International Theory (2026), **18** (2), 316–331
doi:10.1017/S175297192610027X

International Theory

SYMPOSIUM

IR Resource Bank: a tool for diversifying and decolonizing the curriculum

Fikir Haile[1] and Badriyya Yusuf[2]

[1]Department of Politics, Acadia University, Canada and [2]Political Studies, Queen's University, Canada
Corresponding author: Badriyya Yusuf; Email: badriyya.yusuf@queensu.ca

(Received 21 April 2026; revised 21 April 2026; accepted 23 April 2026)

Abstract
Spurred on in part by the large social justice mobilizations that began in 2020, recent years have seen growing calls for diversifying and decolonizing the disciplinary practices in the field of International Relations (IR). In response to these calls within the field and across academia more broadly, faculty and students in the Department of Political Studies at Queen's University embarked on a project to produce a 'Resource Bank' highlighting and centring alternatives to Euro-American epistemologies, pedagogies, and ontologies that have thus far dominated the IR field. Drawing on our experiences as project managers of this Resource Bank project since its inception in 2021, we discuss some of the most salient issues and important challenges that emerged in the course of this work. We employ a postcolonial theoretical framework to tease out and problematize the Eurocentric foundations of the IR field and utilize the Resource Bank to reimagine research and teaching in the IR field.

Keywords: pedagogy; epistemology; Eurocentrism; postcolonialism; African Systems of Thought; Global South IR

Introduction

The 2015 #RhodesMustFall Movement in South Africa led to the removal of Cecil Rhodes's statue from its revered post on the campus of the University of Cape Town. It also fueled demands for the decolonization of curricula, which gained traction on campuses across the world.[1] Academic debates on the centrality of structural racism in International Relations (IR) theories and the interrogation of their Eurocentrism made a comeback following the Black Lives Matter social justice mobilizations of

[1]Other notable international campaigns on race and racism on campuses include the University College of London's 'Why is My Curriculum White' and the National Union of Students 'Liberate the Curriculum' in the United Kingdom, and the 'Idle No More' movement on Indigenous resurgence on Canadian campuses.

© The Author(s), 2026. Published by Cambridge University Press. This is an Open Access article, distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution licence (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0), which permits unrestricted re-use, distribution and reproduction, provided the original article is properly cited.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S175297192610027X Published online by Cambridge University Press

2020.[2] It was within the context of growing calls for diversification and decolonization of disciplinary practices that the *Resource Bank – Race, BIPOC and Global Perspectives in IR* project was initiated in the Department of Political Studies at Queen's University, Canada. This article and the broader Resource Bank[3] project are premised on the argument that the dominant approaches and debates in the IR field are rooted in a partial, Western-centric, and colonial epistemology. The article makes use of key insights from postcolonial theory and draws from the Resource Bank to problematize the colonial and Eurocentric foundations of the field and help reimagine IR scholarship and pedagogy. In so doing, it aims to support efforts to diversify and decolonize the discipline and facilitate the construction of a pluralistic IR curriculum that better reflects African systems of political thought.

The article is structured as follows: First, we situate it and the broader Resource Bank project in the ongoing debates centred around reimagining IR. Next, we discuss how this scholarship informs our theoretical grounding for this article. This is followed by an overview of the Resource Bank, the considerations, and the processes involved in putting it together. We then highlight the lessons we learnt from the project, discuss how the Resource Bank can serve IR theorists, and provide insights on developing knowledge-plural IR syllabi. The final section offers some concluding remarks.

The state of the field: an overview of the literature

Described by some as a scholarly defence of colonialism,[4] the centrality of racism and deep-seated coloniality in the IR field has long been discussed by several critical scholars.[5] Scholars recognize that IR is rooted in a politics of knowledge production that presumes the centrality of Western thinking,[6] which has shaped most of the assumptions that undergird IR theorization. This Eurocentrism is manifested in the field's analytical categories, assumptions, theories, and preoccupations, which have given rise to distorted understandings of the Global South.[7] A prominent example is Morgenthau's assertion that Africa did not have a history before the Second World War.[8] Rooted in the 'Peace of Westphalia (1648) narrative[9] that instituted sovereignty in international society, this assertion assumes that Africa has no meaningful politics.[10] As put by Kayaoglu,[11] 'the Westphalian narrative allows scholars to reinvent a framework of normative hierarchy depending on where Western and non-Western societies are placed in the narrative. Western states produce norms, principles and institutions of international society, and non-Western states lack these until they are socialized.' Our work on the Resource Bank found the enduring

[2]Ziai Aram et al. 2020; Howell and Richter-Montpetit 2020; Rutazibwa 2020; Bilgin and Smith 2024.

[3]Available at https://www.queensu.ca/politics/sites/polswww/files/uploaded_files/IR%20Resource%20Bank%20Document.pdf.

[4]Sen 2023, 339.

[5]See Du Bois 1925; Doty 1993; Henderson 2013; Vitalis 2015; Sabaratnam 2020.

[6]Capan 2017; Iñiguez de Heredia and Wai 2018.

[7]Busby and Kang 2020; Darby 2010.

[8]Morgenthau 1973.

[9]Chakrabarty 2000.

[10]Dunn 2001, 1.

[11]Kayaoglu 2010, 194.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S175297192610027X Published online by Cambridge University Press

dominance of these Western accounts of what IR is and how it evolved.[12] The neglect of non-Western histories and experiences exposes the colonial roots of IR concepts, such as the state, security, and sovereignty, which are universalized and often problematic when applied to Global South contexts.[13] Through its occlusions, mainstream IR falls short of providing adequate tools to understand contemporary global IR.[14] This not only limits the ability of students in the Global North to investigate and understand the world but also deeply affects students in the Global South, upon whom the perceived superiority of Western scholarship is imposed.[15] As noted by Mayanja and Yakohene in this collection, this is particularly evident in IR pedagogy in African classrooms, where the continent's scholarship, insights, examples, and critiques remain underexplored.

The IR canon has consistently placed Africa on the periphery, rendering its significance to be 'solely in its disruptive potential for neat theoretical paradigms.'[16] African countries are predominantly used as exceptional case studies, often on corruption, failed economic policy, political instability, or ethnic violence.[17] For instance, Hern (2023) demonstrates how, in comparative politics, describing African countries that perform well as miracles or darlings and highlighting their performance as the exceptions rather than the rule presents them as outliers that cannot be learned from. Hern additionally notes how the social science research published about Africa has largely focused on a handful of countries,[18] which contributes to the homogeneous lumping together of African states and societies despite their significant differences. In this paper, we define and locate Africa as the 55 Member states of the African Union. We recognize that there are multiple Africas in that these contemporary, postcolonial states might share similar historical and economic underpinnings but have varied politico-social contexts. As such, there is no homogeneous African political thought but rather a rich diversity in African cultures, histories, worldviews, and ways of knowing which make up a distinct African epistemology.[19]

It is well-noted that the IR discipline remains characterized by the suppression of epistemologies and theories[20] that do not conform to its orthodoxy of positivist[21] or rationalist methodological framework.[22] This ostensibly scientific approach requires the formulation of hypotheses and the provision of evidence to test, falsify, or validate them. Some scholars contend that using other sources of knowledge diverts scholars from the real study of world politics.[23] Methodologically, most critical approaches, such as dependency and postcolonial theories, fall into postpositivist, reflexivist, or interpretive methodologies, which argue that the intersubjective understandings, intentions, and conduct of actors also matter when seeking to understand actor

[12]Wemheuer-Vogelaar et al. 2020, 18.
[13]Chowdhry and Rai 2009.
[14]Grovogui 2001; Cornelissen et al. 2012.
[15]Mignolo 2009.
[16]Nkiwane 2001, 280.
[17]Hern 2023, 1.
[18]Ibid., 2.
[19]Ikhane and Ukpokolo 2023.
[20]Darby 2010.
[21]Blaney and Inayatullah 2008.
[22]Tickner 2014, 93.
[23]Keohane 1998.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S175297192610027X Published online by Cambridge University Press

behaviour.[24] Mainstream IR often dismisses these ontological differences and methodological frameworks as unfalsifiable or irrational,[25] thereby relegating them to the field's margins.[26] This is evident in the marginalized position afforded to Africa in IR theory despite decades of critical scholarship interrogating dominant theoretical assumptions. As aptly put by Wai, the IR discipline's inability to come to terms with African complexities results in its persistent depiction as 'a region that has very little to contribute to world politics other than constituting a headache for Western policy makers, international strategic actors, aid agencies, and global do-gooders.'[27] Countering this requires 'epistemic disobedience'[28] whereby what constitutes valid knowledge in the field needs to be challenged.[29] However, often, non-Western IR theories are confined to the margins of the discipline. A good example is dependency theory, which was formulated to analyze the intimate linkage between developed and developing parts of the world, tracing the roots of underdevelopment to the dynamics of capitalist exploitation. Despite its novel insights, dependency theory was branded as unscientific and as constituting invalid knowledge, and it was dismissed by the mainstream of the IR field. As Darby puts it, dependency was pronounced dead, only to belatedly receive limited recognition from its critics.[30]

As outlined above and in this volume, a plethora of scholarship now exists interrogating the IR field's imperialist and Eurocentric foundations. Several proposals have been put forward for a Global IR,[31] and calls have been made for the reconsideration of Africa's positioning in the field.[32] However, a significant impact on the field's theories and pedagogy remains to be felt as Eurocentrism has persisted and alternative theoretical approaches remain at the margins.[33] This can be attributed to the limited guidance available on *how to* diversify and decolonize our theoretical and pedagogical practices. How does one expand the range of theoretical options beyond the narrow ambit of Western knowledge? Simultaneously, how does one avoid parochialism and the ostracization of Western theories? Scholars such as de Matos (2017), who integrated *Ubuntu* principles into her curriculum at the University of Witwatersrand in the wake of the #RhodesMustFall movement, raise these questions, asking if decolonizing knowledge entails 'eradicating all Western knowledges and substituting them with Indigenous knowledges?'[34] Many scholars in the Global South and beyond struggle with the question of balancing diverse perspectives, which can often constrain the exercise, leading some to question whether the IR field can indeed be diversified and decolonized.[35] Our work on the Resource Bank aims to help fill this gap. By providing a practical tool to guide theory development and pedagogical innovation, we strive to contribute to the study and practice of

[24]Lapid 1989.
[25]Blaney and Inayatullah 2008.
[26]Keohane 1988, 392.
[27]Wai 2018, 5.
[28]Mignolo 2009.
[29]de Matos 2017, 9.
[30]Darby 2010.
[31]Acharya 2014, 2016; Barnett and Zarakol 2023.
[32]Abrahamsen 2017, Iñiguez de Heredia and Wai 2018; Andrews and Khelema 2023.
[33]Bilgin 2008; Sen 2023.
[34]de Matos 2017, 12.
[35]Sen 2023.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S175297192610027X Published online by Cambridge University Press

building knowledge-plural IR. In the sections that follow, we discuss how the existing scholarship informs our theoretical grounding for this article and introduce the Resource Bank.

Theoretical framing: centring postcolonialism

Postcolonial theory is a framework concerned with uncovering how colonial power relations continue to structure the study and practice of global politics.[36] Postcolonial scholarship underscores that colonial power relations and representations are embedded in and reproduced through the dominant epistemologies employed in academia, highlighting how discourse and knowledge not only describe but also construct the Other.[37] While postcolonial theory has been employed by scholars in diverse disciplines since the 1970s, it has had relatively limited impact in the field of IR.[38] Studies that employ a postcolonial lens to investigate international politics highlight the enduring influence of colonial power relations on the contemporary dynamics of IR, illustrating how concepts central to IR, including the state and sovereignty, are rooted in colonial epistemologies.[39] Postcolonial IR scholarship further underlines that Eurocentric epistemologies, ontologies, and methodologies inform the major paradigms in the field,[40] revealing how racialized, gendered, and hierarchical representations have been indispensable to the making of the discipline.[41]

This article and the Resource Bank project draw on three key insights from postcolonial theory. First, we draw on postcolonialism's insight that colonial epistemologies, ontologies, and methodologies have shaped the dominant approaches, debates, and topics in the field.[42] This insight reveals that the taken-for-granted IR epistemologies, ontologies, and methodologies are neither neutral nor universal but rather Eurocentric constructions shaped through colonial conquest and epistemic violence. We make use of this insight to locate the foundational sources of the field's important occlusions, including its oversight of the contributions of African knowledge systems. Second, postcolonial IR underscores the need to challenge the epistemologies at the heart of the discipline by looking to alternative places and sources to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the international. Drawing on this insight, in the Resource Bank project, we present works by and about the Global South broadly and Africa specifically that employ alternative epistemologies, ontologies, and methodologies that complement, enhance, and challenge the existing IR canon. As such, the Resource Bank can serve as a tool that scholars can use to produce works that speak to the foundational theoretical oversights in the field. In the implications section of this paper, we illustrate how the Resource Bank can be used in this regard. Third, postcolonial theory stresses the importance of situated knowledge, in the place of knowledge that proclaims to be both neutral and universal.[43] Drawing on this insight, in this article, we utilize the Resource Bank to highlight the

[36]Haag 2020; Lazarus 2011.
[37]Said 1979; Seth 2011.
[38]Haag 2020.
[39]Chandra 2013.
[40]Henderson 2013; Krishna 2018.
[41]Tickner 2014; Persaud and Sajed 2018.
[42]Wilkens 2017.
[43]Epstein 2014.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S175297192610027X Published online by Cambridge University Press

contributions of African knowledge systems in IR, demonstrating how situated knowledge can meaningfully expand our understanding of the international. Overall, the Resource Bank project provides a repository of alternative epistemologies, ontologies, and methodologies, designed to help construct a more theoretically and pedagogically pluralistic field.

The Resource Bank: a labour of passion

We consider our work on the Resource Bank to be a labour of passion. Putting together this vitally important project was simultaneously daunting because of the sheer size of the undertaking, and yet intellectually exciting. The project provided excellent opportunities to grapple with the broader epistemological and ontological debates in the field, as we were forced to rethink what we thought we understood about the field and how to disrupt it. These moments were highly fruitful because they forced us to answer some of the most fundamental questions this project raises, such as: Where do we start? With recent scholarship, or with earlier work on which it draws? Do we begin with a specific theme or geographic area, or do we cast the net widely to incorporate as many perspectives as possible? How do we curate a collection of resources that offer clear alternatives to the mainstream orthodoxy in the field while at the same time being mindful of the differences among and within these resources? This included considerations for the format of the final output – would it be an expanded critical syllabus or a bibliography?[44] Most importantly, we grappled with tensions about whether our aim is to decolonize the curriculum or to diversify it? We resolved to design a Resource Bank that would presently provide tools for diversifying the discipline and pave the way for undertaking decolonization down the line. From initial brainstorming to the soft launch, the Resource Bank took over 12 months to complete.

Mirroring the heated debates on how to reimagine the IR field,[45] the question of diversification versus decolonization fueled much discussion within our team. The two concepts are interrelated but generate tensions because of their differences in terms of depth, purpose, and political commitments. While there is variance in the conceptual definitions, decolonizing refers to the process of rethinking, reframing, and reconstructing the curricula and research practices, challenging the institutional hierarchy of a Western-centric lens.[46] Decolonization demands a deeper epistemic shift that Lu (2017)[47] describes as repudiating the marginalization of non-Western modes of knowledge, discourse, and political practice to erode normatively obscuring myths about the origins of the modern international order. Diversification, on the other hand, focuses on representation and refers to the process of being more inclusive of as many voices as possible to avoid parochialism.[48] According to Akel (2020), decolonization differs from diversification in that the latter can still exist

[44]Initial considerations included a format similar to the Oxford Bibliographies. Other initiatives that serve as good references include the Canadian Political Science Association (CPSA) Reconciliation Committee's Indigenous Content Syllabus, available at https://cpsa-acsp.ca/syllabus/.

[45]Akel 2020; Capan 2017; Sen 2023.

[46]Akel 2020.

[47]Lu 2017, 271.

[48]de Matos 2017.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S175297192610027X Published online by Cambridge University Press

within a Western bias. Decolonisation goes further and deeper in challenging the institutional hierarchy and monopoly on knowledge, moving out of a Western framework. Decentring is another mechanism in the movement to reform, as highlighted by Lu (2017). Decentring involves proactively creating space for the inclusion of marginalized and oppressed agents and perspectives. According to Lu, decentring facilitates the process of decolonization by refocusing political inquiry and action away from the powerful or dominant modes of inquiry and political engagement.

Along the lines of decentring, the challenges we encountered while putting the Resource Bank together included limitations such as the inability to include non-English language scholarly publications due to our linguistic constraints and intended audience. More broadly, as el-Malik and Kamola (2017) note, the curation of a collection such as this is a political process, and as such, the decisions around what to include/exclude proved to be quite challenging. Pragmatic considerations were also significant. For instance, we wrestled with the question of how to make the Resource Bank widely accessible and the best form to present it in. To enhance its user-friendliness, we decided to go with a format like the Oxford Bibliography model that enables the inclusion of a quick synopsis of each resource used, situating its content or context within relation to the project. A list of tags and associated descriptions was added to the lists to help readers understand how to use the Resource Bank and to facilitate contributions and suggestions for new content to add. Finally, we engaged in conversations around whether to make the Resource Bank an internal resource at Queen's University or to make it publicly available. In line with our goal of aiding diversification and decolonization in the field, the Resource Bank is a publicly available resource that IR scholars and students can freely access.

Compiling the Resource Bank

The Resource Bank aims to be an accessible reference to guide students, faculty, and researchers in their teaching, learning, and research. It is designed as a repository of knowledge on topics and parts of the world that have received limited attention in mainstream IR, including race, gender, and developments in the Global South. We conducted extensive literature reviews to identify journal articles, chapters, podcasts, and webinars that addressed these issues. Following this, in consultation with IR faculty and graduate students within the department of Political Studies at Queen's University, we began compiling the sources to be included in the Resource Bank.[49] Among the key inclusion criteria was that sources were to be written by authors who self-identify as Black, Indigenous, and/or People of Color (BIPOC), offer analyses focused on issues considered to be marginal to IR, or contribute to decolonial and critical approaches to the study of IR. In the process of compilation, we decided to go beyond these criteria and include sources that contributed to expanding the disciplinary boundaries of IR. The compiled resources are organized into different categories – subfields, themes, and geographical areas. In each of these categories, subcategories are used to further structure the resources. At times, an article or book may touch on more than one subfield or geographical area, in which case, it appears in more than one category. Each entry includes the name of the author (s), the date of

[49]A full list of all the individuals who contributed to the project is included in the Resource Bank.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S175297192610027X Published online by Cambridge University Press

publication, the title of publication, the publisher, keywords, and a synopsis. For journal articles and eBooks, hyperlinks are included.

The first section of the Resource Bank offers a selection of texts on decolonizing the curriculum. The second section presents texts that grapple with race and racism in IR. The third section features resources on Global IR and the IR of the Global South, while the fourth and fifth sections focus on Indigenous perspectives and the history/historiography of IR. Section 6 looks at the various IR subfields and provides resources organized into four sub-sections: International Security, International Political Economy, Foreign Policy, and International Institutions and Global Governance.[50] Section 7 provides a selection of texts organized along thematic subheadings of gender, environmental security and governance, armed conflict, peacebuilding, humanitarian intervention, human security, global health, diplomacy, and technology. Section 8 presents four geographical sub-sections, providing a selection of resources that focus on Africa, the Middle East, Asia Pacific, and Latin America, respectively. Section 9 provides other useful resources, including research methods, pedagogical tools, podcasts, and webinars that may be of interest.

Living document

We describe the Resource Bank as a living document to highlight that we do not wish for the project to be a one-off accomplishment reflecting only the debates and preoccupations of a specific period. Recognizing that it is the product of a specific confluence of several factors – including moves towards decolonization in academia, the 2020 civil rights and anti-racism mobilizations, and the COVID-19 pandemic – we are aware that while the resources included in the Resource Bank may be useful for understanding this specific moment, its contents may need to change over time. As time goes on, we anticipate that some new resources will need to be added while others may need to be changed or removed. We also hope that the broad categories we use to divide the resources will undergo some changes in the future, as new fields of research, theoretical frameworks, and perspectives emerge in the field. As such, we envision the Resource Bank as a living document that will change, grow, and expand along with and in response to the discipline. This change will be reflected in the periodic updates to the Resource Bank, which will present an updated version of the document.

Theoretical and pedagogical implications

We produced the Resource Bank in the hope that it can serve as a tool to foster theoretical innovation and pedagogical transformation in the field of IR. This resource can serve as an important tool for theoretical innovation in two significant ways. First, as numerous scholars have convincingly argued and as we have highlighted in the preceding sections, the theoretical toolkit of IR is rooted in an exclusionary, Western philosophical foundation. This Western philosophical tradition used the European experience to ground its claims about human social reality, universalizing the experiences of an unrepresentative group of people. These universalizations of Western experiences informed the theoretical foundations of the IR field. Presenting a collection of texts that provide rich empirical, historically

[50]These sub-sections correspond to the major streams in the IR program at Queen's University.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S175297192610027X Published online by Cambridge University Press

grounded, and situated scholarship from across the world, the Resource Bank provides sources that can serve as important starting points for theoretical innovation in IR. Looking at a range of different places and histories to diversify the experiences we use as bases for developing our theories is vital for addressing IR theory's parochialism and Eurocentrism. In particular, the texts included under the subheading of geographic areas, covering a range of diverse spaces, provide empirical insights that can be vital for theoretical innovation that decentres Europe and diversifies the canon, aiding efforts to decolonize the field.

Second, and relatedly, the Resource Bank contains a plethora of sources that illustrate how scholars have used African experiences to undertake IR theory revision and development, which can serve as important templates for theoretical innovation. For instance, closely examining Namibia, Grovogui[51] demonstrates how race and imperialism entrenched international hierarchy, recasting dominant accounts about the development of international law. Similarly, Getachew[52] focuses on African and Caribbean anticolonial leaders and thinkers to develop the concept of worldmaking that she details in her book. Finally, in *Ethiopia in Theory*, Zeleke[53] examines the literature associated with the Ethiopian Student Movement of the 1960s and 1970s to draw invaluable insights about how African systems of political thought and activism speak to and enhance Marxist theory specifically and critical theory more broadly. These texts, as well as many others included in the Resource Bank, illustrate how scholars are looking to places and issues that are often overlooked in mainstream IR to generate theoretical insights that complement, challenge, and advance the existing theoretical toolkit. Moreover, the Resource Bank includes a section on research methods, which sheds light on the alternative methodological approaches scholars can utilize in the course of their work. In all, the Resource Bank features a collection of empirical texts that can spur theoretical innovation and theoretical works that provide frameworks for how to undertake such a task. And, given that theory lies at the heart of all IR literature, whether explicitly acknowledged or otherwise, the work of theorists is vital in fostering not only theoretical diversity but also ontological and epistemological transformation in the field.

In terms of pedagogy, the Resource Bank is a repository from which instructors can draw to develop syllabi that introduce students to diverse strands of IR thought and theorization. For instance, the Resource Bank can be used to create syllabi that centre the contributions of African systems of thought to IR. Similar to el-Malik & Kamola's (2017) conceptualization, we define African systems of thought as diverse streams of political thought produced by those within and outside Africa, united by a focus on the past and contemporary political dynamics on the continent. Our aim here is not to provide a ready-made African IR syllabus but rather to illustrate how the Resource Bank can be used to develop syllabi and courses that highlight how the continent has shaped the field, focusing on the contributions of African scholarship and knowledge systems. Such an IR syllabus and the broader pedagogical revision that we hope the Resource Bank can foster will be especially important for students and institutions located on the African continent. As other contributors to this special issue have noted, the coloniality of knowledge production and dissemination has

[51]Grovogui 1996.
[52]Getachew 2019.
[53]Zeleke 2019 – Entry included in the upcoming, updated version of the Resource Bank.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S175297192610027X Published online by Cambridge University Press

meant that IR students across African institutions have very limited opportunities to engage with Africanist IR scholarship, a challenge we hope the Resource Bank can help address. Moreover, in addition to designing specific courses centred on African IR, institutions and departments – especially within the continent – can utilize the Resource Bank to integrate African histories and knowledge systems into mandatory and introductory courses in the field.

An African-centred IR syllabus could cover a range of topics and themes that can serve to decolonize and diversify the discipline of IR. In terms of decolonization, the Resource Bank features a number of texts that draw on African histories, experiences, and systems of thought to uncover and critique the colonial and Eurocentric origins of the IR field. Among them are Du Bois's seminal 'The African Roots of War'; Thakur et al.'s (2017) discussion on the racialized and imperial origins of the field; and Henderson's (2013) 'Hidden in Plain Sight,' which unpacks the racially infused constructs that inform mainstream IR paradigms. While it is impossible to list all the relevant authors and titles, the Resource Bank features numerous texts that discuss coloniality, decolonization, and postcolonial approaches in IR through an examination of Africa.[54] Altogether, these texts provide a critical re-reading of the origin story of the discipline, demonstrating how race, racialization, colonialism, and empire have long been at the centre of the field. In contrast to standard IR courses that often replicate incomplete – and, at times, incorrect – narratives around the foundation of the field, an African-centred IR syllabus could prominently feature texts that highlight the colonial origins of the field, enabling students to uncover how these factors continue to shape existing debates, paradigms, and knowledge in the field.

In addition to featuring decolonial and postcolonial perspectives, an Africa-centred IR course could also be vital in diversifying the field by incorporating insights from African and Africanist IR scholars. An important theme raised by such scholars is a critical analysis of the global political economy and Africa's place within it. Rodney's deeply influential *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (1981) and Robinson's *Black Marxism* (2020), which have vastly improved our understanding of the complex link between capitalism, race and imperialism, stand out as important examples. The Resource Bank also includes more contemporary scholarship on African Political Economy[55] that contributes to IR broadly and International Political Economy specifically. Another important area where African knowledge systems and scholarship have made important contributions includes debates on agency in the global arena. Scholars such as Compaoré (2018), Grant (2018, 2022), Grant et al. (2023), and Tieku (2013, 2022) have looked to the African continent to contribute to the burgeoning research agenda on state and non-state agencies. Given that much of IR is preoccupied with great power politics, a focus on African agency would serve to de-centre the Euro-American core. Finally, the Resource Bank features African scholars and scholarship that have made important contributions to the fields of security and conflict studies.[56] While due to spatial constraints we cannot list all the contributions of African IR scholarship, the topics discussed above highlight the distinct insights, themes, and topics that can be covered in an Africa-centric study of IR which privileges African histories, experiences, and perspectives.

[54]Bouka 2018, 2021; Rutazibwa and Shilliam 2018; Getachew 2019; Sesay 2021; Shilliam 2020, 2021.
[55]Haile 2023.
[56]Adebajo 2002; Smith 2010; Wai 2012; Coleman et al. 2018.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S175297192610027X Published online by Cambridge University Press

Lessons

Several valuable insights emerged from working on this project, three of which we will briefly highlight. The first is the importance of recognizing and drawing on the work that has already been done. In the course of our work, we engaged with and drew from scholars who have long wrestled with the same questions we are grappling with in this project, including Henderson, Mignolo, Vitalis, Shilliam, and many more.[57] Interacting with these scholars and texts underscored the importance of building on existing foundations because, despite not being well-acknowledged in the IR field, postcolonial scholars have provided insights that contribute immensely to advancing our understanding of global politics and challenging the problematic disciplinary boundaries of IR. Building on this robust intellectual history, this engagement also illuminated for us gaps in African IR scholarship that limit innovative theory building, knowledge production, and mobilization. For example, the focus of several scholars in responding to the marginalization of Africa in the IR field is found by Tieku (2022)[58] to be defensive. Tieku calls instead for advancing epistemic freedom by shifting to a more proactive form of knowledge production, which is best done by drawing on pre-colonial African history to produce counternarratives to the 1648 metanarrative, and by engaging with Indigenous African knowledge systems. This allows for privileging African voices, ideas, and experiences. The work of Sesay in this volume and elsewhere on legal internationalization in settler-colonial environments[59] is a good illustration of knowledge production using the history of legal development in Africa.

The second key insight that emerged was the importance of collaboration. During this project, we engaged in fruitful formal and informal conversations with one another, fellow graduate students, and IR faculty within the department of Political Studies. The collaboration also enabled us to build bridges with scholars beyond Queen's. For example, our paper presentations on the Resource Bank in Round Tables at local and domestic conferences helped broaden support for similar initiatives in the discipline of IR.[60] A notable outcome of the collaboration is a presentation made at a workshop on African Systems of Political Thought in International Relations hosted by the University of Ghana in July 2025. The workshop served as a platform for the exchange of knowledge on IR pedagogies that centre African systems of thought, epistemologies, ontologies, and lived experiences. In addition to helping us establish strong connections, this collaborative approach enabled us to brainstorm ideas, devise new ways of tackling challenges, and refine our vision for the Resource Bank. Moreover, these conversations impressed upon us the importance of this work, as the colleagues and faculty members we spoke with were not only enthusiastic about the work but also ready to assist our efforts.

Third, this project highlighted the vital role of institutional, professional, and disciplinary power. The Resource Bank project was made possible because of the efforts of faculty members within the Department of Political Studies at Queen's

[57]Henderson 2013; Mignolo 2009; Vitalis 2015; Shilliam 2021.

[58]Tieku 2022.

[59]Sesay 2021.

[60]Paper presentations on the Resource Bank were made at the University of Notre Dame's Race and International Workshop, May 2024; Roundtable on Diversifying the IR Discipline at the 2024 Canadian Political Science Association, June 2024, and at Symposium on African Systems of Political Thought at International Studies Association, April 2024.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S175297192610027X Published online by Cambridge University Press

University.[61] These scholars not only laid the groundwork for the Resource Bank by creating opportunities to have critical and reflexive conversations about the IR field but also materially contributed to the project. Funding for the project was made available by Dr. von Hlatky's Canada Research Chair (Tier 2) on Gender, Security, and the Armed Forces, who supervised the project together with Dr. Martel. Moreover, faculty within and beyond Queen's University generously offered their expertise, support, and guidance throughout the process. A key takeaway from this is that the types of transformations that will make IR more pluralistic require professional and institutional support. While institutions often claim that they want to see such transformations (frequently framed as diversity and inclusion), they do little to materially support those doing this work. Accordingly, these tasks frequently fall on the shoulders of junior, racialized, and/or women faculty members who provide the uncompensated labour for such work. Our experience with the Resource Bank project illustrates the importance of recognizing and compensating the labour of scholars doing this work.

Conclusions and recommendations

In the years after 2020, various academic disciplines have been undertaking important conversations and debates around diversifying – and, at times, decolonizing – their respective fields. These conversations have been happening in IR long before 2020, but in the past 5 years, there has been a rise in the number of publications, conferences, and conversations engaging with these topics. In this article, we have highlighted our IR Resource Bank project – a project designed to address some of the systematic exclusions in the field – as one possible way to push these conversations forward. The article introduced the Resource Bank, highlighted the impetus for its production, and discussed the collaborative efforts that went into compiling it. We also highlighted how the Resource Bank can help the work of IR scholars and students interested in the debates around diversifying and decolonizing the discipline. Drawing on our experience with the Resource Bank project, we conclude by offering the following three recommendations to those hoping to undertake a similar project. First, institutional culture matters: This project would not have been possible without the resources, support, and commitment of the IR faculty and graduate students in the department of Political Studies at Queen's University, who directly and indirectly contributed to the Resource Bank. This illustrates the fact that attempts to foster transformations within fields and disciplines rely not only on the efforts of individuals but also require supportive institutional cultures and environments. Second, it is widely recognized that the work of diversifying and/or decolonizing curricula often relies on the unpaid and underappreciated labour of people in academia.[62] In contrast, despite being a labour of passion, the Resource Bank was the result of paid labour, which was integral to its success. As such, directing financial support towards such projects is vital in ensuring that efforts to make the discipline more pluralistic do not exacerbate the marginalization that many of us in academia face. Third, as put by de Matos-Ala (2017), developing plurality goes beyond including a smattering of

[61]In particular, Stefanie, Stephanie, Yolande, Andrew, and Wayne all played a pivotal role in facilitating the project at multiple stages.

[62]Ahmed 2012; Davis 2024.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S175297192610027X Published online by Cambridge University Press

Global South scholarship together with a few local examples or case studies. As such, what is required is not simply adding a few local examples but rather a sustained and meaningful commitment to pluralism in our theoretical and pedagogical practices.

References

Abrahamsen, Rita. 2017. "Africa and International Relations: Assembling Africa, Studying the World." *African Affairs* 116 (462): 125–39.

Acharya, Amitav. 2014. "Global International Relations (IR) and Regional Worlds: A New Agenda for International Studies." *International Studies Quarterly* 58 (4): 647–59.

Acharya, Amitav. 2016. "Advancing Global IR: Challenges, Contentions, and Contributions." *International Studies Review* 18 (1): 4–15.

Adebajo, Adekeye. 2002. *Building Peace in West Africa: Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea-Bissau*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.

Ahmed, Sara. 2012. *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Akel, Sofia. 2020. "What Decolonising the Curriculum Really Means." *Each Other*. Available at https://eachother.org.uk/decolonising-the-curriculum-what-it-really-means/.

Andrews, Nathan, and Nene Ernest Khalema, eds. 2023. *Decolonizing African Studies Pedagogies: Knowledge Production, Epistemic Imperialism and Black Agency*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Barkawi, Tarak, and Mark Laffey. 2006. "The Postcolonial Moment in Security Studies." *Review of International Studies* 32 (2): 329–52.

Barnett, Michael, and Ayşe Zarakol. 2023. "Global International Relations and the Essentialism Trap." *International Theory* 15 (3): 428–44.

Bilgin, Pınar. 2008. "Thinking Past 'Western' IR?" *Third World Quarterly* 29 (1): 5–23.

Bilgin, Pınar, and Karen Smith. 2024. *Thinking Globally about World Politics: Beyond Global IR*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

Blaney, David, and Nadeem Inayatullah. 2008. "International Relations from Below." In *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations*, edited by Christian Reus-Smit and Duncan Snidal, 663–74. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bouka, Yolande. 2018. "Wakanda, Afrofuturism, and Decolonizing International Relations Scholarship." *LSE Blog*. Available at https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/Africaatlse/2018/02/12/wakanda-afrofuturism-and-decolonizing-international-relations-scholarship/.

Bouka, Yolande. 2021. "Women, Colonial Resistance, and Decolonization. Challenging Africa Histories." In *The Palgrave Handbook of African Women's Studies*, edited by Olajumoke Yacob-Haliso and Toyin Falola, 1295–313. London: Palgrave.

Busby, Josh, and David Kang. 2020. "We All Suffer If the Field is Parochial." *The Duck of Minerva*. Available at https://www.duckofminerva.com/2020/08.

Capan, Zeynep Gulsah. 2017. "Decolonising International Relations?" *Third World Quarterly* 38 (1): 1–15.

Chakrabarty, Dipesh. 2000. *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Chandra, Uday. 2013. "The Case for a Postcolonial Approach to the Study of Politics." *New Political Science* 35 (3): 479–91.

Chowdhry, Geeta, and Shirin M. Rai. 2009. "The Geographies of Exclusion and the Politics of Inclusion: Race-Based Exclusions in the Teaching of International Relations." *International Studies Perspectives* 10 (1): 84–91.

Coleman, Katharina P., and Thomas K. Tieku, eds. 2018. *African Actors in International Security: Shaping Contemporary Norms*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.

Compaoré, W. R. Nadège. 2018. "Rise of the (Other) Rest? Exploring Small State Agency and Collective Power in IR." *International Studies Review* 20 (2): 264–71.

Cornelissen, Scarlett, Fantu Cheru, and Timothy M. Shaw. 2012. "Introduction: Africa and International Relations in the 21st Century: Still Challenging Theory?" In *Africa and International Relations in the 21st Century*, edited by Scarlett Cornelissen, Fantu Cheru, and Timothy M. Shaw, 1–17. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S175297192610027X Published online by Cambridge University Press

Darby, Philip. 2010. "A Disabling Discipline?" In *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations*, edited by Christian Reus-Smit and Duncan Snidal, 95–108. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Davis, Shardé M., ed. 2024. *Being Black in the Ivory: Truth-Telling about Racism in Higher Education*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.

Doty, Roxanne Lynn. 1993. "The Bounds of 'Race' in International Relations." *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 22 (3): 443–61.

Du Bois, W. E. B. 1925. "Worlds of Color." *Foreign Affairs* 3 (3): 423–44.

Dunn, Kevin C. 2001. "Introduction: Africa and International Relations Theory." In *Africa's Challenge to International Relations Theory*, edited by Timothy M. Shaw, and Kevin C. Dunn, 1–8. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Epstein, Charlotte. 2014. "The Postcolonial Perspective: An Introduction." *International Theory* 6 (2): 294–311.

Getachew, Adom. 2019. *Worldmaking after Empire*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Grant, J. Andrew. 2018. "Agential Constructivism and Change in World Politics." *International Studies Review* 20 (2): 255–63.

Grant, J. Andrew. 2022. "Towards Praxes of the Region: Agential Constructivist Approaches to Regionalisms." *International Journal* 77 (3): 414–29.

Grant, J. Andrew, Abdiasis Issa, Fredrik Söderbaum, and Badriyya Yusuf. 2023. "Regionalism beyond State-Centrism: African Regionalism in Comparative Perspective." *International Journal* 77 (3): 449–68.

Grovogui, Siba N' Zatioula. 1996. *Sovereigns, Quasi Sovereigns, and Africans: Race and Self-Determination in International Law*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Grovogui, Siba N. 2001. "Come to Africa: A Hermeneutics of Race in International Theory." *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 26 (4): 425–48.

Haag, Steffen. 2020. "Bridging the Postcolonial Political-Economy Divide. Towards a Theoretical Framework." DPS Working Paper 7. *KOBRA*. Available at https://kobra.uni-kassel.de/items/692d092d-a443–45fb-875c-2eb00e321573.

Haile, Fikir. 2023. "Africa in IPE Theorization: Exclusion, Oversight, and Eurocentrism in the Field's Past and Future." *Review of International Political Economy* 30 (5): 1660–75.

Henderson, Errol A. 2013. "Hidden in Plain Sight: Racism in International Relations Theory." *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 26 (1): 71–92.

Henderson, Errol A. 2017. "The Revolution Will Not be Theorised: Du Bois, Locke, and the Howard School's Challenge to White Supremacist IR Theory." *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 45 (3): 492–510.

Hern, Erin Accampo. 2023. *Explaining Successes in Africa: Things Don't Always Fall Apart*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.

Howell, Alison, and Melanie Richter-Montpetit. 2020. "Is Securitization Theory Racist? Civilizationism, Methodological Whiteness, and AntiBlack Thought in the Copenhagen School." *Security Dialogue* 51 (1): 3–22.

Ihkane, Peter Aloysius, and Isaac E. Ukpokolo, eds. 2023. *African Epistemology: Essays on Being and Knowledge*. London: Routledge.

Iñiguez de Heredia, Marta, and Zubairu Wai, eds. 2018. *Recentring Africa in International Relations: Beyond Lack, Peripherality, and Failure*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Kayaoglu, Turan. 2010. "Westphalian Eurocentrism in International Relations Theory." *International Studies Review* 12 (2): 193–217.

Keohane, Robert O. 1988. "International Institutions: Two Approaches." *International Studies Quarterly* 32 (4): 379–96.

Keohane, Robert O. 1998. "Beyond Dichotomy: Conversations between International Relations and Feminist Theory." *International Studies Quarterly* 42 (1): 193–7.

Krishna, Sankaran. 2018. "Postcolonialism and its Relevance for International Relations in a Globalized World." In *Race, Gender, and Culture in International Relations: Postcolonial Perspectives*, edited by Randolph B. Persaud and Alina Sajed, 44–62. Abingdon: Routledge.

Lapid, Yosef. 1989. "The Third Debate: On the Prospects of International Theory in a Post-Positivist Era." *International Studies Quarterly* 33 (3): 235–54.

Lazarus, Neil. 2011. "What Postcolonial Theory Doesn't Say." *Race & Class* 53 (1): 3–27.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S175297192610027X Published online by Cambridge University Press

Lu, Catherine. 2017. *Justice and Reconciliation in World Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
el-Malik, Shiera S., and Isaac A. Kamola, eds. 2017. *Politics of African Anticolonial Archive*. London: Rowman & Littlefield International.
de Matos-Ala, Jacqueline. 2017. "Making the Invisible, Visible: Challenging the Knowledge Structures Inherent in International Relations Theory in Order to Create Knowledge Plural Curricula." *Revista Brasileira de Politica Internacional* 60 (1): e021.
Mignolo, Walter D. 2009. "Epistemic Disobedience, Independent Thought and Decolonial Freedom." *Theory, Culture & Society* 26 (7–8): 159–81.
Morgenthau, Hans J. 1973. *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 5th edition. New York: Knopf.
Nkiwane, Tandeka C. 2001. "Africa and International Relations: Regional Lessons for a Global Discourse." *International Political Science Review* 22 (3): 279–90.
Persaud, Randolph B., and Alina Sajed, eds. 2018. *Race, Gender, and Culture in International Relations: Postcolonial Perspectives*. New York: Routledge.
Robinson, Cedric J. 2020. *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*, 3rd edition. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.
Rodney, Walter. 1981. *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. Washington, DC: Howard University Press.
Rutazibwa, Olivia U. 2020. "Hidden in Plain Sight: Coloniality, Capitalism and Race/Ism as Far as the Eye Can See." *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 48 (2): 221–41.
Rutazibwa, Olivia U., and Robbie Shilliam, eds. 2018. *Routledge Handbook of Postcolonial Politics*. London: Routledge.
Sabaratnam, Meera. 2020. "Is IR Theory White? Racialised Subject-Positioning in Three Canonical Texts." *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 49 (1): 3–31.
Said, Edward W. 1979. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage.
Sen, Somdeep. 2023. "Decolonising to Reimagine International Relations: An Introduction." *Review of International Studies* 49 (3): 339–45.
Sesay, Mohamed. 2021. *Domination through Law: The Internationalization of Legal Norms in Postcolonial Africa*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
Seth, Sanjay. 2011. "Postcolonial Theory and the Critique of International Relations." *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 40 (1): 167–83.
Shilliam, Robbie. 2020. "Race and Racism in International Relations: Retrieving a Scholarly Inheritance." *International Politics Reviews* 8 (2): 152–95.
Shilliam, Robbie. 2021. *Decolonizing Politics: An Introduction*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
Smith, Malinda. 2010. *Securing Africa: Post-9/11 Discourses on Terrorism*. Farnham: Ashgate.
Tickner, J. Ann. 2014. *A Feminist Voyage through International Relations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Tieku, Thomas Kwasi. 2013. "Exercising African Agency in Burundi via Multilateral Channels: Opportunities and Challenges." *Conflict, Security & Development* 13 (5): 513–35.
Tieku, Thomas Kwasi. 2022. "A New Research Agenda for Africa's International Relations." *African Affairs* 121 (484): 487–99.
Vitalis, Robert. 2015. *White World Order, Black Power Politics: The Birth of American International Relations*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
Wai, Zubairu. 2012. *Epistemologies of African Conflicts: Violence, Evolutionism and the War in Sierra Leone*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
Wai, Zubairu. 2018. "Africa in/and International Relations: An Introduction." In *Recentring Africa in International Relations*, edited by Marta Iñiguez De Heredia, and Zubairu Wai, 1–29. Cham: Springer.
Wemheuer-Vogelaar, Wiebke, Ingo Peters, Laura Kemmer, Alina Kleinn, Luisa Linke-Behrens, and Sabine Mokry. 2020. "The Global IR Debate in the Classroom." In *International Relations from the Global South*, edited by Arlene B. Tickner and Karen Smith, 17–37. New York: Routledge.
Wilkens, Jan. 2017. "Postcolonialism in International Relations." In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies (Online)*, edited by Nalanda Roy. New York: Oxford Academic. Available at https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190846626.013.101.
Zeleke, Elleni C. 2019. *Ethiopia in Theory: Revolution and Knowledge Production, 1964–2016*. Boston, MA: Brill.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S175297192610027X Published online by Cambridge University Press

Ziai, Aram, Daniel Bendix, and Franziska Müller. 2020. "Decolonizing Knowledge Orders, Research Methodology and the Academia: An Introduction." In *Beyond the Master's Tools? Decolonizing Knowledge Orders, Research Methods and Teaching*, edited by Daniel Bendix, Franziska Müller, and Aram Ziai, 1–15. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Cite this article: Haile, Fikir, and Badriyya Yusuf. 2026. "IR Resource Bank: a tool for diversifying and decolonizing the curriculum." *International Theory* **18** (2): 316–331, doi:10.1017/S175297192610027X

https://doi.org/10.1017/S175297192610027X Published online by Cambridge University Press