# MOVING GLOBAL IR FORWARD – A ROAD MAP

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**Abstract:** *Many disciplinary analyses have exposed IR as a Western-centric discipline, unaware or uncaring of its own ethnocentric outlook. A growing consensus in the Global IR framework argue that it is time to move beyond disciplinary critique but scholars disagree on how to proceed. Three key issues remain debated: "Who can talk?", "how to go local?" and "how to make the local global?" The paper confronts these questions by offering three interlinked contributions. First, it develops a typology of scholarly profiles by combining the typically isolated debates on scholarly origin, embeddedness within local context, and location. Secondly, the paper identifies three main strategies for discovering and developing theories outside the core. Third, it offers two different avenues for applying local theories to the larger global canvas, underlining that Global South theories should not necessarily be limited to their 'own' region. Together these three contributions constitute a comprehensive roadmap of how to advance Global IR's research agenda. The paper provides examples focused on Latin America highlighting the benefits of the roadmap while also giving agency to regional theoretical debates that are often overlooked in the Global IR debate.*

## INTRODUCTION

Why is there no non-Western theory of international relations? This question has been frequently asked over the last years, underlining the claim that International Relations (IR) is a Western-centric discipline dominated by Western theories, methodologies and scholars (Hoffmann 1977, 10, Acharya and Buzan 2007, Tickner and Wæver 2009). Western dominance in science is not unique to IR, however, it does potentially pose a larger problem bearing in mind that IR intends to explain *international* relations. Can you explain the international without being a truly international discipline? Is it necessary to hear the voices from the places you are trying to explain? There is a growing agreement within IR that the answer to the latter question is affirmative. Most recently, the president of APSA David Lake also acknowledged and problematized the existing parochialism in IR (Lake 2016). This wide agreement can be attributed to a decade of hard work by parts of the IR community who have been uncovering the inequality and biases in the discipline, discerning how existing structures benefit some over others. However, it is also possible to identify a growing agreement that we need to move beyond critique and start reshaping the discipline with insights from the Global South (Acharya 2016, Hurrell 2016).

In 2014, Amitav Acharya embodied these sentiments calling for a more *Global* IR, denominating the fact that IR in its current status is not a truly international discipline (Acharya 2014a). Moving beyond critique of parochialism, he called for Global IR *"to develop concepts and approaches from non-Western contexts on their own terms and to apply them not only locally, but also to other contexts, including the larger global*

*canvas"* (Acharya 2014a, 650). The key question is, how should we proceed with this endeavor? Actual attempts to move beyond the critique are scarce and what we are often left with are calls and reflections at the end of articles and less substantial attempts to incorporate insights from the Global South. This paper argues that a core issue is a lack of agreement on how to proceed. This means that we are stuck in the critique-stage and attempts to move beyond from here appear fragmented and disconnected.

While the underpinning of Global IR is the agreement about ethnocentricity in the discipline, the Global IR framework does not explicitly deal with the issue of scholarly identity. Much have been written on non-Western agency, stating that IR scholars have tended to view the non-Western world as a place for *"fieldwork and theory-testing, rather than for discovery of new ideas and approaches"* (Acharya 2014a, 648). Put differently, the non-Western world has not been perceived as an agent of IR knowledge but rather an object of IR study (Tickner 2003b). However, it is unclear whether non-Western agency only relates to content or if it also denotes non-Western scholars. Consequently, the first question to confront is who can talk for and about these regions? Secondly, Acharya calls for the development of local concepts and theories. However, there seems to be various perspectives on how to develop or discover these concepts - in other words: "how to go local?" The second part of his call refers to the larger and global application of these local theories. There has been a tendency to regard theories from the West as universal by default, whereas theories from the Global South are considered local or regional. For example, while important work has been done on security concerns in the periphery, most of the theories are not considered to be of general applicability for other contexts. The core issues are if some of these "local" theories might be useful in other contexts and how we should go about exploring the scope of these theories. In other words: "how to make the local global?" There has not been sufficient reflections on how to do this, which this paper aims at remedying.

In the end, we are left with three key issues: "who can talk?", "how to go local?" and "how to make the local global?" This paper aims at remedying this gap by providing a comprehensive roadmap of different pathways related to these questions. In this way, the roadmap also helps identifying seemingly different and previously disconnected insights and attempts and demonstrate how these fit into the Global IR framework. Furthermore, the paper also provides reflections on what the different pathways entail. Whatever road we choose to follow, there are pitfalls on our way and to avoid such traps, one has to know that they exist. Furthermore, it is also important to be aware of the consequences of choosing one road over another. In this manner, the paper helps to move the Global IR debate beyond the critique of Western-centric IR by identifying the different pathways forward.

While the roadmap and the reflections are general, this paper focuses on Latin America for illustration. Latin America is an interesting case, as it is perceived as somewhere between the West and non-West. This perception stems from its early independence *and "the widespread belief that independence merely saw the continuing dominance of 'Western' settler elites. This perception has supported the argument that Latin America was essentially part of the West and therefore not worthy of separate consideration*" (Fawcett 2012, 679). With the notable exception of the work by Arlene Tickner, the region has consequently been somewhat

overlooked in the Global IR debate (Fawcett 2012). This is exemplified by the fact that specific books are devoted to Global IR in Africa, the Middle East and Asia, but to this author's knowledge not in Latin America. A separate contribution of the paper is therefore to highlight Latin American agency in the Global IR debate.

The paper is structured as follows. The first part argues that the Global IR debate need move beyond internalist critiques and start focusing on specific original contributions from the Global South and their ability to explain global developments. However, in order to move on, three key issues need to be addressed, namely "Who can talk?", "how to go local?", and "how to make the local global?" Section two discusses the question "who can talk" and identifies eight types of scholarly profiles typology of scholarly profiles by combining the typically isolated debates on scholarly origin, embeddedness within local context, and location. The third section moves on to tackle the question on how to go local and develop or discover concepts outside the core and identifies three different strategies. The fourth and last section then offers two different avenues for how one can apply these local theories to "the larger global canvas" (Acharya 2014a).  By combining these four parts, the paper offers a road map for the reflections needed to move the Global IR debate beyond mere critique.

## AN IR FOR THE FEW – AND SO WHAT?

Stanley Hoffmann's legendary "An American Social Science" came out in 1979. 30 years later Biersteker revaluated Hoffman's claim of parochialism concluding: *"The nature of American IR parochialism is that it is rationalist, positivist, US-centric, monolingual, recently published, and written by men"* (Biersteker 2009, 320). This parochialism means that (foreign) scholars focusing on Global South are scarce and if they publish in another language than English then they are excluded from the debate. Globally, analyses on the structure on IR has led to the conclusion that *"the predominance of the American Academy in international relations is manifested in many ways, from the number of lecturers, the number of doctoral programs offered, the number of doctoral students and thesis, the number of university presses and scholarly journals, to the predominance of epistemological, theoretical and methodological approaches made in USA among different academic communities around the world"* (Tickner and Blaney 2012, 6).

Turning the eye to Latin America, the same patterns emerges. The United States hegemonic status make it difficult for Latin American scholars to enter the international scene. *"Much of the academic community is heard of in the 'great journals' only when the topic of the day in the United States is specifically about a country or a region, as Kristensen (2012) addresses. South American academics only tend to be heard when the matter being dealt with is South America itself"* (Villa and Pimenta 2017, 281). Latin American scholars also appear to have internalized the hegemonic power of American IR to some degree. Hence, in the Teaching, Research, and International Policy (TRIP) project, survey answers from IR professors at Latin American institutions highlight the status that Western and particularly American IR has. When naming the most influential authors in IR, the professors themselves nominate three American mainstream authors. There is no mention of authors from their own region or elsewhere in the developing world. Likewise only American and English-speaking journals make their list of the most influential journals  - only with the notable

exceptional of Brazil who also place their own Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional on the list (Villa and Pimenta 2017).

Important work has been done on uncovering the unseen structures in academia and highlighting the structural forces working behind and influencing our methodologies, theories and knowledge claims. Brazilian scholar Amado Cervo has called for Latin American researchers to contest this structural imbalance. He argues that existing theories are not impartial but instead linked to specific interest and values servicing "first world" countries which does not necessarily correspond with the wishes of developing countries. He proposes to replace these universally oriented theories with locally rooted concepts. This means exposing the national or regional roots from which such concepts necessarily are derived – roots that the existing theories try to obscure (Cervo 2008). Recently, Melisa Deciancio has also called for more attention to this issue. She argues that Latin American contributions have been marginalized and that Latin America has made notable contributions to the regionalism agenda but that these have been missed by mainstream IR. (Deciancio 2016). The growing attention to Latin America and Global IR is also evident in the number of conferences addressing this issue such as the 2017 FLACSO conference "Latin America in Global International Relations" and the 2017 LASA congress "Latin American Studies in a Globalized World". However, by themselves these calls and critiques do not necessarily help with making Latin America an agent of IR knowledge rather than an object of IR study.

## Looking at ourselves or looking at the world?

One can talk about a "blindness of the Self" in IR, which suggests that scholars are blind of their own particular perspective and how this influence their worldview (Valbjørn 2008). IR is built on a Western experiences and with a Western perspective but most scholars do not appear to be aware of this fact making IR *"a discipline which speaks partially, but which has 'assumed' and 'declared' as if universally"* (Chan 1997, 114). Many scholars have focused on the "Blindness of the Self" issue with reflexivist analyses aiming to provide *"a detailed self-examination over the social and historical conditions under which knowledge is produced"* (Jackson 2010, 167). Their starting point is the (to them) erroneous collective imagination of being able to observe from a neutral point of view (the zero point) and thereby rejecting that the world can be observed from any other point of view. This is what Colombian philosopher Santiago Castro-Gómez labels "the hybris of the zero point" (Castro-Goméz 2005). More than uncovering what drives international relations, these reflexivist scholars focus on the "positioning of the beholder" and why one narrative is chosen over the expense of other possible narratives (Hall 1996) with the object of study being the internal and invisible structures within academia. To them *"theories of international relations are more interesting as aspects of contemporary world politics that need to be explained than as explanations of contemporary world politics"* (Walker 1992, 6).

Much important work on the parochialism of IR have revolved around the "blindness of Self" dilemma with extensive research uncovering the biases and parochialism in the discipline, displaying how both the ontology, methodology and scientific designs are influenced by a Western view of science (Hountondji 1992, Wæver 1998, Mgonja and Makombe 2009). The articulation of the need for a more Global IR thus builds on their exposure of the marginalization of non-Western scholars and non-Western line of thinking. These analyses

have also made many important arguments about how this power relationship is reflected in the existing theories (Hurrell 2016, 149). These reflexivist analyses and critiques is an imperative part of moving IR forward, but it is also possible to identify a growing agreement that we need to move beyond critique and start shaping a new discipline with insights from the Global South (Acharya 2016, Hurrell 2016). To this end, one can also identify a more "outward-looking" research agenda (Hellmann and Valbjørn 2017), focused on mapping how international relations are studied around the world (Tickner and Wæver 2009, Crawford and Jarvis 2001, Tickner and Blaney 2012, Kristensen 2015). These analyses and mappings have enriched our understanding of difference and demonstrated how IR may be similar or different in other regions. However, elucidating the parochialism and the deficiency of the existing knowledge claims logically leads to the question of "then what?" How should we move on with this new awareness and insights in mind? While these reflexivist analyses are good at uncovering power structures in knowledge production and making researchers self-reflect, it is only one dimension of IR. It is important not to forget the aim of explaining international relations. In other words, it is time to move on from a purely internalist critique and start explaining international relations whilst putting these insights to use. The key question is how we should proceed with this endeavor, as there seem to be a lack of agreement of how to proceed. This means that we are stuck in the critique-stage and attempts to move beyond from here appear fragmented and disconnected. More substantial reflections are needed on three key issues, 1) the question of scholarly identity, 2) how to develop/discover local theories, and 3) how to test the scope of these local theories. These three questions will be reflected upon in the following sections, thereby providing a comprehensive roadmap of the reflections needed to move the Global IR debate forward.

## WHO CAN TALK?

When moving forward towards achieving a more Global IR, the first dividing issue is that of scholarly identity. Who can talk for and about the Global South? Is it only local voices who can "truly" speak from a non-Western perspective? Area specialists are mostly Westerners who spent a lot of time working and studying in their region of interest. Can they speak about the non-West or is deep knowledge of a particular region not necessary – opening up the table for general IR specialists as well? These are important questions that draws on insights and criticism from different debates, namely 1) The Area Studies Controversy and 2) Post-western critique. While these two debates have been big within their respective areas they have not have not dealt explicitly with one another. I try to redeem this gap by contributing with a typology of different scholarly profiles (table 1) where distinctions from both debates are included. Furthermore, the typology also includes an often overlooked point about geographic location – a separate and additional contribution to the debate. Hence, there are three different parameters in the typology, which I will briefly sketch out below.

### IR or Area Studies – The Area Studies Controversy

Area Studies is a cover term for multidisciplinary social research focusing on specific geographic regions with close attention to local histories and viewpoints (Szanton 2002). This has also meant a tendency to underscore the particular. The particularistic standpoint is rooted in the ontological observation that dynamics are

different in different places. If the dynamics are fundamentally unalike then we cannot use the same theories to obtain knowledge of the object (Binder 1976). This can lead to an argument about exceptionalism, which is a familiar claim within the Area Studies. In the Middle East, regional specialists for example state that the Middle East is a "region like no other" (Valbjørn 2004). The pitfall of such claims is that it can lead to "regional narcissism" which entails a focus so narrow on one's own region that one risks missing more general explanations of a phenomenon (Halliday 2005). This debate is also known as the Area Studies Controversy, which reflects a tension between social science generalists (in particular comparativists) and Area Studies specialists about how to carry out regional analyses. Fierce debates have thus taken place between disciplinary comparativists who argue that Area Studies lack scientific rigor and are hostile to generalizability with area specialists responding with a counter charge of uncritical scientism, cultural illiteracy and generalization without attention to context (Ward 1974, Hanson 2009, Bates 1996). While this debate revolves around a question of what constitutes valid knowledge claims, the debate also has implications for the "who"-question. The controversy is between area specialists who emphasize the exceptional character of their region arguing the need for in-depth knowledge and generalists who believe it is possible to use the same theoretical lens to analyze different societies (Tessler, Nachtwey, and Banda 1999). It follows that area scholars would claim that you need regional expertise and deep historical knowledge to be able to speak about a region, thus excluding pure generalists from the debate. Many area scholars are Westerners and regional expertise is not to be confused with the origin of the scholar. A Latin American who does not engage with Latin American history and politics is not necessarily better equipped to speak about the region than an area scholar studying the region is.

## Locals or non-locals – The post-Western critique

Whilst the origin of scholars is not the deciding issue for area scholars, this has been a major focal point for the post-Western camp. They claim IR is not open to all due to a discursive practice *"that sets the rules of the game: who can speak, from what points of view, with what authority, and according to what criteria of expertise"* (Escobar 1999, 383). Hence, there are underlying structures deciding who can speak in IR, leading back to the statement about IR being dominated by old, white men. In line with this argumentation, Ken Booth famously wondered *"what…would the subject look like today…if, instead of being founded by a wealthy Liberal MP in Wales (and those like him elsewhere in the Anglo-American world) what if the subject's origins had derived from the life and work of the admirable black, feminist, medic, she-chief of the Zulus, Dr Zungu?"* (Booth 1996, 330). Booth's statement refers to the post-colonial belief that local scholars have a different outlook on the world which in turn means that only locals can speak the language of "the oppressed" (Dabashi 2015). The ethnocentricity regarding who gets published means that we are essentially only seeing things from one perspective, thereby overlooking other narratives. However, taking up this radical view that only non-Westerners can understand and speak about the non-West also involves excluding several scholars from the debate. The pitfall is that by excluding non-locals from the equation and focusing only on local scholars, radical post-Western scholars risk closing in on themselves which is not helpful to the objective of more pluralistic and inclusive Global IR (Smith 2009, Zegeye and Vambe 2006).

## In the region or outside the region – The question of location

One matter seem to have been somewhat neglected in these debates, that is the matter of location. In today's globalized society, academics are not confined to their own region and the mobility amongst scholars is great. That some scholars move away from their native country to take a job in a foreign country might seem glaringly obvious, but it does complicate the picture somewhat when debating who can talk from the perspective of the Global South. For example, the prominent Argentinian post-colonial scholar Walter Mignolo got his PhD from France in 1973 and has worked in the US ever since. His works concentrates on Latin America. In contrast, some area specialists have lived in, worked and followed the region for decades. The demarcation between local scholars and area specialists is therefore becoming blurry. Is a German scholar who have worked in Colombia for 17 years less equipped to talk about Colombia than a Colombian who have lived in Germany for the last 17 years? Some believe so, seeing as non-locals will always unconsciously compare to their own lived experiences. Then again, locals who have lived abroad for several decades might not have the same lived experiences as non-locals actually living and working in their region. Whatever position one takes, the debate above illustrate that location is a matter one also need to take into consideration. Location is not to be confused with the area studies controversy. While some area scholars live in their region of expertise, many do not. Hence, location is an important overlooked factor in itself.

### Table 1: A typology of scholarly profiles

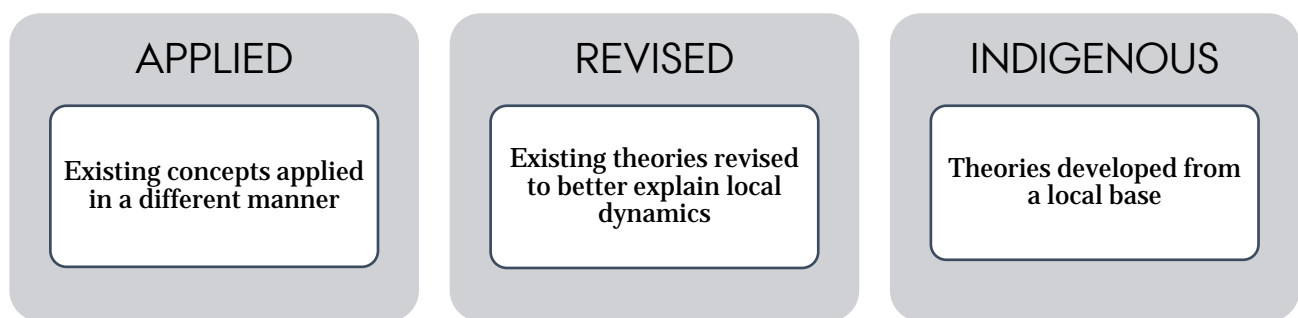| | Locals | | Non-locals | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **General IR** | **Area** | **General IR** | **Area** |
| **In region**<br><br>Example | Locals working in the region on general IR<br><br>Colombian working at a Colombian university on realism | Locals working in the region on the region<br><br>Colombian working at Colombian university on border relations between Colombia and Venezuela | Non-locals working in the region on general IR<br><br>German working at a Colombian university on realism | Non-locals working in the region on the region<br><br>German working at a Colombian university on border relations between Colombia and Venezuela |
| **Outside region**<br><br>Example | Locals working outside the region on general IR<br><br>Colombian working at a German university on realism | Locals working outside the region on the region<br><br>Colombian working at a German university on border relations between Colombia and Venezuela | Non-locals working outside the region on general IR<br><br>German working at a German university on realism | Non-locals working outside the region on the region<br><br>German working at a German university on border relations between Colombia and Venezuela |

This exhaustive typology identifies eight ideal types of scholarly profiles. While work location might seem easy to decide, many local scholars are educated in the West. In Latin America 73,5% of the IR professors obtained their PhD in American or European institutions (Tickner 2009, 39). While this does not change their current work affiliation, it blurs the distinctions somewhat. Likewise, it can be discussed whether a scholar of mixed German and Colombian descent who has never set foot in Colombia is a local or non-local scholar. Finally, some scholars also work in the intersection between general IR and Area Studies, making this demarcation difficult. However, while reality is complex, these analytical distinctions can still be useful in illustrating some of the controversies and clarifying the consequences of taking up different views. For example, three of the voices in the debate about "Latin American IR" (all referenced in this paper) represent three distinctive scholarly profiles. British scholar Andrew Hurrell is a professor at Oxford University and while he is a well-known international society scholar, he is also an associate member of the Latin American Centre at Oxford which is located under the school of interdisciplinary Area Studies as well as a recognized expert on Brazil. On the topic of Latin American IR, Hurrell's scholarly profile would therefore be "non-local working outside the region (mainly) on the region". Another famous scholar is Arlene Tickner who is an American citizen and thus qualifies as a non-local. She is a professor at Universidad del Rosario in Colombia and primarily deals with Latin American IR also from a multidisciplinary perspective, for example exploring how hip-hop has been appropriated in Latin American countries and how it has been used to express the performers' reflections on social, political, and economic problems (Tickner 2008a). Tickner would thus be located in the upper right corner "non-local working in the region on the region". Lastly, Melisa Deciancio is an Argentinian scholar working on Latin American IR at the Latin American Social Science institute (FLACSO) in Buenos Aires and thus a clear-cut example of a "local working in the region on the region". These three examples constitute different scholarly profiles. So what is the consequence of this? If one follows the radical argument from the post-Western camp, Deciancio would be more equipped to speak about Latin America than the other two. Similarly, area studies scholars might prefer Tickner's more pure area studies profile than Hurrell's more mixed profile. The typology and the examples illustrate that there are diverging views to the question of "who can talk" and that it is necessary to be aware of these different perspectives.

To sum up, there are at least three questions that one need to reflect upon when entering the Global IR debate: 1) Do you need regional knowledge to understand the region? 2) Do you need to be from the region to understand the region? 3) Do you need to work in the region to understand the region? Saying yes to some or all of these questions, necessarily involves excluding some scholars from the debate. The pitfall of such an exclusion is that it can create "national ghettos" (Buzan 2016) or paradoxically create a counter-parochialism where Westerners can never speak about the non-West. On the contrary, saying no to all of these questions carries the danger of just continuing the existing parochialism shaping the discipline today. In this way, the typology serve as a useful tool for reflections about scholarly identities when moving forward in the Global IR debate.

## HOW TO GO LOCAL?

While the section above discussed the question of scholarly identity, the next key issue to reflect upon is how to develop and/or discover concepts outside the core. Whether the ambition is to develop new theories from the Global South or discover existing theories overlooked in a parochial discipline, this paper identify three main strategies: 1) applying existing concepts differently, 2) revising existing theories, 3) developing or discovering completely indigenous theories (Aydinli and Biltekin 2017, Bilgin 2008, Smith 2009, 2006). The three strategies represent different ways and to some degree, different perspectives on what local knowledge and theories can look like (see figure 1). Below the different strategies are outlined with examples from Latin American research.

### Figure 1 Three types of local theories



| APPLIED | REVISED | INDIGENOUS |
|---|---|---|
| Existing concepts applied in a different manner | Existing theories revised to better explain local dynamics | Theories developed from a local base |

### Applied differently

While not denying Western dominance, some scholars explain the lack of non-Western IR theories with the claim that there is no unique theorizing to find - non-Western scholars use the same theories as Western scholars. Content analysis of academic journals partially support this claim (Medeiros et al. 2016, Tickner and Wæver 2009). Regarding Latin America, the most severe conclusion is found in Medeiros et al.'s bibliometric content analysis of South American Journals spanning 7.857 articles from 2006-2014. Their result is that *"one cannot identify, apart from a positivist and qualitative preference, any major genuine trend of South American IR, nor any significant attempt to contribute to the new "Global IR" ideas"* (Medeiros et al. 2016). A realist interpretation of this fact is that states and regions are like units – why should there be particular local theories if states behave in a similar manner? A more critical interpretation ascribes the lack of non-Western theories to the overwhelming success of Western concepts leading to the disappearance of indigenous concepts (Jackson 2011). Ironically, then the success of ethnocentrism in IR may make the quest for local variations of IR irrelevant. While these analyses point to the fact that IR theorizing in the Global South is quite similar to the West, they also find that *"western IR translates into something differently when travelling to the periphery"* (Tickner and Wæver 2009, 338). Global South scholars may still employ the Western concepts in a different manner so that IR is "almost the same but not quite", engaging in the process of "mimicking" Western ideas (Bilgin 2009). While Western dominance works as an external force trying to impose certain views, it is thus local circumstances that shape how these ideas are used locally (Acharya and Buzan 2017). The critique to such claims is that it undervalues the agency of the Global South, and agency was exactly the primary

objective of global IR. However, Bilgin reminds us that mimicking *"permits recognition of the agency and agenda of 'non-Western' actors in adopting, adapting or bypassing 'Western' ways of thinking about and doing world politics. The point is that 'non-Western' resistance and/or 'difference' may take many forms—including a search for 'similarity'"* (Bilgin 2008, 14). In Latin America, the Western concepts and theories have been the most widely used (Medeiros et al. 2016, Villa and Pimenta 2017). However, "when looking at similar categories, Latin American scholars have normally seen something different" (Tickner 2008b). Interestingly, Latin America appear more epistemologically and methodologically diverse than their American counterpart (Villa and Pimenta 2017), which could be another explanation for the different understandings and uses of a concept.

## Revised versions

In the Global South, theoretical innovation has often happened by theory revision rather than completely new theory development (Smith 2013, 542). Revision denotes adjusting existing IR theories so that they are more suitable for understanding the particularities of the region in question (Acharya and Stubbs 2006, 128). One of the most celebrated Latin American examples of this, is Carlos Escudé's theory of peripheral realism (Bernal-Meza 2016, Tickner 2003a, Schenoni and Escudé 2016). The theory of peripheral realism was originally developed by Escudé to explain the foreign policy of the Menem Administration in Argentina and constitutes a revised version of realism based on Argentinian experiences. It posits that the international system has a hierarchical structure based on differentiated roles: rule-makers, rule-takers and rebels, and the poorer a country is, the lower the margin of maneuver will be unless it imposes its citizens to increasing degrees of authoritarianism (Escudé 1992, 1995, Schenoni and Escudé 2016). Peripheral realism has been hailed as the most comprehensive original theoretical framework (Tickner 2003a, 332) and is sometimes perceived as independent alternative to dominant Western IR theories. Nonetheless, the theory still builds on an acceptance of the assumptions underlying the realist framework and speaks the realist language, but the theory adapts it in order to better understand and explain Latin America.

Another celebrated example of original theorizing is the Argentinian and Brazilian thinking on autonomy. Spanning from Puig and Juagaribe in the 1970s over to Vigevani and Cepaluni in the new millennium, the theorizing on this topic vast and diverse (Jaguaribe 1979, Puig 1980, Vigevani and Cepaluni 2007). The thinking on autonomy consists of a fusion of concepts from dependency theory, realism, and interdependence and constitutes the "Latin American hybrid model" that is one of the most distinguishable features of Latin American IR (Tickner 2003b). This hybrid model of combining concepts and revising theories almost have character of indigenous theorizing, which demonstrate that the identified strategies are indeed ideal types. Sometimes theory revision might have qualities from indigenous theorizing whilst still accepting the Western base and assumptions.

## Indigenous theories

Instead of accepting the existing assumptions, radical indigenous theories begin with an indigenous base and then build a theory by generalizing from these local experiences on their own terms (Acharya 2011). The focus is then on the agency dimension *"what is lacking is IR theory not just for but from the developing world"*

(Smith 2006, 2). Completely indigenous theories might be hard to find given the range and influence of Western concepts, which might make the other two strategies more feasible and suitable. This is also why the strategies are presented as ideal types, in the sense of perfect models that might not exist empirically but can be used as a tool for empirical comparison. Some indigenous theories might build on implicit Western assumptions, whilst still maintaining their own locality and language. Indigenous theorizing might seem radical if the new theories are intended to supplant the existing ones. But new theories do not necessarily have to compete as some topics of relevance to the non-West are simply not covered in the existing theories (Tickner 2003b). An example from Latin America is the work on earth jurisprudence, which is simply not a topic covered in existing IR literature (Humphreys 2016, Gregor Barié 2014). Similarly, concepts such as "pluranationality" and "diplomacy of the people" contradict the assumption of a unified state. The first by recognizing that several nations can exist within a state (González, Burguete, and Ortiz 2010, Grijalva 2008) and the second with a bottom-up approach to diplomacy (Bernal Meza 2015, Díaz Martínez 2013). Both are homegrown concepts developed in Bolivia and Ecuador and based on these countries' local experiences.

The focus on non-Western IR and indigenous concepts carries some dangers, especially the danger of renationalization or balkanization (Buzan 2016). By highlighting the exceptional, we risk ending up with a hodgepodge of particular theories only applicable to their own locale instead of developing a toolbox with more nuanced IR theories. In China several efforts have thus been made to establish an authentic "chineseness" within IR (Callahan 2001). But while it is important to not create "national ghettos" (Buzan 2016), the inclusion of non-Western narratives, concepts and methodologies is important for a more pluralistic and inclusive Global IR.

## HOW TO MAKE THE LOCAL GLOBAL?

Some scholars maintain that universal or global theories are a fallacy and that theories cannot and do not need to explain more than its local context. Area scholars supporting the exceptionalist claim would argue along these lines. However, if one agrees with Acharya and his vision of a Global IR, then the main challenge is "*to develop concepts and approaches from non-Western contexts on their own terms and to apply them not only locally, but also to other contexts, including the larger global canvas*" (Acharya 2014a, 650). Many global IR scholars focused on demonstrating how existing IR theories fail to apply to their nations or regions actually end up offering alternative understandings or revised approaches. However, often such theoretical innovation do not travel beyond their nations and regions (Acharya 2015).

While the section above reflects on how to discover or develop local theories, these strategies work on the national or regional level. However, indigenous theories might possess analytical utility beyond their particular region and these revised theories may also 'modifications' may not only be limited to engendering greater understanding of that particular region, but may also contribute to studying other parts of the world, with considerable potential to advance IR (Acharya 2014a, Smith 2009). The ambition is to make the Global South a source of IR theorizing and not just a place for national ghettos with their own particular local theories. The

question is therefore how to make these local theories global? This paper presents two possible avenues: 1) neopositivist theory testing, and 2) Comparative Area Studies. Both will be elaborated on below.

## Theory testing – A neopositivist approach

An obvious avenue for making theories global, is to follow the traditional neopositivist approach of attempting to falsify general claims against empirical evidence (Jackson 2010). The neopositivist approach requires generating testable hypotheses from the local theories and subsequently test if these hypotheses can survive being applied to other local contexts. This objective with this approach is then to discover systematic cross-case covariations. As Jackson puts it *"whether large-n or small-n, neopositivist comparison has precisely one ultimate goal, and that is to disclose cross-case covariations so that hypotheses may be evaluated"* (Jackson 2010, 70). Much has been written about the neopositivist approach and the associated methods. The objective is not to go further into this debate, but just highlight neopositivist theory testing as one possible approach for testing the global scope of local theories. A neopositivist approach is most suitable for scholars with a commitment to the philosophical-ontological wagers of phenomenalism and mind-world dualism working with strict explanatory theories (Jackson 2010). However, not everyone believes that theories have to be strict explanatory in the neopositivist sense. As Buzan notes (2004, 24) *"Many Europeans use the term theory for anything that organizes a field systematically, structures questions and establishes a coherent and rigorous set of interrelated concepts and categories. Many Americans, however often demand that a theory strictly explains and that it contains – or is able to generate – testable hypotheses of a causal nature."* Acharya supposes that the understanding of theory in the Global South is closer to the European understanding than the American one (Acharya 2014b, 3), which would make a strict neopositivist approach less suitable in these cases.

## Comparative Area Studies – A context-sensitive approach

Arguably, theories from the Global South might have difficulties travelling to other contexts in a neopositivist approach, due a different conceptualization of what constitutes a theory. In Area Studies, for instance, the search is often for a full explanation of the phenomenon based on contextualized cases and the theories might therefore identify specific features of the case (Gerring 2004). According to Tilly a successful analysis thus combines specification of universals with enumeration of particulars, recognizing that while a process might may be somewhat generalizable, outcomes depend on sequence, setting and circumstance (Tilly 1995).

This view is in line with the Comparative Area Studies framework (CAS), which rests on the conviction that deep contextual knowledge of particular areas are needed in social sciences and that this knowledge could have relevance beyond that particular region. Scholars should accordingly seek comparable observations that speak more generally while at the same time work with a deep sensitivity to context (Koellner, Sil, and Ahram 2015). CAS is a framework coined by Basedau and Köllner (Basedau and Köllner 2007, Basedau and Köllner 2006, Koellner, Sil, and Ahram 2015) and is defined as studies *"where profound area knowledge of one or more areas is combined with methods to compare across nations or other empirical entities"* (Basedau and Köllner 2006). Hence, CAS constitutes a framework and not a specific method. The starting point is "Area Studies"

which is a cover term for multidisciplinary social research focusing on specific geographic regions. Knowledge of and field research in local languages is often included in a definition of area studies (Szanton 2002). Going back to figure 1, then this approach appear to exclude certain scholars from the table, particularly various non-locals, IR generalists and to some degree people positioned outside of the region. Consequently one's attitude toward the question of scholarly identity might influence which globalizing approach seem most suitable as it resonates with one's core assumptions and views on how to research Global South perspectives. However, Basedau and Köllner argues for a looser definition of Area Studies "*the distinct characteristic of area studies is above all their specific geographical focus. Regardless of their (multi- or inter-)disciplinary background, area studies can be used for testing, elaborating, criticising or developing local and universalistic concepts and theories on the basis of detailed observation of local phenomena. In this sense, intensive language study, in-depth field research conducted in local languages, and multi- or interdisciplinary cooperation or conversation are not per se essential characteristics of area studies but constitute assets of individual researchers or methods of choice – they are necessary only as far as the specific research topic requires it*" (Basedau and Köllner 2006, 10). Ascribing to this wider definition means that more types of scholarly profiles could engage with the CAS framework.
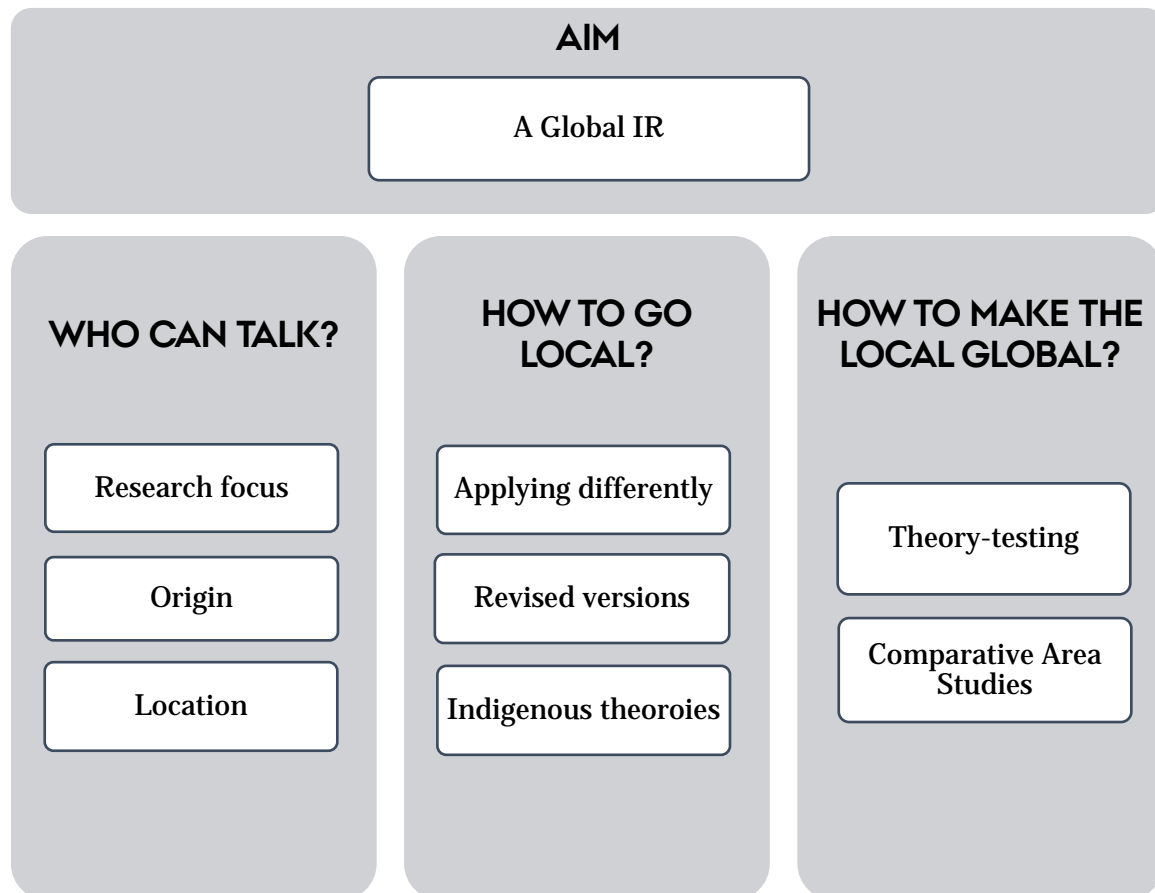
In CAS, deep regional knowledge is incorporated into a comparative framework offering "the potential to make the mechanisms portable and appreciable in general terms without neglecting historical specificity" (Ahram 2011, 84). Instead of only focusing on variables, these comparisons consider the context and setting of the causal story, recognizing that causal powers may unfold in diverse ways due to historical specificities. This is in line with Buzan's notion of a European conceptualization of a theory "*Many Europeans use the term theory for anything that organizes a field systematically, structures questions and establishes a coherent and rigorous set of interrelated concepts and categories*". In the CAS framework, the scope of the theories is consequently not evaluated on their ability to make precise predictions, but instead if they help us to ask questions about how, when and to which degree something matters in different contexts. Critics will argue that this test is not rigorous enough and that almost every theory would live up to this criterion. Can you really claim that a theory has a more global perhaps even universal scope, just because it helps us to ask relevant questions somewhere else? However, this critique often stems from scholars having different ontological-philosophical wagers and conceptualization of what constitutes a theory.

## CONCLUSION

Global IR can be perceived as a reaction to analyses uncovering Western biases and parochialism in the discipline. Now a growing consensus within the framework argue that it is time to move beyond a purely internalist critique and start explaining international relations whilst putting these insights to use. Nonetheless, these scholars disagree on how to proceed. This paper identified three overriding contested issues: "Who can talk?", "how to go local?" and "how to make the local global?" Disagreement on these issues has contributed to an appearance of Global IR as a framework comprised of seemingly disconnected and fragmented contributions.

Different answers to the three issues provides us with different avenues of how "to do" Global IR. The objective of this paper was therefore to map out the different answers to these key issues, as the different answers generate different avenues for how to proceed (figure 2). In this way, the roadmap also helps to identify seemingly different and previously disconnected insights and attempts and demonstrate how these fit into the Global IR framework.

**Figure 2: Questions for reflection – A road map to move Global IR forward**

| AIM | | |
|---|---|---|
| **A Global IR** | | |
| **WHO CAN TALK?** | **HOW TO GO LOCAL?** | **HOW TO MAKE THE LOCAL GLOBAL?** |
| Research focus | Applying differently | Theory-testing |
| Origin | Revised versions | Comparative Area Studies |
| Location | Indigenous theoroies | |

The paper confronted the contested issues by offering three interlinked contributions. First, it developed a typology of scholarly profiles by combining the typically isolated debates on scholarly origin, embeddedness within local context, and location. In sum, three questions constituted the typology: 1) Do you need regional knowledge to understand the region? 2) Do you need to be from the region to understand the region? 3) Do you need to work in the region to understand the region? Affirmative answers necessarily involves excluding some scholars from the debate, paradoxically creating a danger of counter-parochialism. However, negative answers might result in a continuation of the existing parochialism shaping the discipline today. Hence, the typology serves as a useful tool to reflect about who can talk for and about the Global South and the associated pitfalls. Secondly, the paper tackled the question of "how to go local" and identified three main strategies for discovering and developing theories outside the core, namely 1) applying existing concepts differently, 2)

revising existing theories, 3) developing or discovering completely indigenous theories. The strategies represent different ways and to some degree, different perspectives on what local knowledge and theories look like. Third, the paper underlined that Global South theories should not necessarily be limited to their own region. It contributed to this argument by presenting two different avenues for how to apply local theories to "the larger global canvas" (Acharya 2014a). One avenue is the neopositivist approach of theory testing which works well with strong explanatory theories while Comparative Area Studies is another possible approach more suitable for context-sensitive research.

Together these three contributions constitute a roadmap of how to advance Global IR's research agenda by providing reflections on what the different pathways entail and the pitfalls on the way. The provided examples from Latin America highlighted the benefits of the roadmap while also giving agency to regional theoretical debates. Advancing Global IR is a complex matter and serious attempts to incorporate specific Global South contributions are severely needed. Hopefully, this paper can set off some useful reflections on how to proceed with this endeavor.

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