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## WORLDING CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND MEDIATION EXPERTISE

In the 'Global South'

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This chapter responds to the paradox at the heart of this volume: '[o]n the one hand, expertise is constantly consulted and drawn up ... On the other hand, the expertise at the heart of the raj is constantly questioned, contested and criticized for ignoring the really relevant knowledge' (Leander and Wæver, this volume: xx). As such, 'ignorance' refers to a particular body of knowledge and techniques that is assembled by 'experts' to constitute their 'expertise', which they then draw upon to inform policy. In what follows, I will focus on how this paradox plays out in the Global South. Here, 'ignorance' applies not only to expertise about a particular geography of conflict, but is understood as built into the field of conflict resolution and mediation.

The field of conflict resolution and mediation is viewed by some of its critics as offering 'off-the-peg solutions, utilizing standard procedures' vis-à-vis the Global South, while remaining 'curiously uninterested in the particulars – cultural, political, historical – of conflicts' (Chan, 2011: 270). Recent experiences, which have revealed the limitations of such 'off-the-peg solutions' in the Global South, however, have been framed in terms of the so-called 'problem of local ownership' (see, for example, Nathan, 2007; Kumar, 2011; Mac Ginty and Richmond, 2013). As such, it is not the limitations of 'expertise', but local actors' ownership of such expertise that has come under scrutiny. Yet, what often goes unnoticed is that there are (at least) two dimensions to the so-called problem of local ownership: the prevalence of actors from the Global North in shaping conflict resolution and mediation efforts *and* the Eurocentric slant in the assembling of conflict expertise. While these two dimensions are not unrelated, it is nevertheless useful to look at them separately, not least because 'local ownership' is problematized differently by different actors responding to different contexts.

In what follows, I will look at two efforts that seek to address the limits of 'local ownership' by addressing each of these two dimensions. These two efforts have

emerged independently of each other, responding to slightly different concerns regarding the theory and practice of conflict resolution and mediation expertise. By juxtaposing these two efforts, I seek to highlight the emerging body of critical work, underscore its richness, and highlight limitations that remain to be addressed. The Australia-based effort focuses on conflict resolution expertise, understands the limits of ‘local ownership’ in terms of the Eurocentric slant in the assembling of conflict resolution expertise and seeks to make up for such ‘ignorance’ by exploring differently situated conflict resolution expertise originating from Oceania and Asia. The Brazil-based effort, in turn, focuses on mediation, understands the limits of ‘local ownership’ in terms of the prevalence of Global North actors in designing and implementing mediation efforts around the world and focuses on empowering Global South actors by helping them to constitute their agency as mediation experts. Put differently, the first set of efforts has focused on assembling a new body of conflict resolution expertise through tapping into already existing knowledge and techniques in the Global South. The second set of efforts has engaged directly with policy practitioners, seeking to render mediation expertise less Eurocentric by empowering mediation practitioners from the Global South, thereby diluting the power of Global North expertise. Drawing on the notion of ‘worlding’ that has been (re)introduced to the study of world politics in recent years (Tickner and Wæver, 2009), I will offer a reading of these two efforts as pointing to the need to go beyond reflecting on the geo-cultural situatedness of expertise, and to consider its constitutive effects – as observed in the continuing prevalence of such expertise in the Global South even as it is widely contested by virtue of its Eurocentric slant.

The first part of the chapter presents a brief overview of the notion of worlding, distinguishing between its two understandings, ‘worlding as situatedness’ and ‘worlding as constitutive’ (Bilgin, 2016b). In the second part, I introduce the Australian and Brazilian efforts. The third part offers a reading of these two efforts as reflecting these two understandings of worlding: where the Australia-based effort reflects on the geo-cultural situatedness of expertise in conflict resolution, the Brazil-based effort responds to its constitutive effects with regard to mediation expertise. I conclude by pointing to the need to connect the two understandings of worlding (and not apply only one or the other) in making sense of the way the book’s paradox plays out in the Global South.

## **Two(fold) understanding(s) of worlding**

In contemporary IR scholarship, ‘worlding’ is typically used to refer to reflecting on the geo-cultural situatedness of knowing. However, there is another, equally important aspect to the notion of worlding, which is about reflecting on the constitutive effects of knowing. These two understandings were introduced to the study of world politics around the same time (late 1990s and early 2000s). Yet, it has been the first one that has shaped contemporary debates on IR’s limitations, including the so-called ‘problem of local ownership’ (Kumar, 2011; Mac Ginty and

Richmond, 2013). The following highlights these two different understandings of worlding, before calling for worlding conflict expertise and mediation in its twofold meaning (and not one or the other).

The notion of worlding was initially introduced to IR through feminist scholarship. Jan Jindy Pettman's (1996) book entitled *Worlding Women* was one of the first feminist IR monographs exploring the ways in which IR is gendered. For Pettman (1996: vii), worlding women meant 'taking women's experiences of the international seriously'. Pettman (*ibid.*: vi) called for adopting worlding as a strategy so that 'the different worlds of those outside the powerful centers and classes be included in our understanding of international politics'. Put differently, for Pettman, worlding was meant to address IR's limits (including the apparent absence of women), gendered nature of knowledge, and IR's narrow understanding of difference, including gendered difference.

Different from Pettman's feminist standpoint perspective (which I term 'worlding-as-situatedness'), postcolonial studies discussions introduced another understanding – that I term as 'worlding-as-constitutive' (Bilgin, 2016b). Presenting Edward Said's notion of 'worldliness' to IR students, Pal Ahluvalia and Michael Sullivan (2001: 363) defined it as 'the un- or non-neglect of other ideologies and experiences'. Understanding texts, underscored Said, involved becoming aware how they are 'worldly', that is, how they respond to and reflect their context. Accordingly, Ahluvalia and Sullivan invited scholars to reflect on the ways in which scholarship is shaped by scholars' ideologies and experiences, as they seek to respond to their context.

The notion of worlding came to the attention of a broader group of IR students in the 2000s through the 'geo-cultural epistemologies and IR' project by Arlene Tickner and Ole Wæver, who sought to understand the dynamics that shaped International Relations as a Eurocentric body of knowledge. In calling for worlding IR, Tickner and Wæver's concern was that although critical scholars' 'critique or lament' regarding IR being 'not so international' (Wæver, 1998) was acknowledged, it was not always considered as valid due to lack of evidence. Finding out about the study of IR and conceptions of the international in other parts of the world was crucial, argued Tickner and Wæver, not only because there was a need for evidence beyond the anecdotal, but also because:

when this is done without a concrete study of non-dominant and non-privileged parts of the world, it becomes yet another way of speaking from the center about the whole, and of depicting the center as normal and the periphery as a projected 'other' through which the disciplinary core is reinforced.  
(Tickner and Wæver, 2009: 1)

Accordingly, Tickner and Wæver designed their project around the notion of worlding. Yet, where Tickner and Wæver discussed worlding in both senses of the term, the rest of the volume reflected concerns with geo-cultural situatedness, with the second meaning of worlding-as-constitutive all but disappearing from the

discussions.<sup>1</sup> In a similar fashion, it is ‘worlding-as-situatedness’ that has shaped present-day discussions on geo-culture and expertise, thereby framing the issue in terms of a ‘problem of local ownership’ (but not, for instance, the limitations of the field of conflict expertise and mediation).

Let me make a brief detour here to say more on ‘worlding-as-constitutive’. Edward Said’s 1983 book, *The World, the Text and the Critic* offered his initial elaboration on the notions of ‘worldly’ and ‘worldliness’. Arguing against then-prevalent views of the role of the critic as apolitical and interest-free, Said maintained that

Criticism ... is always situated; it is skeptical, secular, reflectively open to its own failings. This is by no means to say that it is value-free. Quite the contrary, for the inevitable trajectory of critical consciousness is to arrive at some acute sense of what political, social and human values are entailed in the reading, production, and transmission of every text.

(Said, 1983: 26)

For Said, texts were worldly. He studied the worldliness of texts through scholarly reflection on the ‘concrete reality about which political, moral, and social judgments have to be made and, if not only made, then exposed and demystified’ (ibid.). The critic’s situation demanded reflecting on the worldliness of texts, wrote Said; when offering criticism, the critic should reflect on how texts as well as their authors *and* their critics are worldly. As opposed to, that is, pretending that the author, the text and the critic exist outside history and politics. In offering this argument, Said was not seeking to encourage the critic to ‘discover’ a/the truth about history and politics. He wrote:

My position is that texts are worldly, to some degree they are events, and, even when they appear to deny it, they are nevertheless a part of the social world, human life, and of course the historical moments in which they are located and interpreted.

(ibid.: 4)

Accordingly, Said’s was a plea for worlding texts so that the critic could study their worldliness, understood as their situatedness *and* their constitutive effects.

Said’s approach to worlding-as-constitutive crystallizes in postcolonial studies discussions on the ‘Third World’. Among others, Gayatri Spivak highlighted how the literature on the subject has worlded the Third World ‘on a supposedly uninhabited earth’ (Spivak, 1985: 253). Inquiring into constitutive effects of writings on the ‘Third World’ helps to uncover how colonized space is ‘brought into the “world”, that is, made to exist as part of a world essentially constructed by a Eurocentrism’ (Ashcroft et al., 2009: 225). Worlding the scholarship on the ‘Third World’, then, allows us to see how focusing merely on the geo-cultural context of ideas and institutions may result in overlooking the constitutive effects of the

colonial encounter in the making of the world – including the ‘colonial present’ (Gregory, 2004). Scholarship on the ‘Third World’ does not only reflect the geo-cultural context in which ideas and institutions take shape; it also responds to a world that is already worlded insofar as some have found themselves to be allotted to a ‘third’ world where others are viewed as belonging to ‘first’ or ‘second’ worlds.

To recapitulate, building on the twofold meaning of worlding, I underscored the significance of worlding in its twofold meaning: reflecting on the situatedness of expertise *and* on its constitutive effects. Self-reflection on the geo-cultural situatedness of ideas (and others) is crucial but not enough by itself (Bilgin, 2016b). The point being that, we are likely to fall short of making sense of the paradox at the heart of this volume (see Introduction) so long as we focus on geo-cultural situatedness alone, without considering the ways in which the field of conflict resolution and mediation has worlded the world. The issue at stake is not only the Western European postcode of some key institutions and scholars, but how ideas have been shaped through interaction with IR’s ‘constitutive outside’. I will return to this point in the final part.

### **Responding to the limits of ‘expertise’ on conflict resolution and mediation in the ‘Global South’: two efforts**

Where and who is the Global South? I use the term Global South while remaining aware of its ambiguity (as with the ‘Third World’, see above). In doing so, I follow Albert Paolini (1999: 4) who noted that ‘no matter how amorphous’, such concepts are nevertheless useful insofar as they ‘[redirect] our attention to the edges of the Western gaze’. Indeed, as Matthew Sparke (2007: 117) maintained, ‘the global South is everywhere, but it is also always somewhere, and that somewhere, located at the inter-section of entangled political geographies of dispossession and repossession, has to be mapped with persistent geographical responsibility’.

There is no yardstick for determining whether Brazil or Australia is/not in the Global South. Brazil is identified by insiders and outsiders alike as a rising power of the Global South (Herz, 2011). Yet, Brazil’s most recent South-South experiences in peacekeeping have exhibited hierarchical dynamics that are not entirely unlike tensions experienced in North-South relations (Müller, 2016). Furthermore, scholars in Brazil have, for long, challenged the Eurocentric slant in the assembling of knowledge about international relations while, at the same time, resisting associating themselves with efforts to construct a so-called ‘non-Western IR’ (Kristensen, 2015).

But then, the indeterminacy of Australia and Brazil’s Global South credentials point to the Eurocentric limitations of the way students of international relations make sense of world politics. For, Eurocentrism is not only about whether one is located in or originating from Europe (or the ‘West’). Nor is it only about whether one puts the interests of Europe (or the ‘West’) at the center of one’s policy or research agenda. Rather, Eurocentrism limits our understanding of how the world works by shaping the concepts and categories through which we understand history and our place in constituting the international. As such, being in the Global North

or South is not (only) about geographical and economic situatedness but also an outlook, informed by expertise about how the world works (Bilgin, 2016b).

Other than being located in the southern hemisphere of the globe, Australia does not come across as an obvious location to reflect on Eurocentrism. While Australia is geographically closer to Asia than to Europe, it is considered by insiders and outsiders alike as ‘Western’ by virtue of its colonial legacy and contemporary orientation (which Bleiker and Brigg identify as a part of the problem, see below) (on New Zealand, see Laffey, 1999). Indeed, over the years, the relationship between the settler and native populations in Australia has exhibited tensions reminiscent of those between the Global South and North. That said it is Australia’s ambivalent position vis-à-vis the Global South that Bleiker and Brigg have sought to turn into a vantage point and a research agenda. In a similar vein, as will be suggested below, it is Brazil’s own ambivalence vis-à-vis the Global South that crystallizes the constitutive effects of the Eurocentric slant in expertise on conflict resolution and mediation. Let us consider these two efforts in turn.

The starting point of the Australia-based effort is the editors Roland Bleiker and Morgan Brigg’s (2011: 1) observation that ‘cultural difference is widely invoked in conflicts that beset today’s world’. The editors respond to this eventuality by attempting to ‘turn difference from a perceived threat into a valuable resource for helping to manage conflicts’ (Bleiker and Brigg, 2011: 1). In doing so, they encounter a hurdle in that ‘prevailing ways of dealing with conflict tend to be limited because they are almost exclusively embedded in Western conceptual frameworks’, which, they argue, ‘often fail to understand and adequately deal with conflict, particularly when cultural difference is at play’ (ibid.). This is because, Bleiker and Brigg note, prevailing approaches view conflict resolution in ostensibly ‘depoliticized’ terms, thereby overlooking ‘how conflict and the problem of difference today is still intertwined with colonialism and its legacies, with the residues of slavery, destruction of cultures and civilizations, expropriations of lands and property’ (ibid.: 4).

Having identified their challenge as one of ‘opening up a dialogue between neglected and prevailing approaches to conflict resolution’, Bleiker and Brigg (2011: 5) organized a three-day workshop in Brisbane in 2007, designed to jump-start such dialogue between experts representing a variety of conflict resolution cultures, including ‘North’ and ‘South’, ‘written’ and ‘oral’, ‘academic’ and ‘policy’. To allow for the kind of crosscutting dialogue generated by the workshop to be reflected in the written end product, they assigned the experts into cross-cultural teams, making sure that one or more cultures of conflict resolution (North/South, written/oral, academic/policy) get represented. As Bleiker and Brigg (2011: 2) underscored in their introductory chapter, such an effort has the potential to ‘enrich both prevailing Western theories and practices of conflict resolution and their often ignored local counterparts through mutual encounter and exchange’.

The first part of the volume is devoted to exploring, in conceptual terms, the problems the editors have identified with the prevailing approaches. Having located the limits of conflict resolution expertise in a particular way of approaching

cultural difference, the editors then turn to different geo-cultural sites (what I term 'worlding as situatedness', see below), where neglected traditions of conflict resolution can be found, and bring them into dialogue with the prevailing approaches. The rest of the volume falls into three parts, looking at three specific sites, namely Indigenous Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand, South Pacific, and East Asia. In each of these sites, the contributors are invited to consider the relevance of some of the traits of prevailing approaches to conflict resolution such as the reason versus emotion distinction, privileging of speech as a form of communication, linear conceptions of time, understanding physical violence as synonymous with conflict, the individual as an autonomous entity, and the de-legitimization of myth and magic in sustaining a community. As such, the contributions zoom in on the limitations of the prevailing approaches to conflict resolution as identified by the critics. The point being that Eurocentrism of conflict resolution expertise is not only about the geo-cultural locatedness of experts (i.e., reducing Eurocentrism to one's postcode) but also (perhaps more so) about the limitations of their expertise. What is more, such limitations apply not only to expertise on the Global South but also the Global North, as revealed by the contributions to the Bleiker and Brigg volume.

To recap, the Australia-based effort engages in worlding conflict resolution expertise in the first sense of the term, shaped by an understanding of the limits of local ownership in terms of geo-cultural situatedness. Accordingly, the contributors lay bare the Eurocentric slant in the assembling of conflict resolution expertise and point to existing alternatives as found in knowledge and techniques of the Global South. What is overlooked, as will be discussed below, is the constitutive relationship between 'West' and 'non-West', including the ways in which the latter has responded to a world that is already worlded by 'exclusive expertise'.

Different from their Australian counterpart, the Brazil-based effort organized by Global South Unit on Mediation (GSUM) understands the limits of 'local ownership' in terms of the prevalence of Global North agency in the conception and direction of mediation practices around the world. Set up in 2012 as part of the Catholic University of Rio's BRICS<sup>2</sup> Policy Center, GSUM has sought to address this eventuality by seeking to develop 'national mediation capacity' in the Global South. In the project proposal, the rationale behind setting up GSUM is explained in the following manner:

most of the governmental and non-governmental actors involved in international mediation processes are still from developed countries. Very few states and civil-society institutions from the so-called 'Global South' are engaged in international mediation initiatives or have invested in improving their mediation national capacities. This unequal state-of-affairs goes against the increasing importance of so-called emerging countries in the domain of international peace and security and its related dispute settlement mechanisms. Against this backdrop, and responding to recent United Nations recommendations about

the necessity of member states to strengthen their international mediation capacities, the creation of the ‘Global South Centre for Mediation’ [later re-named GSUM] is proposed here.

*(IRI-PUC-Rio, n.d.: 2)*

At the top of GSUM’s agenda has been ‘to promote among developing and emerging countries an “international mediation culture” and to efficiently assist academics, diplomats, government officials and non-governmental actors to study, analyze and employ international mediation procedures’ (IRI-PUC-Rio, n.d.: 2). GSUM’s agenda is explained in the project proposal as a response to ‘low representation’ of the Global South in mediation processes and that this ‘risks not only letting these countries outside important mediation initiatives – in which they might have an important say and contribution – but also endangers the legitimacy of the very mediation agenda, which may be seen as too North/Western centered’ (IRI-PUC-Rio, n.d.: 4). Explained as such, GSUM was responding to the dearth of mediation experts in the Global South. The expectation being that training more mediation experts in the Global South would help restore the North–South balance regarding mediation efforts and the legitimacy of the mediation agenda as pursued by the United Nations.

In the winter schools organized by GSUM, this agenda was put into practice. GSUM winter schools brought together different cultures of conflict resolution (as identified by Bleiker and Brigg): academic and policy practitioner, from the Global North and South, representing written and oral traditions. The student body (up to 24 students per year) was similarly composed but with a Global South focus, thanks to travel grants provided by GSUM. As such, GSUM’s winter schools sought to address Eurocentrism in mediation expertise by empowering Global South actors by helping them to constitute themselves as mediation experts. The organizers’ expectation from the winter school was that its graduates would help address the so-called ‘problem of local ownership’ by diluting the power of Global North expertise, by designing practices that are in tune with local interests and needs – i.e. by taking ownership of mediation in the Global South.

As such, GSUM’s efforts underscore the point that the limits of ‘local ownership’ is not only about the geo-cultural locatedness of actors who participate in mediation efforts, but also about the body of knowledge and techniques from which they draw (‘worlding as constitutive’, see below). By way of seeking to train a new body of experts in the Global South, GSUM’s winter schools have mediated the constitutive dimension of the relationship between geo-culture and expertise (see, Bilgin, 2009). Accordingly, they have addressed the (potentially productive) tension between the attempt to train local experts and doing so by relying on a body of expertise that remains Eurocentric. I will return to this tension in the final part of the chapter. What is significant to note here is that this tension cannot be resolved, but is innate in those efforts originating from the Global South insofar as they respond to a world that is already worlded by mediation expertise.

## Worlding 'expertise' on conflict resolution and mediation in the 'Global South'

Through worlding expertise on conflict resolution and mediation, we begin to understand how Global South actors' efforts to respond to the problem of local ownership take forms that are 'differently different' (Bilgin, 2012) – be it in the form of the Australia-based effort to seek alternative knowledge on conflict resolution or the Brazil-based effort to help local actors constitute themselves as experts by gaining mastery of received knowledge on mediation.

One difference between Australia- and Brazil-based efforts' response to 'exclusive expertise' on conflict resolution and mediation is immediately apparent. The Australia-based effort challenges the claim to expertise on the part of those in the Global North who produce 'expert knowledge' on conflict resolution and mediation, points to its limits in understanding and addressing conflicts in the Global South, and seeks to enrich it with alternative knowledge from the Global South. In this case, the assembling of expertise in the Global South takes place through turning to local knowledge and techniques of conflict resolution. In the case of the Brazil-based effort, in turn, the assembling of expertise in the Global South takes place through mastering prevailing forms of expertise on conflict resolution and mediation as produced in the Global North and juxtaposing it with area studies knowledge plus Global South practitioners' experience, with an eye to rendering 'exclusive expertise' less Eurocentric.

Both approaches to 'exclusive expertise' and the Global South are characterized by their inclusions and exclusions. The Australia-based effort comes across as resisting those who offer 'off-the-peg solutions, utilizing standard procedures' while remaining oblivious to cultural difference (Chan, 2011: 270). The Brazil-based effort focuses not on cultural but on geo-political difference and hierarchy in world politics. The latter also comes across as underestimating the difficulties involved in addressing the Eurocentric slant in the assembling of 'expertise' as underscored by the former.

That said, reading the Brazilian effort as responding to a world that is already worlded by the existing body of mediation expertise, may allow considering how it also resists 'off-the-peg solutions' as offered by prevailing forms of expertise, albeit in a way that is 'differently different' (Bilgin, 2012). In this case, a key difference between the Australia- and Brazil-based efforts is one of strategy. Where the former seeks to address the problem of local ownership and transform local practice in the Global South by assembling a new body of expertise, the latter prefers a bottom up strategy, seeking to transform knowledge in action. Yet, the choice of strategy also reflects how their proponents respond to the relationship between geo-culture and expertise, in terms of situatedness (Australia) or its constitutive effects (Brazil). Let me clarify.

Bleiker and Brigg's edited volume challenges prevailing approaches to conflict resolution on three grounds: how they understand cultural difference, how they shape the way people organize being together, and how they overlook other

traditions of conflict resolution in doing so. Yet, what goes undetected by the editors and the contributors is that a particular way of understanding ‘the problem of difference’ has been constitutive of prevailing approaches to the study of conflict resolution (and IR). As discussed by Naeem Inayatullah and David Blaney (2004: 2), IR’s ‘problem of difference’ refers to a ‘relative incapacity to acknowledge, confront and explore difference’. This problem is intrinsic to IR theorizing, Inayatullah and Blaney argue, and not external to it. That is to say, concerns with identity and difference have been constitutive of IR theorizing even as scholars have sought to leave them out of their research frameworks (Williams, 1998; Bilgin, 2010).

Inayatullah and Blaney’s argument could be extended into the prevailing body of knowledge on conflict resolution insofar as (1) it has been shaped by a particular understanding of difference and its management (by keeping it ‘outside’); and (2) it has overlooked how those who are presumed to be ‘outside’ are already ‘inside’ – i.e. the ‘constitutive outside’ (Blaney and Inayatullah, 2008). Following Inayatullah and Blaney (2004: 670), it could be argued that when seeking ways of diluting the power of the Global North, what is needed is not a bridge with the Global South, ‘but an excavation; a mining of the culture of international relations in order to reveal the representational practices that hide what is central to its constitution and through which we may find the resources for international relations’ reimagination’ (also see, Ahluwalia, 2005).

While Bleiker and Brigg share the same starting point as Inayatullah and Blaney, the first part of the volume could be viewed as doing the project a disservice by reproducing the ‘West’/‘non-West’ dichotomy that they otherwise seek to think beyond. For, while it is indeed the case that ‘many of the local traditions [they] engage have inevitably been shaped by the contact with the West’ (Brigg and Bleiker, 2011), the opposite is also true. Coming into contact with ‘others’ has had transformative effects for the ‘West’ beyond the ‘civilized’ self’s need for a ‘barbarian’. As Edward Said (1993: 61) wrote:

So vast and yet so detailed is imperialism as an experience with crucial cultural dimensions, that we must speak of overlapping territories, intertwined histories common to men and women, whites and non-whites, dwellers in the metropolis and on the peripheries, past as well as present and future; these territories and histories can only be seen from the perspective of the whole of secular history.

Said lamented that it is often the first part of the exchange that is emphasized and analyzed while the second part gets dropped out of analyses, thereby leaving the impression that the ‘West’ has ‘autonomously developed’ (save for the material gains of colonialism, (cf. Hobson, 2004)) and that the encounter with ‘others’ left the ‘West’ untouched (also see, Bilgin, 2016a).

While Bleiker and Brigg are not oblivious to the bi-directional nature of learning between ‘West’ and ‘non-West’, they nevertheless emphasize that ‘Western

ways of organizing political community and resolving conflict typically derive from a tradition that emerged out of Western Europe and subsequently became more Global as a result of practices of colonialism and globalization' (Brigg and Bleiker, 2011: 29). As such, Bleiker and Brigg's framework constitutes an admirable moment of self-reflection and critique, which circumscribes the power of its critical engagement by maintaining 'West'/'non-West' as 'a tentative but necessary heuristic device' to organize research (*ibid.*).

Indeed, the divide between the conceptual discussion in the first part of the Bleiker and Brigg volume and the empirical explorations in the latter three parts seems to have resulted in relatively little engagement with the broader issue of IR's 'problem of difference' (Inayatullah and Blaney, 2004) and how it plays out in the assembling of expertise on conflict resolution – beyond the 'West'/'non-West' dichotomy, that is. Arguably, the volume's reliance on 'West'/'non-West' dichotomy has resulted in overlooking the constitutive relations between the two, thereby missing an opportunity to engage fully with the nature of the limitations of 'exclusive expertise' vis-à-vis the Global South.

For, there is a contradiction here – a contradiction that is rooted in the 'non-West' being the 'constitutive outside'. On the one hand, conflict expertise gets labeled as 'Western' because of the apparent limits of input by 'others'. This is indeed how the relationship between geo-culture and expertise is understood by many in terms of the so-called 'problem of local ownership'. On the other hand, 'others' have contributed to the production of conflict resolution and mediation expertise in multiple ways over the years. Such contributions have included being the object of conflict resolution efforts, an/the 'other' to the expert 'self', the provider of raw data on conflicts, and a source of philosophical insights on peace and practices of coexistence. While the first three of these contributions are frequently brought up, they are seldom viewed as contributions to expertise. The fourth, on the other hand, is almost never considered, even as students and practitioners of peace begin and end their discourse with quotes by Gandhi, among others.<sup>3</sup> It is in this fourfold sense that 'others' have been the 'constitutive outside' of conflict resolution expertise; 'others' have helped shaped what is known as 'Western' expertise even as their contributions have been overlooked by virtue of labeling it as 'Western'. It is difficult to pinpoint why 'others' have also located themselves as 'outside'. The alternative would be to highlight their 'insider' status through 'excavating' the 'constitutive outside' (Blaney and Inayatullah, 2008), offering 'connected histories' that trace the 'beginnings' of ideas and institutions (and not origin/s). The latter is Edward Said's preferred approach to historical inquiry (Bilgin, 2016a). That the critics who seek to amplify the voices of 'others' (as with Bleiker and Brigg) also chose to focus on the 'Westernness' of expertise as they sought to address the limits of 'local ownership' has had the unintended consequence of further reinforcing the 'West'/'non-West' dichotomy and not thinking beyond it.

The point is that 'others' have been the 'constitutive outside' (Ahluwalia, 2005; Blaney and Inayatullah, 2008) of conflict resolution and mediation expertise.

Accordingly, inquiring into the constitutive relationship between ‘West’ and ‘non-West’ would allow approaching the so-called ‘problem of local ownership’ not only in terms of geo-cultural situatedness, but also the agency of local experts in constituting themselves as experts who contest the Eurocentric slant in conflict resolution and mediation expertise. Such an approach, in turn, builds on a different understanding of the so-called ‘problem of local ownership’ – not in terms of ‘locals’ not embracing the knowledge presented to them by the ‘outsiders’, but due recognition given to the role played by *all* in the assembling of such expertise. As will be discussed below, the Brazil-based effort’s understanding of the limits of local ownership as a dearth of local experts offers a crucial corrective in this regard while, at the same time, crystallizing the limits of local agency insofar as it responds to a world that is already worlded by mediation expertise. Hence the need for GSUM’s bottom up strategy, seeking to transform knowledge in action.

As noted in the first part of the chapter, there is a potentially productive tension in GSUM’s efforts. This tension is between the attempt to train Global South experts, thereby diluting the power of the Global South in shaping mediation efforts and expertise. But then, how does one claim expertise in one field? By demonstrating competence over what is commonly accepted as expert knowledge in that field. A rite of passage, if you wish (for a discussion, see Bueger, this volume). By way of seeking to master the existing body of expertise as a basis for training, however, there emerges the risk of leaving unchallenged its status as ‘expertise’ without due recognition given to its ‘constitutive outside’ (see above).

Indeed, GSUM’s winter schools do not directly contest the relevance of (or seek to replace) received (i.e. Eurocentric) ‘exclusive expertise’ on mediation. Countering the so-called ‘problem of local ownership’ by focusing on the Global South as a site of knowledge production (let alone challenging the definition of the problem as one of ‘local ownership’) comes across as less-than-central to GSUM activities. GSUM winter schools are better understood as an effort to address the so-called ‘problem of local ownership’ by equipping Global South actors with ‘expert knowledge’ as received from the Global North. As stated on the GSUM webpage, priority is placed on improving mediation capacity in the Global South, understood as training experts who would be able to engage in mediation initiatives in their own locale and beyond. Indeed, judging by its curriculum, GSUM winter schools’ ‘focus on the Global South’ is defined in terms of empowering Southern agency. Students are offered conceptual training on conflict resolution and mediation as well as the experiences and area expertise of professionals invited by the BRICS Policy Center. Through this combination GSUM winter schools could be viewed as seeking to render more authoritative the voices of practitioners from the Global South in the training of future mediation experts. As such, GSUM winter schools come across as wanting to make such knowledge more widely accessible in the Global South, with an eye on a possible future where local experts will transform mediation expertise by re-writing from the bottom up, through transforming knowledge in action.

Here emerges the potentially productive tension in GSUM efforts. In the proposal cited above, the founders of GSUM expressed interest in pursuing ‘new directions’ and ‘alternatives’ to prevailing expertise on mediation in theory and practice, by bringing together local actors and conflict resolution experts under the ‘laboratory’ (IRI-PUC-Rio, n.d.: 3) conditions as provided by Rio as a location in the Global South. This is what the proposal says about the agenda of GSUM:

it is proposed that the ‘Global-South Centre for mediation’ works as a laboratory for testing ideas and solutions from diverse mediation cases and also as a site for challenging traditional third-party assisted negotiated practices. It is also expected that the Centre and the actors interacting inside it obtain considerable knowledge and leverage to suggest innovative changes to present models of mediation and, eventually, become capable to propose new directions and alternatives to them.

*(IRI-PUC-Rio, n.d.: 3)*

As yet, the extent to which GSUM is interested in contesting the ‘ignorance’ of mediation expertise by focusing on the Global South as a site of knowledge production has not become clear. Perhaps one way of doing so would be through recovering the Global South as the ‘constitutive outside’ of the existing body of conflict resolution and mediation expertise. Offering ‘connected histories’ of this body of expertise as assembled in the Global North would help counter Eurocentric narratives on the subject. Indeed, those narratives that present conflict resolution and mediation expertise as autonomously produced in the Global North need countering, because they reinforce Eurocentrism. Yet, even those who identify and seek to address the so-called ‘problem of local ownership’ do not avoid such Eurocentrism insofar as their critique is informed by the same narrative about a ‘knowledge producing North’ and ‘hesitant to apply South’. However, as noted above, Eurocentrism is not only about the geo-cultural situatedness of ideas and institutions but also about their constitutive effects. Such Eurocentric narratives, too, have constitutive effects, thereby limiting the horizons of Global South actors as to who can produce expertise and who needs to receive knowledge to become an expert.

To summarize, GSUM, while hesitating to explicitly engage with the tension ‘between the focus on local knowledge and local ownership in conflict resolution and the continued predominance of knowledge from the North’ (Leander and Wæver, this volume: 1), at the same time responds to the constitutive effects of ‘expertise’ as knowledge in action. This is because GSUM efforts highlight the agency of local actors in choosing to furnish themselves with received mediation expertise and become experts in a world that is already worlded by mediation expertise. This eventuality, in turn, can be understood by worlding expertise in its twofold sense, by considering both geo-cultural origins *and* the constitutive effects of expertise.

## Conclusion

A narrow understanding of Robert Cox's (1981: 128) maxim, 'theory is always for someone and for some purpose' has led us astray. According to this narrow understanding, there is no such thing as disinterested knowledge, therefore all knowledge is interest-laden. Applied to the production of 'expertise', the Coxian maxim seems to signal the need for worlding 'expertise' to reveal the geo-cultural particularity of what is presented as 'universal' *and* then its replacement with 'local knowledges' produced in different contexts as shaped by politics and culture in the Global South. This is indeed what some critics of 'expertise' have done in the attempt to address the so-called 'problem of local ownership'.

That said, arguably, Cox's writings do not allow for what Edward Said (1994: 111) referred to as 'self-indulgent subjectivity' in the production of 'expertise'. Rather, both Cox and Said (albeit in different ways) highlighted the need for remaining aware of the ways in which all knowledge is interest-laden. Yet at the same time they insisted on the need for universals and for 'carefully weighing the alternatives, picking the right one, and then intelligently representing it where it can do most good and cause the right change' (Said, 1994: 115; also see, Cox, 2009). Applied to the production of expertise about conflict resolution and mediation, this reading of Cox's maxim invites paying attention to the assembling of 'expertise' under conditions characterized by hierarchy and seeking to produce 'expertise' that seeks to expand the universals. This is what I term the twofold meaning of worlding: highlighting how 'expert knowledge' has worlded the world *and* inquiring into the constitutive relationship between 'expertise' and the Global South.

For, the question of 'exclusive expertise' opens up further interrogations when considered under conditions of hierarchy between the Global North and the Global South. Producing expertise is already about instituting a hierarchy between those who have privileged access to knowledge and those who do not. The former has the potential to constitute themselves as experts and the latter less so. The more specific hierarchy I have pointed to is constituted by those who have privileged access to the machinations of the production of expertise and others who have rather constrained access. What is different in the case of the latter is that access is shaped by structures that tell us who can produce what kind of knowledge, about what and whom. The issue, then, is not only about access to expertise, but access to the machinations of its assemblage. Hence the need for worlding expertise on conflict resolution and mediation in its twofold sense: responding to the Eurocentric slant in the assemblage of expertise *and* empowering local actors to constitute themselves as experts of conflict resolution and mediation. Such empowerment, however, cannot focus only on mastering existing expertise and/or coupling it with the experiences of practitioners from the Global South, but also involve, as suggested above, thinking beyond the 'West'/'non-West' dichotomy to reveal the constitutive relationship in between.

## Notes

- 1 It was in the third volume of the project entitled *Claiming the International*, that the *Worlding Beyond the West* book series returned to the second meaning of worlding, noting (albeit briefly) that we are ‘at once worlded and worlding’ (Tickner and Blaney, 2014: ix).
- 2 Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa.
- 3 Needless to say, the influence of Gandhi on students of peace *and* the influence of others such as Henry Thoreau on Gandhi is fertile ground for the study of ‘beginnings’ of non-violent activism and peace studies.

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