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Epistemic hegemony: the Western straitjacket and post-colonial scars in academic publishing

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Abstract

The field of International Relations (IR) is barely 'international'. Scholars have voiced their concerns and as a result, we have witnessed calls for diversity and inclusion in IR, be it in publication or in syllabi. Notwithstanding, the misrepresentation of non-Western scholars in the production of knowledge is significant. This article sheds light on the dynamics of publishing from a non-Western perspective and reinforces Post-Colonial epistemological critiques in IR. Based on the latest dataset from the International Studies Association (ISA)'s journals, this article argues that the current setting of IR journals is not suited for and receptive of non-Western scholars and epistemologies.

Keywords: academia; publishing; research; Western; non-Western; post-colonialism.

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Introduction

The realm of academia is noble, yet ruthless. Brimming with fierce competition, the pinnacle of the academic domain is indubitably the prestige of publishing. Despite the fact that the process of publication varies from area to area, and even from journal to journal, what unites all processes is the high level of difficulty in breaking into the top-journal circle. Nevertheless, most journals in IR present disparities between Western and non-Western authors.

Amitav Acharya (2014) argues that the field of IR is not, in fact, international. Western intellectual colonisation plays a deciding role in the development of the discipline, which is reflected not only on what is considered proper knowledge, but also what is published. The reasons for that are not entirely centred on epistemological domination; economic and

developmental factors play a role. However, all factors share a common root: colonial relations. The field of IR has grown in the last decades in non-Western countries, yet, these are still seen as peripheral environments in IR:

IR scholarship has tended to view the non-Western world as being of interest mainly to area specialists, and hence a place for “cameras,” rather than of “thinkers,” for fieldwork and theory-testing, rather than for discovery of new ideas and approaches (Acharya 2014, 648).

In this article I analyse the dynamics of academic publishing in IR, with a focus on authorship distribution and selection. My aim is to investigate whether factors such as authors’ origins and preferred epistemologies affect publication chances. For this effort, I analyse the latest data from all seven ISA journals. Aided by Post-Colonial theory, I demonstrate how colonial relationships have moulded the way in which we think today and what is considered prime scientific research and knowledge. Supplementing data collected from ISA journals, I will also rely on faculty surveys from the Teaching, Research and International Policy (TRIP) database to build my argument of epistemological discrimination and knowledge erasure. This article is structured in three parts: first, a debate on knowledge and science based on Post-Colonial theory and how this debate is recurrent in IR; second, a brief presentation of the publication data from the journals; and third, an analysis of the data related to non-Western representation in IR, highlighting possible explanations for the lack of non-Western representation.

Post-Colonial scars and the idea of knowledge

The *raison d’être* of the field of Post-Colonial Studies has been to analyse the world from a set of lenses focusing on three main distinctions between the colonisers and the colonised: 1) the spatial and geographical differences between coloniser and colonised; 2) the difference in material and economic realities amongst the two groups; and 3) the crucial imaginative differences between them (McLeod 2007). Considering a scope of knowledge production, my focus here is on the second and mainly the third distinctions. Foucault (1978) argues that knowledge is intrinsically connected to power in the sense that the former is a manifestation and exercise of the latter. When transferred to the current idea of the production of ‘valid’ knowledge, it exposes the colossal influence of eurocentrism and Western epistemologies.

The definition and distinction of ‘Western’ and ‘non-Western’ continue to spark debates in the social sciences. There are two main ways to separate them: the first would be a geographical divide, similar to the North-South divide (despite some disparities, for example, Australia being considered a Global North country despite being in the Southern hemisphere), whilst the other an epistemological divide. My focus here is on the latter, nevertheless, the two are often intertwined.

Focusing on epistemological differences is difficult due to the fact that Western epistemology is so ingrained in IR in general that it is often troublesome to point out non-Western epistemologies in IR. Colonial relations have dictated international relations, including the production of knowledge. It is up to Western thinkers, scholars, professionals, and entities to decide what is ‘universally’ accepted as valid or even common knowledge. All forms of knowledge that differ from Western canons are pejoratively branded as ‘alternative’, implying it is not formal, valid knowledge. Local knowledges, thus, are given little to no recognition.

The clash between crystallised and local knowledges is a consequence of colonialism and eurocentrism. What the academic community has known and internalised as the valid type of knowledge is dependent on a Western epistemological order (Mudimbe 1988). Knowledge, thus, becomes the gold-standard to define what is valid and what isn’t, and knowledge’s own standards are a reflection of power relations amongst countries, most notably, the West versus the *Other* (Said 1978). Nevertheless, the clash between the typologies of knowledge is rooted in the so-called imaginative differences crystallised by colonial relations (McLeod 2007). Akin to Acharya’s (2014) view on the role of (or lack thereof) non-Western countries in the production of knowledge, Bruno Latour (1999) explores how the unknown is transformed into knowledge by assimilation with what is considered ‘core knowledge’, that is, Western knowledge. To this end, any information and type of knowledge is only considered as such when it is coded and understood through axioms constructed by and for Western science.

Two possible explanations emerge as to why Western knowledge prevails over non-Western. On the one hand, the most common Post-Colonial argument is that Western knowledge is dominant due to the asymmetric relations between Western and non-Western countries. These asymmetries are transposed to knowledge production, thus reflecting the purely imaginative differences between the two types of knowledge.

On the other hand, critics of Post-Colonial Studies point out that purely scientific scrutiny is what separates the two. The problem with this argument is twofold: first, the idea of scientific scrutiny is already a social construct based on colonial relations; the epistemology of science equals the Western epistemological order. Second, the idea of scientifically valid knowledge, often associated with Western-based knowledge, is a product of years of cultivation and investment, two factors that non-Western countries could not develop due to their colonial past.

There is no unique definition to what science is. The scientific standards often spread and used are merely one form of evaluating knowledge. What is considered valid or not is a social construct that has been developed – and is still developing – since colonial times. If this Western benchmark is the so-called ‘universally accepted’ concept, it is merely another consequence of colonialism.

Production of knowledge and the judgement and assessment of the validity of said knowledge are connected to budgetary allocations on research, science, and education. Unsurprisingly, all these areas are also connected and dependant on wealth, which in turn is a product of colonial relations between the West and the rest. Within the scope of IR, these Post-Colonial relationships are mirrored; the production of knowledge in IR – and their subsequent publications – is mostly

dominated by Western schools of thought and their scholars. Terms such as “Frankfurt School,” “Copenhagen School,” “Paris School,” “Welsh School,” “English School,” “American and British International Political Economy” are often known to IR students, whilst few to no “schools” from the rest of the world are taught, known, or even acknowledged.

Subaltern International Relations and the ‘Western straitjacket’

On non-Western IR theory, Arlene Tickner (2003a) analyses the trends of IR in Latin America and how dependency theory can be applied to its own influence in the discipline. Dependency theory surfaces as one of the few challengers of Western IR theories to holistically understand development in the Third World, particularly in Latin America (Cardoso and Faletto 1969). Western IR canons in development studies, such as modernisation theory, are ill-equipped to understand and account for the particularities of non-Western countries (Tickner 2003a). Despite the fact that dependency theory is one of the most widely diffused theoretical IR schools produced outside of the West, its reach in Western IR circles is severely limited.

Nevertheless, this sheds light on a separate, but related issue. Whilst it is true that Western IR theories are unable to understand the nuances of non-Western countries and that non-Western IR theories fill that gap, this relationship creates an assumption that non-Western scholars should only focus on non-Western/regional issues. Latin American scholars are expected to work on Latin American issues or issues that are highly relevant for the region, such as development. In other words, non-Western scholars are trapped by webs of their own origin, which establish a deterministic foundation for their line of work. This determinism impedes non-Western scholars to work on a plurality of issues or broader theories of IR.

Contemplating the history of IR as an independent field of study, the debates have mostly been centred around Western thought and its reinventions. IR has become a quasi-synonym for Western views on IR, and consequences of this dominance have mirrored power relations in the world (Booth and Smiths 1995). Knowledge and intellectual prestige were – and still are – proxy commodities for power and dominance.

IR has always been dominated by Western scholars and Western epistemologies. Stanley Hoffmann (1977) famously called IR an American Social Science, due to the fact that the issues dealt by IR arise from the United States and are mainly directed towards the United States. Consequentially, IR mimicked some traits that are “essentially American” (Hoffmann 1977, 57). One of these traits is the dominance of positivist epistemologies and the “the crusade to replace discussions of motives with such more objective data” (Hoffmann 1977, 57).

Despite the post-positivist turn in IR having shed much-needed light on the epistemological problems of the field, little has been done to actively equalise the validity of other perspectives. Widespread calls in the field for diversity and inclusion were not met by concrete actions and structured efforts. The IR of the non-West is either a reproduction of Western IR, or, if signs of originality are attempted, it becomes ‘subaltern IR’ (Tickner 2003b). Discussing the coloniality of

knowledge, Arlene Tickner (2003a; 2003b) and Aníbal Quinjano (2000) argue that IR is essentially 'Americocentric' and Eurocentric, and highly rooted in positivist/rationalist epistemologies to this day. It becomes clearer that IR knowledge mirrors Post-Colonial practices of past international relations (Tickner 2003a; 2003b)

Consequentially, IR is constrained by a 'Western straitjacket': the epistemological trap of disregarding all non-Western values and knowledges, either classifying them as subaltern or failing to acknowledge them altogether. The Western straitjacket refers to the denial and marginalisation of non-Western knowledge as a result of the Western epistemological imperialism and colonial relations.

In order to provide a solution for this issue, Amitav Acharya and Barry Buzan (2010) present and critically evaluate five common hypotheses to explain Western dominance in IR: 1) the West has solved the puzzle of IR theory; 2) Western IR theory has reached the hegemonic status in the field; 3) there are non-Western IR theories, but they are scattered and hidden; 4) conditions related to locality thwart the production of IR theory; and 5) Western dominance was conditioned to a head-start, and this scenario is susceptible to change soon (Acharya and Buzan 2010, 16-21).

The first hypothesis is by far the most absurd. It implies that an encompassing and diverse field of study such as IR can be reduced to universal truths which Western scholars miraculously found on their first try. Construing IR through a 'one size fits all' approach puts the field in the same category as the natural and hard sciences, in which there are universally accepted facts, leaving no room for interpretation whatsoever. IR is an extremely rich niche in this sense, always prone to changes and analysis, with no universal truths and a significant amount of critical thinking; framing IR as limited to a single (Western) viewpoint is simply unfathomable. Given the fluidity and abstractness of the social sciences, it is hardly plausible that 'the puzzle of IR theory' – even humouring such a notion – was solved.

The second hypothesis is much more of a condition than an explanatory reason. This hypothesis is in fact acceptable depending on the reason of Western IR sovereignty. It would be naïve to assume that Western IR is hegemonic because it is 'right'; this would link to the idea of the first hypothesis. That Western IR is hegemonic is not in question, what must be investigated is why. My argument is that the reason for this hegemonic status is colonial relationships between the West and the *Other* and its scars on epistemological prejudices.

In regard to the third hypothesis, it is likely that local knowledges are produced in the field of IR; once again, the question is why they are hidden. There are several barriers for non-Western IR theories to emerge. For instance, language may prove an effective hindrance. Non-Western scholars with no skills in a Western language (namely, English) find it difficult to diffuse their research globally. However, this does not account for the scantiness of non-English speaking channels and platforms to debate non-Western IR. The establishment of English as the quasi-exclusive language of IR also shows the colonial characters of international relations, which brings me to the previous point: non-Western IR theories may be hidden not by chance, but due to active suppression and silencing by Western IR gatekeepers.

As for the fourth hypothesis, locality-based factors may be key in explaining why there are no non-Western IR theories. Cultural or location-based barriers may thwart the spread of non-Western IR. It is possible that local knowledge is produced internally by a community to address an issue that is particular to that community. Nevertheless, with the advance of area studies, this hypothesis grows weaker. Western scholars are increasingly interested in the particularities of the non-West, opening channels for discussion, despite the fact that Western experts on non-Western issues will almost always have more visibility.

Lastly, the fifth hypothesis affirms that the current scenario of massive dominance of Western IR theories over non-Western is merely ephemeral. As promising as that sounds, it is borderline absurd. This hypothesis implies that IR theory and knowledge production would break the shackles of this subconscious, slumbering subjective colonialism, when no other field of study – or sphere of life, for that matter – managed to do so. Scientific imperialism and Western epistemological dominance may not last forever, but considering the pace of the evolution and emergence of non-Western IR theories and voices, it is unlikely that this balance is moving in the foreseeable future.

The hypotheses proposed by Acharya and Buzan (2010) may contribute to an overview of the underlying reasons of Western dominance in IR – some certainly more than others. The lack of non-Western IR is a particular outcome of active knowledge and epistemological suppression by Western scholars and institutions, curtailing the reach of non-Western scholars and non-Western knowledge. In a response to Justin Rosenberg's (2016) article calling for a shift of IR towards societal multiplicity, Arlene Tickner and David Blaney (2017) argue that the very nature of the discipline of IR is grounded on the erasure of multiplicity and the suppression of differences. These practices of not only suppressing, but also appropriating and erasing non-Western knowledges are what Santos (2010) has called "epistemicide" (Santos 2010, 39).

It is this epistemicide that Post-Colonial scholars and critics of Americo- and Eurocentric IR have been fighting against and trying to find spaces in which to expose their critiques and ideas on the field of IR. In the last twenty years, there have been several calls to decolonise IR and allow for a plurality of different epistemologies and local knowledges; not only are the channels for such voices limited, but so are the outcomes. As Tickner argues,

In addition to difficulties in jumping over imposing gates, third world scholars are hard-pressed to get around the gate-keepers of knowledge, which include specialised journals, academic associations, foundations and academic experts in the core. In the case of IR, publishing practices in journals are weighted heavily against scholars residing in the third world (2003b, 300).

The clear-cut hegemony of Western epistemologies in IR is visible throughout the years. For decades now, non-Western scholars have been fighting against this epistemicide and exposing the lack of space local knowledges and the so-called subaltern IR have in the course of the field. But how is the situation in 2020? Regardless of the lack of space for non-Western IR theories, are non-Western

scholars granted visibility in the IR community? Despite the dominance of the West in IR, the field of study has grown in number globally. Does IR visibility mirror, or at least comes close to mirror, the large number of non-Western IR scholars, regardless of their epistemological approach?

The publishing game

Given the panoramic view of the field, in regard to the production, acceptance, and validity of IR knowledge from Western and non-Western epistemic communities, it is implicit that this dominance reflects on the institution of academic publishing. The majority of top IR journals is ruled by Western publications. Journals define Western authors by their affiliation, rather than their origin or nationality. In this article, all scholars affiliated with institutions located in the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and all European countries at the time of their articles' submission and publication are considered 'Western'.

The steps through which a manuscript must undergo before publication are numerous, and the methodology most journals choose to apply are aimed to eliminate any biases. In theory, the double-blinded review process is designed to be impartial, thus, at least mitigating the gap between published Western and non-Western IR scholars. Nevertheless, an analysis of the latest reports from ISA journals' annual reports demonstrates that the discrepancy is alarming.

Not all journals provide full, detailed data regarding the acceptance rates or geographical disposition of their authors. To counter that, in the reports with missing data, the methodology I apply is to calculate which published issues are likely to contain the manuscripts submitted during the period covered by the reports, based on the average reported turnover time. Consequentially, the ratio of participation in these issues can be extracted. It is important to highlight that this methodology is imperfect; all manuscripts have different stages of editing, so the manuscripts in the issues published after the turnover time may not necessarily be the same as the manuscripts submitted during the period covered by the reports. Nevertheless, this methodology is useful to produce an estimate of the gap between Western and non-Western publications.

International Studies Quarterly (ISQ)

The scope of ISQ is fairly broad, publishing pieces on most topics related to IR. The latest report is the 2019 ISQ Annual Report, published in March of 2020, and containing data from the 1st of October 2018 to the 30th of September 2019. The document reports a total of 704 manuscripts received in the period; out of all manuscripts, 130 were submitted by non-Western authors, accounting for 18%. The United States alone accounted for 65% of all manuscripts – 461 (Prins and Wiegand 2020).

Out of all the 704 manuscripts received, 65 were accepted for publication (9%). In analysing the acceptance rate by author location, the data shows the disparity between Western

and non-Western acceptance. Out of the 65 accepted manuscripts, 61 were authored by Western scholars, while only four were submitted by non-Western scholars. 11% of Western manuscripts were published, whilst the non-Western rate was 3%. Again, there is a clear-cut disparity between the United States alone: US manuscripts accounted for 65% of the 65 manuscripts accepted for publication – 42 (Prins and Wiegand 2020).

International Studies Review (ISR)

Similar in scope to ISQ, ISR is also a wide-ranged journal that accepts contributions from most areas related to IR. ISR's latest available data is from 2020, encompassing the period from the 1st of October 2018 to the 30th of September 2019. ISR reports receiving a total of 333 original manuscripts; out of these, 82 were submitted by non-Western scholars, accounting for 25%. The United States alone accounted for 27%, with a total of 89 submissions (Murdie et al. 2020).

However, ISR's report does not state an accurate number of accepted articles, nor demographics of accepted manuscripts. Based on the average turnover time for decisions, the period covered by the report, and ISR's latest issues, the ratio of Western/non-Western can be estimated. In all issues published – considering ISR's average turnover time – 73 pieces were published, including book reviews, review essays, and fora. Even considering all co-authorships, there were only nine non-Western scholars involved in publication – a ratio of 12%.

Journal of Global Security Studies (JoGSS)

Unlike ISQ and ISR, JoGSS is a journal with a more focused scope; the newest series from ISA accepts submissions from Security-related topics, from all perspectives. The latest available data covers the period from the 1st of November 2018 to the 31st of October 2019. During this time, JoGSS reports receiving a total of 201 manuscripts. A total of 388 authors were included in these submissions – 67 non-Western, accounting for 17% (Avant 2019). Similar to ISR, JoGSS does not report the demographics of accepted manuscripts. Following a similar methodology – counting published issues during the reported period, whilst taking into consideration the average turnover time – out of 62 published works, only three (5%) were authored or co-authored by non-Western scholars.

International Political Sociology (IPS)

IPS is another broad-themed journal from ISA, but one that encourages the engagement of sociologists and socio-political theorists with the field of IR. The latest available report from IPS encompasses the period from January to November 2019. During that time, IPS received 183 manuscripts involving 214 authors; 41 (19%) were affiliated to non-Western institutions. In total, 36 authors were published: 35 Western scholars and a single one non-Western (Lisle et al. 2020).

International Studies Perspectives (ISP)

ISP focuses on the pedagogical side and on the profession of IR itself. The latest available data from ISP is from 2017 and it covers the period from the 1st of November 2018 to the 31st of October 2019. ISP's latest report states that the journal has received a total of 167 manuscripts for publication from 305 different authors. Out of these, 80 (26%) were non-Western scholars. A total of 46 authors were accepted for publication: 32 Western and 14 non-Western (Neack et al. 2020).

Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA)

FPA has a broad scope, but seeks contributions that emphasise the role of Foreign Policy Analysis as a method. The latest data available from FPA is from 2020 and it covers the 2019 calendar year. In 2019, FPA has received 204 manuscripts and surprisingly reports having conditionally accepted no manuscripts:

Of the remaining 92 that were not desk rejected and that received a decision (we have about 28 still under review that were submitted this year), 78% were rejected after review and 22% received a revise and resubmit (Brummer 2020, 2).

Furthermore, data from the submission ratio of Western/non-Western scholars is omitted. Instead, FPA states only the countries represented and the highest rates of authorship. Authors from 36 countries have submitted – 16 Western and 20 non-Western – yet, unsurprisingly, Western submissions are dominant – the US and UK alone account for 50.5% (Brummer 2020). Not much can be extracted from the reported data. Following the same methodology applied to ISR and JoGSS, the total number of authors published in the issues encompassed by the reported period was 48, out of which 9 (19%) were non-Western.

International Interactions (II)

II focuses on conflict and political economy, with an emphasis on how actors in the International System interact. The latest available data is from 2019 and it covers the period from the 1st of August 2018 to the 31st of July 2019. II reports having received 185 manuscripts from 304 authors – 55 (18%) non-Western scholars. Out of the 185 manuscripts, 43 (23%) were eventually accepted or conditionally accepted, though the report does not reveal how many authors were involved, let alone the Western/non-Western ratio (Pickering 2019). Manually analysing the published issues covered by the reporting period, the data shows that a total of 81 authors were published, out of which 7 (9%) were non-Western.

Based on all the data collected through the journals' annual reports and the published issues covered by their reporting periods, non-Western participation and representation in IR academic

publishing is significantly smaller than Western. Table 1 illustrates the data from the journals. On average, 19% of all submissions were made by non-Western scholars, whilst the average ratio of Western/non-Western published works in the journals is 12%. In total 486 manuscripts were authored or co-authored by non-Western scholars, out of which only 47 (9%) were published. In contrast, 1896 submissions by Western scholars were received by the journals, and 364 (19%) were published – more than double the ratio of non-Western manuscripts.

ISP has received the largest number of non-Western submissions (26%) and the most balanced ratio of Western/non-Western acceptance (70% - 30%). In contrast, JoGSS has received the least amount of non-Western submissions (17%) with an acceptance ratio of only 5%. IPS, however, is the journal with the lowest number of non-Western published scholars – only one (corresponding to 3% of total acceptances).

Table 1. Western and non-Western representation in ISA journals', 2018-2019.

	SUBMISSIONS (authors)			ACCEPTANCE (authors)		
	Western	Non-Western	Total	Western	Non-Western	Total
ISQ	574 (82%)	130 (18%)	704	61 (95%)	4 (5%)	65
ISR	251 (75%)	82 (25%)	333	65 (88%)	9 (12%)	73
JOGSS	321 (83%)	67 (17%)	388	59 (95%)	3 (5%)	62
IPS	173 (81%)	41 (19%)	214	35 (97%)	1 (3%)	36
ISP	225 (74%)	80 (26%)	305	32 (70%)	14 (30%)	46
FPA	At least 51%	At least 15%	204	39 (81%)	9 (19%)	48
II	249 (82%)	55 (18%)	304	74 (91%)	7 (9%)	81

Source: elaborated by the author.

Post-Colonial scars in IR knowledge production

Despite most reports mentioning the need to be more inclusive, be it gender-based or location-based, non-Western representation is still underwhelming. The review processes are designed to mitigate this gap; double-blinded peer reviewing, in theory, eliminates any form of discrimination directed towards authors, promoting a fair evaluation of submissions. Where, then, lies the flaw? Why are non-Western scholars still thoroughly underrepresented? Similar to Acharya and Buzan's (2010) work, I will develop a few hypotheses, under three main themes: practical, organisational, and epistemological.

Firstly, there are so-called practical factors related to the countries' particularities that may hinder higher participation and representation of non-Western scholars in IR publishing. Within these practical factors are the lack of resources and funding for general academic research and scholarship, specific – and limited – funding opportunities for policy and/or problem-based

matters, and normative issues related to unquestioned *status quo* and internalised ideologies and self-perception (Evans 2018).

The realities of non-Western countries, particularly Third World countries are entirely different from their Western counterparts. Western countries are economically developed, which allows for the better functioning of political institutions and channelled resources into research and scientific development. On the other hand, non-Western countries either suffer from underdevelopment, leaving no strong political institutions and no available resources to be spent on science and research, or they are developing, which makes resource allocation to economic issues a priority (Acharya 2014).

Science and research, thus, serve as a tool for economic development, rather than for the production and advancement of knowledge for its own sake. As Ole Wæver (1998, 695) argues, “Changing forms of state and state intervention raise a need for social scientific knowledge, and thus political developments are shaped by whether and how social scientists supply this, and the social sciences are structured by these roles.” The interaction between society, science, and State is what dictates and shapes the future of research.

To this end, Tickner (2013) argues that not only is funding for science and research scarce in non-Western countries, but also a large share of the limited amount available originates from private donors or institutions who prioritise specific use – or appropriation – of knowledge. In other words, funded research is steered towards a particular ending, which may include the appropriation of knowledge produced in non-Western countries and its assimilation and integration in Western ideals of science and knowledge.

Common forms of this interaction are funded research for development-themed or regional-specific projects. Whilst the first is centred on policy/problem-based practical questions, the latter confines scholars to region-specific issues in a deterministic trap. Both these issues are rooted in the scars of colonialism, which is visible in all forms of West/non-West relationships (McLeod 2007). As a consequence, these relationships foster normative issues in between science and research, and the non-West.

Given these systemic effects on the production of knowledge, the way in which non-Western scholars perceive themselves before the realm of science and knowledge production is negatively affected. Considering the extremely low representation rates, non-Western scholars internalise the self-perception and stereotype of being limited to reproduce Western IR theories and thinking. The possibility of innovative theoretical works unhindered by regional and policy/problem-based issues is curbed by systemic and colonial Western domination in the field of knowledge production. In other words, non-Western scholars are discouraged to exit Plato’s cave and the status-quo remains unchallenged.

Secondly, on the organisational camp of hypotheses, the lack of fail-proof anonymity guarantees regarding authorship of submitted manuscripts is severely problematic. Even though manuscripts are submitted by the authors themselves with no identification cues, accompanying identified cover letters are aimed at the editors. Scholars from the same area and expertise tend

to know one another, and consequentially know who the editors of the journals are and who the possible reviewers for that given topic are. Therefore, double-blinded peer review is not so blind after all.

Roger Watson (2015) highlights these issues of biases based on identification. Even considering an airtight formal concealment of the authors' identities, these can still be deduced based on the nature of the work under review. Similarly, when submitting a manuscript to a broad-scoped journal, an author can fairly accurately pinpoint which are the most likely reviewers – authors who have published research on similar topics in the journal in question. Embedded is the variable of competition within academia. Reviewers might unfairly judge a manuscript, hindering its publication for their own gain:

While it is always possible to protect the identity of reviewers during and after the review process, it is often possible for reviewers to identify authors by virtue of the work that is being reviewed. Moreover, even when the author cannot be identified, reviewers may take exception to a line of work for reasons that are not concerned with the science or because the work competes with or refutes some of their own work. Therefore, the advantages of the system—minimizing bias and protecting identities—may be undermined by prejudice on behalf of reviewers (Watson 2015, 1).

Third, and perhaps most importantly, epistemology, once again, takes the centre stage. Climbing on the shoulders of giants, such as Quinjano, Tickner, and Acharya, amongst others, I showed how IR is still Western; despite many calls for balanced representation and inclusion, and that the field of IR is still constrained by the Western straitjacket – even if subconsciously. This hegemony of the Western epistemological order in IR has sunk its roots so deeply in the IR community – both Western and non-Western – that prejudices against non-Western IR pass by unnoticed by some. Even ruling out any organisational interference and identity leaks, this Gramscian subconscious hegemony may be accounted for the underrepresentation of non-Western scholars in IR.

The assessment of one's origin does not necessarily require a reviewer to know the identity of the authors. Apart from the overall epistemological cues present in the manuscript and Watson's (2015) argument that authorship can be deduced from the nature of the work itself, there are also bibliography and linguistic cues. Considering epistemological cues, a reviewer is able to identify whether a piece follows the normative, dominant Western IR epistemology; otherwise it is ignored or considered subaltern IR. If that is the case, the manuscript is turned down for not contemplating scientific IR standards, replicating the discrepancy between Western and non-Western representation, and strengthening the dominance of the former over the latter.

To illustrate, data from William & Mary's TRIP survey shows the preferences of US-based scholars – the majoritarian source of submitted and published manuscripts as well as reviewers – on epistemological grounds. Table 2 shows the epistemological cut within US-based scholars. More than half of the respondents characterise their work under positivist epistemologies, which are linked to the foundations of Western thought and, consequentially, (Western) IR. Similarly,

Tables 3 and 4 show which are the most influential scholars of the field and the most valued PhD programmes in IR in the world, respectively, according to US scholars, strengthening the argument of the dominance of Western values in IR.

Table 2. Epistemological preferences of US scholars.

	Response option	n	Percentage
1	Positivist	949	66.8
2	Non-positivist	239	16.7
3	Post-positivist	234	16.5

Source: Maliniak et al. 2017, 6.

Table 3. Most influential IR scholars according to US scholars.

Rank	Name	N	Percentage in top 4
1	Alexander Wendt	349	30.11
2	Robert O. Keohane	310	26.75
3	John Mearsheimer	257	22.17
4	James Fearon	233	20.1
5	Kenneth Waltz	182	15.7
6	Martha Finnemore	160	13.81
7	Joseph S. Nye Jr.	158	13.63
8	Robert Jervis	119	10.27
9	Stephen M. Walt	103	8.89
10	Kathryn A. Sikkink	92	7.94

Source: Maliniak et al. 2017, 10.

Table 4. The best PhD programmes in IR in the world according to US scholars.

	Question	Rank	Institution name	n	N	Percentage in top 5
1	PhD	1	Harvard University	575	844	68.13
2	PhD	2	Princeton University	513	844	60.78
3	PhD	3	Stanford University	484	844	57.35
4	PhD	4	Columbia University	333	844	39.45
5	PhD	5	University of Chicago	233	844	27.61
6	PhD	6	Yale University	218	844	25.83
7	PhD	7	University of California-San Diego	181	844	21.45
8	PhD	8	Massachusetts Institute of Technology	162	844	19.19
9	PhD	9	University of Michigan-Ann Arbor	122	844	14.45
10	PhD	10	University of California-Berkeley	121	844	14.34

Source: Maliniak et al. 2017, 12.

Out of top ten influential academics cited in the survey, all are affiliated with US institutions. Furthermore, all are white, and eight out of ten are male. Kenneth Waltz, highly listed, famously said that “[i]t would be [...] ridiculous to construct a theory of international politics based on Malaysia and Costa Rica” (Waltz 1979, 72), which show the influential disregard for non-Western IR.

Similarly, out of the ten best PhD programmes in IR in the world, all are within US institutions. Echoing Hoffmann’s (1977) words, the prestige of the field – in particular, the prestige of a set of epistemologies, in this case rooted in Western thinking – ensures its dominance in the field and shapes its future debates.

Reviewers also pay close attention to manuscripts’ bibliography lists. Not only are reviewers biased towards Western epistemology, but they may also discriminate based on the lack of works they personally consider to be important. There are few consensual canons in IR, and bibliography-based discrimination may happen due to a lack of works that dovetail the reviewers’ own standpoint or even the reviewers’ own work. To mark a manuscript as substandard for lacking dialogue with the fields’ major works is one thing, but to reject it on personal preference basis is another entirely.

Even considering the fact that there are at least two reviewers, IR has been normalised and its high-quality epistemology has become a ‘cookie cutter’, leading to reviewers likely sharing the same views – both on epistemology as on bibliography – particularly due to the majority of Western reviewers. Not all journals’ reports presented this information, but the ones who do show the vast majority of Western reviewers. ISR, for example, reports only 13% of the reviewers were non-Western. In stark contrast, the United States alone accounted for 55% (Murdie et al. 2020), while ISQ’s 2018 report reveals a rate of 59.1% of US-based reviewers (Nexon 2019). Unsurprisingly, the 2019 ISQ report mentions “anecdotally” this disparity: “boosting submissions from non-OECD countries remains difficult and we have found *anecdotally* that manuscripts from global south scholars have a higher chance of rejection after review as well as rejection without review” (Prins and Wiegand 2020, 7). Furthermore, the 2019 ISQ report acknowledges the disparity, yet mentions that the editorial team had no time to look into the issue: “the data continue to show few submissions from non-OECD countries and few acceptances for manuscripts that do originate outside of the global north. The [...] editorial team has not had time to begin any new initiatives to address this gap” (Prins and Wiegand 2020, 17).

Moving further, Table 5 shows the opinion of US scholars on what are the most influential IR journals in the world. The opinions of non-Western scholars, however, seem to be extremely similar to that of its US counterparts, further showing the dominance of US knowledge and science on the discipline and course of IR in general. Tables 6, 7, and 8 show the results of the same survey when applied to scholars from Asia and Oceania, Latin America and Caribbean, and Middle East and Africa, respectively.

Table 5. Most influential IR journals in the world according to US scholars.

	Journal	n	Percentage in top 4
1	International Organization	797	60.33
2	International Studies Quarterly	621	47.01
3	International Security	533	40.35
4	Foreign Affairs	405	30.66
5	American Political Science Review	319	24.15
6	World Politics	309	23.39
7	Journal of Conflict Resolution	290	21.95
8	Foreign Policy	185	14
9	European Journal of International Relations	176	13.32
10	American Journal of Political Science	167	12.64

Source: Maliniak et al. 2017, 11.

Table 6. Most influential IR journals in the world according to Asian and Oceanian scholars.

	Journal	n	Percentage in top 4
1	International Organization	167	58.6
2	International Security	111	38.95
3	International Studies Quarterly	99	34.74
4	European Journal of International Relations	92	32.28
5	Foreign Affairs	91	31.93
6	World Politics	63	22.11
7	Review of International Political Economy	46	16.14
8	Review of International Studies	44	15.44
9	Millennium	42	14.74
10	American Political Science Review	39	13.68

Source: Maliniak et al. 2017, 9.

Table 7. Most influential IR journals in the world according to Latin American and Caribbean scholars.

	Journal	n	Percentage in top 4
1	Foreign Affairs	76	42.22
2	International Organization	67	37.22
3	International Studies Quarterly	42	23.33
4	Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional	42	23.33
5	International Security	38	21.11
6	European Journal of International Relations	36	20
7	Foreign Policy	30	16.67
8	Le Monde Diplomatique	26	14.44
9	Millennium	25	13.89
10	Review of International Studies	25	13.89

Source: Maliniak et al. 2017, 25.

Table 8. Most influential IR journals in the world according to Middle Eastern and African scholars.

	Journal	n	Percentage in top 4
1	International Organization	76	32.2
2	Foreign Affairs	68	28.81
3	International Security	66	27.97
4	European Journal of International Relations	42	17.8
5	International Studies Quarterly	38	16.1
6	Uluslararası İlişkiler	37	15.68
7	Journal of Conflict Resolution	34	14.41
8	International Affairs	31	13.14
9	Foreign Policy	30	12.71
10	World Politics	30	12.71

Source: Maliniak et al. 2017, 33.

Five journals figure in all lists: International Organization, International Security, Foreign Affairs, International Studies Quarterly, and European Journal of International Relations. Noticeable is the fact that only the Latin America and Caribbean and the Middle East and Africa regions included, each, one regional, non-Western journal – Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional (Brazil) and Uluslararası İlişkiler (Turkey).

Analysing publication data from some of the top journals from 1970-1995, Wæver (1998) highlights the fact that Western – particularly US and UK – publications are the overwhelming majority. Table 9 shows data from his research. The percentage of publication of the group so-called ‘Rest of the World’, comprising all countries outside North America and Europe, has never been higher than 4% in these journals.

Table 9. Distribution of authors by geographical residence in American and European journals, 1970-95.

Journal/Origin	North American (%)	British (%)	Rest of Europe (%)	Rest of the world (%)
	1970	92.3 (24)	0	3.8 (1)
	1975	100 (25)	0	0
International Organization	1980	66.7 (14)	14.3 (3)	4.8 (1)
	1985	80 (16)	10 (2)	5 (1)
	1990	78.1 (12.5)	0	18.8 (3)
	1995	85.7 (18)	4.8 (1)	9.5 (2)

continue...

continuation...

Journal/Origin		North American (%)	British (%)	Rest of Europe (%)	Rest of the world (%)
	1970	95.5 (21)	4.5 (1)	0	0
	1975	92.9 (19.5)	0	0	7.1 (1.5)
International Studies Quarterly	1980	88.5 (23)	0	7.7 (2)	3.8 (1)
	1985	88.5 (23)	0	7.7 (2)	3.8 (1)
	1990	90.9 (20)	0	9.1 (2)	0
	1995	83.3 (20)	8.3 (2)	8.3 (2)	0
International Security (1975)	1980	68.75 (22)	18.75 (6)	0	12.5 (4)
	1985	100 (28)	0	0	0
	1990	86.4 (14)	9.1 (2)	0	4.5 (1)
	1995	96 (24)	0	4 (1)	0
World Politics	1970	100 (20)	0	0	0
	1975	79.3 (18.25)	15.2 (3.5)	4.3 (1)	1.1 (0.25)
	1980	81.8 (9)	0	9.1 (1)	9.1 (1)
	1985	100 (22)	0	0	0
	1990	89.5 (17)	0	0	10.5 (2)
	1995	91.7 (11)	0	0	8.3 (1)
Review of International Studies, formerly British Journal (1976)	1975	0	100 (20)	0	0
	1980	40 (6)	40 (6)	6.7 (1)	13.3 (2)
	1985	26.1 (6)	65.2 (15)	0	8.7 (2)
	1990	14.7 (2.5)	73.5 (12.5)	5.9 (1)	5.9 (1)
	1995	43.3 (8.66)	40 (8)	5 (1)	11.7 (1.33)
European Journal (1995)	1995	30.8 (6.16)	30 (6)	39.2 (7.83)	0
Millennium (1972)	1975	28.6 (6)	71.4 (15)	0	0
	1980	15.4 (2)	52.3 (6.8)	23.1 (3)	9.2 (1.2)
	1985	34.4 (5.5)	43.8 (7)	12.5 (2)	9.4 (1.5)
	1990	61.1 (11)	38.9 (7)	0	0
	1995	46.7 (7)	33.3 (5)	13.3 (3)	6.7 (1)
Journal of Peace Research	1970	28.6 (6)	0	71.4 (15)	0
	1975	18.8 (3)	6.3 (1)	75 (12)	0
	1980	50 (12)	12.5 (3)	33.3 (8)	4.2 (1)
	1985	43.5 (10)	4.3 (1)	43.5 (10)	8.7 (2)
	1990	50 (16)	9.4 (3)	34.4 (11)	6.2 (2)
	1995	43.8 (14)	12.5 (4)	39.1 (12.5)	4.9 (1.5)

Source: Wæver 1998, 698.

Wæver's data shows that the situation 25-50 years ago used to be significantly worse. The data from the ISA journals show an average of 12% of Western/non-Western publication ratio. However, the increase in participation over 50 years is extremely slow. Moreover, it is important to notice that the field of IR has been developed in the West much earlier than in the rest of the world. In Brazil – one of the largest poles of IR scholars outside the West – the first undergraduate course in IR was only established in the late 1970s, and borrowing much from neighbouring areas, such as Political Science, Law, Economics, and Sociology, to name a few (Lessa 2005).

Lastly, language cues may also play an important role in reinforcing the prejudices against non-Western scholars. A significant portion of journals' desk rejects are related to improper or substandard writing. For non-native English speakers (NoNES), this is another obstacle to streamline their work. The vast majority of IR journals adopt English as their only language. The domination of the English language over others merges into the discussion of Post-Colonialism as a whole, yet it escapes the scope of this article. Still, NoNES must undertake the laborious endeavour of perfecting a second language – or paying for costly editorial services – in order to simply submit their work for consideration.

Miguel Clavero (2010, 552) coined the term “linguistic injustice” to address this very issue. Clavero's work analyses trends in linguistic injustice in academic publishing in relations to the field of Biology – a field in which jargons are much more universal than IR. Moreover, his piece focuses on the overall level of English of NoNES and the additional efforts they must make to learn another language. There are several surveys that conclude the overall feeling of linguistic injustice in academic publishing across all fields of study (Kourilová 1998; Li 2002; Hwang 2005; Duszak and Lewkowicz 2008; Lillis and Curry 2010; Hanauer and Englander 2011; Ferguson et al. 2011).

Even in cases in which NoNES have attained the highest levels of English and fully mastered ‘academic English’, specific linguistic constructions and vocabulary may flag a ‘Western epistemological grammar’. Just like accents in spoken languages, written language can also give away non-natives, despite the lack of formal mistakes. Depending on the phrasing and word choice, reviewers are able to identify non-Western structures in the manuscripts. Even if the linguistic structure is grammatically impeccable and following strict academic rules, there are linguistic cues within this poll of academic English.

Wæver (1998) points out this linguistic and writing style issue in his typology of scientific particularities. Given the hegemony of the US branch of Saxon knowledge, the standardisation of academic language around US writing style is not only noticeable, but also a deciding factor when evaluating manuscripts. US writing style prioritises a reductionist and parsimonious elaboration of ideas in text – mirroring the natural sciences – whilst other traditions of writing may prioritise a deeper probe into theoretical concepts and ideas, resulting in longer, more abstract texts, akin to philosophical canons of the 18th century.

One is not superior to the other, yet, given US hegemony over knowledge production and valuing, one is prioritised over the other. The data analysed here – though limited, on the one

hand, and specific to the field of IR on the other – shows a gargantuan gap between the two groups – even including NoNES European scholars under the ‘Western umbrella’.

Despite the fact that the focus here is on the epistemological differences between Western and non-Western IR – and the Gramscian hegemony of the former and the marginalisation and erasure of the latter – geographical divides also reflect on this hegemony over the discipline. Considering the main events of IR organised by ISA, all annual conventions – since its inception in 1959 – have taken place in Western countries, more particularly either in the United States or in Canada (*Past ISA conferences and programs* 2019). There have been some minor conferences, often partnered with a local institution, located in non-Western countries, but again, those are often marginalised and not given the same importance as the annual ISA conventions.

The consequences are higher costs for non-Western scholars (who are already financially ill-equipped to attend international events), which leads to a significantly lower degree of participation and representation – now not only due to the epistemological constraints of section chairs selecting and approving panels, but also due to geographical, and consequentially financial, constraints. In the end, Steve Smith’s words still ring true: “hegemonic country, hegemonic discipline” (Smith 2002, 67).

Conclusion

There is no question that there is a significant gap between Western and non-Western IR. Consequentially, there is also a significant gap between Western and non-Western representation in the field of IR – that is, publications. In this article, I showed that despite several calls for equality and balance between the West and the rest of the world over the decades, current data still shows that this notorious gap persists.

Non-Western IR is a rare find, despite being allegedly encouraged by the majority of journal editors and the IR community in general; yet, most non-Western IR works are either ignored or labelled as subaltern. The data analysed here has shown that non-Western scholars are thoroughly misrepresented in the form of academic publishing, and I argued that the reasons for that are practical, organisational, and mainly epistemological.

The lack of resources for science and research – a scar of colonial relations – hinders the development and cultivation of knowledge. The scarce funding available for research is in most cases either insufficient to stimulate researchers or originated from private donors who directs research towards a self-benefitting end. As a result, many non-Western countries see a process of ‘brain-diaspora’, in which researchers seek positions in Western institutions, being trained and prepped towards a Western-only-based type of knowledge.

Academic journals tried to mitigate any prejudicial practices towards authors by implementing a double-blinded peer review method, in which the identities of the authors are not divulged to

either reviewer. Nevertheless, journals, as organisations, are not immune to mistakes, and hints regarding the identities of the authors can be dropped – intentionally or not – either in the manuscript itself, or in the cover letter addressed to the editors. Moreover, a number of people involved in the editorial process do know the identity of the author and the secrecy depends solely on them.

Yet, I argue that the largest barrier is epistemological. IR, being a Western-dominated field, has implemented a Western epistemological order which has become the scientific standard. Any deviations are ignored or relegated to second-tier IR. Despite the alleged anonymity of manuscripts, there are several cues in the manuscript itself that can be flagged by reviewers – who are, for the most part, Western too. Challenges to normative Western thought, bibliography biases, or linguistic cues all play a role in this maintenance of Western epistemological dominance. That is not to say, however, that reviewers purposely seek these non-Western flags when they are reviewing a manuscript. IR is entrapped in what I called a Western straitjacket. This bias towards Western-structured manuscripts – from content to writing – may be subconscious, dovetailing a Gramscian concept of hegemony.

It is important, however, to denote the limitations of this research. First, this is an experimental effort, encompassing a small-scale dataset. Analysing seven journals' data may not fully represent the big picture. However, due to purpose limitations, it was unfeasible to include all IR journals in this analysis. I deliberately decided to analyse ISA journals for two main reasons: 1) they are the official journals by the largest IR association and should follow similar procedures; and 2) their scope is fairly broad. Had I chosen to analyse journals with a higher impact factor, I would be more limited in terms of scope, and a separate analysis detailing which sub-areas and topics of IR are preferred by which region would be required.

Secondly, it is hard to accurately pinpoint authorship geographical location, since the standard method is to consider the authors' current institutional affiliation, and not where they have undertaken their studies. This means that a portion of non-Western scholars affiliated with Western institutions is counted as Western, and vice-versa. This limitation, however, does not tamper with the epistemological analyses, which are still visible in epistemological and linguistic cues in-text. It does, however, have an impact in cases in which a non-Western scholar was entirely raised or educated in Western institutions, perhaps with a multi-linguistic upbringing. This, however, would raise another debate on what it means to be Western and non-Western, which is not the scope of this article.

Despite these limitations, I shed some light on the current scenario of IR representation through publications amongst non-Western scholars. I do not question the argument that the publishing game is ruthless and extremely competitive for everyone, but both the data and the general perception of non-Western scholars show that the slope is indeed steeper for them. I also argued in this article that this Western epistemological hegemony is rooted in past colonial relationships. The era of colonies ended long ago, but we still live in the era of neo- and post-colonies, in which the scars of colonial relationships are reflected in all arenas of

everyday life. As V.S. Naipaul once wrote, “The empires of our times were short-lived, but they have altered the world forever; their passing away is their least significant feature” (1967, 38).

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