

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

Jacqui Ala

University of the Witwatersrand

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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.<sup>1</sup> The consequence of this is that IR's ontology and epistemology has evolved to prioritize a Western political, economic, and

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Jacqueline De Matos Ala, Assoc. Prof., Department of International Relations, University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. Email: jacqueline.dematosala@wits.ac.za.  0000-0002-8164-4523.

<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup>

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 GS<sup>3</sup>, 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.<sup>4</sup> Most of the work in this regard is focused on establishing knowledge plurality within the field of IR theory.<sup>5</sup> 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.<sup>6</sup> 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

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

<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> 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.

<sup>5</sup> Qin, "A Multiverse of Knowledge," 139-157.

<sup>6</sup> 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”.<sup>7</sup> 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.<sup>8</sup> 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.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, these theories reflect and entrench the power, prosperity, and influence of the West.<sup>10</sup> This mono-dimensionality in both focus and interest of most IR theories mitigates claims of their universal applicability despite arguments to the contrary.<sup>11</sup> 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.<sup>12</sup> 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.<sup>13</sup> 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.<sup>14</sup> This is one of the consequences of the

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

<sup>8</sup> 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.

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

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

<sup>11</sup> 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.

<sup>12</sup> 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.

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

<sup>14</sup> 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.<sup>15</sup> 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.”<sup>16</sup> 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.<sup>17</sup> 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.<sup>18</sup> 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.<sup>19</sup> 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.

<sup>15</sup> Qin, “A Multiverse of Knowledge,” 141.

<sup>16</sup> *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.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

<sup>18</sup> 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.

<sup>19</sup> 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.<sup>20</sup> 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.<sup>21</sup> 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'.<sup>22</sup> 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.<sup>23</sup> 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."<sup>24</sup> 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.<sup>25</sup> 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.<sup>26</sup> 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

<sup>20</sup> 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.

<sup>21</sup> Acharya, "Global International Relations (IR) and Regional Worlds," 649.

<sup>22</sup> Qin, "A Multiverse of Knowledge," 139-157.

<sup>23</sup> 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.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 303.

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

<sup>26</sup> 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.<sup>27</sup> 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.<sup>28</sup> 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.<sup>29</sup> 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.<sup>30</sup> 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.<sup>31</sup>

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

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

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

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> Blaney, "Global Education," 268-282.

<sup>31</sup> Hovey, "Critical Pedagogy and International Studies," 241-254.

Taiwanese IR courses.<sup>32</sup> 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.<sup>33</sup>

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.<sup>34</sup> 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.<sup>35</sup> 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.<sup>36</sup> 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.<sup>37</sup> 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.<sup>38</sup>

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

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

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> 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.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 276.

<sup>36</sup> Smith and Tickner, "Introduction," 2

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>38</sup> *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.<sup>39</sup> 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

<sup>39</sup> 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.<sup>40</sup> 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 structures<sup>41</sup> 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.<sup>42 43</sup>

The pedagogic device models the process of creating educational knowledge.<sup>44</sup> 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.'<sup>45</sup>

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

<sup>41</sup> 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. Hays 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 causality 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."

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

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

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 317.

<sup>45</sup> 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.<sup>46</sup>

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”,<sup>47</sup> as well as setting the limits of legitimate discourse.<sup>48</sup> Moreover, they control who has access to the ‘unthinkable’, meaning the production of new knowledge, and the ‘thinkable’, or official knowledge.<sup>49</sup> 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.<sup>50</sup> 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.<sup>51</sup> 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.<sup>52</sup> 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.

<sup>46</sup> Shay, “Curriculum Formation,” 316.

<sup>47</sup> Bernstein, *Pedagogy, Symbolic Control, and Identity*, 131.

<sup>48</sup> 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.

<sup>49</sup> Bernstein, *Pedagogy, Symbolic Control, and Identity*, 114

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

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

<sup>52</sup> Bernstein, *Pedagogy, Symbolic Control, and Identity: Theory, Research, Critique*, 114..

refers to considerations pertaining to social and moral order.<sup>53</sup> 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.<sup>54</sup> 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.<sup>55</sup> 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.”<sup>56</sup> 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.<sup>57</sup> 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.<sup>58</sup> 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.<sup>59</sup>

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

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

<sup>54</sup> Bernstein, *Pedagogy, Symbolic Control, and Identity*, 32.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>58</sup> Shay, “Curriculum Formation,” 317.

<sup>59</sup> *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.<sup>60</sup> 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.<sup>61</sup> 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.<sup>62</sup>

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

<sup>60</sup> 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.

<sup>61</sup> Singh, "Pedagogising Knowledge," 573.

<sup>62</sup> Bernstein, *Pedagogy, Symbolic Control, and Identity*, 28.

discipline in acknowledging the necessity of knowledge pluralism in the field of IR theory.<sup>63</sup> 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

<sup>63</sup> 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,<sup>64</sup> 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,

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<sup>64</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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 <sup>3</sup>	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.

<sup>1</sup>Chronological = theories sequenced, more or less chronologically.

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

<sup>3</sup> \*\*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>
<b>Teaching Western IR theories</b>	*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.	
<b>Inclusion of knowledge beyond the West</b>	*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.		
<b>Sequencing knowledge</b>	*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	

<b>Lecturer Agency</b>		*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
<b>Language</b>	*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.
<b>Pedagogical practice</b>	*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
<b>Rationale for teaching IR theory</b>	*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

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