵² Bernstein, *Pedagogy, Symbolic Control, and Identity: Theory, Research, Critique*, 114..

refers to considerations pertaining to social and moral order.⁵³ Within instructional discourse, knowledge structures inform the range of choices available in the selection, sequencing, pacing, and evaluation of knowledge. It is within the instructional discourse that contestation over what constitutes valid discipline-specific knowledge occurs.⁵⁴ Regulative discourse often informs debates on the aim and purpose of the curriculum. This introduces questions regarding the aim and purpose of studying International Relations theory as well as what would constitute the “ideal IR knower”, which in turn is related to the issues of knowing and becoming. It is important to note that the regulative discourse is the dominant discourse, and the instructional discourse is embedded within it.⁵⁵ Thus, we can conclude that the regulative discourse can be used to shape the instructional discourse to serve the curriculum’s overall aim and purpose.

A significant result of the selection, relocation, and reassembly of knowledge from its “purest” form to a form which is suitable to be taught is that it produces the “discursive gap.”⁵⁶ This allows the personal interpretations, values, beliefs, and ideologies of the curriculum designer to influence which elements encapsulated in the instructional and regulative discourses are included in a curriculum, as well as the form they should take. It also creates an opportunity for the ideological, the social, and the political milieu of the moment to influence the content and form of a curriculum.⁵⁷ Here, curriculum designers have the agency to reproduce or challenge the knowledge of their discipline and incorporate or address relevant issues arising both inside and outside the academy. Practically, this will also influence how designers select, sequence, pace, and evaluate knowledge in their curriculum. Agents operating in the field of knowledge recontextualization would include state educational regulatory bodies, university teaching and learning bodies, social movements such as “fees must fall”, curricula designers, and textbook authors. However, IR academics who design and lecture theory courses are the primary recontextualizing agents. Their choices in selecting specific knowledge for inclusion in curricula gives them agency to determine what constitutes legitimate objects of study. They get to decide on the most logical way of sequencing the knowledge that will be presented to students. Lastly, they are responsible for setting the evaluative criteria that defines what counts as legitimate performance. Nevertheless, Shay argues that even though academics at universities usually have greater autonomy over their curricula choices than schools, these choices are still always constrained by ideological, social, and political factors, together with competing agents as well as structures that vie to influence the knowledge selection choices made by curriculum designers.⁵⁸ The pedagogic device’s ability to reveal the complex interactions that occur within the field of knowledge recontextualisation enables one to model the conditions for affordances and constraints when knowledge is pedagogised in a specific context.⁵⁹

In the field of knowledge, reproduction content and skills are delivered from the educator to the learner. How this is accomplished is largely up to the lecturer’s discretion. However, this discretion is constrained by internal and external factors. These include the lecturer’s

⁵³ Luckett, “The Relationship between Knowledge Structure and Curriculum,” 441-453.

⁵⁴ Bernstein, *Pedagogy, Symbolic Control, and Identity*, 32.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 33.

⁵⁸ Shay, “Curriculum Formation,” 317.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 317.

perception of their role as educator, the process of pedagogy, and the role of students in the learning process. Contained in this field are evaluative rules that regulate what counts as the valid acquisition of the knowledge ascribed in the curriculum. This is expressly evident in assessment regimes contained in curricula as these define what counts as legitimate knowledge and knowers.⁶⁰ Agents operating in this field include lecturers, students, teaching and learning experts, and individual teaching teams.

Bernstein concludes that agents operating in the three fields above may either seek to maintain or challenge the ordering and disordering principles of the pedagogic.⁶¹ Hence, there exists within the pedagogic device both the ability to maintain or alter the status quo pertaining to what knowledge is distributed as well as how and to whom this is taught, depending on how agents within the three fields utilize these spaces to disrupt or reinforce knowledge narratives.⁶²

Below, I present a descriptive analysis of the course outlines provided by the interviewees, presented in Table One, followed by a summary of its key finding. I then present my content analysis of the ten semi-structured interviews conducted. The analysis culminates in identifying the affordances and constraints to establishing knowledge-plural IR theory curricula emerging from the data analyses applying the pedagogic device.

3.1 Descriptive Analysis of Course Outlines – Summary of Findings (Refer to Table One)

There was no predisposition toward knowledge plurality according to courses' geographic location. The same applied to whether a course was co- or solo-taught. Five courses were taught to Master's students and four to undergraduates. All courses were taught over a semester (half an academic year) but the number of classes allocated did vary, with 12 – 18 classes being the average. The 3 courses that had 26 or more classes did cover a greater amount of theory, and all included knowledge from the GS, but 3 out of 9 courses is not indicative of a trend.

Out of the eight courses that were analysed above, only two courses, namely Course Five (Morocco) and Course Seven (South Africa), did not identify the engagement with either knowledge from the GS or both the GS and West as a course aim or objective. Although this was not unexpected for Course Seven as it focused exclusively on Western IR theories, Course 5 contained knowledge from both the West and GS in its lectures, yet this engagement with diverse knowledges was not identified as a course objective. Course six (the Netherlands) was the only course that expressly problematised the Western centrality of IR knowledge in its stated objectives, though Courses One and Two (both Colombia) devoted an entire lecture to this issue. Nevertheless, the fact that most of the courses did identify engagement with knowledges from the GS or those of the GS and the West as a course aim was significant. As mentioned previously, assigning engagement with knowledges from the GS as a course aim designates this knowledge as valid. In addition, it was evident that the regulative discourse in these courses has been responsive to the substantial shift currently occurring within the

⁶⁰ Monica McLean, Andrea Abbas, and Paul Ashwin, "The Use and Value of Bernstein's Work in Studying (in) Equalities in Undergraduate Social Science Education," *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 34, no. 2 (2013): 262-280.

⁶¹ Singh, "Pedagogising Knowledge," 573.

⁶² Bernstein, *Pedagogy, Symbolic Control, and Identity*, 28.

discipline in acknowledging the necessity of knowledge pluralism in the field of IR theory.⁶³ Further, in these six courses, the discursive gap seemed to facilitate the decision to deviate from the norm of the Western-centric IR theory course. Further, most courses also included as objectives the development of students' critical reasoning capacity, as well as their ability to use theories to analyse real world scenarios. Thus, the 'ideal knower' in this context appeared to be a student who can interact critically with and apply a diverse range of knowledges beyond what they are familiar with.

When examining the types of knowledges selected, seven out of the nine courses could be identified as knowledge-plural. This finding itself gives a clear indication of whether there is a trend for or against embracing knowledge plurality in the evaluated curricula. However, data from the course outlines alone is unable to offer any explanations as to why particular choices were made.

Five courses had sequenced their knowledge chronologically, with three of these placing knowledges or theories from the GS at the end of the course. Course One disrupted the chronology by placing dependency theory after Liberalism. Course four included Indian and Chinese philosophers when covering Realism. This trend was further noted in that the decision to sequence theories chronologically did not necessarily prevent curriculum designers from supplementing this arrangement with knowledges from the GS, usually included at the end.

Three courses used Western textbooks, but two did not do so exclusively. Course Eight used Western sources alone, while all the others include scholarship from both the West and GS. The rationale given by all interviewees who chose not to assign a textbook was that the knowledge they had selected, as well as their sequencing of this, differed substantially from that found in most IR textbooks available. The courses that wanted to incorporate knowledges from the GS beyond that of post-colonialism found textbooks to be of limited or no value.

Assessments in four of the courses required students to work with a plurality of knowledges. Another four of the courses had assessments that were potentially knowledge-plural because students were allowed to choose from a selection of topics. Depending on the students' choices, it was possible for the assessment to encompass a variety of knowledges, but also, it was equally possible to choose to focus only on one type. Only in Course Eight was the knowledge students were exposed to in their assessments exclusively Western. Interestingly, Course Seven, which exclusively contained Western knowledge in terms of content, nevertheless had knowledge-plural assessments.

3.2 Content Analysis of Semi-Structured Interviews

Conducting a content analysis of my semi-structured interviews entailed multiple readings and attempts at synthesising a system of categorisation that accurately reflected points that were either emphasised or repeated by the interviewee, as well as content that resonated with the literature reviewed or directly addressed a key aspect of the research questions. Key points were identified as issues that were emphasised, highlighted specifically, or repeated by interviewees. The key points that emerged from the interviews where the following:

1. Teaching Western IR theories
2. Inclusion of knowledge beyond the West
3. Sequencing knowledge

⁶³ Smith and Tickner, "Introduction," 1-14; Qin, "A Multiverse of Knowledge," 139-157.

4. Lecturer Agency
5. Language
6. Pedagogical practice
7. Rationale for teaching IR theory
8. Developing academic skills and learner dispositions
9. Student engagement
10. Student demographics

A detailed discussion of each theme identified from the semi-structured interviews follows below.

All the curricula reviewed engaged with Realism and Liberalism, and perhaps other Western IR theories in some way. When probed about their choices about the selection of Western IR theories, some interviewees felt that the Western IR theories, especially Realism and Liberalism, constituted an important component of IR theory. Thus, students' education would be incomplete if they omitted these theories. Further, they felt that this would negate the whole ethos of a knowledge-plural IR theory curriculum. It was suggested that instead of excluding these theories, they should be placed alongside or integrated with theories from the GS. Course Three's interviewee stated that the central place the IR canon occupied in their curriculum was influenced by the theory curricula that they had been exposed to as a student. Many of the curricula adopted a critical approach to Western IR theory, using it as a platform for initiating discussions of the Western-centric nature of IR theory and its shortcomings, thereby raising the issue of IR theorising from the GS.

The interviewee from Taiwan (Course Eight) stated that at most Taiwanese universities, the theories of Realism and Liberalism usually comprised the entire theory curricula because of the dominance of American thought in its academia. Thus, their course's introduction of Constructivism was seen as a radical move, breaking with this traditional dominance. A similar reason was given by the lecturer of Course Seven (South Africa) for its focus on Realism, Liberalism, and Structuralism. The lecturer, who was not the curricula designer, stated that this was the product of IR academics at their institution strongly subscribing to a traditional Western ideological vantage with respect to the study of the discipline.

In the analysis of course outlines (Table One), it was evident that eight curricula had elements of knowledge plurality, even if this was limited to course assessments. However, as the elements present in the discursive gap were usually unique to each course context, the types of knowledges from the GS, as well as the way in which they were incorporated, were extremely varied.

Both curricula from South America (Course One and Course Two - Colombia) included Dependency theory due to it having originated in the region. It was noted by both interviewees that this theory was now usually omitted from theory curricula in Latin America, as having been developed in the 1960s, it is now perceived as dated and irrelevant, as well as supplanted by Wallenstein's World Systems Theory. Nevertheless, these lecturers felt that Dependency Theory still had enormous analytical value even beyond the context of their geographic region. Therefore, they felt that it was paramount to include it in their curricula. The lecturer of Course Two stated that their research interests in knowledge pluralism in IR theory, theorising from the GS, and critical IR theories were responsible for the inclusion of these perspectives in the curriculum and made the teaching experience enjoyable. Although Course One dealt primarily with Western IR theories, the lecturer stated that their first class

problematised IR being a de facto “American Social Science” and included Dependency Theory as well as Postcolonialism. These two theories were included to make students aware of other ways of conceiving of IR outside of Western IR theories. In addition, they felt that it was important to include these theories as they were more relevant for students from Latin America and the GS. Further, they wanted students to understand that most current IR theories have been developed from the experiences and perspectives of the United States, and that they should critically interrogate the abilities of these in helping explain or understand the international relations of Latin America. Inclusion of theories from both the GS and the West allowed students to appreciate that all IR theories have strengths and limitations, and that they must be selected according to their utility within specific contexts.

In Course Four (India), the lecturer fused the work of Kautilya, an Indian Realpolitik philosopher, with Western Realism to offer a different perspective on the implications of an anarchical international system. This curriculum further included Chinese philosophical slants on Neo-Realism. The lecturer stated, “The whole purpose of doing this was to show that IR theory does not by default mean Western IR theory only, even though this was where its academic roots originate”. The course sought to introduce the idea that there were different ways of doing IR and not only one way of looking at IR theories.

The lecturer of Course Five (Morocco) chose to include the dominant Western IR theories of Realism, Liberalism, and Constructivism because they had found that students had weak backgrounds in these theories. However, the lecturer also introduced critical Western IR theories. The second half of the course contained fundamentally different knowledge to that contained in traditional IR theory. It considered the power of knowledge regarding how knowledge originates in IR; a range of indigenous populations in broadening the definitions of IR germinal concepts; ideas pertaining to identity and difference as well as the problem of having a knowledge-exclusive Western IR canon. Further, the course included Edward Said’s concept of Orientalism as part of its discussion on postcolonialism due to its relevance to Morocco as part of the Maghrib and its strong resonance with students’ context. Moreover, students had input on the course content as there was a negotiation between the lecturer and them as to what should be covered for that academic year.

Interestingly in 2010, Course Three (Germany) was transformed from a traditional Western theory course to a non-Western IR theory course. The rationale for this was that the lecturer was assisting one of their graduate students who was undertaking a research project on teaching non-Western IR theory. However, when the project was concluded, the course’s focus in subsequent years shifted primarily to Western IR theory with two classes devoted to non-Western IR. The lecturer stated that this was driven by their preference for designing the course to resemble the theory classes that they attended when they were a student, as well as including classical primary texts of Western IR philosophers. Nevertheless, the course still had two lectures devoted to non-Western IR. Thus, it was apparent that the course did not remain unaffected by the 2010 curriculum change.

Even though Course Six (Netherlands) was titled “Decentering International Relations”, Western IR history, concepts, and theories are still included to purposely facilitate a critical analysis of disciplinary knowledge exclusivity. Subsequently, the lecturer included knowledges from various locations in the GS to formulate a knowledge-plural approach to theorising as well as to interrogate the utility of doing so. The lecturer stated that they constructed this postgraduate course to be contrapuntal to the undergraduate theory course

that was constituted solely of Western IR theories. Thus, they sought to present students with a more holistic and complex view of the field.

An important observation to emerge from the semi-structured interviews was that of the seven lecturers who identified one of their research interests as being either non-Western IR/theory, relational IR, identity, and IR, as well as IR of the GS,⁶⁴ six had chosen to develop knowledge-plural IR curricula. The lecturer in the outlier (Course Seven) was unfortunately constrained from incorporating a wider variety of theories and knowledges into the curriculum content because they were not its designer. Thus, it may be inferred that an interest in knowledge production in the areas listed was an element that operates in discursive gap and influences the regulative discourse in terms of prioritising knowledge plurality as a fundamental aim when developing an IR theory curriculum.

The importance of sequencing in encouraging students to engage with the knowledge plurality of the curriculum was raised in four interviews (Courses One, Four, Five, and Six), even though most of the reviewed curricula had chronological sequencing. Interviewees argued that theories were assigned different values by students depending on where they were sequenced in the curriculum. Theories that appeared at the beginning of the course were deemed to be of more analytical value than those at the end. For this reason, the lecturer of Course Five sequenced Gender Theory in the middle of the course. Further, in problematising a chronological approach to sequencing, two of the interviewees indicated that making Realism the first theory that students encountered in the curriculum resulted in it becoming their theory of choice when asked to choose a theory by which to analyse a scenario. Moreover, it became the default theory that every other theory was juxtaposed or measured against. The simplicity of its precepts gave it additional appeal. Such was the prominence acquired by Realism in the undergraduate theory course that the lecturer of Course Six, a Master's-level course, found it essential that they expressly decentred the focus on Realism through critical engagement with it, as well as making theories from the GS the focal point. The other lecturers stated that they did not sequence Realism as the first theory in the curriculum, and they actively encouraged students to choose other theories for their essays.

Aside from the two courses that were co-taught, all other interviewees stated that they had freedom in terms of being unhindered from governmental, institutional, or disciplinary interference in designing their courses. This was a fact that was especially emphasised by lecturers in Courses Two, Four, Six, and Nine. For Courses Two, Four, and Six, this gave them leeway to create curricula that blended knowledges from both the West and the GS. It was further clear from the interviews that the decision to create knowledge-plural IR curricula was a conscious choice by lecturers to transfer the knowledge plurality currently being created in the field of IR theory knowledge production over into the field of knowledge recontextualization. The lecturer from Course Nine felt that the exponential rise in the societal focus on the issue of "race" resulted in this being an optimal time to be involved in incorporating such subjects into IR. This was even more imperative with the rise of social movements focusing on race in the United States. Moreover, the lecturer of Course Four stated that they wanted to convey to students the current "churning" taking place in the discipline as the centrality of Western knowledge was challenged by theories from the GS,

⁶⁴ All these topics consider IR beyond the West, the complexities of identity, and/or the interaction of different populations across the globe.

especially research focusing on the development of relational IR.

Course Four had been revised four times to define and refine its focus. The lecturer stated that when they took the course over in 2002, despite its title being “International Relations Theory”, most of the course content was not IR theory. Thus, they had to implement numerous curriculum redesigns to achieve its current knowledge plurality in terms of IR theories. Although the lecturer had in the curriculum redesign, they stated that the fact that this was an arduous twenty-stage process requiring the approval of all fifty-one colleges at the university disincentivised one from undertaking such a procedure. Thus, a bureaucratic university practice such as this one could limit a lecturer’s agency in designing or redesigning curricula.

Both the lecturers of Courses Seven and Eight, which were co-taught, had extremely limited agency to innovate regarding what they taught because they had neither designed the course nor had a co-ordinating role in the course. The lecturer of Course Eight attested that the older, more senior members of staff who designed and co-ordinated the course were extremely reluctant to introduce new topics or theories. Thus, if it were not for them being available to teach Constructivism as well as their interest in Chinese philosophy that relates to this theory, the course would teach Realism and Liberalism exclusively. An interesting innovation in the use of agency was that the lecturer of Course Seven invoked a South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) rule that states that only fifty percent of the content of co-taught courses need be the same. They used this clause to reclaim some agency to re-sequence the course content and redesign the class assessments. They have used this as an opportunity to include knowledges from the GS in the class assessments, partly to realise their personal belief that the curriculum should be knowledge-plural. Further, they have also convinced the curriculum co-ordinators to switch from an American-centric IR textbook to one where the discipline was contextualised from the GS in 2021. This was an excellent example of the discursive gap being utilised to place a curriculum on a more knowledge-plural trajectory.

The interviewees from Colombia (Courses One and Two), India (Course Four), and Taiwan (Course Eight) raised language as an impediment to curricula knowledge plurality. This stems from English being the primary language of publication of International Relations knowledge. In India, as the course was presented at a central (national) university, it was taught in English. However, at least seventy percent of the class were native Hindi speakers. There were also numerous foreign students who were non-native English speakers. Thus, the English proficiency of the class was extremely diverse. Taking cognisance of this has necessitated that the lecturer selects English reading material of different complexity to cater to the different English language abilities of students. What made this problematic was the dearth of good-quality textbooks or texts available in Hindi. This limited the range of knowledges to which students who were not proficient in English could be exposed.

The lecturers of the courses in Colombia (Courses One and Two) and Taiwan (Course Eight) encountered the same problem. The availability of IR texts, in the form of both books and articles, translated into Spanish or Chinese was extremely limited. In addition, the quality of translation was erratic, with many being exceptionally poor, thereby diminishing students’ understanding of the knowledge that it was attempting to impart. Consequently, students’ ability to engage with diverse knowledge was ultimately dependent on their proficiency in English. Thus, this factor potentially limited the range of knowledge plurality in contexts where English was not spoken or was a secondary language. Significantly, it also had reverse

implications, in that knowledge that was not published or translated into English was less able to contribute to the knowledge diversity of the discipline as most IR publications are produced in English.

In every interview conducted for this research, interviewees demonstrated that they were strongly committed to reflective teaching practices. They constantly reflected on and reviewed their course content, how this was sequenced, and their prescribed readings and assessments to ensure that they were meeting their defined learning objectives. Except for the two interviewees (Courses Three and Nine) who were retiring at the end of the academic year, most desired to add greater knowledge diversity to their curricula. Further, the interviews revealed that at least half of the interviewees expressed an interest in the pedagogical aspect of academia. Finally, all those surveyed stated that irrespective of the challenges encountered, they enjoyed lecturing their IR theory course.

Interviewees emphasized the importance of teaching theory, especially with a plurality of knowledges. They felt that it enabled students to appreciate and study an extremely diverse, complex world. Further, it resulted in students developing an analytical vocabulary through which to define, describe, and analyse international relations. It widened their intellectual horizons and necessitated them developing alternative ways of thinking. Studying theory required that students read intensively and engage with a wide range of content as well as develop relational thinking through their critical engagement with different ideas. Theories gave students the tools to analyse international relations in a coherent, structured process, culminating in the ability to draw conclusions. Knowledge-plural theory curricula exposed students to a wide range of ontologies and epistemologies. Being exposed to a wide variety of knowledges gave students the flexibility to experiment with different ways of explaining and/or understanding international relations in particular contexts.

Linked to the discussion above, interviewees stated that the development of specific skills as well as learner dispositions were essential parts of a successful IR theory curriculum. Critical thinking and engagement with knowledge were at the top of the list of skills that the courses reviewed wanted to get students to develop. Students were also required to function at a high level of abstraction given the nature of the subject. Further mastering new vocabularies and concepts needed to take place, in addition to learning to read complex texts critically. The interaction between theory and historical or cultural contexts also needed to be appreciated. Consequently, numerous opportunities were given in all the reviewed courses for students to develop these skills.

Most interviewees noted that it was initially a challenge to get students to be enthusiastic about studying IR theory due to the perception that theory was not practical and that it had no real-world relevance. Correcting this misperception entailed getting students to apply theories as analytical tools to real-life events, both everyday life occurrences as well as international relations events. Ultimately linking the theoretical to the practical facilitated greater student engagement and enthusiasm for these courses. Aside from this problem, students in Course Eight found being required by the course to think and engage with the material critically to be difficult as these were not skills that they had needed to use before.

The lecturer of Course Six stated that students found the knowledge-plural curriculum, with its focus on non-Western IR theory, extremely interesting and engaging. After overcoming their initial reluctance to studying theory, it was claimed that students in Course Three became active, engaged participants in the course. For students in Course Two, it was

Queer IR theory, which draws from a diverse range of knowledges that sparked the greatest engagement.

Reflecting the extent to which higher education institutions are globalised today, all the courses reviewed had diverse student populations in terms of ethnicity and socioeconomic indicators. This seemed to have an impact on how students engaged with the knowledge and skills encompassed in the curricula. It was noted that students from Course Six, particularly, enjoyed the course on non-Western IR theory as they had already studied the theories of Realism, Liberalism, and Marxism in their high school curriculum. Thus, they were happy not to be repeating this content for the third time, having been made to take an undergraduate theory course which re-covered this ground. They found the Master's course more interesting than those taken previously as it presented a holistic and contextual picture of IR theory. Students in Course Nine had a similar experience. The course was taught at a small, private college in the United States. Consequently, the well-educated student body enabled the lecturer to introduce sophisticated and complex topics drawing on a diverse range of knowledges. The course was designed to encourage students to become better thinkers and writers. In contrast, Course Seven was comprised of learners from marginalised socioeconomic populations. In this context, students found it harder to engage with the course content as well as to master the necessary academic skills. While this course's assessments incorporated knowledge plurality, they had to be highly scaffolded to assist the students in completing them. The lecturer reported that students seemed ambivalent to this inclusion of knowledges from the GS, being more focused on developing the academic skills needed to complete the assessment task. Thus, in this context, having knowledge plurality did not automatically make the skills required by the curriculum easier to master.

4. Analysis of the affordances & constraints to the creation of knowledge-plural IR curricula as identified in the course and interview analyses

In the context of this study, the pedagogic device unveils the affordances and constraints to delivering knowledge-plural IR curricula. Evaluating these affordances and constraints provides an opportunity to determine what agents and structures give rise to these as well as whether the Western knowledge status quo is being maintained, challenged, or supplanted by the curricula examined in this article.

As stated above, the literature indicates a concerted movement demanding that knowledge from the GS be recognised as valid knowledge within IR, especially by being published by mainstream Western publishers. Although progress in this area has been slow, momentum towards achieving this goal is increasing (Qin 2020). Thus, in the field of IR theory knowledge production, there is a growing body of published research from the GS that is available for selection and incorporation into curricula from mainstream academic publications. This is an important step in conferring validity on this knowledge.

Language was identified as often constraining access to knowledge for inclusion in curricula. English being the dominant language of publication meant that this knowledge was only available to students who were proficient in English. Moreover, the quantity and quality of academic literature translated from English into other languages was extremely limited. Conversely, scholars who did not publish in English would find it difficult to have their work included in mainstream Western publications, thereby limiting the extent of its distribution. Thus, even though there have been more opportunities for the publication of knowledges

from the GS, especially those that diverge from the dominant Western epistemology of positivism, there are still constraints imposed by agents and structures that operate in the field of knowledge production—language being one of these. Moreover, one of the interviewees who assisted in editing a large Western IR journal still found peer reviewers to be extremely critical of articles containing knowledges from the GS that did not subscribe to mainstream Western ontological and epistemological practices.

It was further observed that most interviewees had a research interest in de-centring IR, Global IR theory, or IR theory knowledge from the GS, and were producing knowledge by publishing in these areas. In contrast to the studies conducted by Tickner and Barasuol and Silva, which found in a Latin American context that even though academics' research interests included knowledge from their region (the GS), they did not include this knowledge in the curricula they taught, this article had divergent findings. Most interviewees who had research interests pertaining to knowledges from the GS had also included knowledges from the GS in their curricula. Thus, their commitment to knowledge plurality was not limited to their actions within the field of knowledge production but transferred across into the field of knowledge recontextualization.

4.1 Affordances and Constraints in the Field of Knowledge Recontextualisation

The above data analyses clearly indicated that the decision to include knowledge from the GS in curricula arose from the interviewees' express desire to disrupt the status quo of Western knowledge exclusivity in IR theory curricula. In addition, the six interviewees who had developed knowledge-plural curricula chose to include Western IR theories as well. However, their motivations for doing so differed. Many argued that Western IR theory still constituted a significant component of IR theory. Thus, for students to have a firm grounding in IR theory, they needed a curriculum that combined knowledges from the West and GS and included theories with different epistemological stances. This stance aligns with Acharya's (2014) vision of producing Global IR theory where knowledges from different geographic locations would co-exist. Other courses used Western IR theory to frame a discussion problematising the current Western-centric nature of IR theory, then proceeding to critically examine alternative perspectives from the GS. Individual agency played an important role in the extent to which interviewees had freedom of choice in designing and executing their curricula. In the two curricula that were co-taught, interviewees lacked the capacity to introduce knowledge from the GS into the curricula as their assigned role of lecturer deprived them from being party to knowledge selection for the course, even though both personally felt that knowledge plurality in IR theory curricula was imperative.

Interviewees' decisions to create knowledge-plural curricula were not made in isolation. They were shaped by social and disciplinary catalysts. As previously stated, the de-Westernization and decolonization of IR knowledge was an increasingly central academic concern. Further impetus has been provided by social movements, such as 'fees must fall', 'Rhodes must fall', and 'black lives matter', that provide platforms for debates on racism, equality, colonialism, neo-colonialism, decolonisation, and social justice. Thus, the regulative discourse in which most of the interviewees are immersed was conducive to encouraging their knowledge-plural curricula ventures. It is important to note the influence the development of these dispositions has on determining how interviewees, as recontextualising agents, ultimately chose to use the discursive gap. Nevertheless, social and disciplinary catalysts,

in specific contexts, may also constrain freedom of choice. The strong influence of the American theoretical tradition at Taiwanese tertiary institutions has resulted in curricula being confined to teaching Realism and Liberalism almost exclusively, thereby reinforcing the Western theoretical status quo. In addition, agency to develop knowledge-plural curricula may be facilitated or hindered by structures guiding, overseeing, and certifying the design or re-design of academic courses at both tertiary institutions and at state level. Overly bureaucratic, time-consuming, and complex processes act as disincentives for undertaking course or curricula design initiatives, thereby perpetuating the knowledge status quo. Thus, these situations pose substantial constraints to the development of knowledge-plural theory curricula.

The opportunities provided by the discursive gap to imagine knowledge-plural critical IR theory curricula produced a myriad of innovations in how most interviewees selected knowledge. What was notable was the careful selection of reading material in introducing knowledges beyond the West. In Course Four (India), the lecturer mixed in marginalised Realist and Liberalist theorists from the GS with key Western Realist and Liberalist scholars. The lecturers of Courses One, Two, and Six immediately problematised the Western-centric nature of IR theory, setting a critical tone for their course as well as demonstrating the necessity for incorporating knowledges from the GS. Courses One and Two's lecturers made the concerted decision to include Dependency Theory, believing that it held special relevance for Latin American students even though it was usually excluded from IR theory curricula from the region. Course Five's lecturer expressly included Said's Orientalism due to its relevance for students from Morocco, while also letting students select the topics that they wanted to study. Course Nine's lecturer chose to select and sequence knowledge around post-colonial critiques of IR to problematise the Western exclusivity of knowledge populating IR theories and then introduce knowledges from the GS. In Course Eight, although the lecturer lacked the agency to include knowledge from the GS as part of the theory lectures, they used South African Qualification Authority (SAQA) rules guiding the extent to which different lecturers of the same course can diverge in their teaching to create knowledge-plural assessments.

Interviewees from Courses One, Four, Five, and Six indicated that the order in which knowledge was sequenced within curricula determined the degree of validity students ascribed to it. Knowledge sequenced at the beginning of the curriculum was deemed by students to be more important and relevant than that placed towards the end. Thus, decisions to teach IR chronologically, beginning with Realism and Liberalism and placing post-positivist Western theories or knowledges from the GS at the end, exponentially elevated the validity afforded to the already dominant theories of Realism and Liberalism. Consequently, it appears that it is not just the inclusion in curricula that bestows validity on knowledge but also where it is situated in position to other theories.

The critical engagement with a diverse range of knowledges on the part of students emerged as a central feature of the instructional discourse in most courses. This was clearly grounded in the regulative discourse of these courses that was strongly influenced by counter-hegemonic movements both within the discipline as well as society, as noted above.

4.2 Affordances and Constraints in the Field of Knowledge Reproduction

All interviewees believed that teaching IR theory was an important undertaking and were actively committed to this exercise. They all practiced reflective pedagogy, constantly

reviewing their teaching practices and curriculum composition, especially the reading material selected, to ensure that it was producing optimal student engagement and learning. Interviewees felt that they had the responsibility to facilitate students' critical engagement with the curricula's knowledge through their pedagogical practice as well as curricula and assessment design. Further, they sought to produce students who could think abstractly when exploring a theory but were also able to practically apply a theory to analyse a real-life case study. Exposing students to a wide range of theories and knowledges was seen as equipping students with the capacity to engage with the complexities of the current globalised international system. Aside from the two interviewees that were retiring, everyone else stated that they wanted to incorporate more knowledge diversity in their curriculum. The fact that half of the interviewees acknowledged that they had an academic interest in pedagogic practice was a testament to how seriously they viewed their role as educators. All interviewees stated that they enjoyed teaching IR theory, viewing this as a positive undertaking which undoubtedly explains their commitment to this endeavour.

The choices made regarding what knowledge to assess, together with the ways in which it is assessed, reinforce the validity of this knowledge and what constitutes valid ways of knowing. Only the interviewee in one course (Course Eight) was denied the freedom to determine what knowledge to evaluate and the format thereof. Four courses assessed knowledge from both the West and GS. In the remaining four courses, assessments included knowledge from both the West and GS. However, the range of knowledges assessed depended on which assignments students chose to complete. Thus, most interviewees chose to assess a plurality of knowledges in their courses. Lecturers in Courses One, Four, and Five required students to apply theories to real-life scenarios so that students would appreciate theories as practical tools of analysis, not abstract ideations.

Most interviewees identified students' lack of enthusiasm as a constraint when teaching their IR theory courses. Students initially struggled to see the relevance as well as the significance of studying theory in providing them with knowledge and skills that would assist them when leaving university. It took a concerted effort on the part of lecturers to convince students of the enormous benefits gained by studying theory not just in gaining knowledge but also the vital academic skills of critical reasoning and analytical thought. In Course Eight, students found acquiring these new higher order academic skills challenging because such skills had not been demanded in other courses. As already stated, lecturers in courses One, Four, and Five required students to practically apply theories to real-life situations so that students would develop an appreciation of the insights that this could provide. Ultimately, interviewees stated that the reluctance to learn IR theory was short-lived, with students quickly becoming active participants in seminars (Courses Three and Nine). The focus on knowledge from the GS in Course Six was attributed as the reason for the high degree of student engagement and participation from its start.

Relatedly, the socioeconomic environment wherein students were located played a part in affording or constraining student appreciation of and engagement with knowledge-plural IR theory courses. In Course Six, students had been exposed to IR theory in their schooling and their first year of university. Thus, they were already familiar with Western IR theories and had acquired the capacity to think theoretically. This equipped them with unfamiliar knowledges from the GS in a sophisticated manner. The small, well-resourced teaching environment and predominantly socioeconomically well-resourced student cohort

in which Course Nine was situated was conducive for the delivery of a knowledge-diverse, critical IR theory course. Students were excited to engage with and critique a complex range of often unfamiliar knowledge from diverse sources. The socioeconomic vulnerability of students in Course Seven, which hindered their academic preparedness for tertiary education, resulted in most students being ambivalent to the inclusion of knowledge from the GS in their assessment. Instead, their focus was solely directed to mastering the academic skills they believed they required to pass.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, this research clearly indicates that the demand for knowledge plurality in the realm of IR theory research has made inroads into the arena of pedagogy, resulting in the generation of knowledge-plural IR theory curricula. Seven out of the nine courses examined had knowledge-plural curricula. Moreover, the content analysis conducted on the course outline and semi-structured interviews with lecturers indicated a strong commitment to the goal of knowledge plurality within these IR theory curricula. Using the pedagogic device as an analytical tool, this article was able to decipher the mechanism affording or constraining the shift towards knowledge-plural IR theory curricula. It is apparent that knowledge plurality is no longer limited to the realm of knowledge production in the subfield. Knowledges from both the West and GS are being pedagogised and included in curricula. Although we cannot extrapolate from this small, qualitative study that a large shift to knowledge-plural IR theory curricula is occurring across the globe, it indicates that there is indeed a concerted movement in this direction. Moreover, by applying the pedagogic device, a definite counter-hegemonic shift against the status quo of Western-knowledge-exclusive IR theory curricula is discernible. Thus, I can conclude that the demand for knowledge plurality in the realm of IR theory research is making inroads into the arena of pedagogy, resulting in the generation of knowledge-plural IR theory curricula.

Nevertheless, if the objective of knowledge-plural IR theory curricula is to become the norm, then attention needs to be paid to the affordances and constraints identified by this research. The affordances identified need to be encouraged and developed. The constraints that emerged need to be addressed and ameliorated. Specifically, the production of a wide range of knowledges from the GS needs to be a priority, with greater access being afforded to this knowledge in mainstream IR publications and intellectual gatherings. Greater opportunities to produce and translate scholarship into a wide variety of languages would also expand the range of knowledge available.

In designing and teaching IR theory curricula, lecturers should be allowed the agency to create innovative, engaging learning environments that address the interests and needs of the unique student cohort they teach. Such agency allowed the lecturers interviewed for this study to use the discursive gap to challenge the Western knowledge status quo of IR theory. Moreover, this research has shown how agency is strongly affected by the regulative discourse that is shaped by the zeitgeist present in both education institutions and the wider societies within which they are situated. This milieu can either facilitate or impede the creation of knowledge-plural IR theory curricula.

As curricula plays a pivotal role in determining the types of knowledges students are exposed to as well as reinforcing their validity, only through the global adoption of knowledge-plural IR theory curricula will the current hegemony enjoyed by Western knowledge be truly

displaced. Until such time that the equal co-existence of a plurality of knowledges in the field of IR theory exists, the discipline cannot truly claim to be facilitating our investigation and understanding of ‘international’ relations. Hopefully the variety of exemplars of knowledge-plural theory curricula will spark an imagination for the possible among those educators who are contemplating a shift to this type of curricula, as well as those that have yet to contemplate the importance of such curricula for the discipline.

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Table One – Descriptive Analysis of Course Outlines

	Course One	Course Two	Course Three	Course Four	Course Five	Course Six	Course Seven	Course Eight	Course Nine
Country	Columbia	Columbia	Germany	India	Morocco	Netherlands	South Africa	Taiwan	United States
Duration	One Semester = 6 classes	One Semester = 26 classes	One Semester = 6 classes	One Semester = 7 classes	One Semester = 32 classes	One Semester = 12 classes	One Semester = 14 classes (2 IR theory)	One Semester = 18 classes	One Semester = 22 classes
Co. or Solo Taught	Solo taught	Solo taught	Solo taught	Solo taught	Solo taught	Solo taught	Co-taught	Co-taught	Solo taught
Course Aim	Develop an understanding of a wide range of theories and the ability to engage with them critically – with a focus on Latin American knowledges.	A critical analysis of IR theories, including contributions from the GS	No expressly stated	Introduction of a diverse range of theories both explanatory & normative	Introduce different IR theories and the contemporary debates within the field. Critically discuss the benefits of including marginalized voices.	Provide an overview of the genesis of IR theory. Problematic Western centrality. Introduce theories from the GS. Decentring IR theory	Develop students' understanding of fundamental tenets of Realism, Liberalism & Marxism	Not stated	Narrowing and broadening the focus on international relations theory. Focus was a postcolonial critique of IR and the inclusion of philosophical knowledge from the GS.
Identified skills required for students to master	Using theories critically as tools of analysis. Critical reflection on Latin American theories.	Identify post-Cold War political, economic & social concerns and critically reflect of their impact	Critical engagement & comparison of theories from the West & GS	Identify central features or theories including ontological & epistemological conditions. Compare and contrast theories. Practical application of theories	Critical reflection on these theories & approaches as well as their practical utilization in the real world by students	Creative thinking, assessing the explanatory capacity of different theories for real world problems. Critical reading and thinking. Application of abstract concepts	Development of critical thinking, analysis and evaluation skills	Not Stated	Critical thinking & analysis
Type of Knowledge Selection 1	Knowledge Plural	Knowledge Plural	Knowledge Plural	Knowledge Plural	Knowledge Plural	Knowledge Plural	Exclusively Western Knowledge	Exclusively Western Knowledge	Knowledge Plural
Type of Knowledge Sequence 2	Mainly Chronological but has dependency theory included here. GS in last lecturer. Problematises the absence of knowledges for the GS.	Eclectic	Chronological approach, GS in last lectures	Chronological but inserts scholar knowledge from India and China, GS addressed in second last unit	Eclectic	Eclectic	Chronological	Chronological	Eclectic

¹ Knowledge Plural - covered the main Western triad of Realism, Liberalism and Constructivism plus critical IR theories and theories from the GS as well as addressed issues of knowledge exclusion in IR theory. Exclusively Western Knowledge – covered Western IR theoretical triad without any critical IR theories. Inclusively Western Knowledge - included the Western theoretical triad and Western critical IR theories.

Exclusively GS Knowledge - included only theories or knowledges from the GS.

² Traditional chronological sequencing that occurs in most introductory IR and IR theory textbooks has the dominant theories of Realism and Liberalism or visa-versa appearing at the beginning of IR theory textbooks or sections on Theory in introductory IR textbooks. This is often followed by Marxism or Structuralism, although these may be included with other critical IR theories. If present, the English

Types of Reading Material Selected	Articles and book chapters from dominant Western IR theorists as well as GS scholars.	Western IR theory textbook as main source, as well as articles and book chapters from both Western and GS scholars.	Articles and book chapters from dominant Western IR theorists as well as GS scholars.	Articles and book chapters from both Western and GS scholars but GS scholarship is most dominant	Western general introduction to IR textbook	Western scholarship	Background readings are a mixture of both Western & GS scholarship. Reading for lectures is GS scholarship
Assessment ³	Potentially knowledge plural	Potentially knowledge plural	Potentially knowledge plural	Potentially knowledge plural	Knowledge Plural	Western knowledge	Knowledge plural

School and/or Constructivism usually follows the two dominant theories acting as a bridge between the positivist theories of Realism and Liberalism, and critical IR theories. Critical IR theories consistently comprise the later chapters or sections of IR textbooks. If theoretical perspectives from the GS are included, they are always placed after critical IR theories. Situating Realism and Liberalism at the beginning of a textbook or theory course implicitly entrenches their theoretical dominance in the minds of students. A disruption in this format may be indicative of the discursive gap being utilised by designers to achieve their goals of knowledge plurality.

¹Chronological = theories sequenced, more or less chronologically.

²Eclectic - placement of Realism Liberalism and Constructivism interspersed with critical IR theories and theories *and/or knowledges from the GS.

³ **Knowledge Plural - Assessment engages with knowledge from both the West and GS

*Potentially Knowledge Plural – Assessment engagement with knowledges from the West and GS determined by students' assessment choices.

*Exclusively Western/GS – assessment engaged with knowledge in either region exclusively.

Table Two – Content Analysis of Semi-Structured Interviews

	<u>Course One – Colombia</u>	<u>Course Two – Colombia</u>	<u>Course Three – Germany</u>	<u>Course Four – India</u>	<u>Course Five – Morocco</u>	<u>Course Six – The Netherlands</u>	<u>Course Seven – South Africa</u>	<u>Course Eight – Taiwan</u>	<u>Course Nine – The United States</u>
Teaching Western IR theories	*Classical Western programme.	*Interspersed Western canon, global, South, critical IR theory.	*Lecturer’s own experience as student – preference for germinal texts. *Traditional approach to teaching IR theory.	*IR canon.	*Canon importance.	Canon overview to facilitate Western centric critique	Focus on central tenets of Western IR theories	*Traditional course practice. *Dominance of Western IR theories of Realism and Liberalism in Taiwan.	
Inclusion of knowledge beyond the West	*Problematising Western dominance. *Dependency theory	*Latin American theory *Global south theory *epistemological divide. *Seeing the international & relations of power & domination on a global level.	*Content diversification to include global South	*Kautilya *Global South knowledge inclusive.	*Inclusion beyond canon. *Popularity of theories beyond the canon. *Student selected content.	*Critical engagement with Western theories *What is Western centric IR? *Difference * Universal *Alternative ways of looking at IR *African & Chinese contributions *Regional division in course structure – relational IR *Uniqueness *Cultural practice in domestic & foreign policy.	*Need to make course knowledge plural.		
Sequencing knowledge	*Knowledge sequence and dominance especially with Realism becoming a foil to other theories			*Dominance in sequencing of topics. *Dominance of realism’s appeal	*Sequencing determines value assigned to content.	*De-centre focus on Realism		*Constructivism & Critical theory	

Lecturer Agency		*Large amount of agency regarding curriculum design		*Redesigned and focused *Bureaucratic hindrances		*Diverging from first year course curriculum. *Freedom in course design. *Re-telling of IR theories.	Large in terms of content. SAQA rules allowing for difference within a course. *American centric textbook. *Staff dispositions. *Assessment innovation Introducing new global South textbook.	*Older staff members *Reluctance to introduce new topics.	*Carte blanche to design the course
Language	*Dominance of English texts *Access to well-translated Spanish texts.	*Dominance of English in IR text *Access to well-translated Spanish texts.		*Language and texts				*Language *Text- access to good translations into Chinese – **lost in translation problem."	*Require familiarity with the vocabulary of IR *Need to understand language and concepts.
Pedagogical practice	*Innovative, reflective pedagogy	Reflective pedagogy	*Reflective pedagogical practice. *Continuous curriculum review and development. *Relevance to students.	*Reflective pedagogical practice. *Enrichment of discourse		*Reflective pedagogy	Reflective pedagogy	Reflective pedagogy	*Reflective pedagogical practice. *Teaching from texts
Rationale for teaching IR theory	*Explanatory utility	*Explaining versus understanding *Widening of students' intellectual horizons	*Exposure to wide range of ontologies & epistemologies *Relational thinking – connections between theories & concepts.	*Theory as tool for understanding the world. *Developing abstract thinking		*Show alternative ways of thinking. *Enable students to draw own conclusions.		*Deconstructing and reconstructing IR concepts	*Read better *Freedom to experiment

Skills and learner dispositions requiring development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Critical engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Challenge to get students enthusiastic *Relevance of theory *Practical application and analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Lack of students' enthusiasm for subject *Need to show relevance of subject to students *Theory as a lens through which to observe the world. *Queer IR theory engaged students the most 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Critical engagement with content *Critical engagement with primary sources *Getting students to read 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Field work – theory meets practical world. *Getting students to enjoy course is challenging. *Subject not seen as practical 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Historical context 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Reading intensive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Hard to get students engaged in classes. *Thinking & engaging critically was difficult for students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Trendiness in use of language. *Teaching from current events/issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Globalised class context. *Small elite class teaching.
Student engagement				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Critical/analytical Thinking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Challenge of keeping students engaged. *Link between theory and lived realities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Large Class 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Critical engagement required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Challenge in getting students to enjoy course 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Heterogeneous student cohort *Very engaged and active participation in seminars 	
Student demographics				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Well-educated student demographic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Diversity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Marginalised student cohort. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Diverse class 			

The Dark Side of the Moon: An Ever-Fragmenting Discipline and Turkish IR in “the Outer Periphery”

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Abstract

A recent debate has emerged in the literature about a need for more global International Relations (IR), one which is truly international, to be worthy of its name. This paper outlines the multi-dimensional fragmentation in IR, which has prevented the emergence of a genuinely integrated and global discipline, and created a context in which the periphery cannot make original contributions to the core. The main purpose of this paper is to point out the major obstacles for such original contributions that emanate from the periphery itself. Aside from the general core-periphery fragmentation in the discipline, the periphery is collapsing within itself. From that perspective, the core and the periphery look more integrated, while the real division is between the periphery and the outer periphery. The outer periphery, while mostly invisible to the core, has real effects in IR practice, yet its nature and problems are not looked upon or handled by the current literature. Based on this observation, and using the Turkish example, four major problems of the outer periphery that affect the periphery and curtail its potential for original contributions are identified: (1) apathy towards western IR; (2) conspiracy theorizing; (3) chronological historicism; and (4) the outer periphery's influence on the mainstream periphery. After discussing these problems, it is concluded that the periphery can make contributions to the core only after it has helped the outer periphery solve its problems, and integration within the periphery is achieved. Only then can original contributions of the periphery to a truly international IR be possible.

Keywords: Global IR, core, periphery, outer periphery, Turkish IR

1. Introduction

The International Relations (IR) discipline was born as a liberal project, out of a search for global peace in the years following the First World War. International conflicts and wars are caused by conflicting perceptions of interests and clashing world-views. Therefore, in order to understand international problems, such as wars, and prevent them from recurring, the discipline needs multiple and all-inclusive perspectives. At the outset, however, the discipline was heavily shaped by western perspectives. Right from the start, Edward H. Carr saw the main problem with the discipline by pointing to its British origins and the power-political roots of the paradigmatic differences. The reason for the obsession with liberal perspectives of peace in the earlier years of the discipline was that other “people had ... little influence over the formation of current theories of international relations which emanated

almost exclusively from the English-speaking countries.”¹ The new discipline was heavily influenced by the dominant powers’ perspectives, and biased towards peace, liberal economy and democratization, ignoring the existence of alternative worlds and their influence over the practice of world politics. On the other side of the coin, since war and authoritarianism still continue to shape the practice, we cannot ignore their existence. However, in the early stages of the discipline, liberal worldviews were presented by idealist thinkers as a matter of global consensus. Again, this superficial and false consensus was, in Carr’s words, a result of “ostentatious readiness of other countries to flatter the Anglo-Saxon world by repeating its slogans.”²

After Carr published his book, realism dominated the intellectual world of IR, as had been the case for liberalism in the inter-war period. Paradigms changed but the nature of the problem remained the same: western originated theories monopolized the whole discipline. This monopoly widened the gap between the constricted theories and wide-ranging political practices. In the following decades, IR remained mainly an Anglo-American discipline, but the practice of international relations continued to be shaped by a variety of world visions. Anglo-American preeminence in the discipline is understandable to a certain extent, and it is possible to identify three main reasons for this: (1) western dominance in world political and economic affairs; (2) the emergence of modern international relations in the European west, based on the principle of sovereignty after the Westphalia treaties of Munster and Osnabruck in 1648, and then, its expansion from there to the rest of the world through European empires; and (3) the inauguration of the IR discipline in the west after the First World War. As a result, the main foundations of both practical and academic international relations are shaped by western perspectives.

With intensifying globalization after the Cold War, a better understanding of international relations, exceeding the limitations of Anglo-American or western worldviews was needed. This need for a more global IR immediately popularized a search for non-western alternatives. As a result of this, ruptures within the discipline and their profound impacts on the nature of the discipline have become more salient. One of the main issues that the literature has begun focusing on is the absence or exclusion of non-western voices from the discipline.

Even though the main discussions converge on the exclusion of non-western perspectives, this paper emphasizes deeper and more basic problems outside the western core preventing the periphery from participating in a global debate. The main question here is about whether the problem emerges out of the exclusivism of western IR or the absence of alternative perspectives. The main argument of this paper leans toward the second option and investigates the fundamental problems within the non-western periphery. Non-western IR has serious problems of productivity and suffers from an epistemological incompatibility with the western core, which exacerbates the already existing problems in the periphery.

This paper takes the Turkish example and tries to outline such problems, based on the assumption that these problems are common in other parts of the world as well. This article can be considered a first step to discovering the problems in the periphery, and in order to reach more generalizable conclusions, similar research has to be done in different countries. A comparative analysis would be invaluable in this case; however, such an endeavor exceeds the limits of this article. The Turkish example is however especially significant for two

¹ Edward Hallett Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis. 1919-1939* (London: The MacMillan Press, 1946), 52.

² *Ibid.*

main reasons: (1) Turkey is a country where western and non-western encounters have a long history. These two perspectives blend at times and clash in others; and (2) Turkey is geopolitically in a unique position where original perspectives can emerge, as it is situated in the middle of politically active regions, such as the Middle East, the Balkans and the Caucasus. Therefore, as the paper claims, Turkey stands out as one of the best places to observe and analyze the interactions between western and non-western perspectives. One can also find there both emotional and rational bases for all the problems emerging from such interactions. For these reasons, Turkey appears to be one of the best candidates to start investigating the interactions between the core, the periphery (or western and non-western) and the outer periphery, and the consequences of such interactions for the discipline.

First, the multi-dimensional fragmentation of the discipline, which leads to multiple worlds of IR with no communication with each other, is outlined. Since it is almost impossible to create a truly international or global IR without first grasping and mapping out these problems, and then finding out ways to overcome them, a comprehensive understanding of such issues is imperative. Unless the periphery solves its problems outlined in this article, the discipline will remain a primarily western science. The current literature mainly focuses on the division of a western core and a non-western periphery, and the core’s exclusion of the periphery. While doing this, it neglects or fails to observe more basic and crucial problems within the periphery, and especially its heterogeneous character. In that sense, by taking a look at the world of the periphery, this paper tackles an issue that is mainly neglected by the literature.

2. Multi-dimensional Fragmentation of the Discipline

Despite its monolithic appearance from the outside, with its heavily western and specifically Anglo-American character, the IR discipline is highly fragmented within itself, to the degree of disintegration. Here, this fragmentation is viewed in three dimensions: (1) within the core;³ (2) between the core and the periphery; and (3) within the periphery. This paper, after reviewing the nature of the first two, focuses on the third dimension of fragmentation, which is between the periphery and the outer periphery. The concept of the core refers to mainly mainstream/western parts of the discipline where all the major publications are made, theories and concepts are produced, and the global agenda setting occurs. The periphery on the other hand, follows the core’s agenda, uses its theories and concepts, and provides case studies and practical field data for the core’s theories.

The main focus of this article, the outer periphery, on the other hand, is completely disconnected from both the core and the periphery. The outer periphery shows no interest in abstract concepts or generalizable explanations, has no clear agenda to follow, and focuses on more practical political problems, some of which are not even international. The outer periphery, compared to the other two, is less coherent and more diverse. More importantly, the outer periphery is almost invisible to the discipline because of its qualitatively different publications and disconnectedness from the rest. The variety and diversity of the scholars in the outer periphery in terms of their educational background and research topics might look like an advantage at first glance; however, disconnectedness even among the outer periphery scholars, poses great challenges for both the outer periphery and the rest of the discipline. It

³ Helen Louise Turton, “Locating a Multifaceted and Stratified Disciplinary ‘Core’,” *All Azimuth: A Journal of Foreign Policy and Peace* 9, no. 2 (2020): 177-210.

might even be an overgeneralization to call them the outer periphery as there is no common ground to conceptualize them as a whole. However, for the purpose of drawing attention to a group of mostly unnoticed problems in the discipline, this paper calls the remaining parts of the discipline outside the core-periphery division, “the outer periphery”.

It also needs to be emphasized that the term “outer periphery” refers both to above-mentioned structural and institutional problems and also to a certain mentality. It is not a geographical or a spatial term, but a mental positioning. Therefore, it can exist even within the west, which, by definition, is perceived to be the core. The studies in the outer periphery, as will be discussed in the following pages, can be called “quasi-IR” or “pseudo-IR” because of their lack of content or irrelevance. In any case, it would be fair to state that, the IR in the outer periphery is based on a completely different mindset.

Table 1 - A Comparison of the Core, the Periphery, and the Outer-Periphery

	MAIN WORK	THEORIES and CONCEPTS	DISCIPLINARY AGENDA	PUBLICATION LANGUAGE	EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND
CORE	Theoretical	Produces	Agenda-setter	English	IR/Political Science
PERIPHERY	Semi-theoretical	Employs	Agenda-follower	English	IR/Political Science
OUTER-PERIPHERY	Non-theoretical	Oblivious/Rejects	No agenda	Local	Various

The first fragmentation, within the core, started with the so-called “Great Debates” and multiplication of paradigms. Added to its interdisciplinary nature, these debates between different paradigms created a fragmented discipline, where different paradigms constructed different images of international relations without making any contributions to each other’s understanding of the international phenomena. They almost spoke different languages, making communication ever more difficult and aggravating the problem of multi-disciplinarity. In some cases, such differences turned into antagonistic clashes similar to ideological battles. Scholars coming from different disciplines and sometimes with disparate paradigms further created their own niches within the discipline without any meaningful channels of communication. Lake calls this “academic sectarianism” and “theological debates between academic religions”.⁴ To some, such debates did not even take place, and debating schools of thought were retrospectively imagined for pedagogical purposes.⁵ In reality, there were different worlds of IR apart from each other, and the discipline was fragmented into different paradigms and methodologies. Disintegration of the discipline into entirely disjointed schools focusing on different aspects of international phenomena, at certain times, made even the very existence of the discipline questionable.

The second dimension of the disciplinary fragmentation is between the core and the periphery, or the west and the non-west, which is the main point of departure for this article. Unlike the first dimension of the fragmentation, the division between the core and the periphery runs against the nature of the discipline, and affects it in negative ways. The

⁴ David Lake, “Why ‘isms’ are Evil: Theory, Epistemology, and Academic Sects as Impediments to Understanding and Progress,” *International Studies Quarterly* 55, no. 2 (2011): 465-480; Peter Wilson, “The Myth of the ‘First Great Debate’,” *Review of International Studies* 24, no. 5 (1998): 1-16.

⁵ Lucian M. Ashworth, “Did the Realist–Idealist Great Debate Really Happen? A Revisionist History of International Relations,” *International Relations* 16, no. 1 (2002): 33-51.

first dimension emerges out of the multivariate nature of the international phenomenon. Therefore, the diverse nature of the discipline is easily understandable (and perhaps even a desirable thing⁶), because the subject matter of “international” requires multi-disciplinary and multi-paradigmatic approaches, and one can argue that multiplicities and plurality are necessary for the discipline to develop.⁷

However, unlike the existence of multiple paradigms, the core-periphery or the west-non-west division is not natural, and leaves the discipline incomplete and prejudiced, causing epistemological and ontological problems. Since international phenomena require a multiplicity of perspectives, the rift between the core and the periphery deprives IR from certain perspectives, which are undeniably important parts of the international practice. An absence of perspectives from the periphery leaves the discipline in an incomplete stage. The discipline might be heavily shaped by western perspectives; but international practice is not solely western. There are parts of the world outside the west whose perceptions and interpretations of international events have substantial impacts on international relations. Adding these outsider perspectives and interpretations might help us to have a better understanding of international relations. Otherwise, western theories might not be able to understand or they might simply misinterpret other parts of the world.⁸ Said’s criticism of orientalism is a good example of this.⁹ Even though more recent critical and post-modern theories bring up this issue of silenced perspectives in world politics to the agenda of the discipline, there are no concrete results which suggest that a non-western alternative IR is coming into existence. Moreover, some attempts to create alternative and unique non-western approaches show that they are epistemologically and methodologically not much different from the western examples, and in some cases, they are arguably inferior to them, especially because of the lack of critical perspectives.¹⁰

The division between the core and the periphery (non-western, alternative) can be interpreted from mainly two interrelated perspectives. The first one focuses on the fact that the periphery is completely absorbed by the core and serves the core’s agenda; and the second perspective emphasizes the potential of the periphery to develop alternative views and theories. Methodologically and epistemologically different from each other, two different worlds of IR (western and non-western) appeared in the second half of the 20th century. While the western “core” produces theoretical arguments and concepts, the non-western “periphery” provides empirical evidence for these theories. In that sense, the periphery does not produce its own conceptual framework (or paradigm), but feeds into the core’s theories. Aydınlı and Mathews call this “the unspoken division of labor” in the discipline.¹¹

As to the second perspective, there are alternative views in the periphery, which are different from that of the core, but they are either silenced, or need discovering. If the periphery is silenced, then this division is not merely an academic issue, but also has power/political roots and consequences of domination. As Shilliam has pointed out, “(t)he attribution of who

⁶ Nick Rengger and Mark Hoffman, “Modernity, Postmodernism and International Relations,” in *Postmodernism and the Social Sciences*, eds. Joe Doherty, Elspeth Graham, and Mo Malek (London: Palgrave MacMillian, 1992), 127-147.

⁷ K. J. Holsti, “Mirror, Mirror on the Wall, Which Are the Fairest Theories of All?” *International Studies Quarterly* 33, no. 3 (1989): 255-261.

⁸ Yong-Soo Eun, “Opening up the Debate over ‘non-Western’ International Relations,” in *Going beyond Parochialism and Fragmentation in the Study of International Relations*, ed. Yong-Soo Eun (New York: Routledge, 2020), 10-11.

⁹ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978).

¹⁰ Eun, “Opening up the Debate,” 17-18.

¹¹ Ersel Aydınlı and Julie Mathews, “Are the Core and Periphery Irreconcilable? The Curious World of Publishing in Contemporary International Relations,” *International Studies Perspectives* 1, no. 3 (2000): 299.

can ‘think’ and produce valid knowledge of human existence has always been political.”¹² According to this view, the parts of the periphery that reject to join the core’s agenda are excluded from the global discipline and silenced. This deprives the global core of the potential of developing original concepts and theories. According to Aydınli and Mathews, the sharp divide between the core and the periphery needs to be bridged, and one way of doing this is homegrown theorizing, where the periphery makes its original contributions to the field.¹³ This implies a rich and undiscovered potential for IR theories, and therefore the division between the core and the periphery, in which the latter keeps its own originality without being assimilated into mainstream theories, can be a source of new theories, rather than a problem. However, before building bridges and making healthy connections, an awareness of the problems on both sides is needed. This brings us to the third dimension of the disciplinary fragmentation, which is within the periphery itself and overlooked by most of the IR literature.

The current literature, while focusing on the core-periphery divisions, fails to notice that there is another aspect to the disciplinary fragmentation within the periphery. There are also cores and peripheries within countries, and in most cases, the divide within countries is deeper than the one between the global core and the global periphery. Aydınli and Mathews talk about a periphery of the periphery as well.¹⁴ This paper prefers to call it “the outer periphery.” The outer periphery, as a result of its socio-economic disadvantages, is not easily noticeable by the core, especially because it does not speak the language of the “global” IR, which is English, and does not participate in the core’s conferences. The texts produced in the outer periphery are mostly in native languages, and published mostly in local journals. Such publications are largely disregarded by both the global core and the global periphery for several reasons. This paper tries to reveal certain characteristics and problems of the outer periphery and their meaning for the search for a more truly international discipline.

There are considerable efforts and debates about the globalization of IR to make it less western oriented. Ironically the globalization and universalization of IR still reflects its western centric perspective. Contrary to common assumption, the western-centric nature of IR, or not enough globalization, seems to be more of a problem of the core, rather than that of the [outer]periphery. The search for new theories and perspectives turned the face of the western core to the non-west, while this search is far from meeting the expectations because of the fundamental and unnoticed problems of the periphery. From the periphery’s perspective, the biggest problem is not the lack of true internationalization, but growing fragmentation of the discipline to such an extent that it is assimilated by “other disciplines”. As will be discussed in the Turkish example, this fragmentation, especially at the outer periphery, blurs the disciplinary boundaries, epistemology and identity, and reduces it to a open field shared by all other disciplines. At first, such urgent problems emanating from the outer periphery are to be identified and then solved. As seen from this perspective, the discipline is not globalizing, but further fragmenting and creating different worlds of IR.

The differences and fragmentations especially outside the core and the problems of the outer periphery are generally neglected by the literature. The literature on divisions and

¹² Robbie Shilliam, “Non-Western Thought and International Relations,” in *International Relations and Non-Western Thought. Imperialism, Colonialism and Investigations of Global Modernity*, ed. Robbie Shilliam (London: Routledge, 2011), 2.

¹³ Ersel Aydınli and Julie Mathews, “Periphery Theorising for a Truly Internationalised Discipline: Spinning IR Theory out of Anatolia,” *Review of International Studies* 34, no. 4 (2008): 693-712.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 697.

fragmentations within the discipline usually focus on paradigmatic plurality within the core in conjunction with the existence of a periphery. This paper, while trying to scratch the surface of an unnoticed array of problems, also aims to contend that the periphery is much more divided and fragmented within itself, without any unifying disciplinary, methodological, conceptual, theoretical, or even educational common ground. Even though focusing on the Turkish example, this paper also assumes that most of these problems and characteristics of the Turkish periphery is not endemic to Turkey, and it is possible to find similar examples in other parts of the world.

3. Unlocking the World of the Outer Periphery: The Turkish Example

Turkish IR is especially compelling because of the country’s historical background as a home to several multinational empires, and its pivotal geopolitical location as the focal point of the hotspots in contemporary international politics, such as the Middle East, the Balkans and the Caucasus. IR studies in Turkey have a great potential to make significant contributions to global IR, if they can overcome the problems that have been discussed below. Paradigms are heavily influenced by both historical backgrounds and the positions from where the international events are viewed. This makes Turkey’s possible contributions even more awaited and appealing.

This article looks at the division of the periphery within itself as one of the underlying conditions that curtails its potential for original contributions to the discipline. Like the global discipline, Turkish IR too is divided within itself. Although it remains as a periphery within the global discipline, there is also an outer periphery within the Turkish periphery, where publications, education and academic agendas are completely different, and there is no epistemological consensus about what “international relations” is, and why the IR discipline exists. Unlike the common conception, the periphery is more integrated with and attached to the core,¹⁵ while the outer periphery struggles with completely different and fundamental problems. In that respect, the real disparity is between the periphery and the outer periphery, especially because there is a sharp and ironically unnoticed detachment between the two.

The outer periphery’s problems are more fundamental and ontological. Mainly for that reason, the periphery has minimal connections with its outer periphery. Publications, as well as education, are in English at the periphery, while these activities are conducted mainly in Turkish at the outer periphery. The scholars from these two parts of IR participate in different conferences, publish in different journals, and do not interact academically, aside from a few exceptions. Since their scholarly communication is in different languages and they have different perspectives of IR, the periphery is unable to notice the problems of its outer periphery, leaving it to its own problems. Even though the outer periphery seems almost non-existent to the core, its effects on the discipline are concrete and very much real. Before investigating its influence over the discipline, a brief introduction to the world of the outer periphery is needed.

IR departments in Turkey are organized in two different ways, both in the periphery and the outer periphery. The first group of departments are called International Relations (IR). The second group is organized in a more interdisciplinary way and called Political Science

¹⁵ Wemheuer-Vogelaar, Kristensen and Lohaus, in their research, found no substantial difference between core and periphery that resembles a “division of labor.” Wiebke Wemheuer-Vogelaar, Peter Marcus Kristensen, and Mathis Lohaus, “The Global Division of Labor in a not so Global Discipline,” *All Azimuth: A Journal of Foreign Policy and Peace* 11, no 1 (2022): 3-27.

and International Relations (PSIR). Even though both departments are open to scholars from other disciplines, PSIR departments are more heavily dominated by political scientists. A general overview indicates that in both departments, the range of studies are so wide that some of them are difficult to identify as IR, especially at the outer periphery.

The discipline at the periphery is so divided within itself that it has become a field completely open for all social disciplines, with no common theoretical or conceptual base. This unruly and chaotic invasion of the field by scholars who have no education in IR, international history, or even political science, further disintegrates the discipline. At first glance, opening the IR field to other disciplines can be interpreted as a contribution to the field; however, to receive contributions, a conceptual common language is needed. IR departments in Turkey hire individuals whose educational backgrounds range from physics to biochemistry to several departments of the faculties of education, and from theology and linguistics to Turkish Republican History. Notably in the outer periphery, a significant number of scholars are not required to have an IR or political science doctoral degree to be appointed in the IR departments. It is logically arguable that scholars from other disciplines can relate their academic interests to international relations and contribute to the discipline. But a closer look at such studies reveals that this is not the case, and some of them are not even remotely related to the field.¹⁶

Most of the scholars who are from other disciplines are especially historians, retired diplomats or military personnel who hold doctoral degrees from a variety of different fields. Most historians are Republican Era Turkish historians, who study Turkish political history from the early 20th century. Among these, almost none focus on diplomatic or international history, and most of them concentrate only on Turkish or Ottoman history. The overall picture indicates that there is a considerable number of scholars in the field of IR, who have no education or specialization in the discipline, yet they continue to teach IR courses, and publish “IR” articles and books.¹⁷

For a factual demonstration of the underlying problems, first, I selected 30 different IR departments which can be considered as the outer periphery. These universities employ 223 scholars holding different levels of professorship positions. In the Turkish academic system, qualification for associate professorship is an especially crucial stage for professional specialization, perhaps even more so than the doctoral degree. In the outer periphery there are a significant number of scholars who received their associate professorship from unrelated fields. Since the information about the associate professorship field is not publicly available, it was not possible to draw an exact number. However, the main database concerning the university departments (YÖK Atlas) has information about the departmental scholars’

¹⁶ If we need to name a few doctoral dissertations of some scholars who are employed in IR departments; “Ratlarda biber gazının (OC) bazı biyokimyasal parametreler üzerine etkisi [The Effect of Pepper Gas (OC) on Some Biochemical Parameters in Rats]”; “Şehir coğrafyası açısından Safranbolu-Karabük ikilemi [Safranbolu-Karabük’s Dilemma with Respect to Urban Geography]”; “Locational Determinants of Horticultural and Christmas Tree Land Uses in the Portland Metropolitan Area, Oregon: A Thunian Discrete Choice and Hedonic Land Values Approach”; “Eserleri ve fikirleri ile Cevat Rifat Atilhan [Thoughts and Publications of Cevat Rifat Atilhan]”; “XX. yüzyılda Tokat’ın sosyal ve kültürel yapısı [Socioeconomic Structure in Tokat in the Late 20th Century]”; “Türkiye sosyalist hareketinde Dr. Hikmet Kıvılcımlı’nın yeri: Tarih tezi ve din yorumu [The Place of Dr. Hikmet Kıvılcımlı in Turkish Socialist Movement: Thesis of History and Interpretation of Religion]” Trablsugarp Vilayeti’nde İdari ve Sosyo-ekonomik Yapı: 1876-1911 [Administrative and Socio-economic Structure in Tripoli Province: 1876-1911].

¹⁷ The outer periphery also created its own outlets for such publications, some of which work in tandem with outer peripheries in other countries. Most of these journals are faculty or graduate school journals at the universities of the outer periphery. Scholars from the periphery rarely publish in those journals or publishing houses. The reason for this is the obvious concern with academic quality and images of these publication outlets.

educational backgrounds.¹⁸ A general overview of the first group of departments (IR) shows us that out of 223 scholars, 54 have no degrees in IR, political science or regional studies, in any of their educational background (undergraduate, masters and doctorate). Additionally, 58 of these scholars wrote their doctoral theses in fields and topics other than IR or political science.¹⁹ In these departments, the number of scholars who hold a doctoral degree in IR or regional studies (Europe, Middle East, Asia, etc.) is 133, which makes roughly 60 percent of the total number.

The second step was the investigation of the second group of departments (PSIR) to compare it with the first group (IR). This overview also has a similar outlook with the previously examined IR departments. The selected 19 outer periphery departments employed 143 professors (full, associate and assistant). Among them, only 65 had their doctoral degrees in IR or regional studies, which is around 45 percent of the scholars who are employed in PSIR departments. In total, combined data indicate that, out of 366 scholars who are employed in these departments, only 198 have doctoral degrees in IR or regional studies. In some departments, not surprisingly, the IR scholars are in the minority.

Disciplinary identity is mainly formed at the undergraduate level, as all the fundamental courses of the discipline are taken at that level. From that perspective, a closer overview of the fields of undergraduate education of these scholars, who are employed in the departments and carry the title of IR professor, is also needed. For this, a count of professors who graduated specifically from the IR departments has produced similar results as their doctoral degrees. Out of the sampled 366 faculty members employed in IR and PSIR departments, only 180 had their undergraduate degrees in the field. Therefore, it can confidently be asserted that in the outer periphery, the field is shaped and dominated by other disciplines, some of which are not even related to the IR discipline, and in certain cases leaving the IR scholars in minority in their departments. Dilution of these few IR scholars into so many different IR departments, reduces the possibility of academic collaboration, interactions and discussions, and impairs joint research efforts. This inevitably reduces the levels of academic productivity, creativity, and quality, by diminishing the opportunities for professional development.

Further research is needed on the issue of educational background of the scholars to reveal the seriousness of the problem and its consequences. Most publications concerning the general structure and problems of IR academia²⁰ fail to note the problem of educational background, and take it for granted. However, this is an issue that negatively affects the quality of education and publications in the outer periphery, and corrupts whatever potential

¹⁸ The information gathered for this article is based on the YÖK Atlas data from April-May 2023. “YÖK Atlas,” *Yükseköğretim Kurumu*, accessed date April 01, 2023, <https://yokatlas.yok.gov.tr/lisans-anasayfa.php>.

¹⁹ In this classification, dissertations in political science are considered as part of IR. However, some of these theses were merely about domestic politics, actors, or issues, and their subjects cannot even remotely be considered IR. To name a few sample titles: “Aydın siyaset ilişkisi bağlamında Hürriyet Partisi [The Freedom Party in the Context of intellectual-Politics Relationship]”; “Disappearing Onion Producers in Karacabey: A Micro Analysis of Farmers and Land After Structural Reform”; “Türkiye’de sosyalist düşünce ve hareketlerin işçi sınıfı ile ilişkisi: 1968-71 fabrika işgal eylemleri [Relationship of Socialist Ideas and Movements with the Working Class in Turkey (1968-71) Factory Occupation Protests]”; “Türkiye’de Siyasal Parti Örgütlenmesi (1908-1960) [Political Party Organizations in Turkey (1908-1960)]; “Türkiye’de Merkez Sağ ve Merkez Sol Partilerde Bölünme [Splits at Center Right and Center Left Parties in Turkey]; Milliyetçilik ve Faşizm Türkiye’de İrkçi Milliyetçilik Üzerine bir İnceleme [Nationalism and Fascism an Analysis on Racist Nationalism in Turkey] Since some scholars posted only the name of their university of graduation without specifying the department or the topic for their dissertations, we have a limited number of examples. There is enough reason to suspect that if it were possible to have access to more detailed information, the examples would be multiplied.

²⁰ Pınar Bilgin and Oktay Tanrısever, “A telling story of IR in the periphery: Telling Turkey About the World, Telling the World About Turkey,” *Journal of International Relations and Development* 12, no. 2 (2009): 174-179; Mustafa Aydın, Fulya Hisarhoğlu, and Korhan Yazgan, “Türkiye’de Uluslararası İlişkiler Akademisyenleri ve Alana Yönelik Yaklaşımları Üzerine Bir İnceleme:TRIP 2014 Sonuçları,” *Uluslararası İlişkiler* 12, no. 48 (2016): 3-35.

there is for original contributions to the field. What makes the detection of this problem even more difficult and its grave consequences unnoticeable is the interdisciplinary character of the IR field. IR is inevitably, and should be, open to contributions from other fields. However, to call this a contribution, the discipline should be able to define its main premises. Without a disciplinary identity, IR turns into an unorganized market place where nobody knows what they are searching for. Under such conditions, potential contributions can never be realized. This mixture of disciplines without any common conceptual, theoretical, paradigmatic or problematic concerns turns the discipline into a multi-disciplinary non-discipline, or an empty field to be occupied by outlier academics who do not fit into their own disciplines. Opening the discipline to scholars who have no knowledge of the literature, theories and concepts, with an attitude of “everything goes”, reduces the discipline to an absolute nothingness.

This blurs the general understanding of what the discipline is about, the main concerns, research goals, and educational content. Therefore, in the outer periphery, there is no clear understanding of what IR is and what it does,²¹ let alone the capacity to make theoretical or conceptual contributions to the discipline at any level, national or international. For making meaningful contributions, the discipline needs to build a common academic ground, and there should be at least a minimal common understanding. Therefore, to solve these issues within the outer periphery a serious debate about the epistemological nature of the discipline is needed.

From this general overview, one more point can be deduced and needs to be emphasized. The concepts of the periphery and the outer periphery in this study, unlike the common understanding, do not refer to a geographical location, but a certain set of problems and a mentality shaped by it. Just as the general mention of the west (core) and non-west (periphery) implies a location, the outer periphery is inaccurately understood as a geographical location, usually referring to the universities and departments in the rural Anatolian towns outside Ankara and İstanbul. The spatial understanding of these concepts is misleading and veils the growing problems within the periphery. The periphery is a set of structures that might exist anywhere, even within the west. In its essence, even the older universities in Ankara and İstanbul might as well be a part of the outer periphery.

The periphery, focusing on its status in relation to the global core, neglects and fails to notice substantial problems within. Therefore, any solution that deals with the problems of the periphery and its status vis-à-vis the core, has to identify and deal with the problems of the outer periphery as a starting point. Identifying the underlying issues, developing an awareness, and then solving these problems are crucial both for a better understanding of the world of the outer periphery and for its integration with the rest of the discipline. This also might open new channels of constructive communication and exchange of views between different parts of the discipline, which might then establish concrete bases for a global IR. It would be overly optimistic to expect the periphery to make original contributions to the core without solving its domestic problems.

²¹ To support this statement, we need a closer look at the doctoral dissertations of the scholars who received their degrees from and also are employed in IR departments. Here are the few sampled titles: “Tanzimat’tan günümüze Türk politik kültüründe romantizm [Romanticism in Turkish political culture since Tanzimat Era]”; “The Role of Turkish Theatre in the Process of Modernization in Turkey: 1839-1946”; “Süleyman Demirel: A Political Biography”; “Aydın siyaset ilişkisi bağlamında Hürriyet Partisi [The Freedom Party in the Context of Intellectual-Politics Relationship]”; “II. Meşrutiyet döneminde paramiliter gençlik örgütleri [The Paramilitary Youth Organisations in II. Constitutional Monarchy Period]”; “Siyasal yaşamımız ve Namık Kemal [Our Political Life and Namık Kemal]”; “Türkiye’de bir politik özne olarak gençliğin inşası (1930-1946) [The Construction of Youth as a Political Subject in Turkey (1930-1946)].”

In outlining the main characteristics of the Turkish outer periphery and how it affects IR studies in Turkey in general, this paper elaborates on four typically degenerative issues as an extension of its structural problems. The term degeneration refers to the detachment of the outer periphery from the periphery and its epistemological disengagement from the rest of the discipline in a way that prevents it from producing good quality publications. The most visible outcomes of this are a loss of disciplinary identity; instrumentalization of the discipline by political actors; and production of speculative, non-academic, highly politicized studies, heavily influenced by short-term daily politics. In order to extract an original paradigm out of these unique conditions, the nature of these interrelated problems needs to be fully recognized.

The first problem is the *ignorance of or apathy towards the knowledge produced in the core*, which leads to completely different kinds of studies. This emerges as a reaction to being excluded and unable to participate in the discourses at the core or periphery. At the end, this turns into a reaction that can be called “reverse orientalism,” where the outer periphery rejects most of the knowledge and theoretical constructs of international relations produced by the core. Scholars are not familiar with, or care to know such knowledge. The second problem is also radically different from the core IR, which can be called *chronological historicism*. Despite the fact that IR theories are criticized for their ahistoricism in the core, the outer periphery struggles with the problem of heavy chronological historicism. The third major problem is *conspiracy theorizing, or conspiracy as a paradigm*. The conspiracy paradigm is merely based on and emerged from speculative explanations about international politics, requiring no previous theoretical knowledge or concrete data. The first problem of rejecting most knowledge produced in the core, is that it creates conditions prone to speculative explanations of international relations. The fourth and final problem illustrates the negative effects of the outer periphery when *it becomes the practical mainstream*. Since the scholars of the outer periphery are more in number, they have a quantitative advantage especially in shaping public opinion and foreign policy practices. In this way, the periphery brings its own problems, paradigms and perspectives to the practical politics and starts shaping practice.

Now, we can turn to these four issues of the outer periphery, emerging out of this general structure, and requiring the utmost awareness. These issues prevent academic development of the discipline and its true globalization, and reinforce and reproduce each other through employment policies and publication outlets, all of which can be a subject of comprehensive research projects in the future. Here, we will try to identify them briefly.

3.1. Apathy towards Western IR

The literature on non-western IR focuses more on the west’s gatekeeper position and the obstacles for the periphery to join the discipline with its own alternative perspectives. However, there is another side to this coin. There are parts of the periphery that reject joining (or show no interest in joining) a dialogue within the rest of the discipline, namely the outer periphery. Contrary to the common assumption that there is a deep rift between the core and the periphery, these two are actually relatively well integrated. The outer periphery, on the other hand, is qualitatively different from, and also usually invisible to both. This invisibility is returned back as a rejection of both by the outer periphery.

Though Aydınli and Mathews emphasize intellectual dependency and theory importation

as major problems of the periphery,²² this issue looks completely different from the outer periphery. One of the distinct characteristics of the outer periphery is its disinterest in the theoretical knowledge produced by the core. Emanating from the structural conditions at the outer periphery, three main reasons can be identified for this disregard. The first one is that there are a considerable number of scholars who have no educational background in IR, no knowledge of theoretical debates or basic concepts, and have no interest in learning them. This leads to the second reason, where such scholars, despite their lack of educational background in IR, seek acceptance and recognition in the discipline. Since it would be strenuous to make up for the lack of accumulated knowledge, the easiest path is a complete rejection of it. Linguistic shortcomings, limiting the access to the literature produced by the core, also contribute to this attitude. This predicament also interacts with the rising tide of nationalism, where local languages are praised in place of English. This is also related to the third reason, which is ideological. Lack of knowledge in the field, finds an ideological excuse for not studying the existing IR literature.

In certain cases, all western knowledge is rejected, because it is seen as a device of domination, imperialism, colonialism, and hegemony. It is viewed by the outer periphery as a sort of intellectual corruption and colonization of the minds. This includes IR theories, as they shape peoples' perspectives of international politics. Some scholars, in their theory classes, do not teach theories, and claim to teach students how to think beyond the boundaries drawn by the western literature. Even though this might seem like a legitimate claim, in practice, it cannot be achieved academically without teaching/learning first what kind of knowledge has been produced in the west. Furthermore, in order to replace old perspectives with new liberating ones, a logical expectation would be the construction of new concepts or theories, which are also yet to be generated.

The decolonization of IR is a legitimate goal in creating a truly globalized discipline.²³ Therefore, the debate needs to focus on how it should be done. Even though there are calls for revolutionary approaches, the methodology of decolonization should be based on a multiplicity of perspectives to overcome the western parochialism that has dominated the discipline since its establishment. A complete rejection of western theories leading up to a complete destruction of the IR discipline would not serve that purpose, but open up the whole field to a purposeless occupation by other disciplines, as happens in the outer periphery. Even when the whole methodology of decolonization is revolutionary, the main goal has to remain as accumulation of knowledge, not an anarchist revolution which totally ignores the existing literature. Decolonization can only be fruitful when the whole process is based on a dialogue where the western origins are questioned and re-examined by its alternatives, rather than its total rejection.

In order to decolonize IR thought, first a full understanding of the existing western literature is required; however, this is the exact ingredient that is missing in the outer periphery. Without this, the whole effort turns into a fruitless nationalistic rebellion against the current discipline and a mere rhetorical support for the ultimate goal. After all, raising an awareness about the problems and the consciousness of non-western IR are possible only

²² Ersel Aydınlı and Julie Mathews, "Türkiye Uluslararası İlişkiler Disiplininde Özgün Kuram Potansiyeli: Anadolu Ekolünü Oluşturmak Mümkün mü?" *Uluslararası İlişkiler* 5, no 17, (2008): 178.

²³ There is a growing literature about the intellectual decolonization of IR: Branwen Gruffydd Jones, ed., *Decolonizing International Relations* (Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 2006); Zeynep Gulsah Capan, "Decolonising International Relations," *The Third World Quarterly* 38, no 1 (2017): 1-15.

through the knowledge of previous theories. Without knowing what is criticized, the claim of establishing alternative perspectives is baseless.

The political history and the current atmosphere in countries inevitably shape the nature of the development process for homegrown or alternative theories. As an extension of the political atmosphere in Turkey, neo-Ottomanism is a very popular ideology among outer periphery scholars. Neo-Ottomanism implies an admiration of an idealized Ottoman past, a longing for its superiority against the west and a reaction to the modernization process. This imperial nostalgia shapes the way people perceive and interpret international relations in Turkey, especially in the outer periphery. From that perspective, anything the west has produced is an extension of its imperialist past. This also feeds into an illusion of greatness, where as an heir to the throne, Turkey has regional and global responsibilities to reestablish the just order of the Ottomans, which was destroyed by western imperialism. The motto of “the world is bigger than five” is widely used by the outer periphery scholars.²⁴ This motto is not just a simple criticism of the international/UN system, but a way to question Turkey’s absence among the permanent five members of the UN Security Council (P5).

Combined with popularization of the views of Islamic/Asian revivalism in recent decades, the political and academic ecosystem has created a new paradigm, which some scholars call “reverse orientalism.” It is not peculiar to Turkey, and its examples exist all across Asia, especially in the Arab world, Japan and China, sometimes under the rubric of “Asian Values.”²⁵ Reverse orientalism is a spinoff concept of orientalism, coined by Edward Said. Even though Said warned that “the answer to orientalism is not occidentalism,”²⁶ with the tide of rising nationalism and anti-modernism, occidentalism, or reverse orientalism, has become the intellectual fashion in some parts of the Asian continent. In the Turkish case, having an imperial past, an idea of uniqueness of the country and its central position in regional politics, has led to a rejection of all western impositions, whether they be political or intellectual. This has fed into the idea of some kind of exceptionalism, with Turkey not needing any western ideas in conducting relations with other countries, and being the last bastion of defense against western imperialism. Again, in Said’s terms, this has led to “the seductive degradation of [the western] knowledge.”

A search for a non-western IR theory inevitably starts with a critique of the existing western literature, but this search has several pitfalls. The first one is to reproduce the criticized falsehood, namely the parochialism of western IR. Despite the fact that reverse orientalism emerged as a reaction to an orientalist parochialism, when turned into a political project, this reaction has ironically created a new sort of parochialism. The second danger is related to the first one. The rejectionist parochialism creates a sort of willful ignorance, proudly not knowing and not wanting to know western theories. Any attempt to produce new knowledge of IR based on this binary reactionism is doomed to be artificial and unsustainable, which cannot be considered a contribution to the field, and this seems to be the case in the outer periphery. To avoid this binary western-non-western exclusionism, some suggest the term

²⁴ Furkan Kaya, Mesut Özcan, and Soner Doğan, “Türkiye’s Demand for Global Order in The Context of Critical Realizm and ‘The World Is Bigger Than Five Discourse’,” *Gaziantep Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 22, no 4 (2022): 2408-2425; Ersoy Önder, “Hangisi Daha Büyük? Dünya mı Beş mi?” *Uluslararası Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi* 12, no 63 (2019): 341-359.

²⁵ Ryoko Nakano, “Beyond Orientalism and ‘Reverse Orientalism’: Through the Looking Glass of Japanese Humanism,” in *International Relations and Non-Western Thought. Imperialism, Colonialism and Investigations of Global Modernity*, ed. Robbie Shilliam, (London: Routledge, 2011), 125-138.

²⁶ Said, *Orientalism*, 328.

“post-western IR” to define the search for a more inclusive approach.²⁷

3.2. Conspiracy theorizing

Conspiracy theories are everywhere, but when it is in academia it is a different story. Studying conspiracies and analyzing conspiracy theories might well be a part of academic studies, but the real problem emerges when the whole world of international relations is viewed through the prism of a conspiratorial mindset. Therefore, the real problem in the outer periphery is the paradigm of conspiracy. This becomes a problem for the outer periphery especially through IR scholars who have no IR education. The lack of an educational background leads these scholars to simplistic and speculative accounts of international relations. It is possible to identify three main reasons for this problem: educational, ideological, and practical. The problem of educational background has already been discussed in the previous section. Rejectionism of all previous western knowledge and literature is highly convenient for such scholars, as it levels them with IR scholars and puts them on equal footing. Once educational background is removed from academic qualification standards, IR is reduced to a layman’s field of analysis. The easiest and most popular way of doing such analyses is through conspiracy theories, which require no education, but only imagination.

The second reason behind the spread of conspiracy theorizing is ideological. Anti-westernism as a rising ideology, combined with neo-Ottomanist perspectives, leads to a demonization of the west, from where it is assumed that all the malfeasance, sedition and wrongdoings emanate.²⁸ Explanations relating to any dimension of west-non-west relations from such a world view inevitably leans toward conspiratorial approaches. This conspiratorial paradigm disguises itself as anti-imperialism and anti-colonialism.²⁹ Unfortunately, the conspiracy mindset has become the main perspective in the outer periphery, sometimes openly, and at other times as an underlying mentality.³⁰ Some even see IR theories as part of a wider conspiracy, which are ordered by western governments to serve their states’ national interests, and/or legitimize US supremacy.³¹

The third reason for conspiratorial explanations is practical and political. IR is seen by most outsiders as a prestigious field to get media recognition first and then make a transition to active politics in Turkey. There is no better way than conspiracy theories to get media attention. For similar purposes, there are also examples of personal disguise where non-IR scholars present themselves as IR experts on media and make foreign policy analyses, or publish books on international politics and Turkish foreign policy.³² The real influence of the

²⁷ Ersel Aydınli and Gonca Biltekin, “Widening the World of IR: A Typology of Homegrown Theorizing,” *All Azimuth: A Journal of Foreign Policy and Peace* 7, no. 1 (2018): 45-68.

²⁸ Murat Ercan, *Batılı Ülkelerin Dış Politikalarında Türk ve İslam Karşıtlığının Yansımaları* [Reflections of Hostility Against the Turks and Islam in the Western Countries’ Foreign Policies] (İstanbul: Efe Akademi Yayınları, 2021).

²⁹ As an example of such works, a brief look at the papers presented at the II. Uluslararası Demokrasi Sempozyumu: Emperyalizm, Hegemonya ve İstihbarat Faaliyetleri, 30 Kasım-2, Aralık 2017 [The Second International Symposium on Democracy Imperialism, Hegemony, and Intelligence Activities, 30 November-2 December 2017] might be helpful.

³⁰ For historical and sociological background, and the current state of conspiratorial thinking in Turkey, look; Doğan Gürpınar, *Conspiracy Theories in Turkey. Conspiracy Nation* (New York: Routledge, 2020); Julian de Medeiros, *Conspiracy Theory in Turkey: Politics and Protest in the Age of ‘Post-Truth’* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2018).

³¹ One of the graduate students in my class, during our discussions of Stanley Hoffmann’s article, IR as an American Science, pointed out that whole IR theory might be a part of an American conspiracy to manipulate minds. Therefore, according to her, it was useless to learn all that literature, which basically is a piece of propaganda.

³² Most prominent one of these is a well-known geological engineer, Prof. Dr. Şener Üşümezsoy: Üşümezsoy, *Dünya Sistemi ve Emperyalizm* [The World System and Imperialism] (İstanbul: İleri Yayınları, 2006); Üşümezsoy, *Petrol Düzeni ve Körfez Savaşları* [The Oil Order and the Gulf Wars] (İstanbul, İnkılap Kitapevi, 2003); Üşümezsoy, *Petrol Şoku ve Yeni Orta Doğu Haritası* [Oil Shock and the New Map of the Middle East] (İstanbul: İleri Yayınları, 2006); Üşümezsoy, *Türkiye’nin Kesik Damarları: Boru*

outer periphery comes from its simplistic/conspiratorial explanations which give them an outstanding power of shaping public opinion. The public attention is captured more by simple explanations, which require no previous knowledge about the subject matter, and easily stir emotional responses mixed with nationalist feelings, such as fear and anxiety. Therefore, people and politicians are more effectively influenced by conspiratorial explanations, rather than sophisticated analyses of international relations.

There are also some scholars who choose conspiracy theorizing as a career path. Erol Mütercimler, took issue with western imperialists monopolizing the field of conspiracy theorizing, and argued that Turkey needed to produce its own conspiracy theories to shake that monopoly. As a self-declared conspiracy scholar, he undertook the mission of raising conspiracy theorists.³³ This is the conspiracy theorist’s way of decolonizing the non-western minds and searching for alternatives.

However, conspiracy theories, because of their paranoid nature are not a healthy way of analyzing international relations, or formulating policies. Unless it is reduced to merely a brainstorming exercise, conspiracy as a mindset harms the discipline, starting from the outer periphery and working its way inwards.

3.3. Chronological historicism

As we move away from the core, the conceptual and theoretical nature of IR fades. While the center of the core makes pure theory, the outer periphery only tells historical or current stories about world politics. The studies between these two extremes have a mixture of empirical and theoretical analyses, the ratio depending on the closeness to the core or the periphery. Therefore, while an issue of ahistoricism prevails in the core, a completely different problem holds sway in the outer periphery, namely, too much of history or sheer story-telling.

The main reason for chronological historicism at the outer periphery is the influence of the historian scholars in the IR departments (50 out of 366 sampled scholars).³⁴ Undoubtedly, history is an unavoidable part of IR; however, the main concern from our perspective is the type and quality of historicism. In Turkey, history in general is not studied thematically or in a conceptual way. The main methodology is a detailed investigation of archive documents and sometimes merely a translation of them from the Ottoman language into modern Turkish. For IR, this kind of event-centered historicism can only offer raw materials to the discipline, but cannot construct new theories. IR needs much more than raw materials to acquire meaningful contributions from the historians. History is most valuable for IR when it is combined with concepts and theories, allowing us to travel into the historical depths of current relationships and to see how things change or survive over time. The English School is a good example of this.

However, instead of making contributions, the historians aggravate some of the problems such as the conspiracy mindset. Trapped in the past and not making analytical deductions,

Hatları-Kayagazı-Doğal Gaz Savaşı [The Cut Veins of Turkey: Pipelines, Shale Gas, Natural Gas Wars] (İstanbul: İleri Yayınları, 2017).

³³ Unlike other scholars, who opaquely publish within a conspiracy paradigm and hide their perspectives to avoid blemishing their academic images, Erol Mütercimler openly claims himself to be a conspiracy theorist. For that reason, I saw no harm in naming him as an example. He also published nine issues of a journal titled *Kompla Teorileri* [Conspiracy Theories]. Erol Mütercimler, *Kompla Teorileri: Aynanın Ardında Kalan Gerçekler* [Conspiracy Theories: The Realities Behind the Mirror] (İstanbul: Alfa, 2015). Especially in the Introduction part of the book, he explains his mission.

³⁴ Here, the number of historians refers to the scholars who had their education in history departments. There is also a part of IR in Turkey called “Political History” and this number excludes such “political historians.”

the historians in IR interpret current world events as they were happening in the past, and emphasize the secretive nature of diplomacy and inter-state relations based on concepts like imperialist conspiracies. One of the main concerns of IR is to be able to understand the dynamics of continuity and change, and make sense of a changing global structures. The historicism in the outer periphery causes a sort of obsession with the past, not being able to move forward mentally and interpreting the present events as if they are happening in a bygone world, thus experiencing a sort of “cognitive immobility”.³⁵

Most of the articles published in the outer periphery are chronological narrations, with no generalizable proposition.³⁶ It is obvious that this kind of writing cannot go beyond presenting the necessary raw material for theory production. This is one of the main and the most challenging problems at the outer periphery. It is challenging because this chronological methodology reproduces itself through student assignments and theses at all levels of undergraduate and graduate education. This is one of the reasons why the outer periphery cannot go beyond producing factual information and produce abstract, generalizable theoretical knowledge, which could be a more meaningful contribution. For a productive integration between the core, periphery and their outer companion, first they need to speak the same language, which consists of the approaches, concepts and theories.

There is no doubt that there are varieties of history, which can roughly be classified into two main categories for our purposes here. The first one focuses on particularistic details of certain actors or events, and the second one tries to analyze the underlying processes, environments or conditions surrounding such actors or events, and puts them in a context. IR needs more contextualizing works of history, rather than ones that present the particularistic details without their larger background conditions. According to Friedrich Meinecke, historiography until the Enlightenment focused on the first kind, and later it “expanded its horizon to include supra-individual causalities and processes.”³⁷ Even though both kinds of methodologies are needed within the discipline of history, for IR to benefit from it, a sort of contextualizing historical knowledge, going beyond the chronological storytelling, is needed. Contextual history is especially significant for the peripheral IR, because the counterpart of the ahistoricism at the core is the chronological narrative historicism at the periphery, both limiting IR’s horizons and undermining its potential. Unless this is achieved in one way or other, IR, rather than benefiting from history, will turn into a kind of chronological narration without a purpose.

Actually, post-western or globalizing IR largely demand contributions from historians. Alternative histories are in urgent need for enrichment of the existing theories (a sort of decolonization), and to lay the ground for new theories. The traditional narrative history, focusing on the details of certain documents, actors, or events, offers no help for that purpose.

³⁵ The term is coined in an international migration context in Ezenwa E. Olumba, “The homeless mind in a mobile world: An autoethnographic approach on cognitive immobility in international migration,” *Culture and Psychology* 29, no. 4 (2023): 769-790, in order to explain the tension between the past and the present; however, the term is also a good fit for the mindset of chronological historicism and its effects on IR.

³⁶ The titles of the doctoral dissertations written by the scholars who are employed in IR departments can give us an idea about both the chronological nature of these studies and how they are unrelated to the IR field: “Türk-Alman askeri ilişkileri (1913-1918) [Turkish-German Military Relations (1913-1918)]; “Türk-Amerikan Siyasi İlişkileri (1914-1923) [Turkish-American Political Relations (1914-1923)]; “1908-1923 yılları arası Erzurum vilayeti’nin idari ve sosyo-ekonomik durumu [1908-1923 Administrative and Socio-Economic Situation of the Vilayet of Erzurum]; “Türk basınında Balkan Savaşları (1912-1913) [İkdam, Sabah, Tanin] [Balkan Wars in the Turkish Press (1912-1913) (İkdam, Sabah, Tanin)]; “Türkiye-İsveç ilişkileri (1918-1938) [Turkey-Sweden Relations (1918-1938)]; “Türkiye-İsrail ekonomik ilişkileri (1950-1970) [Turkey-Israel Economic Relations (1950-1970)]” etc.

³⁷ Friedrich Meinecke, “Values and Causalities in History,” in *The Varieties of History from Voltaire to the Present*, ed., Fritz Stern (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), 269.

Without taking the context into account, a detailed narration cannot reveal the relations of domination and colonization. The main task of the historian from the IR perspective should be to reveal such contexts, so that alternative theories can emerge. However, historians of the outer periphery, not having any awareness about the problems in IR, are also not attuned to such needs. Most publications in the outer periphery are historical in nature; however, the main concern of these historians is more of their personal academic advancement through increasing the number of their publications, rather than making contributions to the discipline. Even though they are employed in IR departments, some still feel affiliated more with history than IR. Most such historians are not even aware of the discussions of a globalizing IR and the contributions that they are expected to make.

3.4. Outer periphery becoming the mainstream

All these problems might be deemed inconsequential to an outside observer, especially because an outer periphery with such basic problems is not expected to make an impact on the discipline, or change its nature. However, the quantitative weight of the outer periphery grants it a significant clout in shaping the discipline. The number of periphery scholars who are in communication, or debating the state of the discipline with the core, is a small percentage of the number of scholars at the outer periphery. Out of 118 universities with IR or PSIR departments, over 100 can easily be considered as outer periphery departments.

Another issue is the availability of publications for the students. Most of the students have access only to IR articles written in Turkish because of their linguistic disadvantages, which deprives them of benefiting from most core publications. Therefore, the IR literature in Turkish, mostly produced in the outer periphery, sets the example and the standards for new generations of IR students and scholars. While the core/periphery scholars meet in academic conferences with their international partners, the outer periphery scholars form their own conference circles within Turkey, and they also stay in close contact with politicians and media channels. This last point is especially significant since the outer periphery shapes political practice, which is the subject of research for all, including the core. This makes the outer periphery the mainstream.

As the core and the periphery work in their ivory towers, the outer periphery affects the real world and influences policy. “The periphery-outer periphery disengagement” pushes the latter for a symbiotic existence with practical politics.³⁸ The attraction of politics to IR scholars is undeniable. As Stanley Hoffmann says, IR is more about practical issues, and scholars tend to play the role of advisers in world politics. Since the seat of the world government is empty, they either try to transcend conflictual state policies at the national level and make systemic analyses, or advise national policies. For that reason, “scholars are torn between irrelevance and absorption.”³⁹

Overall, the general approach at the outer periphery is more practical and less theoretical, therefore more partial and biased, especially against the west. The main goal is not an analytical understanding of international politics, but developing supportive arguments for

³⁸ There are 3 reasons for the engagement between the outer periphery and politics: (1) the outer periphery’s willingness to participate in politics; (2) the quantitative advantage of the outer periphery against the rest of the discipline; and (3) the ideological match between politicians and the outer periphery scholars. In addition, neo-Ottomanism, an anti-elitist ideology that stands against westernization policies of the current government should be mentioned here as part of this ideological overlap. A populist discourse criticizing westernizing elites and tendencies is typical both in government and academic rhetoric in the outer periphery, both feeding into each other.

³⁹ Stanley Hoffmann, “An American Social Science: International Relations,” *Daedalus* 106, no. 3 (Summer 1977): 55.

government policies to promote their “national interests”. These practical concerns, combined with conspiratorial explanations, make the outer periphery a shaper of public opinion as well. As a result, while the outer periphery unites with practical politics and creates its own epistemological world, the rift within the discipline further deepens.

Table 2 - The Problems in the Outer Periphery and Their Degenerative Effects on IR

The Problems	Effects on the Discipline
Apathy Towards Western IR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ignorance about the existing literature • Deepening the divide within the discipline • Opening the discipline to scholars with no educational background in the field, and blurring the disciplinary identity. • Nationalistic (non-objective) publications based on a parochialist worldview
Conspiracy Theorizing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paranoid and nationalistic perspectives • Rejection of the theories as western conspiracy • No concern for objectivity; belief-based, rather than data-based analyses • Diversion of students’ attention from scientific theories • No global perspective other than grand conspiracies
Chronological Historicism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-generalizable story-telling • No conceptual production • A poor understanding of the dynamics of change, and trapped in the past (a sort of cognitive immobility) • No visionary perspectives for the present or future, other than reviving the past
The Outer Periphery’s Substantial Influence on Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instrumentalization of academia by politics • Main concern is not to explain or understand, but achieving political goals by endorsing politicians. • Shapes the practice and the public opinion on the basis of a conspiratorial mindset • Diminishes the value of IR scholars and theories, and replaces them with speculators, speculations, and short-term practical concerns.

4. Concluding Remarks

It is important to understand the problems of the outer periphery because they shape perceptions, behavior, policies, and relations in the real world, producing tangible consequences. In a sense, the world (especially outside the western domain) that IR scholars try to explain and understand is defined considerably by the outer periphery. Theories based on “western rationalism” might fall short of fully understanding a world that is shaped by a different sort of mindset. Perhaps one of the most concrete and striking examples of this is the rising anti-western emotions in Turkey. This has occurred despite the fact that the country has been a part of the victorious western alliance since the beginning of the Cold War. Instead of taking advantage of the victory, Turkey, especially in recent decades, has chosen to be in opposition to the West, and has not benefited from the Cold War victory, not even as much as the losing Eastern Bloc countries. The odd developments in Turkish foreign policy could

be a subject for another research article; however, it is possible to conclude that the outer periphery scholars, with their conspiratorial and biased historical perspectives against the West, have had substantial influence on policy practices.

Aside from such practical concerns, it is also important to be aware of the fundamental differences between the studies in the core and the (outer)periphery, for establishing a truly global and all-inclusive IR. A better understanding of international relations is only possible with an epistemological common ground to combine all these differences into a coherent field.

This article has tried to reveal an aspect of a deep fragmentation within the periphery, which prevents the emergence of common ground for a disciplinary epistemology. Perhaps more importantly, these deep differences and problems do not reflect on the epistemological discussions in the literature, and thus curtail any potential for original contributions. However, in order to expand the discipline’s horizons and reach something that at least resembles a field with a global perspective, we need to understand the nature of the problems that prevent it from happening.

Therefore, what can be done about the western-non-western dichotomy? Inspired by Said, Chowdhry recommends a contrapuntal reading for reaching global post-western IR.⁴⁰ A contrapuntal reading is about looking at the research subjects without compartmentalizing or polarizing the reading materials such as western and non-western, but taking them into account as a whole. This wholistic approach makes more sense to create a discipline that is more in line with its nature, and broadens our horizons. Solely trying to find an alternative to western IR would recreate the already criticized parochialism in the discipline. Therefore, a so-called non-western IR should be added to the existing literature, and not be established as a rejectionist alternative. This is a realistic danger, since some non-western scholars see all western knowledge as an agent of economic, political, and mental colonization. This creates a contest between different kinds of exclusionisms, instead of a more complete picture. As the movie *Joker* showed, even a comedically caricaturized villain might have a dramatically humane story behind it.

Similarly, a vision of west-non-west antagonism is a binary caricature of the actual situation, which neglects the history of knowledge-sharing and other exchanges between the two. A contrapuntal reading would require a consideration of both, and not a denial of each other. For that reason, instead of polarizing the exclusive perspectives, we need more multifaceted, fuller and more inclusive viewpoints, which require multipartite, overlapping, intertwined and mixed, instead of sterilized and pure categories. World history shows us that there is no “pure west” as a category, which is in fact an outcome of past cultural exchanges. In that sense, what is known as western philosophy or culture is a common heritage of human civilization. Therefore, efforts to find an alternative to it should not fall into the fallacy of reproducing new parochialisms.

From the peripheral perspective, the real issue seems not to be a deliberate exclusion of the non-west from the IR debates, but the structural problems that the periphery (or mainly the outer periphery) struggles with. Mearsheimer thinks that nobody prevents the non-western ideas or theories from being spread within the discipline. In his opinion, there is

⁴⁰ Geeta Chowdhry, “Edward Said and Contrapuntal Reading: Implications for Critical Interventions in International Relations,” *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 36, no.1 (2007): 101-111; Pinar Bilgin, “‘Contrapuntal Reading’ as a Method, an Ethos, and a Metaphor for Global IR,” *International Studies Review* 18, no 1 (2016): 134-146.

not much room for new theories, and actually there are none outside the established core.⁴¹ Mearsheimer is only partially correct in his statement. He is right that there is no substantial development outside the western dominated realm of theories. However, this does not mean that there is no potential for original ideas or perspectives to be theorized. It is instinctively obvious that there is great potential. However, the non-western periphery has to solve its own epistemological and methodological problems first, and it is not easy to overcome these deep-seated problems.

Despite all its disadvantages, the outer periphery, once its problems are solved, can make original contributions. For example, at first glance, conspiracy theorizing seems like a sort of unproductive reactionism based on bare speculation. Interestingly enough, however, as the periphery has struggled to make theoretical contributions, and is criticized for conceptual importing, the conspiracy theorists of the outer periphery have in fact produced original concepts, like “the deep state” which gained international recognition after it was coined in Turkey in the 1990s. Since it challenges the realist idea of a state as a unitary actor, the term led to the publication of several academic articles in the west.⁴² The concept was popular in Turkey especially after the Cold War, referring to the secret and unaccountable parts of the state, operating behind the scenes, which shape government policies and are involved in clandestine activities within the country. This term shows us that conceptual and theoretical contributions might come from the least expected places, but to realize that potential, the IR discipline needs to integrate in more pluralistic and productive ways. For that integration, the periphery needs to solve the problems within itself, especially in the outer periphery.

In recent years, the Turkish university system has also exacerbated the divide between the periphery and the outer periphery by classifying public universities into two main categories: research and education. The research universities are mainly periphery universities, while the education universities are all outer periphery universities. This system, from the perspective of IR, on one hand encourages dialogue, integration and cooperation between the core and the periphery through joint projects and publications, while on the other hand, further excludes the outer periphery from global debates, turning them into introverted educational institutions. This further deepens the rift between the periphery and the outer periphery, and severs the already weak ties between the latter and the global discipline.

It is not possible for the outer periphery to overcome these problems by itself. To solve them, more intimate engagement between periphery and outer periphery is needed. Only then can the periphery reveal whatever originality potential it has, avoid being assimilated into the core, make genuine contributions to the discipline and gain an equal status with the core. This is what both the periphery and outer periphery need urgently.

The search for alternative theories should be a sort of archeological excavation where previously unseen and covered facts and perspectives are revealed with the help of other disciplines. In order to interpret our findings, a common language is needed. This enterprise should neither be an exclusive one where only the west can come up with new theories, nor a reactionary one where all previous western knowledge is rejected and ignored. Perhaps then can we broaden our horizons, and puzzling developments, like the emergence of violent

⁴¹ John J. Mearsheimer, “Benign Hegemony,” *International Studies Review* 18, no. 1 (2016): 147-149.

⁴² John D. Michaels, “Trump and the ‘Deep State’,” *Foreign Affairs* 96 no 5, (September-October 2017): 52-56; Patrick H. O’Neil, *The Deep State: An Emerging Concept in Comparative Politics* (New York: Social Science Research Network (SSRN), November 2017). <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2313375>; Scott Burchill, “Is There a Deep State?” in *Misunderstanding International Relations: A Focus on Liberal Democracies* (Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 85-105.

non-state actors and fragile states as exceptions and challenges to the assumptions of an international order based on the principle of sovereignty; rising state authoritarianism; and popularized longings to revive old empires (be it Ottoman, Russian, Chinese) with resulting conflicts, might start making more sense. For this, the balance has to be kept between a homogenizing universalism of the core and the shattering discipline in which the different parts are completely losing touch with each other, as happens in the outer periphery. A degree of homogenization is needed for a common language of communication, but we also need a moderate fragmentation to allow alternative perspectives. Perhaps this would give us more tools to understand the dynamics, directions and timing of the sweeping transformations, or unsuccessful attempts at the desired changes. Compared to what we know, there is a whole world to be discovered.

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Disciplinary Boundaries and Methodological Issues of Teaching Geopolitics in Turkey

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Abstract

This study aims to present a critical portrayal of teaching geopolitics at Turkish universities by assessing both undergraduate and graduate levels of Political Science and International Relations (IR) curricula. Geopolitical analysis has gone through several phases and traditions by conceiving space as a crucial element for representing world politics. In addition to interstate rivalries, geopolitics also refers to many conflicts and rivalries within an intrastate framework in the context of multiple territorial scales. While geopolitics seems to be falsely perceived as something equal to a state-centric and hard realist academic subfield under a strong military tutelage in Turkey, it lacks a broad multi-level analysis, as well as geographical and historical reasoning. In this study, I propose to consider cartography, territoriality, and geopolitical representations, which form the basis of contemporary geopolitical analysis. The article evaluates weekly schedules, learning outcomes, content, and objectives of the courses available on the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) information packages on university websites. Based on a qualitative case study, it eventually aims to improve the methodological character of geopolitics teaching, indirectly influencing the level and quality of geopolitics in Turkey.

Keywords: Geopolitics, Political Science and International Relations (IR) Curricula, Teaching, Methodology, Turkey.

1. Introduction

Geopolitics has become a very popular, fuzzy, and even clichéd concept in some ways as we talk about the “geopolitics of taste,” “geopolitics of gastronomy,” or “geopolitics of football” in our daily lives.¹ Primarily, geopolitics is concerned with issues of influence and authority over geographical areas. It employs geographical structures to make sense of global events. Therefore, it studies the relationship between geography and politics, and it reflects geographical frames to make sense of world affairs.² As a field of study, geopolitics has no agreed “home” field as it is located somewhere between geography, IR, and other social sciences such as sociology and economy. In geopolitics, we study international politics but keep a geographical vision, and a territorial approach, which is the main difference between IR and geopolitics.

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¹ Yves Lacoste, *Géopolitique. La longue histoire d'aujourd'hui* [Geopolitics. Today's long story] (Paris: Larousse, 2009), 9.

² Klaus Dodds, *Geopolitics. A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 1.

When using the word “geopolitics,” we usually discuss IR-related issues. However, geopolitics also represents a method of context analysis based on a geographical and historical approach. In this paper, I approach geopolitics as a reliable comprehensive method of analyzing international relations. Geographical reasoning shows itself at different levels of analysis and on the intersections of multiple spatial assemblies, while historical reasoning integrates the past and the present.³ According to French geographer Yves Lacoste, geopolitics is especially concerned with the “*study of power rivalries over a territory (...); and the capacity of a power to project itself outside this territory.*”⁴ Congruently, this study aims to present a critical portrayal of teaching geopolitics at Turkish universities by assessing both undergraduate and graduate levels of Political Science and IR curricula. As a main research question, geopolitics remains, above all, a method. More specifically, the paper deals with how the teaching of geopolitics in Turkey represents an exemplary case in which geopolitics is not apprehended from a methodological point of view at all.

This paper relies on the *case study methodology*, which is one of the verification strategies in social sciences based on an empirical research strategy.⁵ The case study further promotes the use of document analysis for data collection.⁶ Even if the case study does not make it possible to generalize easily, it promotes a more in-depth analysis of a given phenomenon.⁷ It also represents one of the techniques of qualitative analysis in the social sciences.⁸ It is the most widely used data-gathering instrument and verification strategy.⁹ This study collected and classified the data of ECTS packages and online documents listed on the websites of Turkish universities. From ECTS data as objective measurement instruments, I argue that they represent a certain reliability since they have an exemplary capacity to faithfully measure a phenomenon.¹⁰ As a researcher, I consulted these documents, from which I extracted factual information or opinions that will be used to support my argument in this work.¹¹

In the following section, I first assess how and in which contexts the conceptual framework of geopolitics has developed as a distinct field of study. Then, in the third section, I analyze geopolitics as a critical method in terms of representations, spatial levels of analysis, and cartography. In the final section, I depict the current situation of geopolitics teaching in Turkey by evaluating the courses available on the ECTS information packages on Turkish university websites. In this context, the article examines the qualitative ECTS data (course name, purpose and content, and 14-week program information, if any) including the courses related to geopolitics in many “Political Science and IR/IR” departments in Turkey.

2. Geopolitics as a disciplinary framework: Main elements and distinctions

As a mainstream approach, geopolitics is concerned with how geographical factors such as territories, people, location, and natural resources influence political outcomes. As Colin

³ Barbara Loyer, *Géopolitique. Méthodes et Concepts* [Geopolitics. Methods and Concepts] (Paris: Armand Colin, 2019), 19.

⁴ Lacoste, *Géopolitique* [Geopolitics], 9.

⁵ Jarol B. Manheim and Richard C. Rich, *Empirical Political Analysis, Research Methods in Political Science*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981).

⁶ Gordon Mace and François Petry, “Cinquième étape. Choisir la stratégie de vérification [Fifth step. Choose the verification strategy],” in *Guide d'élaboration d'un projet de recherche* [Guide to developing a research project] (Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 2000), 80.

⁷ Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, (Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1989).

⁸ Jean-Pierre Deslauriers, *Recherche qualitative. Guide pratique* [Qualitative research. Practical Guide] (Montréal: McGraw-Hill, 1991), 59-78.

⁹ Mace and Petry, *Guide d'élaboration*, [Guide to developing], 90.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 94.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 90-91.

Gray outlines, one can refer to the central idea of *inescapable geography*.¹² Geography seems to be *out there*, physically, as environment or terrain. Geopolitics refers to the study of power over space and territory relationships in the past, present, and future. Besides that, it studies the relationship among politics, geography, demography, and economics. A realist and mainstream understanding of geopolitics reflects a study of geopolitics with a different perspective that is concerned with how geographical factors, such as territory, population, strategic location, and natural resource endowments, as modified by economics and technology, affect state relations and the struggle for global dominance. As a result, geopolitics as a profession only demonstrates the state's ability to control space and territory, as well as the importance of individual states' foreign policies and international political ties.

However, contemporary power analysis can no longer be limited to inter-state relations. A conceptual analysis casts doubt on the one-dimensional approach of geopolitics, which offers only a narrow articulation of power analysis solely at the international level.¹³ An interdisciplinary framework that focuses on IR, geography, and history, and that represents a comprehensive and rather inclusive interpretation of geopolitics seems to be an alternative to the above-mentioned classical vision of geopolitics focused on realist/neorealist accounts of IR.¹⁴ If geography seems to be *out there*, it is also *within us*, as an imagined spatial relationship for critical geographers such as Yves Lacoste gathered in the French Institute of Geopolitics (Paris VIII University) and *Hérodote* Review, founded in 1976. This intellectual stance on geopolitics was mainly developed in France, where geopolitical reasoning was considered something equal to Nazi expansionism, totalitarianism, and political extremism after the Second World War.¹⁵ If geopolitics was perceived by many as a Hitlerian concept,¹⁶ its successful re-appearance seems to be parallel with the development of democratic regimes, the idea of self-determination for peoples, and the influence of modern media.¹⁷

The idea of the French school of geopolitics emerges from the necessity to defend a new conception of geopolitics and distinguish it from geography.¹⁸ While geopolitics consists of all aspects of political life, both internal and external, it also deals with all of the power rivalries in the territories.¹⁹ Also, geography represents a unique and major tool to analyze these rivalries. So, everything is geopolitical in the sense that the term "geopolitics" gains quite a different and even radical meaning for Lacoste.²⁰ As political analysis should be found on geographical reasoning, geopolitics represents the "spatial analysis of political phenomena,"²¹ and there are rivalries not only between states, but also between political movements or secret armed groups.²² Regarding the control and domination of large or small areas, Lacoste and his colleagues were among the first to realize that geopolitics is above all

¹² See Colin S. Gray, "Inescapable geography." *The Journal of Strategic Studies* 22: 2-3 (1999): 161-177.

¹³ See further information: Saul B. Cohen, *Geopolitics, The Geography of International Relations* (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003); Colin Flint, *Introduction to Geopolitics* (London: Routledge, 2006).

¹⁴ Øyvind Østerud, "The Uses and Abuses of Geopolitics." *Journal of Peace Research* 25 2 (1988): 191-199.

¹⁵ See further information: Paul Claval, "Hérodote and the French Left," in *Geopolitical Traditions. A century of geopolitical thought*, ed. Klaus Dodds and David Atkinson (New York: Routledge, 2000), 239; Klaus Dodds and David Atkinson, preface to *Geopolitical Traditions. A century of geopolitical thought*, ed. Klaus Dodds and David Atkinson (New York: Routledge, 2000), xiv.

¹⁶ Yves Lacoste, *Dictionnaire de Géopolitique* [Dictionary of Geopolitics] (Paris: Flammarion, 1993), 7.

¹⁷ Claval, "Hérodote and," 242.

¹⁸ Yves Lacoste, *La géographie, ça sert, d'abord, à faire la guerre* [Geography is used, first of all, to wage war] (Paris: La Découverte, 2012 [1976]), 46.

¹⁹ See Béatrice Giblin, "La géopolitique: un raisonnement géographique d'avant-garde," [Geopolitics: avant-garde geographical reasoning] *Hérodote* 146-147 (2012): 3-13.

²⁰ V. D. Mamadouh, "Geopolitics in the nineties: one flag, many meanings." *GeoJournal* 46 4 (1998): 239.

²¹ Østerud, "The Uses and," 197.

²² Lacoste, *Géopolitique. La longue histoire* [Geopolitics. Today's long], 8.

a political and strategic kind of knowledge.²³

Accordingly, one can especially highlight the complexity of geopolitical cases. This represents a situation depending on the diversity of our complex representation of a geopolitical phenomenon.²⁴ It would be crucial to analyze multiple spatial linguistic, political, religious, and demographic ensembles together with their subjective characteristics. Hence, to better understand geopolitical complexity, one must accept that we live in a subjective environment and that the majority of the geopolitical conflicts are internal; that is, within states, rather than *out there* in interstate relations.²⁵ The contemporary idea of “Internal Geopolitics” formulated by Béatrice Giblin is closely linked to the methodology of “geopolitical representations,” and it can be perceived as a tool to understand interactions and perceptions between social actors at both internal and external levels of analysis.²⁶

The concept of “Internal Geopolitics” developed in this respect has redefined the boundaries of geopolitical conflicts and power rivalries in the context of subnational and local perspectives.²⁷ Here, one may investigate multiple links between geopolitics and democracy.²⁸ It was at the end of the USSR (1991) that the use of the word “geopolitics” began to spread. Where there is a decline in authoritarianism, multiple situations can be more and more subject to geopolitical analysis. Democracy is a term that covers contradictory representations based on a given territory.²⁹ For this, democracy reflects an ideal, and it is, therefore, a geopolitical representation and an *idea*. It would be crucial to understand why some people, groups, and parties impose their ideas in some places and times while others are discarded.³⁰

In addition, the term “geopolitics” has resurfaced to designate “antagonisms less ideological than territorial” over time.³¹ At this point, Lacoste points out: “*The term geopolitics came out of the shadows at the time of the Vietnam-Cambodia war in 1979. This conflict stunned public opinion which does not understand how two ‘communist brothers’, united against American imperialism, could go to war only for one territory.*”³² Therefore, the war started between these two communist neighbors due to the desire of each of the two countries to control part of the Mekong Delta. In other words, the scope of geopolitical issues, shadowed by the ideological conflicts between the two blocs during the Cold War, expanded in terms of both the subject and the actors with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the Iron Curtain and the disintegration of the Soviet Union.³³

Lacoste began to emphasize that politics and geography affect each other mutually.³⁴ From this, we can think about the relationship between geopolitics and geostrategy, which seem to be used *interchangeably*. The strategy uses battles by determining the location and the most appropriate time to affect the result. Put in a mainstream fashion, geostrategy is to

²³ Dodds, *Geopolitics. A Very*, 48.

²⁴ Lacoste, *Géopolitique. La longue histoire* [Geopolitics. Today’s long], 3.

²⁵ Béatrice Giblin, “Géopolitique interne et analyse électorale,” [Internal geopolitics and electoral analysis] *Hérodote* 146-147 (2012): 71-89.

²⁶ Lacoste, *Dictionnaire de Géopolitique* [Dictionary of Geopolitics], 3.

²⁷ See Philippe Subra, “La géopolitique, une ou plurielle? Place, enjeux et outils d’une géopolitique locale,” [Geopolitics, one or plural? Place, issues and tools of local geopolitics] *Hérodote* 146-147 (2012): 45-70.

²⁸ Béatrice Giblin, “Editorial,” *Hérodote* 3 130 (2008): 13.

²⁹ Lacoste, *Dictionnaire de Géopolitique* [Dictionary of Geopolitics], 23.

³⁰ Loyer, *Géopolitique. Méthodes* [Geopolitics. Methods].

³¹ Lacoste, *La géographie, ça sert*. [Geography is used].

³² *Ibid.*, 43-44.

³³ Pascal Boniface, *La Géopolitique* [Geopolitics] (Paris: Eyrolles, 2017), 31.

³⁴ Frédéric Encel, *Comprendre la géopolitique* [Understanding geopolitics] (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 2011), 62-63.

create a strategy based on geographical data.³⁵ Both physical and human geography have an impact on the political realm; so, we may conceive political geography as the combination of these two “primary geographies.” At the same time, one should be aware of *geographical determinism*: the geographical environment has an impact on geopolitics and cartography because geography presents threats together with opportunities to countries. To be clear, when making foreign policy and security decisions, geographical criteria should not be the *only* consideration.

Before we go on to analyze geopolitics as a “method” in the following section, it will be necessary here to briefly focus on the distinctions between political geography, geopolitics, and geostrategy. These concepts are often defined in contradictory ways. We can think about how we consider “space” to establish an operational distinction between these concepts. Space can be successively considered as a *framework*, *issue*, or *theater*. Space, nevertheless, seems to be a good avenue for reflection to determine the specificity and the links existing between these disciplines.³⁶ Here, one can identify the contours existing between *geopolitics* (1), *political geography* (2), and *strategy* (3) by depending on physical factors.

For Lacoste, political geography is only a simple step in the formulation of geopolitics.³⁷ While the former focuses on geographical events and provides political explanations for them, the latter focuses on political events, provides them with a geographical explanation, and examines the geographical aspects of these events.³⁸ Political geography considers space as a *framework*; geopolitics considers space as an *issue*; and geostrategy considers space as a *theater*.³⁹ First, space as a framework designates that political geography is based on the description of the global political framework. This framework or setting has been formed with territories, lines, and poles. The most classic political territories are the states. The other political territories are of three types: sub-state territories, formed by regions or other types of administrative entities; supra-state territories, made up of meetings of states in international governmental organizations (IGOs) with a global or regional vocation; and finally, transnational territories. This final category can include linguistic and religious territories, and homogeneous territories in terms of the level of development.⁴⁰ The political poles *par excellence* are the capitals (state or regional), the decision-making centers such as permanent headquarters of IGOs, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), or companies that organize and manage space. However, the study of territories, lines, and political poles is not an *end* in itself. Rather, we can say that it constitutes a first step in bringing together the geographical elements necessary for geopolitical analysis.

Secondly, considering space as an issue, the dynamic approach to political territories is the primary element of any geopolitical investigation. However, it must also include, as implied by the notion of stake, the existence of identifiable actors, each developing territorial representations and strategies. If political geography describes the political framework at a given point in time, geopolitics is first concerned with describing the spatial evolution of this framework. Indeed, geopolitics is a part of political geography. It represents an

³⁵ Gray, “Inescapable geography”.

³⁶ Stéphane Rosière, “Géographie politique, géopolitique et géostratégie: distinctions opératoires,” [Political geography, geopolitics and geostrategy: operational distinctions] *L'information géographique* 65 1 (2001): 35.

³⁷ Lacoste, *La géographie, ça sert*. [Geography is used].

³⁸ Ladis K. D. Kristof, “The Nature of Frontiers and Boundaries,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 49 3 (1959): 269-282.

³⁹ Rosière, “Géographie politique,” [Political geography], 36.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 37.

eminently psychological part in its broader sense, especially about the particular question of the reciprocal images that political units maintain with each other.⁴¹ The main reason why the actors must be put in the center is to think of power not only as an instrument of domination, but also as a complex phenomenon made of rivalries and supervision of the population.⁴² Hence, actors who fight and clash for domination or control of the territory play key geopolitical roles.⁴³ Among these actors, the most classical one is undoubtedly the state (which can therefore be considered both an object of political geography and a subject of geopolitics), but we should also consider the “peoples” (a general concept bringing together all forms of organized and differentiated human groups, from the tribe to the nation), as well as the “political, economic and military structures.”

On this basis, each actor develops its territorial representations. This is a conception of space and its political framework. Territorial representation can be akin to land claims. Each actor in a hierarchy of territories can distinguish a central, fundamental space and less important peripheries. To achieve its objectives, an actor deploys a strategy. The notion of strategy is understood here as the means to achieve its ends and not as a specific military development. The notion of strategy has long been developed almost exclusively in the military sphere.⁴⁴ Any actor in a geopolitical situation develops a strategy; this can be not only a civil or political strategy, but also an economic and/or military one.⁴⁵

Finally comes the idea of space as a theater, which is the place of confrontation between the armed forces.⁴⁶ Strategists use the term “theater of operations” to more precisely signify the space where military confrontation takes place; the place where a tactic is implemented. The military distinguishes between strategy, which considers military problems on a local, regional, or global scale, and tactics, which envisage them on a large scale (tactics being the local application of a strategy). Thus, as Rosière states, space considered as a theater should therefore be the object of “Geotactics.”⁴⁷ Geostrategy could also be defined as the study of the geographical parameters of the strategy, emphasizing the spatial dimension. Furthermore, geostrategy is, like geopolitics, a dynamic description in which one can highlight territories, lines, and strategic poles. Strategy cannot be limited to the military domain, but it also integrates economics or politics into the analysis.⁴⁸

3. Geopolitics as a *method*: Representations, maps, and spatial levels of analysis

While geopolitics seems to be a concept that naturally intertwines with IR, it also appears as a broad method based on a historical and geographical approach. In this respect, geopolitics aims to examine contemporary power conflicts and rivalries over regions.⁴⁹ Specifically, it can be conceived as a method that contributes to the discipline of IR within the scope of foreign policy studies and regional studies. Most importantly, it refers to geographical knowledge, which itself is a method indeed. This method is a geographical know-how that

⁴¹ Thierry de Montbrial, *Géographie politique* [Political geography] (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2006), 20.

⁴² Lacoste, *Dictionnaire de Géopolitique* [Dictionary of Geopolitics], 2.

⁴³ Rosière, “Géographie politique,” [Political geography], 37-38.

⁴⁴ Montbrial de, *Géographie politique* [Political geography], 21.

⁴⁵ Rosière, “Géographie politique,” [Political geography], 39-40.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 40.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ Alix Desforges, Barbara Loyer, Jérémie Rocques, Joséphine Boucher, Julie Mathelin and Pierre Verluise. “Existe-t-il une méthode géopolitique?” [Is there a geopolitical method?] *Diploweb.com: la revue géopolitique* (2019, 19 October), accessed March 30, 2022.

aims to know how to think and represent spatial configurations. Hence, geopolitics reflects a test method of reality, based on a geographical and historical approach to understanding how power, peace, prosperity, and freedom, are exerted in concrete territories in precise temporal conjunctures.⁵⁰ If geopolitics is knowledge derived from geography, this reasoning is based first on a spatialized approach to phenomena.⁵¹

Geopolitics remains a method of analysis capable of considering the complexity based on multidisciplinary analyses in several scales, spaces, and times.⁵² The geopolitical method depends on the combination of an ensemble of political, economic, geographical, demographic, ethnological, or sociological factors. Accordingly, geopolitical situations are different from one issue to another, from one case study to another. Elsewhere, geopolitics presents a broad field of study ranging from local and national to regional and international scales.⁵³ In addition to the interstate rivalries, geopolitics also indicates some issues that take place within an intrastate framework. Thus, the aim of geopolitics is the conflicts and rivalries of contemporary power enrolled in territories.

Representation as the primary conceptual and methodological tool in geopolitical thinking stands at the center of any geopolitical analysis trying to answer the following question: *who speaks?* According to Lacoste, geographical representations have a huge impact on the analysis of rivalries for territory.⁵⁴ As each player in the territory has a more or less subjective meaning of the territory for itself, any geopolitical analysis should decrypt both geographical and historical reasoning. Therefore, as stated by Giblin, there is no geopolitics without geography, which is a motto for *Lacostian geopolitics*.⁵⁵ In this sense, the geopolitical is grounded in the geographical.⁵⁶ At this point, Lacoste defines representation as “*the set of ideas and collective perceptions of a political, religious or other nature which animate social groups, and which structure their vision of the World.*”⁵⁷ The geopolitical method is based on the idea that the contradictory representations are systematically described, and that the rationality and logic of the different actors are explained. On this ground, geopolitics is interested in the causes of conflict and power rivalries based on the territories.⁵⁸

Moreover, the representational perspective of geopolitics aims to understand spatial ensembles formed by diverse social and historical categories, from which symbols and slogans of a given political project follow, such as icons, maps, and “major goals.”⁵⁹ From this perspective, geopolitics indicates a global method of analysis for concrete social and political situations covering local, national, and international levels, along with political discourses and their cartographical representations. Additionally, Michel Foucher states that geopolitics is “*a comprehensive method of analyzing geographically concrete socio-political situations viewed in terms of their location and the usual representations which describe them.*”⁶⁰ According to Lacoste, who comprehends geopolitics as a method above all in the

⁵⁰ Loyer, *Géopolitique. Méthodes* [Geopolitics. Methods].

⁵¹ Giblin, “La géopolitique: un raisonnement géographique,” [Geopolitics: avant-garde geographical reasoning].

⁵² Loyer, *Géopolitique. Méthodes* [Geopolitics. Methods], 29.

⁵³ Lacoste, *Géopolitique. La longue histoire* [Geopolitics. Today's long], 26.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Giblin, “Editorial,” 4.

⁵⁶ Claval, “Hérodote and,” 249.

⁵⁷ Lacoste, *Dictionnaire de Géopolitique* [Dictionary of Geopolitics], 3.

⁵⁸ Loyer, *Géopolitique. Méthodes* [Geopolitics. Methods].

⁵⁹ Giblin, “La géopolitique: un raisonnement géographique,” [Geopolitics: avant-garde geographical reasoning].

⁶⁰ Michel Foucher, *Fronts et frontières. Un tour du monde géopolitique* [Fronts and borders. A geopolitical world tour] (Paris: Fayard, 1991).

context of different levels of geographical analysis (cities, regions, or nations), it is a concept that examines the competition for power and exerts influence at both the regional and social level within the framework of the control of large or small territories.⁶¹

In this direction, geopolitics, which can be conceived as a kind of methodology that studies power rivalries in different parts of the world, also represents an approach that goes beyond the states.⁶² Contrary to the widely conceived one-dimensional and deductive version of geopolitics (especially related to realist/neorealist accounts of IR), representational geopolitics involves a rather broad study of power rivalries on territories that may contain an interstate conflict for sovereignty by diverse actors or a geographical influence in a given zone, or even internal and regional situations within a state.⁶³ The concept of representation is a collective perception based on a geographical-historical identity that occurs as a result of long periods (usually centuries) and in a specific region, and it is all about the ideas that shape different social groups and their visions of the world.⁶⁴ This representational approach is not only a reference for social construction over the diverse identities in a given geography (i.e., a city, a province, a state, or a region or union), but also an analytical tool to understand interactions and perceptions between social actors composed of states, political parties, armies or rebel armed forces, diverse social groups, individuals, researchers, and so on. Similarly, the French school of geopolitics differentiates itself from post-structuralist and critical geopolitics mainly based on discourse analysis, deconstruction of discourses, and critical investigation of the meaning of space and politics influenced by French philosophers Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault.⁶⁵

Representational geopolitics designates a way of seeing, conceiving, and judging events as a whole, positioning oneself in terms of geopolitical postures and helping to make decisions. All these actions have, therefore, a foundation that interests ideological and religious expressions while going beyond them to be inspired by the collective imaginations that are the essence of the notion of representation in this geopolitical setting. Hence, the representational approach is “*a selective combination of images used in diverse categories of social and historical area*,” as asserted by Foucher.⁶⁶ Therefore, geopolitical actors and social imaginations are inseparable; a geopolitical representation does not only mean territorial issues and objects of rivalry, but also collective cognitive perceptions and imaginations over territories.⁶⁷ Representations emerge over time and may encompass cultural, historical, ethnic, and geographical attributes among the actors concerning these territorial issues. The study of the actors, the understanding of power relations in societies or institutions, is at the heart of geopolitical reasoning, and the description of the actors’ strategies is to be placed in their geopolitical contexts.⁶⁸

From this point of view, one may also ask the following questions: *Are borders important in the context of globalization? Is there a world beyond borders? Or can there be a sort of*

⁶¹ Yves Lacoste, *Géopolitique de la Méditerranée* [Geopolitics of the Mediterranean] (Paris: Armand Colin, 2009), 5.

⁶² Lacoste, *Géopolitique. La longue histoire* [Geopolitics. Today’s long], 25.

⁶³ Barbara Loyer, “Retour sur les publications de l’équipe d’Hérodote et l’analyse des problèmes géopolitiques en France, une ambition citoyenne,” [Return to the publications of Hérodote’s team and the analysis of geopolitical problems in France, a civic ambition] *Hérodote* 4 135 (2009): 198-204.

⁶⁴ Encel, *Comprendre la géopolitique* [Understanding geopolitics], 65-66.

⁶⁵ See further information: Mamadouh, “Geopolitics in the nineties”; Alexander B. Murphy et al, “Is there a politics to geopolitics?” *Progress in Human Geography* 28 5 (2004): 619-640.

⁶⁶ Foucher, *Fronts et frontières*, [Fronts and borders], 4.

⁶⁷ Lacoste, *Dictionnaire de Géopolitique* [Dictionary of Geopolitics], 4.

⁶⁸ Giblin, “La géopolitique: un raisonnement géographique,” [Geopolitics: avant-garde geographical reasoning].

“return of borders”⁶⁹ It would be crucial to be aware of a world without borders developed by the discourse on globalization. The “obsession with borders” becomes even more evident and important.⁷⁰ For French geopoliticians such as Pascal Boniface and Yves Lacoste, borders never actually disappeared.⁷¹ At this point, Alexandre Defay asks whether borders necessarily have to be *material*.⁷² Boundaries can also be intellectual. Or do they not matter in geopolitics? With this in mind, there is room for the analysis of *intangible borders*. As Foucher outlines, borders form the front’s most extreme and thinnest line.

A map is a *means* and an *area*. The idea of the map is also based on a representation. It is also an idea, and there is a ruling thought behind it.⁷³ Mapping, or cartography, remains a tool for marking a territory or all the representations of this territory. Essentially, mapping remains very subjective.⁷⁴ Each country has its map that shows an “objective truth.” The maps of France or Germany seem to have existed for “centuries,” and they look like the *truth*. At this level, one can note a certain fluctuation between objectivity and subjectivity. For this reason, maps are not at all neutral.⁷⁵ They are only a picture of reality and not an objective truth, so they are largely subjective. Maps are not frozen things; instead, they are dynamic. Therefore, they impact political decisions and leaders’ choices.⁷⁶ In this context, maps are rich and valuable elements in the geopolitical imagination. On a map, it is possible to guess and understand the choices of the mapmaker: *What is he/she talking about? What is at stake with this map?*

Power rivalries in territories affect not only the territory itself, but also the populations living there. Lacoste puts forth that these rivalries can be explained not only by the stake represented by this territory, but also by the representations of the protagonists.⁷⁷ Therefore, territories do have double meanings. First, they refer to physical space with relief, climate, cities, and countries. But territories also represent mentally-constructed spaces.⁷⁸ In this sense, there is neither *geopolitical law*, nor *geopolitical theorization*. Instead, geopolitical case studies or monographs are much more valuable to grasp a specific geopolitical situation. In short, geopolitics, whatever the pretext, is not a tool in the service of colonialism, imperialism, or expansionism. On the contrary, it is knowledge and, more importantly, a method. A geopolitical study seeks to establish how many distinct perspectives exist rather than what the *true position* is. Therefore, a representation is not only a reflection on a territory or a phenomenon that takes place there, but also the result of a certain reasoning that associates the elements of the *real* to build what appears as a *truth* to be defended. This is how Lacoste apprehends geopolitics, as “*a way of thinking about terrestrial space and the struggles that take place there.*”⁷⁹ In other words, geopolitics is not a *scientific theory*, nor a *theoretical approach*, but it denotes, above all, a set of concepts related to methodology.⁸⁰

As geographical reasoning with different spatial levels of analysis (intersection of multiple

⁶⁹ Michel Foucher, *Le Retour des Frontières* [The Return of Borders] (Paris: CNRS Editions, 2020).

⁷⁰ Michel Foucher, *L’Obsession des frontières* [Obsession with borders] (Paris: Perrin, 2012).

⁷¹ Boniface, *La Géopolitique* [Geopolitics]; Lacoste, *Géopolitique. La longue histoire* [Geopolitics. Today’s long].

⁷² Alexandre Defay, *Jeopolitik* [Geopolitics] (Ankara: Dost Yayinevi, 2005), 50.

⁷³ Foucher, *Fronts et frontières* [Fronts and borders].

⁷⁴ Defay, *Jeopolitik* [Geopolitics].

⁷⁵ Lacoste, *Géopolitique. La longue histoire* [Geopolitics. Today’s long].

⁷⁶ Giblin, “La géopolitique: un raisonnement géographique,” [Geopolitics: avant-garde geographical reasoning].

⁷⁷ Lacoste, *Dictionnaire de Géopolitique* [Dictionary of Geopolitics], 25-26.

⁷⁸ Loyer, *Géopolitique. Méthodes* [Geopolitics. Methods], 45.

⁷⁹ Lacoste, *Géopolitique. La longue histoire* [Geopolitics. Today’s long], 8.

⁸⁰ Estelle Menard, Léa Gobin and Selma Mihoubi, “Entretien avec Yves Lacoste: Qu’est-ce que la géopolitique?” [Interview with Yves Lacoste: What is geopolitics?] *Diploweb.com: la revue géopolitique*, (2018, October 4), accessed March 20, 2022.

ensembles of space) is needed for a comprehensive geopolitical framework, historical reasoning is also crucial in that analysts should integrate different periods (both past and present) affecting geopolitical representations of different protagonists in a given territory.⁸¹ In addition, Foucher indicates that geopolitics refers to schools of thought, discourses, and constructions generally accompanied by cartographical images.⁸² Time and space association will then be fundamental, because as Giblin suggests, historical reasoning is central to the geopolitical research agenda.⁸³ Besides, geopolitical reasoning has several spatial levels of analysis depending on the geographical framework. Much attention is paid to the precise intersections of spatial sets, whether physical or human, as well as changes in levels of analysis, to understand how a local situation is also influenced by phenomena perceptible at broader levels of analysis: regional, national, international, and, in some cases, global.

4. To teach *or not* to teach geopolitics? Findings from Turkey

In this final section, I present a comprehensive portrayal of teaching geopolitics in Turkish universities by assessing Political Science and IR curricula at both undergraduate and graduate levels. For this, I analyzed the available qualitative ECTS data (course name, objective and content, sources, and if any, 14-week detailed program information in the Bologna Information System), including the courses related to geopolitics in the “Political Science and IR/IR” departments in Turkey. Regarding the teaching of geopolitics in Turkey, ECTS contents were analyzed qualitatively as a practical tool in this study as part of the classification and processing of data.⁸⁴ From this point, the qualitative analysis represented a structured exercise in logically relating categories of data. ECTS stands as the only relevant source to study the current situation on teaching of geopolitics in Turkey, though the course names related to geopolitics only represent a *clue* as to the approach taken in the courses. It should also be noted here that the ECTS information packages of many universities are still not up-to-date, and there are recurrent problems with accessing updated course catalogs, which constitutes the main limitation of this research at this level.

We can state that “Geopolitics”/“Political Geography” courses are offered at various levels in more than 120 undergraduate and graduate programs entitled “Political Science and IR” and/or “IR” at the 80 universities in Turkey. Overall, “Political Science and IR” and IR departments in 52 universities deal with the conceptual and theoretical aspects of geopolitics. Table 1 below shows the courses that can be grouped into this first type. Courses given in Turkish are presented with their English equivalents in parentheses, and also with “/” for some courses taught both in Turkish and English. Here, it should be underlined that there are multiple ways to refer to the concept of geopolitics in Turkish, as can be noticed in the variety of course names such as “Jeopolitike/Jeopolitiğe giriş” (Introduction to Geopolitics), “Uluslararası Politikada Jeopolitika” (Geopolitics in International Politics) or “Jeopolitika Esasları” (Fundamentals of Geopolitics). The widely inconsistent use of both “Jeopolitik” and “Jeopolitika” in Turkish, illustrates the *linguistic cacophony* of Turkish terminology regarding the field.

⁸¹ Lacoste, *Géopolitique. La longue histoire* [Geopolitics. Today's long].

⁸² Foucher, *Fronts et frontières* [Fronts and borders].

⁸³ Giblin, “La géopolitique: un raisonnement géographique,” [Geopolitics: avant-garde geographical reasoning].

⁸⁴ Jean-Louis Loubet Del Bayle, *Introduction aux méthodes en sciences sociales* [Introduction to social science methods] (Toulouse: Privat, 1986), 124-157; Manheim and Rich, *Empirical Political Analysis*, 245-270.

Table 1 – Geopolitics courses taught from a conceptual approach

University	Course Name	Degree
Işık	“Jeopolitik ve Jeostratinin Dinamikleri” [Geopolitics and Dynamics of Geostrategy]	Undergraduate
Süleyman Demirel	“Jeopolitik” [Geopolitics] “Jeopolitik ve Strateji” [Geopolitics and Geostrategy] “Kimlik, İletişim ve Jeopolitik” [Identity, Communication and Geopolitics]	Undergraduate Master Doctorate
Tekirdağ Namık Kemal	“Siyasi Coğrafya [Jeopolitik]” [Political Geography-Geopolitics] “Jeopolitik” [Geopolitics]	Undergraduate Graduate
Trakya	“Çağdaş Jeopolitika” [Contemporary Geopolitics]	Undergraduate
Mersin	“Jeopolitik” [Geopolitics]	Undergraduate
Nevşehir Hacı Bektaş Veli	“Jeopolitika”/ “Geopolitics”	Undergraduate
Osmaniye Korkut Ata	“Jeopolitik” [Geopolitics]	Undergraduate
Recep Tayyip Erdoğan	“Political Geography”	Undergraduate
Sakarya	“Political Geography”	Undergraduate
Kastamonu	“Jeopolitik-Jeostrateji” [Geopolitics-Geostrategy]	Undergraduate
Kırıkkale	“Jeopolitik” [Geopolitics]	Undergraduate
Kırklareli	“Jeopolitik” [Geopolitics]	Undergraduate
İstanbul Medeniyet	“Jeopolitik ve Uluslararası Siyaset”/ “Geopolitics and International Politics”	Undergraduate
İstanbul (İktisat fak.)	“Jeopolitik teoriler ve analizi” [Geopolitical Theories and their analysis] “Eleştirel jeopolitik” [Critical Geopolitics]	Master Doctorate
Marmara (SBF)	“Jeopolitik” [Geopolitics]	Doctorate
Muğla Sıtkı Koçman	“Jeopolitik teoriler ve analizi” [Geopolitical Theories and their analysis]	Master
Başkent	“Jeopolitik ve Strateji” [Geopolitics and Strategy]	Master
İstanbul Gelişim	“Jeopolitik Yaklaşımlar”/“Geopolitical Approaches”	Undergraduate
İstanbul Sabahattin Zaim	“Jeopolitik” [Geopolitics]	Undergraduate and Master
Üsküdar	“Küresel Siyasette Jeopolitik yaklaşımlar” [Geopolitical approaches in Global Politics]	Master
Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli	“Jeopolitik” [Geopolitics]	Undergraduate
Gümüşhane	“Jeopolitik” [Geopolitics]	Undergraduate
Kahramanmaraş Sütçü İmam	“Siyasi Coğrafya” [Political Geography]	Master
Boğaziçi	Political Geography	Undergraduate
Hakkari	“Siyasi Coğrafya” [Political Geography]	Undergraduate
Yeditepe	“Géopolitique du monde contemporain” [Geopolitics on the contemporary world] “Géopolitique” [Geopolitics]	Undergraduate Master
Atılım	“Jeopolitik” [Geopolitics]	Undergraduate
Yalova	“Geopolitics”/“Jeopolitik”	Undergraduate
Karabük	“Siyasi Coğrafya ve Jeopolitik” [Political Geography and Geopolitics]; “Political Geography and Geopolitics”	Undergraduate
Çukurova	“Jeopolitika” [Geopolitics]	Undergraduate
Antalya Bilim	“Jeopolitik” [Geopolitics]	Undergraduate
Çankaya	“Jeopolitik” [Geopolitics]	Undergraduate
Kafkas	“Uluslararası İlişkilerde Jeopolitik” [Geopolitics in International Relations]	Undergraduate
Bolu Abant İzzet Baysal	“Geopolitical Theories”	Undergraduate
Erciyes	“Jeopolitika” [Geopolitics] “Siyasal Coğrafya” [Political Geography]	Undergraduate Undergraduate and Master

Eskişehir Osmangazi	“Geopolitics”	Undergraduate
Altınbaş	“Siyasi Coğrafya” [Political Geography]	Undergraduate
Avrasya	“Jeopolitik” [Geopolitics]	Undergraduate
Çağ	“Klasik ve Modern Jeopolitik Kuramlar” [Classical and Modern Geopolitical Theories]	Master
İstanbul Gedik	“Political Geography”	Master
İstanbul	“Siyasal Coğrafya” [Political Geography]	Undergraduate
Batman	“Jeopolitiğe giriş” [Introduction to Geopolitics]	Undergraduate
İstanbul Rumeli	“Jeopolitik ve Jeostrateji” [Geopolitics and Geostrategy]	Undergraduate
Özyeğin	“Political Geography”	Undergraduate
Bitlis Eren	“Jeopolitika Esasları” [Fundamentals of Geopolitics]	Undergraduate
İstinye	Introduction to Geopolitics	Undergraduate
TOBB	“Jeopolitik Düşüncenin Evrimi” [Evolution of the Geopolitical Thought]	Master
Akdeniz	“Jeopolitik” [Geopolitics]	Master
İnönü	“Jeopolitik ve Güvenlik” [Geopolitics and Security]	Undergraduate
Ibn Haldun	“Grand Strategy and Geopolitics”	Undergraduate
Çankırı Karatekin	“Uluslararası Politikada Jeopolitika” [Geopolitics in International Politics]	Undergraduate
İstanbul Bilgi	“Siyasi Coğrafya” [Political Geography]	Undergraduate

Considering the ECTS contents of most of these conceptual courses, it can be said that they do not reflect a contemporary and pluralistic understanding of geopolitics based on the analysis of representations in the previous section. Most of the above-mentioned courses lack a broad multi-level analysis consisting of geographical and historical reasoning. What geopolitics means methodologically in these conceptual courses is a matter that is completely denied. For this reason, the lack of methodological background for the majority of the courses causes conceptual confusion. In this framework, the content of a given geopolitics course based on a geographical and historical method is often replaced with course content shaped by “geopolitical theories.” At this point, the title of “theory” in some geopolitics courses is notable. Although not in the title, most of the conceptual courses on geopolitics in Turkey have a large share of “geopolitical theories” in the 14-week course plan. The main reason for this can be expressed as the confusion between method and theory in IR education in Turkey.

Another key reason why the teaching of geopolitics does not generally include a methodological perspective is that the courses cannot go beyond the *state-centered* dimension mainly characterized by national/international power analysis or foreign policy issues. For instance, geopolitics as a concept descriptively points to many perceptions in the context of sovereignty, border, homeland, security, and national/international strategy. In geopolitics courses taught from a conceptual approach, geopolitics is represented rather as a “sub-branch of international politics,” and is widely discussed in this respect. In this framework, some of the courses resemble “diplomatic history” or “history of IR” courses more in terms of content. The main reason for this is that the *state-centered* perspective dominates the teaching process and does not enable a methodological examination of geopolitics based on various levels of analysis.

From a conceptual point of view, when the syllabi of these 63 courses are classified, it can be stated that there is *conceptual confusion* in the field of IR, where the concepts of geopolitics and political geography are used in an interchangeable way in Turkey. There are such amalgamated relations between security and strategy studies, foreign policy, and

geopolitical approaches in the Turkish IR domain. Furthermore, the main disciplinary boundaries between geopolitics, political geography, and security studies seem to be largely blurred in the context of geopolitics teaching in Turkey. The majority of these “conceptual” courses mostly reflect the one-dimensional and deductive version of geopolitics based on *international* power analysis, neglecting the other spatial levels of analysis in geopolitics.

Accordingly, while regional/international security themes may be dominant in some of these conceptual courses, geopolitics is treated as an equivalent field to security, foreign policy, and strategy. The reason for this is that, with the effect of the realist/neorealist perspective that dominates the IR field, Turkey’s geopolitical situation and geographical location affect the courses and almost narrow the field of study of geopolitics. Contrary to these problematic tendencies in conceptual courses dominated by “geopolitical theories” and/or security and foreign policy-based understandings, geopolitics is handled as a *method* at only 6 universities, including courses with mostly methodological elements. These courses are offered at Özyeğin, Çukurova, Yeditepe, İstanbul Gelişim, Başkent, and Sakarya universities.

Another important point that should be emphasized here is that the map and cartography methods, which are important in geopolitical studies, are explained to the students in very few of the courses listed above. The concepts such as “representation,” “methodology,” “map/mapping,” or “cartography” do not generally appear throughout the long list of geopolitics courses offered in Turkey. Representations, maps, and spatial levels of analysis do not generally constitute relevant methodological references in the teaching of geopolitics in Turkey. Though so many courses appear to be conceptual or even theoretical, they seem to lack a broad methodological background. This explains the growing importance of the representational perspective of geopolitics for Turkish IR. For instance, it should be noted that except for a few examples such as Yeditepe University (“Cartography for Social Sciences I-II”), cartography methods in the social sciences, and thus Political Science and IR, are not covered in geopolitics teaching at both undergraduate and graduate levels.

On the other hand, it can be seen that some of the courses related to geopolitics focus on various regions (Eurasia, the Mediterranean, Black Sea, Latin America, the Middle East, Caucasia, Africa, or Asia-Pacific) and some specific countries or demographic areas (Russia, China, Turkey/Turkish world, or Iran) on the axis of regional studies and foreign policy. In Turkey, 27 universities offer courses on geopolitics that will fall into this category (see Table 2). Parallel to the main issues in the conceptual courses, one can note that an approach in the context of regional/international politics and great powers is emphasized instead of the methodological dimension of geopolitics. Nevertheless, the existence of special geopolitics courses on Russia, Iran, and China is noteworthy. At this point, the lack of courses such as European or North American geopolitics, or more specifically, “*US Geopolitics*,” “*The Geopolitics of Germany*,” “*The Geopolitics of the UK*,” or “*The Geopolitics of France*” within the framework of Western and Transatlantic relations is a point to be considered. Within the scope of the courses in this second category, *Eurasian region* and *Eurasianism* come to the forefront rather than Europe and America, with a perspective centered around Turkey and its neighbors. Nine of the 33 courses in this category are related to Eurasia.

Table 2 – Geopolitics courses taught from a regional perspective

University	Course Name	Degree
Kadir Has	“Avrasya’nın güvenliği ve jeopolitiği” [Security and Geopolitics of Eurasia] “Avrasya’nın jeopolitiği” [Geopolitics of Eurasia]	Undergraduate Doctorate
Yalova	“Eurasian Geopolitics”/“Avrasya Jeopolitiği”	Doctorate
Karabük	“İran ve bölge jeopolitiği”/“Iran and regional geopolitics”	Undergraduate
Kırklareli	“Avrasya Jeopolitiği” [Eurasian Geopolitics]	Undergraduate
Maltepe	“Ortadoğu’nun jeopolitiği ve Jeokültürü” [Middle East Geopolitics and Geoculture]	Master
Ankara	“Geopolitics of Turkish World”	Undergraduate
Bandırma 17 Eylül	“Akdeniz’de jeopolitik ve güvenlik” [Geopolitics and Security in the Mediterranean]	Master
Bitlis Eren	“Ortadoğu Jeopolitiği” [Middle East Geopolitics]	Undergraduate
Giresun	“Güncel Karadeniz jeopolitiği” [Current Black Sea Geopolitics]; “Akdeniz Jeopolitiği ve güvenliği” [Mediterranean Geopolitics and Security]	Undergraduate
Bursa Uludağ	“Asya-Pasifik Jeopolitiği ve Çin” [Asia-Pacific Geopolitics and China]	Doctorate
Çanakkale 18 Mart	Mediterranean Geopolitics “Akdeniz Havzası Jeopolitiği ve Türkiye” [Mediterranean Basin Geopolitics and Turkey]	Undergraduate Master and Doctorate
Düzce	“Rusya’nın Jeopolitiği” [Geopolitics of Russia]	Undergraduate
Karadeniz Teknik	“Geopolitics of the Black Sea region”	Undergraduate
Galatasaray	“Latin Amerika Jeopolitiği” [Geopolitics of Latin America]	Master
Karamanoğlu Mehmet Bey	“Avrasya Jeopolitiği” [Geopolitics of Eurasia]	Undergraduate and Master
İstanbul Yeni Yüzyıl	“Rusya Jeopolitiği ve Kafkasya Çalışmaları” [Geopolitics of Russia and Caucasian Studies]	Undergraduate
İstanbul Arel	“Dünya Jeopolitiğinde Türkiye” [Turkey in World Geopolitics]	Doctorate
İstanbul Gedik	“Political Geography: Africa and Middle East”; “Political Geography: Asia and America”	Undergraduate
Necmettin Erbakan	“Dünya Bölgeler Coğrafyası” [World Regions Geography]	Undergraduate
Yıldız Teknik	“Türkiye coğrafya ve jeopolitiği” [Geography and Geopolitics of Turkey]	Undergraduate
MEF	“Geopolitics of Eurasia”	Undergraduate
İstanbul Beykent	“Çin Dış Politikası ve Avrasya Jeopolitiği” [Chinese Foreign Policy and Geopolitics of Eurasia]	Doctorate
İstanbul Nişantaşı	“Türkiye ve Yakın Coğrafyası” [Turkey and Its Near Geography]	Master
İstinye	Modern Geopolitics and Eurasia	Undergraduate
Yozgat Bozok	“Siyasi Coğrafya [Jeopolitik]” [Political Geography-Geopolitics]	Undergraduate
TOBB	“Ortadoğu Üzerine Jeopolitik Okumalar” [Geopolitical Readings on Middle East]	Master
Bursa Teknik	“Asya-Pasifik Jeopolitiği ve Çin” [Asia-Pacific Geopolitics and China]	Doctorate

While mapping as a key geographical method is not encountered in these courses, an analysis based on geopolitical representations is not even used. From a general point of view, it is very difficult to establish a link between the content of the course and the name given to the course, since a course that can be described as a “regional study” or a “foreign policy of a country” is called “geopolitics.” The most important reason for this can be seen as the denial of the geographical and methodological features of geopolitics, which are seen as the “equivalent” of security, foreign policy, or strategy, in parallel with the conceptual courses. In this framework, the conceptual blurring of geopolitics continues in regional courses as well.

Furthermore, one can state that another part of the geopolitics courses given is handled on a thematic level. In this context, geopolitics emerges within a different spectrum such as “space and power analysis,” “energy security” (mainly centered on oil and gas), “postcolonial geopolitics,” “geopolitics and religion,” or even “Shiite geopolitics.” Although different thematic subjects affect geopolitics courses, it would not be wrong to say that energy-related issues, especially, have a serious impact here. Table 3, shown below, lists the courses that may fall into this category, bringing together 14 universities.

Table 3 – Geopolitics courses taught in a thematic fashion

University	Course Name	Degree
Atılım	“Enerji Jeopolitiği” [Energy Geopolitics]	Master
Niğde Ömer Halisdemir	“21. Yüzyılda Şii Jeopolitiği” [Shiite Geopolitics in 21 st Century]	Master
Ibn Haldun	“Energy and geopolitics”	Master
İstanbul Aydın	“Enerji Jeopolitiği” [Energy Geopolitics]	Undergraduate
İstanbul Ticaret	“Enerji ve Jeopolitik” [Energy and Geopolitics]	Undergraduate
İzmir Ekonomi	“Enerji Jeopolitiği ve Politikaları” [Energy Geopolitics and Politics]	Doctorate
TOBB	“Enerji Jeopolitiği” [Energy Geopolitics]	Master
Hacettepe	“Space, Power and Geopolitics”	Master
Bursa Uludağ	“Postcolonial Criticism and Geopolitics of Religion”	Undergraduate
İstanbul Topkapı	“Enerji Jeopolitiği” [Energy Geopolitics]	Master
Karamanoğlu Mehmet Bey	“Enerji Jeopolitiği ve Çevre” [Energy Geopolitics and Environment]	Master
Ege	“Jeopolitik Risk Analizi” [Geopolitical Risk Analysis]	Doctorate
İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent	“Geopolitics of Oil and Natural Gas” “Advanced Topics in Energy Geopolitics”	Master and Doctorate
Bursa Teknik	“Enerji Politikaları ve Jeopolitik” [Energy Politics and Geopolitics]	Doctorate

While the geopolitical method is included in the sources of some courses such as “Shiite Geopolitics in the 21st Century” in this category, the methodological dimension is generally lacking in the course contents, objectives, and 14-week course plans, as seen in the conceptual and regional courses. Additionally, addressing geoeconomics in courses such as “Geopolitical risk analysis,” which deals with *risk analysis* and *geopolitics* together, remains important in terms of diversifying geopolitical education in Turkish universities, although it does not contribute directly to the scope of the geopolitical method. Furthermore, it would be appropriate to briefly mention the language in which these courses are offered. While most of the geopolitics courses given in conceptual, regional, and thematic contexts in Turkey are in Turkish, 20 departments where English is used as a medium of instruction stand out (see Table 4).

Overall, while 81 of all the geopolitics courses given in Turkey are taught in Turkish, 32 of them are taught in a foreign language. In 20 departments, geopolitics courses are taught in English, as can be seen in the table above, while French is the language of instruction in geopolitics in only one francophone department (Political Science and IR, Yeditepe University) offering French as the foreign language of instruction for geopolitics and related courses such as Cartography in Social Sciences 1-2. If we analyze the geopolitics courses given in Turkey in the context of conceptual, regional, and thematic elements, we find that at Özyeğin (English-instructed), Yeditepe (French-instructed), Istanbul Gelişim (Turkish/English-instructed), Çukurova (Turkish-instructed), Başkent (Turkish-instructed), and

Sakarya (Turkish-instructed), there are more or less consistent and comprehensive courses on geopolitics in terms of geopolitical method.

Table 4 – Universities offering geopolitics courses in English

Bolu Abant İzzet Baysal	Boğaziçi
Eskişehir Osmangazi	Recep Tayyip Erdoğan
İstanbul Gedik	Ibn Haldun
Ankara	Hacettepe
Yalova	Bursa Uludağ
Karadeniz Teknik	İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent
MEF	İstinye
Karabük	Nevşehir Hacı Bektaş Veli
İstanbul Medeniyet	İstanbul Gelişim
Sakarya	Çanakkale 18 Mart

The fact that almost half of the geopolitics courses in these six universities/departments are taught in a foreign language emphasizes the importance of foreign languages such as English and French, and the sources (books, articles, etc.) written in these languages. The role of Turkish as the language of instruction in geopolitics courses is also undeniable, even if methodological issues are not usually covered in these courses. However, there are 35 Political Science and IR/IR departments in Turkey that do not offer any geopolitics courses (see Table 5).

Table 5 – Political Science and IR/IR Departments with no geopolitics courses

Abdullah Gül	Ufuk	Kırşehir Ahi Evran
İstanbul Esenyurt	Adana Alparslan Türkeş Bilim ve Teknoloji	Kocaeli
Kütahya Dumlupınar	Aksaray	Yaşar
Manisa Celal Bayar	Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt	Selçuk
Mardin Artuklu	Aydın Adnan Menderes	Van Yüzüncü Yıl
Tokat Gaziosmanpaşa	Dokuz Eylül	Doğuş
Türk-Alman	Hatay Mustafa Kemal	İstanbul Kültür
Ankara Medipol	Hitit	İstanbul Okan
Bahçeşehir	İzmir Demokrasi	ODTÜ
Beykoz	İzmir Katip Çelebi	Koç
Fenerbahçe	Haliç	Hasan Kalyoncu
İstanbul Medipol		İstanbul 29 Mayıs

5. Conclusion

In this study, I analyzed the conceptual framework of geopolitics and its methodology as a distinct field of study from a critical perspective. I elucidated current geopolitics teaching in Turkey by evaluating the courses available on the ECTS information packages on university websites. I considered geopolitics as a critical method based on cartography, territoriality, and geopolitical representations. Together with interstate rivalries, it refers to diverse conflicts and rivalries taking place within an intrastate framework in the context of multiple territorial

scales. The significance of geopolitics as a complex method of analysis has been reflected in the critical background developed especially by Yves Lacoste and his colleagues in the context of geopolitical representations, which refer to a *collective perception* based on a geographical-historical context.

Focusing on our findings, the methodological aspects we examined were either completely ignored or treated as background components in the ECTS information on the university websites. Most importantly, geopolitics teaching in Turkey does not prioritize the level of methodological inquiry. Similarly, on theoretical ground, while geopolitics in Turkey seems to be falsely perceived as something equal to a *hard realist* and *state-centric* academic subfield representing even a strong military tutelage, it lacks a broad multi-level analysis, as well as geographical and historical reasoning, which constitute two crucial sources of contemporary geopolitical thinking.

Considering the lack of representation in the overall teaching of geopolitics in Turkey, understanding geopolitics as a representational method is a marginal tendency today. The evocation of new actors as sources of “collective representation” other than the state is lacking in the teaching of geopolitics as well. The teaching of geopolitics reflects rather a state-centric approach that still dominates the discipline, and this can be seen in diverse geopolitics courses taught in many universities. From another point of view, when the courses are examined in general, it should be emphasized that unlike “geopolitical methods,” the understanding of “geopolitical theories” is heavily entrenched in Turkey. In this sense, historical and geographical reasoning should be added in the Political Science and IR curricula on geopolitics in Turkey.

Finally, while the use of maps remains crucial in geopolitical practice and thinking, I argue that the cartographical deficiency of geopolitics teaching in Turkey indicates a relatively underdeveloped conceptualization of the field. Eventually, courses on cartography might not be generalized in Political Science and IR teaching in Turkey in terms of academic linkages between IR, geopolitics, and geography. Only at a few universities is it possible to find courses based on cartography, spatiality, and geographical background of geopolitics. Establishing a *method* based on notions such as geographical and historical representation remains one of the main challenges for geopolitics teaching in Turkey. If there is room for methodology at this point, one could only consider to what extent a specialization called geopolitics can be developed in Political Science and IR departments, or the idea of creating a master’s program in geopolitics.

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Socializing IR: Turkish IR Scholars and their Twitter Interactions

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Abstract


Online social networking services (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc.) have altered the way we engage with individuals, groups, and communities by profoundly changing our everyday information and communication habits on a global scale. Today, social media has also grown into a massive data repository providing very detailed information on the opinions, beliefs, and communications of millions of individuals. Similarly, social media analysis has grown into an essential method for various fields, including political science and international relations. The purpose of this study is to undertake a nuanced social media analysis using Twitter data to contextualize and assess the context, scope, and impact of Turkish IR scholars' interactions on Twitter. Within the scope of the paper, network analysis, topic modeling, descriptive statistics, and regression analysis approaches will be employed to draw meaningful interpretations about their Twitter interactions. Our basic premise is that among Turkish IR scholars, there is a collective network that connects them in terms of interactions, attitudes, and opinions, and that network may be found by analyzing their Twitter data. This working assumption is not supported by the findings.

Keywords: Social Media Analysis, Twitter, Turkish IR, Social Networks, Networks Analysis

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1. Introduction

Online social networking services (SNSs) have revolutionized the way we engage with individuals, groups, and communities by altering our everyday information and communication habits. In its essence, social media differs from traditional media such as newspapers and television in terms of ease of use, accessibility, and ability to allow two-way or multidirectional interactions. Data flow based on user-generated multimedia content (images, videos, music, text), especially, is a very important feature.¹ SNSs have had a profound impact on society, communication, and various aspects of our lives. They have transformed the way we connect, share information, and engage with one another, ultimately shaping the dynamics of our interconnected world. In this sense, analyses based on social media data have the potential to explain very decisive trends, and this is true at the local, domestic, and international levels.²

Social media analysis, in its most basic form, is the processing and analysis of social media data for a certain purpose and scope.³ In seeking to study this new information environment in a systemic way, social media analysis has developed an amalgam of approaches by integrating various methods and techniques available to different disciplines. Social media analysis has the potential to be extremely valuable today, particularly in the social sciences since it has also evolved into a vast data repository, providing extremely comprehensive information on a wide range of opinions, thoughts, and conversations. Parallel to these trends, scholars from various disciplines have come to exploit social media as a valuable source for their studies. When it comes to International Relations (IR), social media gets a lot of attention because of online disinformation campaigns and foreign election meddling, in particular. Yet, the number of academic projects and inquiries in the field is rapidly increasing.⁴

This study is the result of the authors' broader research interest in how Twitter⁵ might be used to better understand various social phenomena that matter in political science and international relations. In this case, logic argues that Turkish scholars use Twitter, like many other professionals do, to convey information regarding their opinions, teaching, and research activities along with using it as a medium for academic exchanges with their peers. So, we can perform social media analysis by using Twitter data to contextualize and evaluate Turkish IR scholars' social interactions and to determine whether these interactions reflect "an epistemic community" in terms of having a collective network among relations, opinions, and approaches.⁶ That is, our core assumptions are:

- There is a collective network among Turkish IR researchers that connects them in terms of interactions, attitudes, viewpoints;
- That network may be identified by analyzing their Twitter interactions.

¹ Ioannis Pitas, *Graph-Based Social Media Analysis* (Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press, 2016).

² Alex Georgakopoulou, Stefan Iversen, and Carsten Stage, *Quantified Storytelling* (Springer, 2020), 7.

³ Luke Sloan and Anabel Quan-Haase, *The SAGE Handbook of Social Media Research Methods* (Sage, 2017).

⁴ Sarah Kreps, *Social Media and International Relations* (Cambridge University Press, 2020); Ravi Gupta and Hugh Brooks, *Using Social Media for Global Security* (John Wiley & Sons, 2013); thedigitalage, "The Role of Social Media in International Relations," *The Digital Age* (blog), October 4, 2017, <https://blogs.unsw.edu.au/thedigitalage/blog/2017/10/the-role-of-social-media-in-international-relations/>.

⁵ This article was written prior to the changes implemented by Elon Musk on the platform formerly known as Twitter. Please note that in the current context, 'tweets' are now referred to as 'posts' and 'retweets' are now 'reposts' on the platform now known as 'X'. The terminology in this article reflects the state of affairs at the time of data collection, wrangling and manuscript writing.

⁶ An "epistemic community" is a network of specialists with accepted competence and authoritative claims to policy-relevant knowledge in a certain subject area. These experts may come from a variety of backgrounds, but they all share a set of opinions on the most important challenges in their field.

To make this inquiry, we employed three distinct and appropriate methods that are widely used in social media analytics:

- i) descriptive statistics and regression analyses;
- ii) network analysis;
- iii) textual analytics and topic modeling.

2. Material and Methods

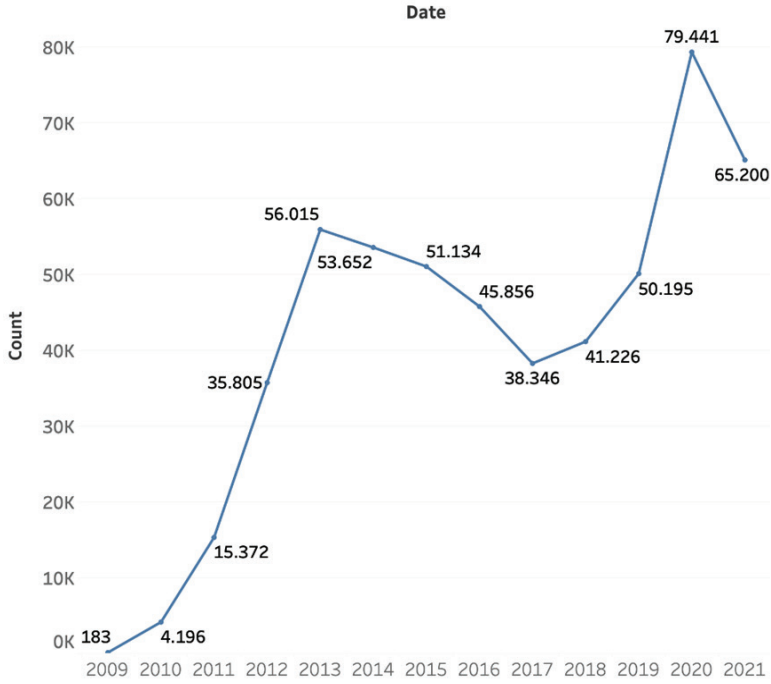
SNSs allow users to share material in so many different formats such as text, music, and video. As such, they have evolved into massive data repositories. The data derived from these repositories provide very detailed insights into the perspectives, ideas, and activities of a diverse set of users. In this sense, these platforms present various possibilities for scientists interested in topics such as elections, language, political communication, conflict, etc.

Among the current popular SNSs, Twitter is an important one in terms of both data availability and scope.⁷ Since its inception in March 2006, it has swiftly evolved into a popular SNS, eventually becoming one of the largest SNSs with over 300 million accounts delivering 500 million messages every day. The data derived from Twitter is also rather straightforward to obtain, in contrast to many other similar SNSs. While other SNSs provide data access, none are as all-encompassing and practical as Twitter. Twitter's worldwide reach, massive user base, and data transparency make it a perfect medium for large-scale social scientific inquiries. Thus, within the scope of this article, the analysis was carried out mainly using Twitter data.

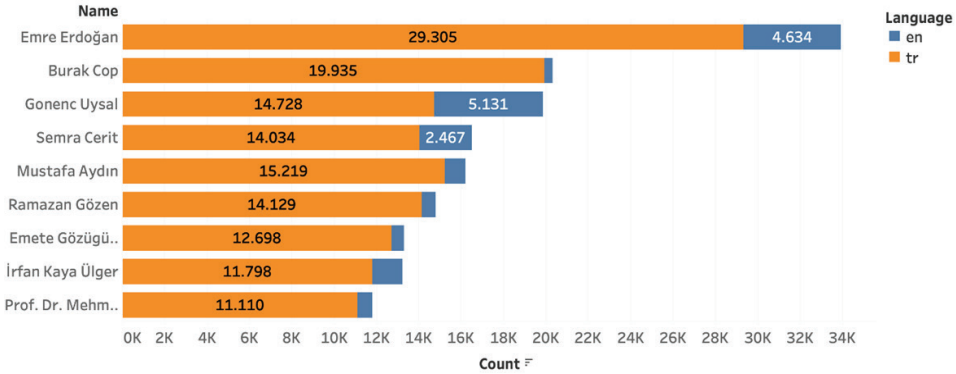
We manually collected the Twitter accounts of Turkish IR scholars affiliated with Turkish universities through an extensive search process that involved examining the online presence of professors and scholars associated with IR departments. While we acknowledge that this approach may not capture every single Turkish IR scholar on Twitter, it enabled us to compile a comprehensive list of accounts belonging to Turkish IR scholars based at Turkish universities. It is important to note that our study specifically focuses on this particular group. We recognize the dynamic nature of Twitter, where new accounts are created, and existing ones may become inactive. Therefore, the exact number of accounts may vary over time. However, during data collection, we identified and included approximately 371 Turkish IR scholars with active Twitter handles. Thus, the compiled dataset contains about 536,000 tweets from 371 Turkish IR scholars ranging from 2009 to September 2021. Our data-collecting technique retrieves tweets from the list of profiles with an option for filtering the stream's output by user account. In this case, the Twitter data comes in a semi-structured data frame, which makes it easier to work with the data. Given the fact that we are only interested in a relatively small group of accounts and their presence on Twitter, the volume of the compiled Twitter data is appropriate and representative (in our case, it is almost the whole population, if we define the population as Turkish IR scholars with a Twitter handle). The first two graphs in **Figure 1** depicts the number of tweets per year and the most active ten users respectively.

⁷ Oshini Goonetilleke et al., "Twitter Analytics: A Big Data Management Perspective," *ACM SIGKDD Explorations Newsletter* 16, no. 1 (September 25, 2014): 11–20, <https://doi.org/10.1145/2674026.2674029>.

Time Span(year)



Tweet Per Users (Top 10 Users)



Tweet Language and Gender Distribution

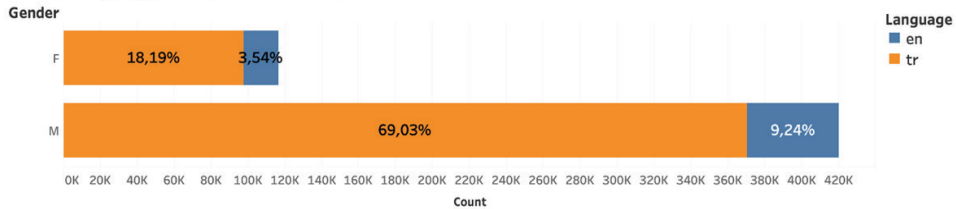


Figure 1: Tweets per year

The material was acquired in a range of languages, the bulk of which were Turkish and English (468,027 in Turkish and 68,594 in English, respectively). We removed any tweets in languages other than Turkish and English for the sake of data clarity and textual analysis readiness. The graph at the bottom of **Figure 1** depicts the proportion of languages in the compiled data as well as part of the gender distribution of user accounts. It should be noted that, in addition to some other languages, we have excluded extreme outliers in terms of tweets (a user with more than 70,000 tweets and a few other users with fewer than 10 tweets in the last ten years) in order to limit a small number of highly active users from dominating the dataset. The decision to exclude users with fewer than 10 tweets in the last ten years was made with the intention of limiting the potential influence of inactive or sporadic users on our dataset. By setting a minimum threshold for tweet activity, we aimed to ensure that the included users have a reasonable level of engagement and contribution within the Twitter platform. In terms of both derived tweet and account numbers, the raw data statistic reveals a large skew towards male components, which is one of the factors we consider in making sense of the “followers” and “following” counts. The whole gender distribution spectrum is seen in in **Figure 1** above. The figure gives the numbers of female and male profiles as percentages in the group, while it also provides the language of the tweets they posted.

The most important difficulty of working with big data is collecting and streamlining the data to make it suitable for use. There are similar difficulties in working with social media data as well. The process of extracting relevant, useful data from the massive amount of information posted on social media platforms requires researchers to use specially designed software to filter and analyze posts or machine learning systems that can directly perform such analysis. Within the scope of this study, the Python (data extraction, cleaning, and shaping) and R (data analysis and visualization) programming languages were used. In addition, we have used Gephi for network analysis. The topic modeling process was done with an external piece of software called Topic Modeling Tool. The whole working process is depicted in **Figure 2** below.

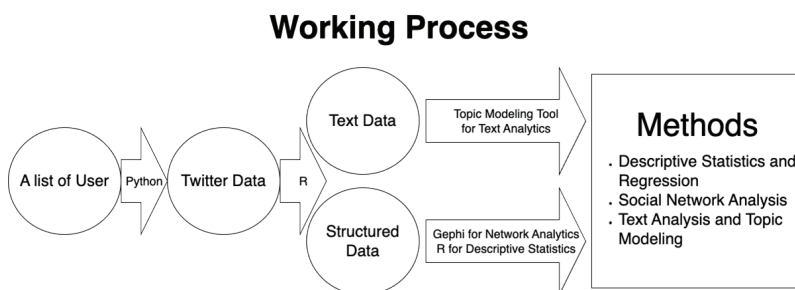


Figure 2: Data Analysis Steps

Since the launch of Twitter in 2006, much new research examining various facets of Twitter data has emerged.⁸ Among such research are studies dealing with a wide range of

⁸ Goonetilleke et al., “Twitter Analytics.”

themes, from opinion mining⁹ to event detection¹⁰ and political discourse analysis.¹¹ When it comes to scholars' presence on social media, there are studies examining the prevalence of biases in scientific research across disciplines;¹² dealing with web visibility as an important factor in measuring scientific productivity and impact;¹³ measuring social influence through Social Network Analysis (SNA) metrics;¹⁴ investigating the ways in which scholars use Twitter to cite and share scholarly information.¹⁵ Yet, there has been no study conducted on Turkish IR scholars' presence on Twitter as a community.

Several distinct methods and approaches to Twitter data have also emerged in recent years. For instance, comparative and descriptive statistics derived from raw numbers of tweets per user, date, retweet, reply, and like counts are particularly insightful key metrics, and they are among the accepted standard for the quantitative description of user activities on Twitter. These metrics identify specific aspects of Twitter data, such as the most prolific users and node users within a given social network. Another way to look at Twitter content is to analyze the "tweet-text" itself. The textual social media data can also be analyzed using various advanced analytical methods and techniques, such as sentiment analysis, probabilistic/statistical topic modeling, natural language processing, machine learning, etc.

Some of these different methodologies/methods differ in their applicability and relevance.¹⁶ The research question inquires whether there is a collective network among Turkish IR scholars that binds them in terms of interactions, opinions, perspectives, and views on a particular subject, and whether this can be read through their Twitter interactions. With this question in hand, we primarily used the following three methods:

Descriptive statistic and regression analysis: A social media dataset contains not just a specific piece of content (text), but also a large amount of information known as metadata. Metadata is information about the users and the material they post. It can also be thought of as data about data. Using this metadata, it is possible to do a variety of analyses on a specific piece of content. We utilized descriptive statistics to interpret this sort of information. This study also makes use of correlation and regression analyses. Correlation and regression analyses are, fundamentally, the study of correlations and/or connections between things. As such, they serve as vital statistical procedures. Correlation and regression analyses are useful tools for understanding social media data and the sensitive information included within it. In this paper, we have created an additional dummy variable indicating gender (of the Turkish

⁹ Amandeep Kaur and Vishal Gupta, "A Survey on Sentiment Analysis and Opinion Mining Techniques," *Journal of Emerging Technologies in Web Intelligence* 5, no. 4 (2013): 367–71; Bing Liu, "Sentiment Analysis and Opinion Mining," *Synthesis Lectures on Human Language Technologies* 5, no. 1 (2012): 1–167; Alexander Pak and Patrick Paroubek, "Twitter as a Corpus for Sentiment Analysis and Opinion Mining," in *LREc*, vol. 10, 2010, 1320–26.

¹⁰ Hamed Abdelhaq, Christian Sengstock, and Michael Gertz, "Eventweet: Online Localized Event Detection from Twitter," *Proceedings of the VLDB Endowment* 6, no. 12 (2013): 1326–29; Farzindar Atefeh and Wael Khreich, "A Survey of Techniques for Event Detection in Twitter," *Computational Intelligence* 31, no. 1 (2015): 132–64.

¹¹ Kristen Johnson and Dan Goldwasser, "Identifying Stance by Analyzing Political Discourse on Twitter," in *Proceedings of the First Workshop on NLP and Computational Social Science*, 2016, 66–75; Mohd Faizal Kasmani, "A Political Discourse Analysis of the Twitter Posts Of@ Najibrazak Prior to 2018 General Elections," *SEARCH (Malaysia)* 11, no. 2 (2019): 129–43.

¹² Daniele Fanelli, Rodrigo Costas, and John PA Ioannidis, "Meta-Assessment of Bias in Science," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 114, no. 14 (2017): 3714–19.

¹³ Chung Joo Chung and Han Woo Park, "Web Visibility of Scholars in Media and Communication Journals," *Scientometrics* 93, no. 1 (October 1, 2012): 207–15, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11192-012-0707-8>; Judit Bar-Ilan et al., "Beyond Citations: Scholars' Visibility on the Social Web" (arXiv, May 25, 2012), <http://arxiv.org/abs/1205.5611>.

¹⁴ Hirotoshi Takeda, Duane Truex, and Michael Cuellar, "Evaluating Scholarly Influence Through Social Network Analysis: The Next Step in Evaluating Scholarly Influence," (2010). AMCIS 2010 Proceedings. 573. <https://aisel.aisnet.org/amcis2010/573>.

¹⁵ Jason Priem and Kaitlin Light Costello, "How and Why Scholars Cite on Twitter," *Proceedings of the American Society for Information Science and Technology* 47, no. 1 (2010): 1–4, <https://doi.org/10.1002/meet.14504701201>.

¹⁶ Gupta and Brooks, *Using Social Media for Global Security*, 329.

IR scholars) to look into the correlations and specific relations between gender and follower/following counts. There are studies exploring the practice of retweeting on Twitter and examining the factors that affect the retweetability of a tweet.¹⁷

Network analysis: Twitter is an important data source for both network and non-network analysis since the service is designed primarily as an SNS. In order to monitor the relationships between users and to understand how they use social media, several indicators, such as user account lists, users' followers or friends, or user groups, are analyzed through network analysis. Network analysis allows us to research, measure, and describe almost everything about a social network and its components. In their most basic form, maps of individual user relationships and interactions on social media platforms can identify members of a particular group. For example, researchers studying follower relationships on Twitter can map networks of ideas based on current discussions and analyze the dynamics of interpersonal networks by reading information through maps.¹⁸ In this study, we have a hashtags map, mentions map, as well as a friends and followers map, all of which show how connected this group of users is to each other and to a topic.

Text mining and topic modeling: Text mining is a process that extracts important information from text and seeks significant links, syntactic correlations, or semantic associations between inferred categories or phrases. It is also known as automated or semiautomated text processing.¹⁹ Text mining is a burgeoning topic in the social sciences, and Twitter supplies scientists with vast corpora. Text data from social media has the ability to give significant insights on events as they unfold.²⁰ We use a special text mining tool known as topic modeling. The goal of topic modeling is to infer the associated algorithms, which include text clustering, text classification, and natural language processing. In this context, topic modeling is the most often used approach for identifying common themes, ideas, or points of view within a particular network.²¹

3. Result and Discussion

3.1 Descriptive statistics and regression analysis

Figure 1 above depicts a temporal trend suggesting that the quantity of tweets has risen dramatically in recent years. This is due, in part, to the fact that, despite its initial launch in March 2006, Twitter did not become a prominent platform until the 2010s. Most Turkish IR scholars' accounts were also just activated in the mid-2010s. Therefore, we have very few entries in terms of tweets published before even 2012.

¹⁷ Bongwon Suh et al., "Want to Be Retweeted? Large Scale Analytics on Factors Impacting Retweet in Twitter Network," in *2010 IEEE Second International Conference on Social Computing* (2010 IEEE Second International Conference on Social Computing (SocialCom), Minneapolis, MN, USA: IEEE, 2010), 177–84, <https://doi.org/10.1109/SocialCom.2010.33>.

¹⁸ Mi Kyung Lee et al., "Mapping a Twitter Scholarly Communication Network: A Case of the Association of Internet Researchers' Conference," *Scientometrics* 112 (2017): 767–97; Zhao Jianqiang, Gui Xiaolin, and Tian Feng, "A New Method of Identifying Influential Users in the Micro-Blog Networks," *IEEE Access* 5 (2017): 3008–15.

¹⁹ Xia Hu and Huan Liu, "Text Analytics in Social Media," in *Mining Text Data* (Springer, 2012), 385–414.

²⁰ Axel Bruns and Stefan Stieglitz, "Metrics for Understanding Communication on Twitter," in *Twitter and Society* ed. Katrin Weller, Axel Burns, Jean Burgess, Merja Mahrt, and Cornelius Puschmann (New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing, 2014), 69–82.

²¹ Kentaro Sasaki, Tomohiro Yoshikawa, and Takeshi Furuhashi, "Twitter-TTM: An Efficient Online Topic Modeling for Twitter Considering Dynamics of User Interests and Topic Trends," in *2014 Joint 7th International Conference on Soft Computing and Intelligent Systems (SCIS) and 15th International Symposium on Advanced Intelligent Systems (ISIS)* (IEEE, 2014), 440–45; Ximing Li et al., "Filtering out the Noise in Short Text Topic Modeling," *Information Sciences* 456 (2018): 83–96.

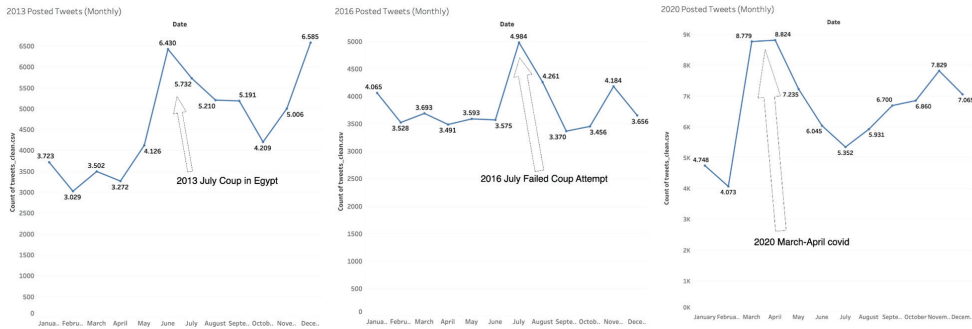


Figure 3: Year-on-year Tweet Count

The first descriptive statistic is the spatial-temporal analytics of activity.²² In our case, this refers to the frequency of year-on-year tweet numbers and comparing these against the averages in order to detect the high- or low-frequency periods, which could indicate certain events or occurrences that are common to the whole group. **Figure 3** above has been prepared for this reason. According to the figure, there is an exceptional increase in the number of tweets in the periods of 2013 July, 2016 July, and 2020 March-April, when the tweet count exceeds the average yearly tweet tally. The average number of tweets each year is 450 in 2009, 478 in 2010, 1,360 in 2011, 3,149 in 2012, 4,916 in 2013, 4,649 in 2014, 4,083 in 2015, 3,523 in 2016, 3,751 in 2017, 4,513 in 2018, 7,079 in 2019, and 7,180 in 2020. Only three occasions have overtaken the annual average in terms of tweet count. These dates correspond to concordance term analysis results; Egypt's 2013 coup, the July 2016 attempted coup in Türkiye, and the initial Covid cases and subsequent lockdowns in March, May, April, and May of 2020, respectively. When we provide the topic modeling and network analysis results, we will return to these three suggestive occurrences in greater detail. However, it could be a good predictor that specific events provoked a collective reaction in our group. Even if this may not be the outcome of close connections between group members, we might still suggest that it is one of the markers pointing to ties binding Turkish IR scholars in terms of interactions, viewpoints, and perspectives on a particular topic. Twitter is well-known for its constantly shifting hot topics. These issues can be discussed as widely as current events. Yet, these are such events that we can suspect drive a high level of sharing, tweeting, and replying among the general Twitter audience. That is, these events are not unique to this group of Twitter users, and that is why we can suggest that analysis of the spatial-temporal analytics of activity does not reveal any type of network indications for Turkish IR scholars. Since 2009, there has not been even a single event that uniquely drives a within-group conversation among them.

The second type of descriptive statistic for the Twitter data are the indicators deriving from hashtags (#) and mentions (@). In Twitter jargon, hashtags are commonly utilized when discussing a topic or term. When speaking to or about someone, however, mentions are utilized (the user account of a person, brand, group, etc.). Both hashtags and mentions are very specific features for creating a network of intra-user interactions indicating common

²² Hakan Mehmetcik, Melih Kölük, and Galip Yüksel, "Perceptions of Türkiye in the US Congress: A Twitter Data Analysis," *Uluslararası İlişkiler Dergisi* Vol. 19, No. 76, 2022, pp. 69–89, DOI: 10.33458/uiidergisi.1226450

themes and viewpoints across issues and peoples.

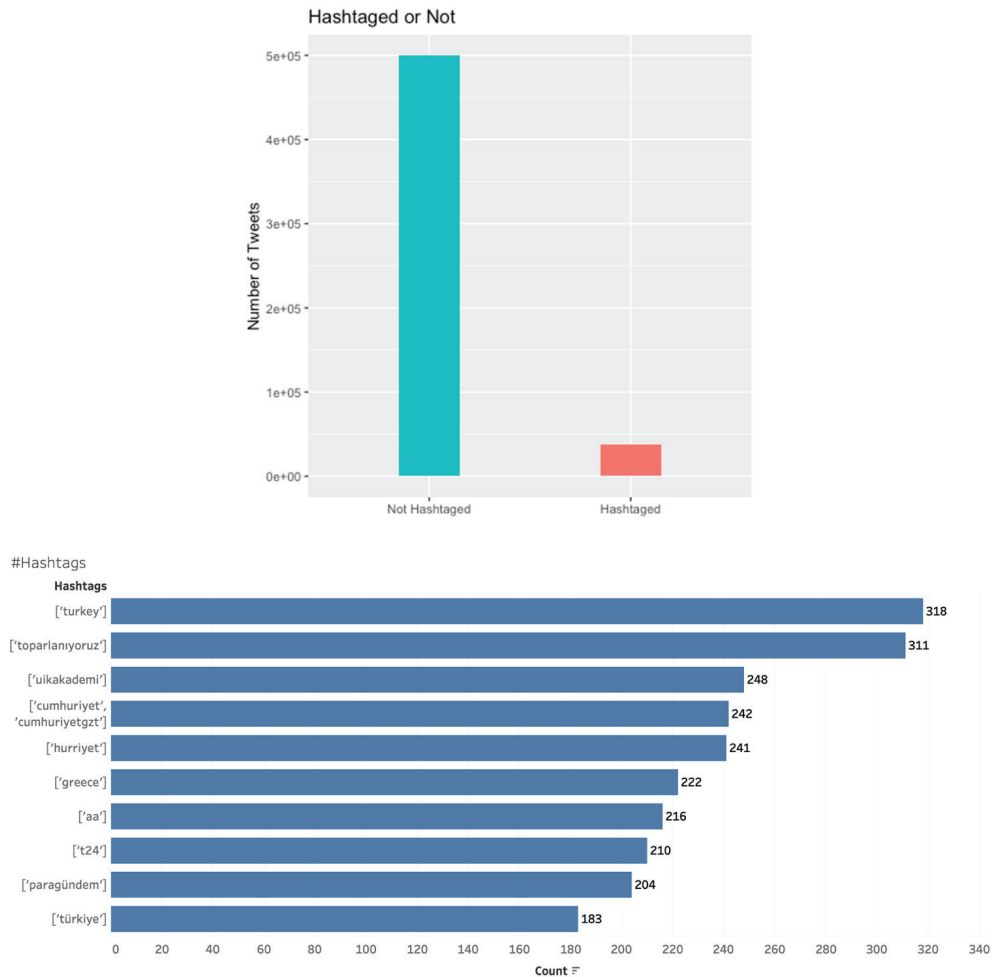


Figure 4: Hashtags

Figure 4 above and **Figure 5** below show the ratio of hashtag or mentioned tweets in the whole sample of 536,621 Twitter posts. From the figures, we can easily see that these features are not fully operational, suggesting that there are few common themes among the group members. **Figure 4** above and **Figure 5** below also list the most common hashtags and mentions. We will make use of hashtags and mentions for the network analysis as well. Yet, for the generic interpretation, we can suggest that there emerge very few common themes in both hashtags and mentions such as uikakademi, Türkiye, Greece, Egypt, etc. Most of the hashtags and mentions involve news outlets, which also suggests that our group members generally share news, but do not create individual and original content and conversations on Twitter. It is also interesting that the three events derived from the spatial-temporal analytics of activity (Egypt's 2013 coup, Türkiye's attempted coup in July 2016, and the initial Covid cases and subsequent lockdowns in March, April, and May of 2020) are not among the top

hashtags in the lists. These trends or hot topics either did not remain “hot” for long, or did not create enough discussion among the group. The limited engagement and conversation surrounding these hashtags indicates that they do not generate substantial individual and original content (or attention) among Turkish IR scholars. This observation aligns with our overall finding that there are few common themes connecting Turkish IR scholars in our dataset. This insight provides valuable context for understanding the engagement of Turkish IR scholars with these otherwise widely discussed topics.

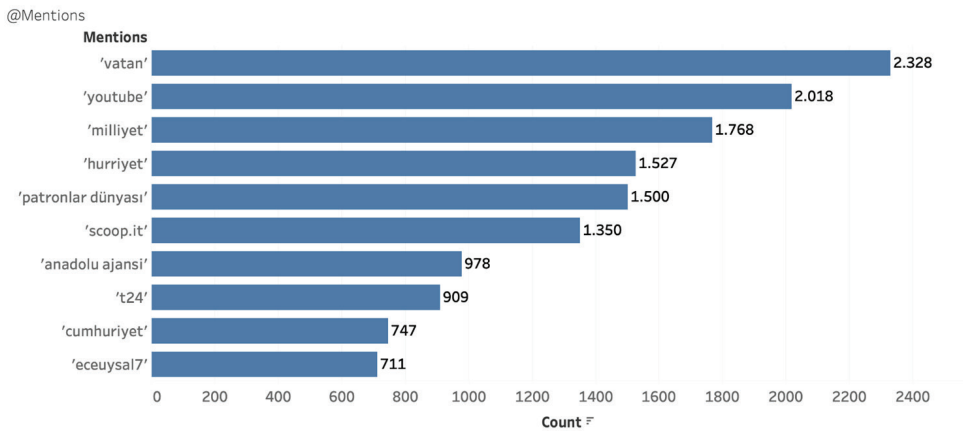
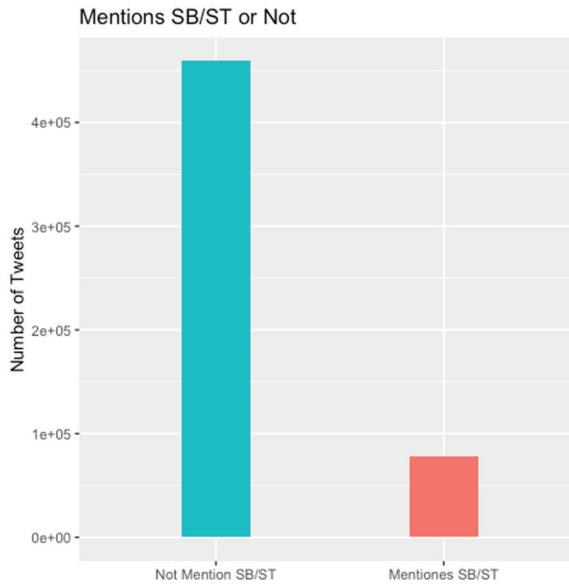
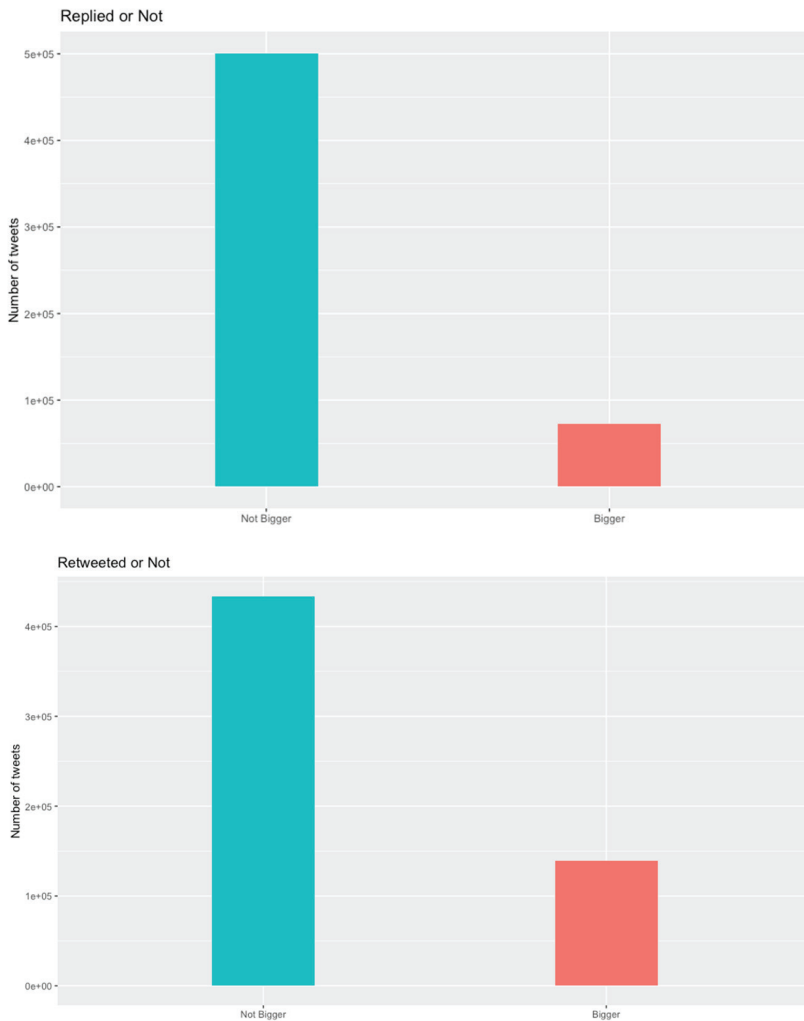


Figure 5: Mentions

Probably the most important metrics about the conversations happening on Twitter are the retweet, reply, and like counts.²³ These metrics mean different things. A reply is technically

²³ “Quote tweets” (originally “retweet with comment”) were not included in the data collection process.

a response to another tweet and is seen as an indicator of communication. That is, replies are responses to someone's Twitter post, posted separately for a specific purpose. A retweet is just a shared duplicate of the same tweet, while a like suggests a person likes or agrees with the original post. Overall, replies are a step above retweets, and retweets are a step above likes in the Twitter-verse.²⁴ These are important metrics because they are significant indicators of communication happening on Twitter. When we look at the reply, retweet, and like counts, we see the results shown in **Figure 6** below. The figure suggests that many tweets are neither replied to, nor retweeted. When we compare averages, we see similar patterns revealing that very few tweets actually passed the average reply, like, or retweet counts.



²⁴ We know this from a leaked source code from Twitter. See Ryan Mac and Kate Conger, "Twitter Says Parts of Its Source Code Were Leaked Online," *The New York Times*, March 26, 2023, sec. Technology, <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/26/technology/twitter-source-code-leak.html>.

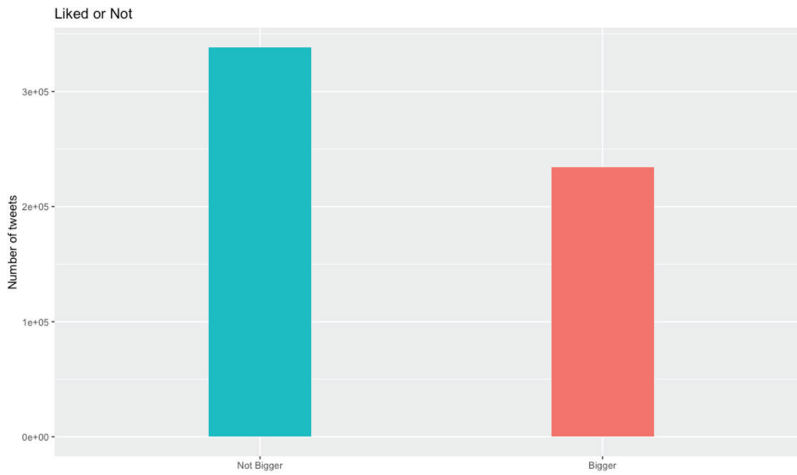


Figure 6: Retweets, Likes, and Replies

The actions of tweeting and retweeting indicate differences in terms of approach. For example, if a user only retweets, it alludes to a disseminative approach, while original tweeting indicates an annunciative approach²⁵, and replies denote a conversational approach.²⁶ Hence, very few tweets are massively retweeted, liked, or replied to, which may be an important metric in terms of measuring the influence or the effect created on Twitter. These are also known as **Engagement Metrics**, which includes the number of retweets, likes, and replies a user's tweets receive. **Figure 6** clearly indicates that most of the tweets did not create any type of follow-up conversation. One of the takeaways from this is that the majority of Turkish IR scholars employ an annunciative approach that proclaims or affirms a certain stance or idea, which is not shared or approved.

²⁵ The annunciative approach in social media refers to a user behavior where the user primarily posts original content, also known as native tweets. This is in contrast to a disseminative approach, where a user primarily shares others' content, such as retweets. In essence, an annunciative approach is more about creating and sharing one's own content, it may or may not be shared by the others while a disseminative approach is more about spreading existing content.

²⁶ Bruns and Stieglitz, "Metrics for Understanding Communication on Twitter"; H. Mehmetcik and E. Salihi, "To Be or Not To Be: Twitter Presence among Turkish Diplomats," *Vestnik MGIMO-Universiteta* 15, no. 3 (2022): 175–201, <https://doi.org/10.24833/2071-8160-2022-3-84-175-201>.

Follower and Following Counts per Gender

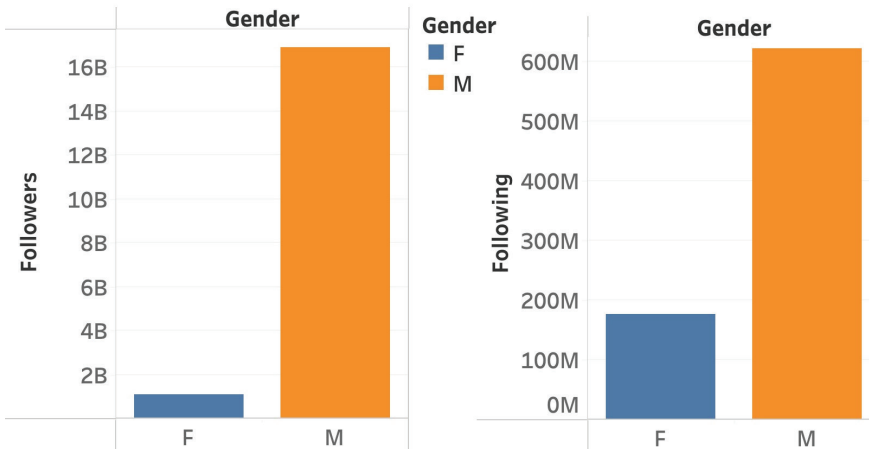


Figure 7a: Follower count and gender distribution

Another way to look at these metrics is to find correlations. Follower count is only one such metric in quantifying social media influence per user. Retweet, like, and response counts can also be analyzed for this purpose. In general, these metrics are used to evaluate how viral specific tweets are. However, from the raw numbers, they indicate a wider influence. From the figure below, we may suggest that there is a positive correlation between follower count and these metrics. From the raw data, we can suggest a positive correlation (correlation does not necessarily mean causation) between likes and retweets for the selected sample of user metrics.

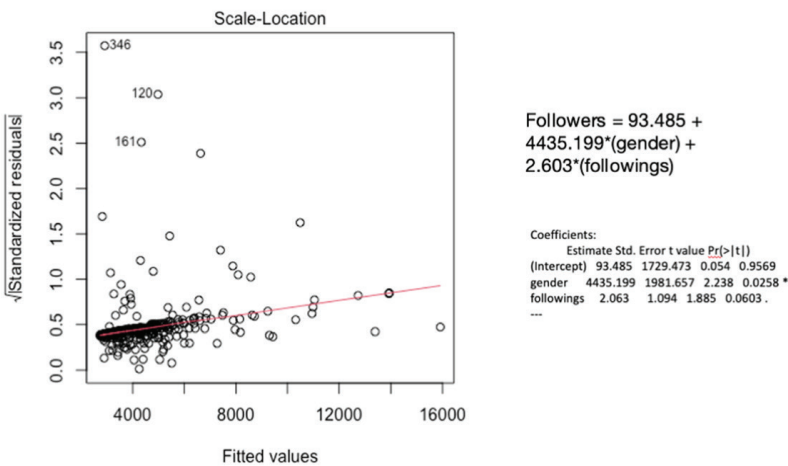


Figure 7b: Follower count and gender distribution

This type of correlation is common, yet it does not say much about the data itself. However, if we use this correlation in a different context, it would be much more insightful in terms of understanding the data. One way to do so is with a gender-based analysis. **Figure 7** above shows the gender distribution of the data and how these followers and following metrics are distributed for males and females. From the figure, we can assume that there is a relationship between gender and follower and following counts. That is, being female or male statistically affects the number of people a user follows and is followed by. To check this, we ran a regression analysis by creating a dummy variable on gender. Our result, as reported in **Figure 7**, suggests that gender (being a male) seems to be statistically significant in terms of affecting follower and following counts. Concisely, gender emerges as a determinant influencing the magnitude and breadth of an individual's social network on this platform. Although the gender factor might initially appear peripheral, it indeed offers substantial insights into the network of Turkish IR scholars on Twitter. It facilitates not only the identification of network participants but also the understanding of their interconnections and interactions. Primarily, the data suggests that males, having larger networks, could potentially occupy a more central role within the network, thereby influencing the dissemination of information and ideas among Turkish IR scholars. Equally, it is important to consider that if there is a noticeable lack of interaction within the network, a significant portion of the responsibility could potentially be attributed to the interaction patterns among males. This underscores the necessity for a more nuanced understanding of gender dynamics within social networks. This observation also further prompts an inquiry into the differential usage of Twitter by males and females, necessitating additional studies to explore the distinct communication and collaboration patterns across genders.

3.2. Network Analysis

Users on Twitter are not just posting, consuming, and sharing material, but they are also forming networks. This behavior prompted us to study the users' structural position via network analysis centrality metrics. In this section, we look at the Twitter follower/following network to see if there is a dense microstructure between Turkish IR scholars. It is worth repeating that our working hypothesis posits a community/network among Turkish IR scholars.

To begin with, one of the most frequent uptakes for network researchers is the "substructures" that might exist in a given network. The division of individuals into subgroups and substructures can be a crucial feature of social networks. From this pure and simple network perspective, we can suggest that there are several substructures in the studied group of users. **Figure 8** in the appendix shows both followers' networks on Twitter as a whole and followers' networks among groups. When we compare these two maps, the first interesting finding that stands out is that there is a significant increase in the edge/node ratio. This indicates the strength of the network of relationships among the group. Again, when we look at the shape of the networks, the general follower map shows a more dispersed appearance as the links' strength decreases compared to the second map. In the map we made for indicating an intragroup follower network, on the other hand, as the links' strength increased, the nodes pulled each other more towards the center, and a relatively round shape emerged. This indicates that the rate of users within the group following each other is much higher than on the general map. That is, there is a tendency for Turkish IR scholars to follow

each other. This is an important indication of a network among Turkish IR scholars. When we look at the purple segment, which is the largest segment of the map, we see that the active people are generally male professors working at private universities and female scholars working at state universities. This network finding requires further elaboration, yet it is an interesting indicator in itself.

Figure 9 in the online appendix shows gender-based follower network maps. On the left-hand side of the figure, we have the female follower map. One of the notable points on this map is that Emete Gözügüzelli and Aşkın İnci Sökmen Alaca are located at the periphery of the map, although their eigenvector centralities are not low. This shows that although these users have a large number of followers, these followers are not among Turkish IR scholars but are from the general Twitter population. On this map, the blue and purple segments appear in the center of the map. This means that the in-map relationship network of the group in this segment is stronger. When we look at the users in these two segments, we see Sinem Açıkmeşe, Sinem Ünalığı Kocamaz, Emel Parlar Dal, Gonca Oğuz Gök, and Helin Sarı Ertem. These five female scholars are located together in the blue segment of the map that we created for the intragroup network, and this segment is in the center of that map. That is, the blue and purple segments on the female follower map represent a group of female IR scholars who have a strong in-map relationship network, meaning they follow and interact with each other more frequently. Therefore, our earlier suggestion that males and females Turkish IR scholars might have different ways of interacting on Twitter is supported by this finding.

Figure 9, we have a male follower network map. When we look at this map, we see completely different names from the active people in the map we made for the intragroup follower network above. This shows that others do not follow the 25 most followed male IR scholars in the group, but their followers are originally from the general Twitter population. One of the striking points on this map is that the three scholars who make up the purple segment work in Ankara, two of them at the same university, and they can be clustered in the same circle. This is another indication about several interesting sub-subgroups (subgroup of a subgroup, sub-sub is not a typo).

When we look at the mentions, replies, and hashtags maps, we clearly see that the same subgroups are visible here as well. The colorings and distributions are quite similar to those presented in the lower side of Figure 10 above. This indicates that the subgroups in our network are also verified by the mentions, replies, and hashtags, which is reported in **Figure 10** in the online appendix.

3.4 Text Analytics and Topic Modeling

This part consists of a preliminary analysis of all tweet data and examines the themes (“topics”) contained in the dataset. In our study, we acknowledge the challenge of bilingual research and the unavailability of readily prepared dictionaries for topic modeling. As such, we created our own dictionaries by grouping relevant keywords²⁷ together based on our research objectives and the context of Turkish IR scholars on Twitter. The topic modeling is divided into seven parts. Each part is outlined below. In each case, the topic modeling process denoted seven topics, 2,400 iterations, and a random number of views equal to 42. Because these

²⁷ In this study, relevant keywords for topic modeling include terms related to international relations, political science, or specific subfields within IR that Turkish scholars commonly use in their tweets, such as “international relations,” “foreign policy,” “security studies,” or “diplomacy.” Additionally, terms associated with common themes in international relations, like “conflict,” “cooperation,” “human rights,” “global governance,” or “national sovereignty,” were considered in the development of our keyword dictionaries.

values were constant throughout the analysis, the results ought to be considered preliminary; more thorough analysis would require different input values for different subsets of the data. It is worth reminding that our initial assumption is that there is a network among Turkish IR scholars. So, there should be common topics/themes in their conversations on Twitter. These identified topics may only consist of keywords, but they serve as a representation of the main subjects that are commonly discussed or mentioned by the scholars in our dataset. Therefore, the primary question we have in doing a text analysis is if these users talk about the same topics. It is important to note that the objective of our study was to identify and explore shared themes or subjects of discussion among Turkish IR scholars on Twitter.

Tweets were first extracted from the data based on year, as well as language. The general topics of the tweets written in Turkish and in English, and how they manifested over the last decade, are illustrated in **Figure 11** in the online appendix (Turkish is on the upper part of the figure, while English is on the lower part):

From the figure, it can be seen that the topics (or issues) are similar in Turkish and English tweets. Türkiye and the coronavirus pandemic are prominent topics, yet Turkish-American relations and related topics also dominate the tweets posted by Turkish IR scholars. A similar result is reported when we look for the seven most frequent tweeters in both Turkish as well as English. **Figure 12** in the online appendix depicts these topics. The most important result from the figure is that the most frequent tweeters do not tweet about the same things. It is as if they are carrying on a conversation with themselves without any tangible interactions with the rest of the group. This is a very important finding as it suggests a weak network between these Turkish IR scholars in terms of topics and issues. This goes against the general assumption that Turkish IR academics have a dense network and that there is a lot of communication and collaboration between them. This is important because it means that Turkish IR scholars are not constantly learning from each other and sharing ideas.

The comparison of tweets by each gender is interesting. In both of the languages, females tended to tweet on a more diverse set of topics when compared to males. **Figure 13** in the online appendix shows this finding.

In **Figure 14** in the online appendix shows tweets written by users with an above-average number of followers are examined for both Turkish- and English-written tweets.

In **Figure 15 b** in the online appendix shows, tweets written by users with an above-average following count are examined for both Turkish- and English-written tweets.

Both figures (Figure 14 for users with an above-average follower count, and Figure 15 for users with an above-average following count) show that the topics are incredibly varied, and that the users don't talk about the same things.

Overall, the dataset represents a variety of subjects, but one, "Türkiye," and the issues that characterize Turkish-American relations clearly stand out. Interestingly, there is very little or no reference to the more sophisticated issues. For example, there are expected topics with regard to cultural aspects of foreign policy, such as Türkiye, Turkish, Turks, etc. However, there are other Turkish foreign policy subjects, and most of them even appear in hashtags such as #lethistorydecide, #operationfriedensquelle, #operationpeacespring, etc. One such foreign policy slogan, "Enterprising and Humanitarian Foreign Policy,"²⁸ was mentioned very few times. As is known from the related literature, Türkiye is happy to make

²⁸ See Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Foreign Affairs. "Türkiye's Enterprising and Humanitarian Foreign Policy," (Last Accessed: July 31, 2021). URL: <https://www.mfa.gov.tr/synopsis-of-the-turkish-foreign-policy.en.mfa>.

its humanitarian and development aid efforts a niche diplomacy field by presenting itself as a humanitarian/virtuous state.²⁹ Turkish NGOs run humanitarian aid campaigns that result in public diplomacy outcomes, and these actions help Türkiye's soft power in recipient countries while also bolstering the country's attempts to be known as a 'humanitarian power.'³⁰ Given this, it is surprising to see very few mentions of this aspect of foreign policy. This is just an example; we can extend this type of argument to many other issues as well. For example, another interesting aspect lacking here is the mention of "Global IR," or any other theoretical nuances. Such findings suggest that Turkish IR scholars did not attempt to establish dialogue on Twitter about the topics of International Relations, but they use the platform in terms of an annunciative approach rather than a conversational approach.

Conversation analysts investigate how individuals negotiate the meaning of the conversation in which they are engaged and the wider discourse of which the conversation is a part. The tweets of Turkish IR scholars were expected to constitute a corpus of academic discourse rather than a corpus of causal dialogue. However, the initial analyses suggest otherwise. In order to extract additional but more subtle themes, further analysis would necessitate raising the number of desirable subjects from seven to any other number. Tweets published in Turkish and tweets written in English are comparable in general. The most active tweeters, on the other hand, do not all tweet about the same topics. It is almost as though they are talking to themselves. This finding also confirms the earlier suggestion about an annunciative approach. The gender contrast of tweets is intriguing. The difference in tweet content based on gender is quite interesting. Compared to males, females tend to tweet about a wider variety of topics in both languages. This observation seems to support the earlier finding of differences in communication styles among males and females. The number of likes and retweets a tweet receives seems to be influenced by the overall themes of the tweets. Moreover, the tweets written by users who tweet frequently seem to be reflected in the tweets of their followers and those they follow.

4. Conclusion

Online social networking services (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and others) have revolutionized the way we engage with individuals, organizations, and communities during the last decade, and have radically altered our daily information and communication habits on a worldwide scale. People utilize social media platforms to communicate knowledge and influence others all around the world nowadays. As a result, social media analysis, which has evolved into a massive data repository that gives highly comprehensive information on a wide variety of relevant users' viewpoints, ideas, and communications, has become an important method in International Relations as well.

In this paper, the analysis was conducted using Twitter data. We prepared a collection of Turkish IR scholars' tweets. Between 2009 and 2021, the data collection comprises around 536,000 tweets from 371 Turkish IR researchers. This study examined Turkish IR scholars' Twitter interactions in order to make sense of their socialization. The primary research question was whether their social interactions represent "an epistemic community" in terms

²⁹ "Virtuous Power New Defense Doctrine: Turkish President," *Hürriyet Daily News*, June 4, 2012, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/virtuous-power-new-defense-doctrine-turkish-president.aspx?pageID=238&nID=17784&NewsCatID=338>.

³⁰ Hakan Mehmetcik, "Humanitarian NGOs: Motivations, Challenges and Contributions to Turkish Foreign Policy," *PERCEPTIONS: Journal of International Affairs* 24, no. 2 (2019): 249–78.

of a common network of links, attitudes, and methods. We used three separate and relevant methodologies to conduct a scientific investigation: descriptive statistics and regression analyses, network analysis, and textual analytics and topic modeling. This sophisticated approach was especially employed in this study to identify if this group of users addressed similar themes or issues in their Twitter posts. That is, we asked if they were talking about the same subjects, and if so, what are key issues that link this group together? This study also demonstrates methodological eclecticism by employing a large number of independent variables and a substantial amount of qualitative and quantitative data on these variables, as discussed above in terms of datasets and data analysis approaches.

Overall, our findings indicate that based on the raw tweet counts, we can suggest that specific events provoked a collective reaction in our group. In our sample, 2013 July (corresponding with the coup in Egypt), the 2016 coup attempt in Türkiye, and the 2020 Covid pandemic are events attracting more social networking among the selected group of users. However, this does not indicate any close networks among the group, since these issues are not unique to the group. The spatial-temporal analytics of activity does not reveal such events.

Meanwhile, the findings suggest that the majority of Turkish IR scholars use an annunciative style, in which they announce or confirm a given attitude or notion that is not accepted or endorsed by others. Few tweets are retweeted, liked, or replied to in large numbers, indicating that tweeting has minimal communication value for the selected group. Most importantly, the most active tweeters and the most liked, replied, and retweeted tweets do not all focus on the same things. It is almost as though they are conversing with themselves. Unsurprisingly, the data shows that there is only a handful of commonly shared themes emerging in both hashtags and mentions. “Türkiye” and the “challenges that defined Turkish-American relations” seem to be among the few common topics that stand out. Otherwise, and surprisingly, there is little or no mention of the more complicated topics.

It is also possible to reach some conclusions about trends in follower counts and trends, as well as the existence of various subgroups from a network perspective. The network analysis shows that the rate of group members following each other is substantially greater than the general map. That is, Turkish IR scholars have a propensity to follow each other. The top 25 male IR academics, on the other hand, are not followed by others in the group, and their followers are generally pulled from the broader Twitter population. According to the statistics, gender (being a man) also appears to have a statistically significant impact on the follower and following counts. Meanwhile, all the subgroups in our network are also validated by the mentions, responses, and hashtags network maps.

To conclude, we can suspect from their Twitter interactions that the discipline of IR in Türkiye is not well-connected, and that there is a very low level of communication and collaboration between Turkish IR scholars. We should mention that the level of communication and collaboration pertains to the observed interactions on Twitter, and scholars may engage in communication and collaboration through other means, such as traditional academic channels, conferences, and research collaborations. Our study was designed to explore the dynamics of their interactions within the realm of social media. Yet, there are some studies showing similar results with citation and collaboration patterns among Turkish IR scholars.³¹

³¹ Hakan Mehmetcik and Hakan Haksas, “Turkish IR Journals through a Bibliometric Lens,” *All Azimuth: A Journal of Foreign Policy and Peace* 12, no. 1 (2023): 61-84; Hakan Mehmetcik, Emel Parlar Dal, and Hasan Haksas, “Studying Turkish Foreign Policy:

Nonetheless, the finding that the discipline of IR in Türkiye at academician levels is not well-connected is interesting. It suggests that there may be some challenges to communication and collaboration between scholars in this field. There are a few possible explanations for this finding. One possibility is that the discipline of IR is relatively new in Türkiye, and that there is still a lack of established networks and channels for communication between scholars. Another possibility is that there are cultural or institutional factors that make it difficult for scholars to collaborate. For example, there may be a lack of funding for collaborative research projects, or there may be a preference for individual research over collaborative research. Whatever the reasons, the finding that the discipline of IR in Türkiye is not well-connected has some implications. First, it suggests that scholars in this field may be missing out on opportunities to learn from each other and to share ideas. Second, it suggests that the discipline may be less likely to evolve and adapt to new challenges. Overall, the finding suggests that the discipline of IR in Türkiye may be less influential than it could be. If scholars are not communicating and collaborating with each other, they are less likely to be able to make their voices heard and have an impact on policy and practice.

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Abstracts in Turkish

Küresel Uİ Araştırma Programı: Şaşkınlıklardan İlerlemelere

Deepshikha Shahi

O. P. Jindal Küresel Üniversitesi

Öz

'Uluslararası' ile ilgili temel beklentilerimiz, fenomenal varlığımızı iki görünüşte bağdaşmaz bilişsel hapishaneye dönüştürdü: Batı tarafından egemen olan homojenleştirme eğilimlerine sahip 'tek dünya' ve Batı olmayanlar tarafından temsil edilen heterojenleştirme eğilimlerine sahip 'çok dünya'. Ara sıra bu bilişsel hapishaneler, Batı'nın aşırı homojenleştirme eğilimleri ile Batı olmayanların heterojenleştirme eğilimleri arasında salınan, küresel kriz durumlarının ortaya çıkardığı zorlukları ele almak için gerekli olan etkili küresel ortaklıkların uygulanmasında engel oluşturur. Örneğin, dünya savaşı olasılıkları, finansal kriz, iklim değişikliği, pandemi vb. 'Küresel Uİ Araştırma Programı'nın gündemi, bu bilişsel hapishaneleri yıkmak için ortaya çıkmıştır. Bu amaçla, bu gündem, dünyanın farklı köşelerinde gelişen şimdiye kadar aşığılanmış bilgi formlarından uyarlanan çeşitli yardımcı teorilerden rasyonel destek bulur: örneğin Çin'den Tianxia (tüm-alt-cennet), Hindistan'dan Advaita (tekdüzelik) ve Japonya'dan Mu No Basho (hiçlik yerleşimi). Bununla birlikte, birçok UİI araştırmacısının şartlandırılmış refleksleri, ortaya çıkan bilgi formlarını genellikle 'kaynak' ve 'kapsam'larını ilişkilendirerek kabul etmelerini zorlar: genellikle Batı kaynaklı bilgi formlarına küresel bir kapsama izin verilirken, Batı olmayan kaynaklı bilgi formlarına yerel bir kapsama izin verilir; sıkça yerel olmayan Batı olmayan bilgi formlarının daha büyük küresel senaryoyu kavrayamayacağı şüphesi bulunmaktadır. Felsefi olarak, bu şartlandırılmış refleksler, fenomen-noumena, bilim-metafizik, Batı-Batı olmayan vb. gibi bağlantısız zıtlıkları oluşturan Kantçı ikiliğinden kaynaklanmaktadır. Bu makale, Çin, Hindistan ve Japonya kozmovizyonlarından ilham alan Küresel Uİ Araştırma Programı'nın, 'tek dünya versus çok dünya' bilişsel hapishanelerini yıkmaya çalışarak bu araştırma programının olası ilerlemelerini sağlamaya çalıştığını ortaya koymaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Küresel Uİ, Lakatosyan araştırma programı, Çin Uİ, Hint Uİ IR, Japon Uİ

Yerli Uluslararası İlişkiler Teorilerinde Batı Merkezli Anlar: Bağımlılık, Çin ve Afrika Okulları

Engin Sune

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Öz

Modern uluslararası sistem, uzun süre devam eden eşitsiz güç ilişkilerinin tarihsel pratikleri tarafından şekillendirilmiş ve Batı dünyasını siyasi evrenin merkezine yerleştirmiştir. Uluslararası sistemdeki Küresel Kuzey'in merkezi konumu nedeniyle, gerçek anlamda "küre"nin resmini çizmeyi amaçlayan her Uluslararası İlişkiler teorisi, bilimsel araştırmanın

merkezine Batı'yı yerleştirme gerekliliğini taşır. Ek olarak, Batı hegemonyasının oluşturduğu evrensellik biçimi yüzyıllar boyunca dünya genelinde yayılarak Batılı siyasi kurumları, ekonomik yapıları ve ideolojik normları eşit olmayan bir ortamda yaymıştır. Bu nedenle, Küresel Güney'in sosyal yapıları, Batı ile eşitsiz bir ilişki ve diyalektik etkileşim yoluyla gelişmiştir. Bu bağlamda, yerli Uluslararası İlişkiler teorileri, yerel siyasi, felsefi veya kültürel motifleri teori oluşturma kaynağı olarak açığa çıkarırken, aslında Batılı sosyal yapıların eşitsiz yayılımı yoluyla yayılan evrensel gerçekliğin katmanlaşmış biçimlerine odaklanmaktadır. Bu anlamda, herhangi bir yerli Uluslararası İlişkiler teorisinde Batı merkezli bir an bulunmaktadır. Latin Amerika Bağımlılık Okulu, Çin Uluslararası İlişkiler Okulu ve Afrika Okulu sırasıyla bu teorik girişimlerdeki gömülü Batı merkezliliği açığa çıkarmak için incelenmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Batı-Merkezcilik, Bilimsel Realizm, Bağımlılık Okulu, Çin Okulu, Afrika Okulu

Realizmin Zamansız Bilgeliği ve Küresel Güney için Uygunluğu

Nicolas Alexander Beckmann
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Öz

Gerçek anlamda küresel ve çoğul bir Uİ disiplininin geliştirilmesine yönelik sayısız çağrıdan bu yana, giderek artan sayıda Uİ çalışması, alanın Avrupa merkezliliğini bağlamsallaştırmaya ve eleştirmeye çalışmıştır. Akademisyenlerin işaret ettiği en önemli sorunlardan biri, Anglo-Amerikan Uİ teorilerinin yerel bilgi ve yerli teoriler pahasına ontolojik bir üstünlük ve evrensellik iddia eden hegemonik statüsüdür. Bu makale, küresel Uİ'nin kaygılarının çoğunu paylaşırsa da, Uİ'yi öğretme ve yerli teoriler geliştirme arayışımızda, alana yapılan geleneksel katkıların önemini gözden kaçırmamamız gerektiğini öne sürmektedir. Argümanımız, realist akademinin gelişmekte olan dünya için uygunluğuna dair bir dizi düşünceye dayanmaktadır. Klasik Uluslararası İlişkiler teorilerine yönelik başlıca eleştirilerin analizi yoluyla, klasik ve daha az ölçüde yapısal ve neoklasik realizmin küresel Güney'deki kitlelere doğrudan hitap eden çeşitli ve farklı argümanlar içerdiğini göstermeye çalışıyoruz. Özellikle klasik realizm, postkolonyal teori ile bazı ilginç ortaklıklar paylaşmaktadır ve bu da iki yaklaşım arasında daha sistematik bir etkileşimin önünü açabilir. Bu nedenle, öncelikle klasik teorilerin eleştirisi üzerine kurulu küresel bir Uluslararası İlişkiler'in fakirleşmiş bir Uluslararası İlişkiler olacağını ve küreselleşmiş bir disipline doğru atılan "bin küçük adımın" bu disiplinin değerli içselliğini ihmal etmemesi gerektiğini savunuyoruz.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Uİ Kuramları, Küresel Uİ, realizm, post-kolonyal kuram

Oraya Vardık mı? Uluslararası İlişkiler Teorisi Müfredatındaki Bilgi Kapsayıcılığının Küresel İncelemesi

Jacqui Ala

University of the Witwatersrand

Öz

Çoğu Uluslararası İlişkiler (Uİ) teorisinin Batı-merkezli kuramlar üzerine inşa olduğu kabul edilmektedir. Bu sebeple, Batının ideolojik değerleri veya çıkarları ötesinde Uİ'nin açıklama kapasitesi ve potansiyel düşüktür. Ancak, son yıllarda Uİ kuramlarının Batı merkezli doğasını eleştirmenin ötesinde, küresel Güney'den gelen bilgilerin Uİ kuramlarına verdiği katkıları vurgulayan yeni bir literatür ortaya çıkmıştır. Dolayısıyla, statü quo yavaş olsa da değişmektedir. Bununla birlikte, bu bilgi çeşitliliğine olan yönelişinin Uİ kuramları müfredatlarına olan etkisi ve bunun sonuçları yeterince dikkate alınmamıştır. Bu nedenle, bu makale, Uİ kuramları alanındaki bilgi çeşitliliğine olan talebi pedagojik gelişimler bağlamında bir etkisi olup olmadığına bakarak incelemektedir. Makale ayrıca, farklı küresel bağlamlarda Uİ kuramı müfredatları oluşturulurken, eğitimcilerin bilgi çeşitliliğini artırmayı yönelik farklı seçimlerini ve yorumları incelemektedir. Farklı coğrafi bağlamlardaki yükseköğretim kurumlarında Uİ bilgisi seçimi, bilgi yapılandırılması ve iletilmesine dair soruları müfredatlar ve pedagojik tercihleri anlamaya hedeflemektedir. Son olarak, disiplin içinde bilgi çeşitliliğinin gelişimi için müfredatların yarattığı etkiler üzerine değerlendirmeler yapılmaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Küresel Uluslararası İlişkiler, sömürgecilikten kurtulma, Uluslararası İlişkiler teorisi, Uİ teorisi müfredatı, bilgi çeşitliliği/adaleti

Ay'ın Karanlık Yüzü: Sürekli Parçalanmış Bir Disiplin ve Türk Uluslararası İlişkileri "Dış Çerçeve"de

Haluk Özdemir

Kırıkkale Üniversitesi

Öz

Literatürde, adını hak edecek şekilde gerçek anlamda uluslararası bir Uluslararası İlişkiler (Uİ) disiplinine duyulan ihtiyaç üzerine son zamanlarda bir tartışma ortaya çıktı. Bu makale, gerçekten bütünleşmiş ve küresel bir disiplinin ortaya çıkmasını engelleyen çok boyutlu parçalanmayı tasvir eder ve çekirdeğe orijinal katkılarda bulunma imkanını engelleyen bir bağlam yaratır. Bu makalenin temel amacı, bu orijinal katkılara karşı çıkan başlıca engelleri ortaya koymaktır ve bu engellerin çoğunun çevreden kaynaklandığına dikkat çekmektir. Disiplindeki genel merkez-çevre parçalanmasının yanı sıra, çevre kendi içinde çöküş yaşamaktadır. Bu bakış açısından, merkez ve çevre daha fazla entegre görünürken, gerçek ayırım çevre ile dış çevre arasındadır. Dış çevre, çoğunlukla merkez tarafından görünmez olsa da, Uİ pratiğinde gerçek etkilere sahiptir; ancak doğası ve sorunları mevcut literatür tarafından üzerinde durulmayan veya ele alınmayan bir konudur. Bu gözlem üzerine, Türk örneği kullanılarak, çevreyi etkileyen ve orijinal katkı potansiyelini kısıtlayan dış çevrenin

dört büyük sorunu belirlenmiştir: (1) batıdaki Uİ'ye duyulan ilgisizlik; (2) komplo teorileri; (3) kronolojik tarihçilik; ve (4) dış çevrenin merkez çevre üzerindeki etkisi. Bu sorunları tartıştıktan sonra, sonuca varılmıştır ki çevre, sadece dış çevrenin sorunlarını çözmeye yardımcı olduktan ve çevre içinde entegrasyon sağlandıktan sonra çekirdeğe katkılarda bulunabilir. Ancak o zaman çevrenin gerçek anlamda uluslararası bir Uİ'ye orijinal katkıları mümkün olabilir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Küresel UI, merkez, çeper, dış-çeper, Türk Uİ

Türkiye'de Jeopolitik Öğretiminin Disipliner Sınırları ve Metodolojik Sorunları

Cem Savaş

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Öz

Bu çalışma, Siyaset Bilimi ve Uluslararası İlişkiler (Uİ) müfredatlarının hem lisans hem de lisansüstü seviyelerini değerlendirerek Türkiye'deki üniversitelerde jeopolitik öğretiminin eleştirel bir tasvirini sunmayı amaçlamaktadır. Jeopolitik analiz, mekânı dünya siyasetini temsil etmek için çok önemli bir unsur olarak görerek çeşitli aşamalardan ve geleneklerden geçmiştir. Devletlerarası rekabete ek olarak jeopolitik, çoklu bölgesel ölçekler bağlamında devlet içi çerçevedeki birçok çatışma ve rekabete de atıfta bulunur. Jeopolitik, Türkiye'de yanlış bir şekilde güçlü bir askeri vesayet altında devlet merkezli ve katı realist bir akademik alt alanla eşdeğer bir şey olarak algılanıyor gibi görünse de, geniş bir çok düzeyli analizin yanı sıra coğrafi ve tarihsel akıl yürütmeden yoksundur. Bu çalışmada, çağdaş jeopolitik analizin temelini oluşturan haritacılık, bölgesellik ve jeopolitik temsilleri ele almayı öneriyorum. Makale, üniversitelerin web sitelerindeki Avrupa Kredi Transfer ve Biriktirme Sistemi (AKTS) bilgi paketlerinde yer alan derslerin haftalık programlarını, öğrenme çıktılarını, içeriklerini ve hedeflerini değerlendirmektedir. Nitel bir vaka çalışmasına dayanan makale, nihayetinde jeopolitik öğretiminin metodolojik karakterini geliştirmeyi ve dolaylı olarak Türkiye'deki jeopolitik düzeyini ve kalitesini etkilemeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Jeopolitik, Siyaset Bilimi ve Uluslararası İlişkiler (Uİ) Müfredatı, Öğretim, Metodoloji, Türkiye

Uluslararası İlişkileri Sosyalleşmesi: Türk Uluslararası İlişkiler Akademisyenleri ve Twitter Etkileşimleri

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Öz

Çevrimiçi sosyal ağ hizmetleri (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, vb.) küresel ölçekte günlük bilgi ve iletişim alışkanlıklarımızı derinden değiştirerek bireyler, gruplar ve topluluklarla ilişki kurma biçimimizi değiştirmiştir. Günümüzde sosyal medya aynı zamanda milyonlarca bireyin görüşleri, inançları ve iletişimleri hakkında çok detaylı bilgi sağlayan devasa bir veri havuzuna dönüşmüştür. Benzer şekilde, sosyal medya analizi, siyaset bilimi ve uluslararası ilişkiler de dahil olmak üzere çeşitli alanlar için önemli bir yöntem haline gelmiştir. Bu çalışmanın amacı, Türk Uluslararası İlişkiler akademisyenlerinin Twitter'daki etkileşimlerinin bağlamını, kapsamını ve etkisini değerlendirmek için Twitter verilerini kullanarak incelikli bir sosyal medya analizi yapmaktır. Çalışma kapsamında ağ analizi, konu modellemesi, betimleyici istatistikler ve regresyon analizi yaklaşımları kullanılarak Twitter etkileşimleri hakkında anlamlı yorumlar yapılacaktır. Temel önermemiz, Türk Uluslararası İlişkiler akademisyenleri arasında etkileşimler, tutumlar ve görüşler açısından onları birbirine bağlayan kolektif bir ağ olduğu ve bu ağın Twitter verilerinin analiz edilmesiyle bulunabileceğidir. Bu çalışma varsayımı bulgular tarafından desteklenmemektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Sosyal Medya Analizi, Twitter, Türk UI, Sosyal Ağlar, Ağ Analizi

