

IR and the Global South: Revisiting Obstacles to a Global Discipline

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The IR discipline is marked by a strong center-periphery inequality that is perpetuated through theories, methodologies, and concepts produced in the Global North that do not adequately capture the diverse experiences of Global South states and societies. In tandem with growing critiques of Western-centrism and calls for global IR, the discipline has now become more heterogeneous and inclusive, and IR scholars are more attentive to the global IR debate than ever before. Yet, the discipline has not become truly global, as many Global South scholars are absent from the major debates in the field and there are still sharp geographic differences with respect to IR knowledge production. Even though Global South countries have enormous potential to enrich and globalize IR with their history, political thinkers, and religious and philosophical traditions, this potential remains largely untapped. While Global South scholars develop alternative perspectives and engage in theorizing practices, these efforts have not yet been embodied in the form of an IR theory that provides alternative explanations of world politics. Equally important, these perspectives are not echoed in much of the mainstream accounts in IR. This study contributes to the global IR debate by problematizing the dynamics behind the insufficient development and representation of Global South IR theories and perspectives in the discipline. After delving into entrenched Western-centrism and the asymmetries of knowledge production in the discipline, the present study puts into spotlight the intellectual and material barriers that feed off each other and perpetuate the inequalities in IR knowledge production.

Keywords: *the Global North; the Global South; Western-centrism; homogenized knowledge; homegrown theories*

Introduction

International Relations (IR) is a discipline with strong center-periphery inequality, which has been described as “academic

imperialism,” “academic dependency,” and “knowledge hegemony and exploitation.”¹ Mainstream IR theories are primarily built on the idea of a Western experience and the concept

¹ The Global North and the Global South have recently replaced the West and the non-West (Third World) as popular terms for describing structural inequalities in the IR discipline. See Kleinschmidt (2018). See Walter D. Mignolo, *On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics* (Praxia. Durham, 2008); Alatas, “Academic Dependency and the Global Division of Labour in the Social Sciences,” Boaventura de Sousa Santos, *The End of the Cognitive Empire. The Coming of Age of Epistemologies of the South* (London: Duke University Press, 2018). Throughout the text, I use the terms the Global North/ the West/the core and the Global South/the non-West/ the periphery synonymously.

of modernity (Halperin, 2006, p. 43; Cossens, 2021, p. 56). They, as such, overlook the unique historical, cultural, and economic contexts that shape the behavior and interests of Global South actors (Halperin, 2006, p. 43; Cossens, 2021, p. 56). This is paradoxical for a discipline that aims to theorize about the world (Kleinn, 2016, p. 33; Dingwerth & Pattberg, 2006). Overall, IR has evolved into a discipline characterized by historical, economic, political, and social biases produced by and for the Global North that have been imposed as an interpretive reference to relationships, problems, and experiences of the rest of the world (Cossens, 2023). This exclusionary approach prevents IR from becoming a more accurate reflection of the complex dynamics and power structures that shape our world today.

The dominance of Western-centric epistemologies and North-based publishing houses in the discipline has implications on the ways in which research communities around the world think about international affairs, teach IR, and conduct research. Global South scholars overwhelmingly experience dependency that operates through the imposition of Western-centric paradigms and ideas (Alatas, 2003), limiting their ability to shape and contribute to the field on their own terms. This goes parallel with the treatment of Global South scholars as “categorical others” and the othering of Global South contributions (Klein, 2016). Western-centric epistemologies often shape the criteria used by North-based publishing houses to decide which research to publish, leading to a bias towards research that aligns with Western-centric perspectives. These exclusionary practices have molded IR into a peculiarity that has serious implications for the development of the discipline (Pasha, 2011, p. 217-

218).

Notwithstanding the entrenched parochialism in the discipline, there have been growing critiques targeting Western-centrism and systematic disregard for racial issues (Krishna, 2001; Zvobgo & Loken, 2020; Nisancioglu, 2020). Postcolonial perspectives have criticized the hierarchical organization of knowledge where knowledge produced in the Global North is considered superior to that of the Global South (Quijano, 2000; Rodriguez Medina, 2014). The Global IR debate has been at the center of disciplinary attention and scholars have devoted considerable attention to the possibilities of the development of non-Western international theory (Acharya, 2016; Layug & Hobson, 2023; Acharya & Buzan, 2017; Aydinli & Biltekin, 2018; Makarychev & Morozov, 2013; Acharya, 2011).

Acharya succinctly describes the idea a global IR in the following words:

The principal aim of global IR is to ‘bring the Rest in’. It calls for greater participation from scholars from the Global South in the IR discipline and the broadening of the way IR is taught and written in the dominant centres of knowledge in the West. The purpose of global IR is to ensure the transformation of the discipline into something that actually captures and explains the relationships among states and societies in all parts of the world: East, West, North, South. A global IR perspective on IR theory does not seek to displace existing the-

ories, but challenges them to broaden their horizons and acknowledge the place and role of the non-Western world (Acharya, 2017).

The Global North-South disparities in IR limit our understanding of global issues and prevent the development of comprehensive and inclusive solutions to global problems. The equal representation of Global South scholars and their perspectives in the discipline can contribute to the decolonization of knowledge production in IR, and challenge the existing power dynamics. Global South countries have enormous potential to globalize IR with their history, political thinkers, and religious and philosophical traditions.

Indeed, recent studies offer valuable insight into how experiences and perspectives in the Global South could enrich and globalize IR. To name a few, Niang (2016) links African deliberations to perspectives of international morality, rights, and self-determination, Shimizu (2021) discusses how Mahāyāna Buddhist teachings can contribute to IR. Cossens (2019) attests to a pre-Hispanic international system configured in Mesoamerica through trade routes and dynamics (particularly obsidian trade). Pardesi (2021) illustrates that in the pre-colonial period, the Mughal Empire transformed South Asia into a region of the Eurasian international system, the other constitutive powers of this system being the Ottoman and Safavid Empires. Spruyt (2020) examines how the Ottoman, Safavid and Mughal empires; the Sinocentric tributary system; and the Southeast Asian galactic empires differed from the

Westphalian state system. After criticizing Western-centric treatment of the Ottoman/Turk in the English School of International Relations, Ruacan (2018) moves to redefine the Ottoman Empire as a potential European superpower rather than as an abnormal polity in European life. Looking at power projection, interconnectedness, and the autonomy of frontier polities, Balcı and Kardas (2023) attest to the existence of an Ottoman international system between the early sixteenth century to the late eighteenth century.

Despite the fact that the discipline has become more heterogeneous and inclusive of Global South history and perspectives than ever before, it has not become truly global, as many Global South scholars are still not part of the major debates in the field. While Global South scholars engage in theorizing attempts, there is still no non-Western theory of IR (Maiken, 2019). There are large geographic asymmetries with respect to IR knowledge production. As it will be explored in detail throughout this study, mainstream IR theories and narratives dominate the Global South scholarship and the Global South perspectives and theorizing are not echoed in much of the mainstream accounts in IR. In light of these dynamics, it is fair to argue that the potential of the Global South to globalize the discipline remains largely untapped. This study starts from the analytical point of departure that the development and inclusion of Global South IR theories and perspectives is essential for inclusive and holistic approaches to IR.

The existing studies in the literature shed light on the question of why there is still no non-Western theory of IR and stress the importance of homegrown theorizing (theorizing in the periphery about the periphery) for a global IR discipline (Acharya & Buzan, 2007; Acharya & Buzan, 2017; Aydınlı & Biltekin, 2018; Kuru, 2018). Building on these studies, the present article brings under spotlight the discrepancy between mainstream IR and IR scholarship around the world. It contributes to the global IR debate by problematizing the underlying reasons behind the insufficient development and representation of Global South IR theories and perspectives in the discipline. As such, it provides new insights into the debate by critically examining the intellectual and material barriers that prevent scholars from contributing equally to the study of IR.

Western-centrism in the IR discipline

Geopolitical power, knowledge, and othering have gone hand in hand throughout most of history (Slater, 2004). Colonialism, which was based on the organization of the world for the benefit of Western powers, has left its epistemological imprint on scientific reasoning in the social sciences (Alejandro, 2019). In addition to brute force, colonialism utilized and manipulated normative ideals, such as civilization and progress (Pasha, 2011). As its spillover, Western-centrism, also a product of the modern world system, has influenced the intellectual sphere, resulting in the propensity to evaluate the world through “the ontological distinctiveness of the West” (Caserta, 2021, p. 323; Sabarat-

nam, 2013, p. 274).

Western-centrist thinking is built on the premise that there is a sharp analytical distinction between the West and the non-West (Gran, 1996). It is closely connected to Euro-centrism defined “as a set of practices – scientific, cultural, political – which overtly (mostly in the era of colonial imperialism) or tacitly (mostly in the postcolonial era) seek to establish and maintain the primacy of post- Enlightenment European political and epistemic culture at the expense of alternative political systems and epistemologies.” (Vasilaki, 2012). The Western-centric discourse, which emerged in the 18th century concomitant with the construction of European identity, resulted in the creation and solidification of “an imaginary line of civilizational apartheid” that sharply divided the Global North and the Global South (Said, [1978] 2003). This division perpetuated notions of superiority and inferiority, contributing to the perpetuation of Western imperialism (Hobson, 2007, p. 94). It stripped the non-Western society of its independent identity and agency and made it a target of a myriad of negative attributes (Slater, 2004, p. 223). The Western-centrism in academic disciplines led to the colonization of intellectuals in the periphery and the normalization of global structures of inequality (Joseph et al., 1990).

The social sciences were born when Europe was at the apex of its power in the 19th century. In Wallerstein’s words, “[i]t was virtually inevitable that its choice of subject matter, its theorizing, its methodology, and its epistemology should reflect the

constraints of the crucible within which it was born.” (Wallerstein, 1997). Therefore, Western-centrism was embedded in a wide array of disciplines of social science, including philosophy, history, anthropology, law, and sociology (Kayaoglu, 2010). Rather than criticizing Western-centric thinking, social scientists endogenized it into their theories by explaining the developments in the world by looking at dynamics that existed only in the West (Hobson, 2007). The sharp distinctions between the West and the non-West were perpetuated by the modernization theory in the 1950s (Slater, 2004, p. 58). Modernization was described “as a universal process of change towards those types of social, economic and political systems that had developed in Western Europe and North America from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries.” (Slater, 2004, p. 59). The development of the non-West was only envisioned in the context of the diffusion of modern and secular norms from the West (Slater, 2004, p. 61).

Western-centric understanding gives agency to the Global North by emphasizing its ability to create norms, principles, and institutions of the modern international system and stripping away the agency of the Global South societies by treating them as passive actors who need to socialize into these norms, principles, and institutions (Kayaoglu, 2010, p. 194). In other words, Western values, norms, and political vision are treated as the

ultimate stage that the Global South should strive to reach (Kayaoglu, 2010, p. 195). It is in this context that peripheral thinking “can attain presence only by conceding its alterity or by surrendering its distinctiveness.” (Pasha, 2011, p. 218).

To fully account for the lack of diversity and equity in the discipline, it is essential to trace a biased and one-sided historical narrative that dominated the discipline (Fonseca, 2019). This narrative dates the creation of the modern international system and the birth of the idea of sovereignty to the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia (Buzan & Little, 2000, p. 3).² The Westphalian narrative perpetuates a distorted understanding of the creation of the modern international system with its dualistic assumption that “with Westphalia European states had solved the anarchy problem either through cultural or contractual evolution. Non-European states, lacking this European culture and social contract, remained in anarchy until the European states allowed them to join the international society—upon their achievement of the ‘standards of civilization.’” (Kayaoglu, 2020, p. 193). The Westphalian narrative obscures colonialism, imperialism, cultural erasure, and resistance of the non-West (Pasha, 2011, p. 221).

It is important to highlight a growing body of literature that describes the alleged link between the Treaty of Westphalia and the creation of a sovereignty-based international system as a “myth.” (Osiander, 2001).³

² For the study that problematizes this assumption, see Benjamin de Carvalho, Halvard Leira, and John M. Hobson, “The Big Bangs of IR: The Myths that your teacher still tell you about 1648 and 1919,” *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 39 no. 3 (2011), 735-758.

Furthermore, the concept of Indigenous sovereignty (which acknowledges interdependencies between political actors and relationships with the land and sees sovereignty as a contextualized rather than universal phenomenon) continues to evolve (Bauder & Mueller, 2023). Despite these developments, the Westphalian narrative still guides many IR scholars (Zarakol, 2022). Rather than studying non-Western states and actors in their own right, most IR studies tend to attribute them a supporting role in the story of the West (Zarakol, 2022).

The Western-centric bias is poignantly visible in major IR theories such as Realism and Liberalism that were built upon and binary distinctions such as “developed” vs. “undeveloped”; “modern” vs. “primitive”; “civilized” vs. “uncivilized” (Zvobgo & Loken, 2020, p. 11-13). Constructivism provides another example of how this bias is ingrained in IR theory. While Constructivism initially offered a prospect for the decolonial project with its focus on non-Western norms, Constructivist scholars have systematically disregarded racial issues as well as pre-Westphalian civilizations in the Global South (Acharya & Buzan, 2017, p. 314-370). Importantly, in their analysis of IR journals, Bertucci, Hayes, and James (2018) reveal that the majority of Constructivist studies concentrate on security processes and outcomes in the Global North. It is equally important to note that postcolonial IR theory underlines the legacies of colonialism on which

IR is built, but it does not strive to include Global South perspectives (Anderl & Witt, 2020, p. 41). Even though critical IR theory has encouraged the emergence of alternative discourses that counter western-centric discourses within the discipline, it still speaks for and to the West (Shani, 2008).

In recent years, calls for IR to become a global discipline have become louder. Calls for a global IR have gone hand in hand with calls for decolonialism and mounting criticisms of the legacies of imperialism and racism (Fonseca, 2019, p. 45). Against this backdrop, the discipline has indeed become more inclusive of new voices and critiques. Scholars have moved to analyze the intellectual and structural gatekeepers of the discipline, the developments of IR in different regions of the world, the possibilities of homegrown theorizing and post-western critical IR that encompasses critical discourses from the Global South (Tickner, 2009; Aydınli & Biltekin, 2020, 45-68; Makarychev & Morozov, 2013, 328-350; Acharya, 2011, 619-637; Shani, 2008, 722).

Despite these recent developments and growing revisionist voices, international relations (IR) is still far from being a diverse and pluralist discipline that brings equal opportunities to Global South scholars and their perspectives (Wemheuer-Vogelaar & Peters, 2016, p. 2). The traces of a tendency “to parochially celebrate or defend or promote the West as the proactive subject of, and as the highest or ideal normative referent in, world

³ For the critique of Westphalia-based narrative, see also Stephen D. Krasner, *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999); Kinji Akashi, *Acta Pacis Westphalicae: Mythos et Veritas* (Tokyo: Keio University Press, 2009).

politics” are still visible (Hobson, 2021). Apart from exceptions, the Global North still maintains an agenda-setting role (Aydinli & Mathews, 2008). Many Global North scholars maintain their tendency of not being curious about the Global South and of imposing theories, categories and concepts produced in the Global North to Global South dynamics (Bilgin, 2008). Even though Global South countries have enormous potential to enrich and globalize IR with their history, political thinkers, and religious and philosophical traditions, this potential remains mostly untapped. To engage with the question of why this potentiality has not become manifested in the context of an equal and global discipline, this study first proceeds by giving an overview of the general dynamics of global knowledge production in the social sciences in general and IR in particular.

Geographic Asymmetries of Knowledge Production in Social Sciences and IR

Inequalities in IR knowledge production between the Global North and the Global South is a microcosm of global knowledge production in the social sciences. The Global North has monopolistic control over social science knowledge production with its generation of large outputs of research and the global reach of its ideas and theories (Alatas, 2003). For example, almost half of the social science articles published in Q1 Scopus journals are written by authors from North America and Western Europe whereas the Global South is represented by less than 1% (Demeter, 2020). In a very interesting study,

it is found that the monopoly of the Global North in social sciences is also produced and reproduced through the phrasing of article titles (Torres & Alburez-Gutierrez, 2022).

It should be emphasized that while the Global North and the Global South are useful categories in understanding the distinction between the center and the periphery, they are not homogeneous, as center-periphery relations exist both within the Global North and in the Global South. There are countries in the former, such as the Netherlands, Japan, Australia or Spain that are considered “semi-peripheral social science powers” (Alatas, 2003). For example, while Japan is a world economic power, it is not a social science power in the context of its dependency on Western-centric ideas. It has some influence on social science research in the Global South through funds, but it is still far from diffusing its ideas (Alatas, 2003). Israel fits perfectly into the “center within the periphery” phenomenon, as its scientific community has a greater affinity for the USA than for those of the Middle Eastern countries. It stands at the core of global knowledge production with respect to publication output, international collaboration, and the quality of its universities (Alatas, 2003).

Different countries regions in the Global South are characterized by asymmetries in terms of research output. For example, Nigeria, South Africa, and Egypt produce more social science research than other countries in the African continent (Egbetokun et al., 2022) whereas, in Latin America, Brazil and Mexico take the lead in social science publications (Keim, 2008). On

the other hand, Asian countries such as China rank only behind the US and the UK in terms of the number of published papers in social science, but the citation per document index of China is much lower compared to that of the Global North countries (Demeter, 2020). Notwithstanding their differences, all Global South regions are characterized by overreliance on theories and ideas and the media of ideas (such as books and scientific journals) of the Global North (Alatas, 2003).

Moving down the ladder of generalization, a closer scrutiny of IR publications reveals that the inequalities of the general dynamics of global knowledge production in the social sciences are reflected in the IR discipline. The Global North and the Global South scholars are not equally represented in high-ranking IR journals. For example, in analysing US political science journals between 1970 and 2005, Waever and Tickner find that North America is represented by 80% (Waever & Tickner, 2009). Importantly, Aydinli and Matthews show that in leading IR journals (including *International Organization*, *International Security*, *International Studies Quarterly*, and *World Politics*), less than 3% of the authors come from the periphery. Zooming in on *International Studies Quarterly*, the authors reveal a striking finding by noting that less than 1% of the authors come from the periphery (Aydinli & Matthews, 2000). In their analysis of 17 IR journals from Africa, East Asia, Europe, Latin America, North America, and the United Kingdom and more than 2000 arti-

cles published between 2011 and 2015, Lohaus and Wemheuer-Vogelaar find that these journals are overwhelmingly represented by authors from their regions. Interestingly, the authors reveal that most Global South scholars represented in IR journals, which appear to have more diverse backgrounds, received their education in North America, the United Kingdom, and Europe (Lohaus & Wemheuer-Vogelaar, 2021). These findings attest to a skewed representation of diverse perspectives and voices in the field of International Relations.

Inequalities in IR: The Challenges of the Global South

Broadly speaking, parochialism and inequalities in IR are closely related to the historical developments that resulted in the dominance of Western-centric epistemologies, asymmetries of global knowledge production in the social sciences, and the current power dynamics in the world. While experiences of and voices in the Global South carry enormous potential to enrich and globalize the IR disciplines, this potential remains mostly latent. Global South perspectives and theorizing have not yet evolved into a major IR theory that provides alternative explanations of world politics.⁴ Global South scholars' theorizing practices are not echoed in much of the mainstream accounts in IR. This study contributes to the global IR debate by problematizing the dynamics behind the insufficient development and representation of Global South IR theories and perspectives. It

⁴ While it is necessary to make the southern voice heard, the author cautions against turning the global IR project into a "global south parochialism."

sheds light on the intellectual and material barriers that prevent Global South scholars from globalizing the discipline by focusing on homogenized knowledge in IR; linguistic and education-related barriers; financial and bureaucratic problems.

Homogenized Knowledge in IR

Decades after Stanley Hoffmann's (1997) definition of IR as "American social science," the USA maintains its hegemonic role in the discipline. A study conducted by Maliniak et al. in twelve major IR journals between 1980 and 2014 corroborates this argument (Maliniak et al., 2018). In Smith's words, "IR remains an American social science both in terms of the policy agenda that US IR exports to the world in the name of relevant theory and in terms of the dominant (and often implicit) epistemological and methodological assumptions contained in that theory" (Smith, 2000). Tickner & Blaney (2012) eloquently expresses the dominance of the USA in IR in the following words: "the predominance of the American Academy in International Relations is manifested in many ways, from the number of lecturers, the number of doctoral programs offered, the number of doctoral students and thesis, the number of university presses and scholarly journals, to the predominance of epistemological, theoretical and methodological approaches made in the USA among different academic communities around the world" (Tickner & Blaney, 2012). It goes without saying that American IR is parochial in spatial, linguistic, and methodological terms (Biersteker, 1999). The IR discipline is

as such characterized by a "(neo)imperialist" division of labor between the Global North (mainly the USA) and the Global South (Tickner, 2013).

In general, many Global South scholars tend to adopt theories, methodologies, and concepts produced in the center. Adherence to defined standards of the discipline results in less resistance from editors and reviewers and an increased chance of publication (Friedrichs, 2004), which leads to the homogenization of knowledge. Abu-Bakare's (2022) share of a rejection letter from a journal of international politics reveals with poignant clarity the gatekeeping role of journals and the difficulty of overcoming the general dynamics of knowledge production in IR:

Whilst white supremacy, Islamophobia and anti-blackness are indeed global features structuring contemporary politics, and the literatures with which the manuscript engages speak to the ways in which colonialism formed the racial, political, and economic orders shaping modernity, this is not explicitly developed or elaborated within the piece. Instead, it currently focuses quite specifically upon the UK context - tailored to a particular audience - without explication of this context, extrapolation of it more broadly or consideration of its ramifications for the international or International Relations. Given our mandate around theory development in international studies, however broad-

ly and interdisciplinarity conceived, the piece might be better suited to another journal focused more on race and class, or terrorism studies.

In addition to the general dynamics of knowledge production in IR, career promotion systems in many Global South universities push academics to adhere to the norms dictated by the Global North. Although peripheral perspectives are unequally represented in the Global North, there is a silent acceptance among Global South scholars that perspectives offered by the Global North are more valuable than peripheral perspectives. In addition to global, regional, and local dynamics of knowledge production, the dominance of English in the IR discipline exacerbates the homogenization of knowledge. Treating languages as systems of meanings that influence how people see and think about the world, Pellerin suggests that knowledge production in IR is closely related to the perspective offered by the English language, which is itself the result of the language's historical conditions and its words (Pellerin, 2012).

Considering that creating homegrown theories means taking a "rogue" attitude, an attempt to take a stand and go against that what is already established, it is important to taken on board the dynamic that Global South scholars who engage in home grown theorizing risk being judged against mainstream theories and methodologies, and expected styles of academic writing (González, 2021). Regardless of the Global North/South division, IR scholarship in the world has still a long way to go to develop

alternative schools of IR.

For instance, in his analysis of the state of IR in Iran, Sariolghalam notes that despite Iranian officials' counter-American attitude and attachment to "revolutionary idealism," the US-originated theories (especially realism and liberalism) have an unprecedented impact on the Iranian IR community (Sariolghalam, 2009). The state of the Arab countries with respect to homegrown theorizing is no different. Against the backdrop of the politicization of social science research agendas and insufficient resources and investment in IR, there is little prospect of homegrown theorizing in the Arab world (Makdisi, 2009). In their analysis of 116 scholars in 57 Turkish universities, Okur and Aytekin (2023) attest to the dominance of Global North perspectives in Turkish IR community.

Although Russian IR scholars moved away from Marxist ideology in the post-Cold War period, they have not made a big leap toward homegrown theorizing. Realism remains the most dominant theory in Russian IR while some scholars use idealist, globalist, and post-positivist approaches. Most Russian IR scholars produce policy-relevant work (Sergounin, 2009). The survey conducted by Tsygankov and Tsygankov with forty IR scholars in various Russian universities in 2013 is telling. When asked about their evaluation of the development of Russian IR theory, 50% of the respondents selected the categorization of "insufficient development" and 37% of them opted for the categorization of "growing dependence on foreign/Western approaches" (Tsygankov & Tsygan-

koy, 2014).

In his analysis of Yan Xuetong's moral realism, Zhao Tingyang's Tianxia system, and Qin Yaqing's relational theory of world politics, Hwang notes that the nascent Chinese school of IR mimics the mainstream IR by using the altered meanings of the same concepts, ideas, and principles employed in the Global North (Hwang, 2021). Examining Japanese scholars' attempts of home-grown theorizing, Chen comes to the conclusion that the epistemological underpinnings of these attempts remain Western-centric (Chen, 2012). By the same token, Cho argues that South Korean IR academia's attempt to establish an independent school of IR met with little success as it still reinforces the colonial mentality (Cho, 2015).

As seen above, despite efforts to create alternative schools of IR around the world, IR scholars are still guided by deep-seated assumptions that impact their theory development practices. Even though diverse concepts and ideas have been developed in the Global South, these concepts and ideas have not yet evolved into major IR theories. Equally important, while there are structural barriers for Global South scholars to be included in the major discussion of IR, the agency of Global South scholars should also be highlighted. Based on his contextualized autoethnographic reflection of learn-

ing and researching IR in Indonesia, Umar (2023) reveals the complicity of Indonesian IR scholars in maintaining and naturalizing Western-centrism through their everyday exclusionary practices. Exclusionary practices also dominate the Turkish IR community. By adopting a bibliometric analysis of Turkish foreign policy studies between 1939 and 2022, Parlar Dal points to the scarcity of interactions and collaborative efforts within the IR community in Turkiye and the reluctance of scholars in reading and citing each other's papers (Mehmetcik, Dal, & Haksas, 2024). Taken all together, homogenization of knowledge in IR creates a path dependency that is carried over to subsequent generations of IR scholars.

Linguistic and Education-related Barriers

Linguistic and education-related barriers present major obstacles for Global South scholars in their attempts to globalize the discipline. One of the key characteristics of the Global North hegemony in the IR discipline is linguistic (Aydinli & Aydinli, 2024). The fact that English is the lingua franca of IR scholarship perpetuates the Global North/South inequalities.⁵ In their recent study, Aydinli & Aydinli (2024) find that English-medium journals have higher international rankings than non-English or

⁵ That being said, associating one dichotomy (English vs non-English) with another (Global South vs Global North) is rather problematic due to its complex, language-related hierarchies. Despite of the English primacy in IR scholarship, the Global North is not only Anglophone. There are several linguistic spheres in that Global North which has its own sphere of influence due to historical imperialism/colonialism (e.g., Francophone, Hispanophone, Lusophone, Dutch-speaking countries). For example, France, has historically played a major role in international diplomacy and has its own academic traditions and influence within IR scholarship. I would like to thank Reviewer 2 for his/her remarks on these points.

multi-language journals. Furthermore, they also find evidence to suggest that even in multi-language journals, priority is given to articles in English rather than those in other languages.

This linguistic unilateralism prevents Global South scholars prevents “the periphery’s original contribution potential in an imperialistic manner” Aydinli & Aydinli (2024). To be able to compete and have the possibility of having their academic work published, Global South scholars must gain proficiency in English; otherwise, their careers bear the fate of disappearing in the limbo of poor dissemination (González, 2021). Being proficient in another language requires time, effort, and money which is an extra load to the life of a Global South scholar that is not shared by his/her counterparts in the Global North, giving the latter an extra advantage (González, 2021). Those who decide to publish in their native languages are considered “outside of the club” (González, 2021). Aydinli & Aydinli (2024) eloquently articulate this linguistic discrimination in the following words:

The spread of linguistic unilateralism is thus not only a clear sign of dependency but reflects an underlying linguistic racism, ensuring that inclusion in the global discipline is possible only through the dominant language. Some may consider the ‘linguistic racism’ label harsh, but it seems warranted when we consider that on the other side of the picture is an apparent deep-seated inferiority complex

leading many hard-working periphery scholars to feel that the only way to succeed is to act, think, and write in the Anglo-American core’s language. The inherent ‘racism’ ensues in the sense that the Anglo-American core sees no anomaly in expecting periphery scholars to be proficient in English if they want their academic quality to be recognised. The practice is exacerbated by a parallel phenomenon within the periphery itself. While the linguistic core dominates and dismisses periphery disciplines at the global level, locally, the English-utilising ‘core of the periphery’ dominates and dismisses the non-English-proficient ‘periphery of the periphery’.

In addition to linguistic difficulties, Global South scholars may be less familiar with the specific formatting and style requirements of high-ranking journals, making it challenging for them to meet the publication standards expected by these journals. Peripheral works are much less likely to appear in journals that prioritize theoretical contributions (Aydinli & Aydinli, 2024). In Weaver’s words “journals are mainly defined, structured, and to a certain extent controlled by theorists. You only become a star by doing theory. The highest citation index scores all belong to theorists. Thus, the battle among theories/theorists defines the structure of the field...” (Weaver, 1998).

Education makes a huge difference with respect to compliance to the theoretical and methodological standards expected by IR journals. Global North and Global South

scholars, who receive their education at Global North universities, have a better chance of having their work published in high-ranking journals than their counterparts who graduated from peripheral universities. In addition to the level of education, the first group is more likely to publish coauthored papers with Global North scholars due to the networking opportunities they are exposed to during their education periods at Global North universities; yet, it is not always the case for the latter group. While conferences offer good opportunities for academic networking, financial and bureaucratic problems abound for Global South academics, which will later be discussed. Variations between the Global South countries with respect to their contribution to global knowledge were previously mentioned. Crucially, there are important asymmetries within Global South countries with respect to their integration into the IR communities in the Global North. Broadly speaking, national IR communities in the Global South are marked by divisions between the center and the periphery, which have serious implications for the way these groups are represented in the discipline. IR scholars from the Global South who receive IR education in the Global North are indeed more likely to be represented in the center. However, in many cases, if not all, they perpetuate the perspectives into which they are socialized in the Global North.

Mainstream IR education socializes students into particular ways of seeing and evaluating the world. As Niang puts it, most IR scholars “operate in an intellectual system characterized by structures of reason-

ing that remain conservative given that the themes and concerns, in fact the paradigmatic logics that have framed the boundaries of the discipline, endure even in critiques of orthodox scholarship” (Niang, 2016). All in all, the representation of Global South scholars in the disciplinary core does not always translate into the representation of Global South perspectives, which renders the Global South’s potential to globalize IR even more problematic.

Financial and Bureaucratic Problems

Financial resources in the Global North are usually generous compared to the Global South and crucially these resources are allocated to studies where the Global North has interests. Many universities in the Global South have poor funding mechanisms. Many Global South scholars have a lot of teaching responsibilities and little time for research. There are universities that do not have sufficient money to pay for subscriptions to major journals, as a result of which scholars working in these universities cannot keep track of the latest research in their fields.

Against the backdrop of financial limitations, many Global South scholars have difficulties attending international conferences. While some international conferences provide travel grants, they cover less than 25% of travel expenditures, not to mention the increased travel costs in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic (Chatterjee, 2022). In Brazil, some scholars sell their assets to afford ISA conferences (Kristensen, 2019). Many Mexican scholars are insufficiently

funded given the current presidential policy of austerity (Wade, 2019). Some Ph.D. students and junior scholars in Turkey take bank credits to go to ISA conferences (Ersoy, 2022). Visa application is another difficulty that illustrates the sharp distinction between North-based and South-based academics.

Difficulties related to participation in international conferences perpetuate the problem of inequality in the discipline and push many Global South scholars to the fringes of academia (Chatterjee, 2022). Even if Global South scholars attend international conferences and engage in networking, finding opportunities for academic collaboration with Global North scholars presents a significant challenge. That many North-based universities require fees for visiting scholar positions also impedes the mobility of peripheral scholars and the North-South dialogue (Ersoy, 2022). South-South dialogue and research collaborations are equally important in the path towards global IR with respect to the sharing and diffusion of knowledge, skills, and alternative perspectives. Yet, the current lack of cohesion within and between national IR communities in the Global South is another important factor that prevents the Global South from tapping into its full potential in the discipline.

Conclusion: How do we build a global discipline?

This study offered fresh perspectives on the ongoing global IR debate by critically examining deep-seated obstacles that hinder Global South scholars from making an equitable contribution to the field of Inter-

national Relations. Generally speaking, the dynamics both in the Global North and in the Global South perpetuate inequalities in the discipline that are carried over to subsequent generations of scholars. The absence of many Global South scholars from the core's discussions, debates, and themes in IR is a major problem for the discipline and world politics in general as it limits the understanding of global issues and hinders the development of comprehensive and inclusive solutions to global problems.

While there are apparently no easy solutions to this conundrum, this final section contemplates the ways in which the Global North/South inequalities in IR might be practically remedied. As many scholars have underlined, global IR requires first and foremost a thorough deconstruction of the unwritten norms of the discipline that privilege theories, methodologies, and concepts produced in the Global North. Although self-reflexivity is a crucial starting point in the path towards a global IR, there are limits to it as it risks remaining a sole intellectual endeavor (Anderl & Witt, 2020). For a truly global discipline, IR scholars need to “work towards changing the material conditions of possibility to effect transformations in practice” (Anderl & Witt, 2020).

Insights from the Global South are essential for Global IR (Acharya, 2016). In this respect, homegrown theorizing has a focal role (Aydinli & Biltekin, 2018). In creating homegrown theories, it is important to put a spotlight on how different regions of the Global South evolved throughout history and whether and how the basic IR concepts like

war, peace, alliances, diplomacy, and treaties have their roots in ancient societies around the world. Studies that illustrate connections between the cultures, concepts, and understandings of ancient societies and the current international system would broaden the geo-temporal perspective in IR (González, 2021). In other words, re-historicising pivotal events and concepts would contribute to the deconstruction of “the colonial thinking that suffuses cultural and racial assessments of non-Western political forms and to destabilise the epistemological centrality that characterises strategic concepts in IR” (Niang, 2016).

Interdisciplinary studies carry enormous potential to bring the experiences, voices, and concepts of the Global South to the core of the discipline. In this context, IR scholars around the world should be more involved in debates in history, anthropology, religion, philosophy, and archaeology. Different disciplines have different ways of knowing and doing things. By engaging with these disciplines, IR scholars can gain a deeper understanding of the historical, social, and cultural contexts that shape non-Western political forms and societies and develop more comprehensive and inclusive theories and frameworks that better reflect the complexity of global politics. This interdisciplinary approach can contribute to a more balanced and equitable representation of diverse voices in international relations scholarship. Furthermore, empirical research on comparative analysis of IR research and education around the world needs to be increased. A systematic analysis of different ways of thinking in

the Global South could bring new perspectives to the study of global politics.

In general, intellectual inequalities (that refer to disparities in access to knowledge, education, and opportunities) and material inequalities (that encompass disparities in resources, funding, and infrastructure) within the discipline create conditions that mutually affect each other. These inequalities perpetuate a cycle of disadvantage for Global South scholars which is further exacerbated by the dominance of Western-centric theories and perspectives. In this context, redressing material inequalities between the Global North and the Global South scholars would have intellectual implications in the long run and provide a further stimulus to the development of global IR. While fixing material inequalities between different world regions necessitates comprehensive initiatives at global, regional, and local levels, at this juncture, initiatives and efforts of each IR scholar would provide valuable steps, carrying the potential of leading to a tipping point in the direction of global IR. Future research could focus on the comparative analysis of the efforts of the Global South regions/countries in globalizing IR. Bibliometric analyses measuring the level of engagement and cooperation among IR scholars in different Global South regions/countries can also provide valuable insights into the dynamics of globalization of IR.

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