Avatars of Eurocentrism in international political economy textbooks: The case of the Middle East and North Africa

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Abstract:

The project to decolonise the curriculum revolves around rethinking margin and centre of the discipline. To the extent that the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) is at the margin of international political economy (IPE), it is the ideal entry point to decolonise the curriculum. I conduct a summative content analysis of the six most commonly used IPE textbooks. To what extent do they reproduce or challenge Eurocentric tropes in their treatment of MENA? The region is largely absent from IPE textbooks, suggesting it is accorded little agency in the making of the global political economy. To the extent that it is "brought in", it is "ghettoised" in a specialist chapter. A qualitative content analysis suggests the authors avoid overt orientalism but exceptionalise the region as a failure with too little democracy and economic growth and too much war. They acknowledge the role of continued colonialism in these failures but also deny agency of the colonised. They miss an opportunity to de-provincialise the Middle East by fostering "ecologies of knowledge". The article provides an analytical framework for research on how IPE textbooks treat other world regions and of syllabi.

Keywords: international political economy, Eurocentrism, decolonising the curriculum, Middle East, North Africa

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The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) has for a long time been largely absent in scholarship on international political economy (IPE) (Snider: 2017).[1] As we know from Said (1978), the Middle East is the quintessential "other" to European social science. If the decolonisation of politics as a discipline revolves around rethinking and transforming the relationship between centres and margins (Shilliam, 2021: 3), then MENA is a perfect place to start to decolonise IPE. I conduct a summative content analysis of the most commonly used IPE textbooks in the English-speaking Global North, which convey the "common sense" of the discipline. To what extent do IPE textbooks reproduce or challenge Eurocentric tropes in their treatment of the Middle East and North Africa? Do they cover the region and, if so, how do they do so? I look to see whether they include MENA case studies and, if so, whether they use them to question Eurocentric epistemologies. The article provides an analytical framework for further research on IPE textbooks' treatment of other world regions or of syllabi. Textbooks are crucial sites for de-colonisation because they are "repositories of official knowledge" (Cassese, Bos, & Schneider, 2014: 255) that convey the "common sense" of the discipline (Carvalho, Leira, & Hobson, 2011: 741). This article seeks to understand whether and how Eurocentrism is reproduced and concludes by suggesting what would be necessary to overcome it. The first section introduces the concept of decolonising the curriculum, operationalises the concept of Eurocentrism, and how it relates to IPE's treatment of MENA. The second section sets out the methodology. The third and fourth sections set out the findings of the quantitative and qualitative content analyses respectively. A final section concludes.

Decolonising IPE, Eurocentrism, and MENA

The debate about decolonising the curriculum has swept from South Africa to Britain (Olufemi, 2017; Choat, 2020; Begum & Saini, 2019). Decolonisation is a contested concept and brings together a variety of approaches. A common feature of all of them is the challenge to Eurocentric forms of knowledge by studying colonialism, empire, and racism "as key shaping forces of the contemporary world" and offering "alternative ways of thinking about the world and alternative forms of political praxis" (Bhambra, Gebrial, & Nişancıoglu, 2018: 2). Eurocentrism is not the only aspect of what Quijano called coloniality (Quijano, 2007: 169) but it is a crucial one. This is not to deny the importance of other aspects, such as race (Delatolla & Yao, 2019), but my focus on just one aspect makes it easier to operationalise the concept. For this, I will draw on Sabaratnam's three "avatars" of Eurocentrism (Sabaratnam, 2013). In the politics department of the University of Liverpool, I teach mainly Middle East politics, international political economy, and the politics of development. I noticed that the region was entirely absent from the IPE reading materials and syllabi. The story of the global political economy tends to be narrated as the rise and fall of the "Bretton Woods system", with the USA and Britain cast as the main protagonists (Cohen, 2008). My impression was that non-European regions remain at the margins, with the Middle East entirely absent. Europe's troubled

relationship with Islam and the strategic importance of oil have shaped the way Eurocentric social science views the region (Mitchell, 2003). This makes it a useful test case to explore Eurocentrism in IPE while recognising that the treatment of other regions – Africa, Latin America, Asia – may differ in some respects. While these other regions are beyond the scope of this article, it can provide a framework for analysis for researching how IPE treats them. Engaging with MENA can help teachers and students of IPE rethink the global political economy from the margins and unsettle the binary of centre and periphery. Finally, it is worth reflecting on the practice of "justifying the case study" for a moment. Authors writing on IPE of the Middle East must always do so, in a way that authors who write about monetary policy in Germany or American sub-prime mortgages need not do. The inherent value of the latter to the discipline of IPE is somehow seen as a given, while writing about MENA requires thorough justification. Leaving "the discipline" aside for a moment, the fate of the region's 457 million inhabitants is inherently worthy of study and requires no justification. MENA also generated about 4.2 percent of global GDP in 2019. The region is not just a source of outward migration but in 2015 it was itself home to 16 percent of global migrants. And, of course, it is home to roughly half of global proven oil reserves. If authors of IPE textbooks neglect the region, should it not be they who must justify their omission?

There is a voluminous literature on Eurocentrism in international relations (IR) in general (Hobson, 2009; Gruffyd Jones, 2006; Barkawi & Laffey, 2006; Amitav Acharya and Barry Buzan, 2007; Sabaratnam2013) and IPE in particular (Hobson, 2013a; Hobson, 2013b; Tansel, 2015; Murphy, 2009; Weber, 2015; Inayatullah & Blaney, 2015). In Eurocentric views of IR, Europe is not merely a fixed geographical territory but "a cultural-geographic sphere" (Sabaratnam, 2013: 261) where "the location of Europe shifts, expands and contracts, eventually crossing the Atlantic and the Pacific and becoming synonymous with the 'West'" (Barkawi & Laffey, 2006: 331). I use Sabaratnam's three "avatars of Eurocentrism" to operationalise the concept (Sabaratnam, 2013: 261-262). Firstly, Eurocentrism can refer to "orientalism" identified by Edward Said (1978) which essentialises non-Western regions and constructs them as the binary opposite of the West: Where Europe is rational, modern, and democratic, the non-West is irrational, traditional, and despotic. Overt orientalism exceptionalises the Middle East, positing a fundamental difference between East and West and the inferiority of the former. Said's critique starts from the fact that knowledge production is a form of power. European imperial domination of the Middle East in the 19th and 20th centuries relied on "orientalist" knowledge. More recently, neo-orientalist scholarship on the supposed perils of Islam went hand in hand with America's post-9/11 "war on terror" (Hudson, 2005).

The second avatar is historical: Europe is the driver of history and possesses what Hobson had called hyper-agency (Hobson, 2013b: 1034). Successful modernity is produced endogenously in the West, while the failure of "the rest" is due to their inferior institutions (Weber, 2015; Inayatullah & Blaney, 2015), a stance which Hobson (2013b: 1047) characterised as "Eurocentric institutionalism". This form of Eurocentrism accords the Middle East no agency in the making of the global political economy (Tansel, 2015). A third "epistemic" avatar of Eurocentrism "is the purported atemporal universalism of modern social scientific knowledge" (Sabaratnam, 2013: 262). This refers to the

application of theories developed on the basis of the particular European experience and universalising them. Examples include the concept of Westphalian sovereignty or the claim of a European "hundred-year peace" for much of the 19th century (Krishna, 2001; Hobson, 2009). Authors such as Vitalis and Mitchell actually go further than this and argue that MENA has been crucial in the very making of the discipline of political economy all along (Mitchell, 2003; Vitalis, 2002: 188). This mirrors similar debates about the futility of "bringing Africa back into" international relations because it has, after all, always been there (Iñiguez de Heredia & Wai, 2018).[2] Simply adding or including cases from beyond Europe to the existing canon of knowledge but leaving its Eurocentric origins intact is "a lazy form of decolonisation" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018: 81). A further register of decolonisation is therefore to "provincialise Europe" (Chakrabarty, 2008: 6) and to "de-provincialise" other parts of the world (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018: 81) so as to foster "ecologies of knowledge" that tap into the "inexhaustible diversity of world experience" (Santos, 2014). With regards to the textbooks, the next sections examine which of the three avatars of Eurocentrism we encounter in the IPE textbooks' treatment of MENA, and secondly, what register of decolonisation (if any) the textbooks apply: Bringing the MENA into IPE, provincializing Europe, or de-provincialising the Middle East and fostering "ecologies of knowledge."

Methodology: Textbooks and content analysis

Textbooks are at the heart of IPE teaching and crucial sources of initial knowledge for students. They are key sites of efforts to decolonise the curriculum. Textbooks are widely used in politics teaching as they present material in a simplified and easily digestible format (Atchison, 2017: 187). Staff who are trained to research specialised aspects of their discipline rely on textbooks to curate courses and these texts then shape the content of politics courses (Carvalho, Leira, & Hobson, 2011: 741). Textbooks are "repositories of official knowledge," (Cassese, Bos, & Schneider, 2014: 255) and what they contain often passes as the "common sense" (Carvalho, Leira, & Hobson, 2011: 741), the "mainstream" or "legitimate" perspective on the discipline (Takeda, 2015: 430). Textbooks can thus become "agents of socialization" (Monforti & McGlynn, 2010: 309), a "normalising text" (Atchison, 2017: 187), likely to be taken as the truth by students who are only finding their feet in a discipline (Olivo, 2012: 132). Textbooks are artefacts of struggles representing "what that society has recognized and does recognize as legitimate and truthful values, attitudes, and beliefs within its unique political culture." (Wallace & Allen, 2008: 153). As such, textbooks offer a glimpse of the "hidden curriculum" – "the unarticulated but often powerful messages conveyed in educational settings." (Cassese, Bos, & Schneider, 2014: 255, 270). What remains absent, unsaid, and unmentioned can be as important as what is included.

My approach to IPE textbooks' treatment of MENA is informed by a series of content analyses of race and gender in American politics textbooks. Like MENA in IPE, the authors are concerned with

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[2] The author would like to thank Gemma Bird for making this point.

bringing African Americans, Latinos, women, LGBTQ+, or Asian Americans to the centre of the story. The authors use content analyses to identify strategies by which these groups are marginalised in the American politics textbooks:

- *Absence* of groups from American politics textbooks suggests that women, Latinos, blacks, gays, and lesbians play a rather limited role in American political life (Cassese, Bos, & Schneider, 2014: 255). Absence falsely suggests that they possess little agency and can be safely ignored in telling the story.
- *Ghettoisation* refers to the fact "not only that content is scarce but that is distributed unevenly throughout texts" (Cassese, Bos, & Schneider, 2014: 255). For instance, women or African Americans may feature heavily in the chapter on civil rights but remain absent in the rest of the textbook.
- *Biases and stereotypes* may be reinforced in textbooks. For instance, through the portrayal of poverty and "race coding" via images in the textbook (Wallace & Allen, 2008: 154).
- *Disregard for the complexities* of ethnic or racial groups can also lead to stereotyping (Wallace & Allen, 2008: 154).

I use content analysis to trace strategies of marginalisation of MENA in IPE textbooks and investigate Sabaratnam's three faces of Eurocentrism. Is the MENA absent from IPE textbooks? This would suggest that it is not accorded much agency in making of the global political economy compared to the West's hyper-agency. Is the MENA ghettoized in specific chapters? This would suggest that it is being exeptionalised, evoking both the first and second of Sabaratnam's avatars. Both absence and ghettoization can be measured using quantitative content analysis. I will use a more qualitative analysis of the content to examine biases, stereotypes, or disregard for complexities of MENA politics. With reference to Sabaratnam's first avatar, do authors use any overt orientalist tropes, such as essentialist culturalism? Regarding her second avatar, are economic or political failures explained purely in domestic terms as problems generated endogenously by inferior institutions or is the enduring role of Western colonialism acknowledged? Finally, regarding the third avatar, how do authors use theory? Do they use MENA cases to question Eurocentric theories and de-provincialise MENA by seeking alternative epistemologies?

I constructed a sample of six textbooks by searching IPE syllabi and reading lists on two search engines, the algorithms of which follow different logics.[3] I ended up with a total of 80 syllabi from 13

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[3] I did a search for 'syllabus, "international political economy"' and '"reading list", "international political economy"' on duckduckgo.com with settings on "all regions" on 18 December 2020. This search engine gives all users the same search results for a given search term. The search yielded 27 results. I repeated the search for with the same search terms on google.com on 20 December 2020. Google's algorithm tailors findings to users' previous search histories, meaning each receives unique results. However, google does give a larger number of findings.
The six textbooks and the editions that were used for the analysis were the following (in order of the frequency of inclusion in the reading lists): Thomas Oatley, *International Political Economy: Interests and Institutions in the Global Economy*, 6th edition, 2018; John Ravenhill, *Global Political Economy*, 5th edition, 2016; Robert Gilpin, *Global Political Economy,* 2001; Robert O'Brien & Marc Williams, *Global Political Economy:*

countries. I noted the "recommended texts", "recommended readings", "books to buy" etc. and recorded them in an excel spreadsheet. I included only textbooks and excluded essay collections. I ended up with a sample of six textbooks, with great overlap to those Scholl (2003) analysed. All textbooks are written as introductory texts for both undergraduate or postgraduate students new to IPE.

There are limitations to this approach. My conclusions on the treatment of MENA in IPE textbooks holds for teaching of IPE in the English-speaking Global North. The countries which were represented strongest in the sample are the UK (18 syllabi) and USA (44 syllabi). Secondly, this inquiry into textbooks does not necessarily reflect the level of Eurocentrism in IPE research in academic journals or monographs per se because textbooks are "time-lagged measures of the state of the discipline," (Wallace & Allen, 2008: 155). Thirdly, IPE textbooks are important in the curriculum but not equivalent to it. A next step would be an analysis of course syllabi or reading lists, with Mantz's (2019) initial research suggesting that IPE syllabi tend to reproduce Eurocentrism. While the analysis of syllabi remains beyond the scope of this article, my research can provide an analytical framework for such an inquiry. Thirdly, this paper examines whether IPE's treatment of MENA is Eurocentric but does not allow firm conclusion on the treatment of other world regions. For instance, the findings of the quantitative content analysis suggest ample coverage of Asia although this coverage may still have a Eurocentric quality. Whether this is the case or not is beyond the scope of this article. Finally, if decolonisation is to be more than just a metaphor (Tuck & Yang, 2012) then the wider politics behind it must also be tackled. This article stays at the level of the epistemic but points to wider political issues. This includes publishers' willingness to bring out books which fundamentally question existing hierarchies (Wallace & Allen, 2008: 154). This also includes the intense dispute between student-led campaigns such as "Rhodes must fall" and revisionist commentators and newspapers seeking to torpedo these efforts or even utilise them for a "culture war" (Gebrial, 2018). Finally, and most crucially, there are the actual struggles still playing out over decolonisation in the Middle East and North Africa, not least the Palestinian struggle and the debate over the meaning of decolonisation in this context (Bashir and Busbridge, 2019; Salamanca, Qato, Rabie, and Samour, 2012).

Qualitative content analysis is "a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of the text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns" (Hsie & Shannon, 2005: 1278). More specifically, I conduct a summative content analysis to tease out the "latent" content by "discovering underlying meanings of the words or the content", an approach regularly applied to textbooks (Hsie & Shannon, 2005: 1283-1285). I start with a quantitative content analysis to test for absence/presence of the MENA in the textbook and the region's possible "ghettoization" in specific chapters. I base the quantitative content analysis on the books' indexes. As Ferree and Hall (1996) note, indexing practices are inconsistent across textbooks but consistent within each textbook. I therefore compiled the number of page mentions of the region (Middle East, North Africa) and individual regional countries (Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, etc.) and

Evolution and Dynamics, 5th edition, 2016; David Balaam & Bradford Dillman, *Introduction to International Political Economy*, 7th edition, 2019; Theodore Cohn, *Global Political Economy: Theory and Practice*, 7th edition, 2016.

then compared it to the number of times other regions (Africa, Asia, Europe etc.) and their individual countries were mentioned in the same textbook (rather than across textbooks, which would not be comparable). I discounted iterations of regions, such as regional development banks or regional organisations. I also did not count categories that may include the MENA but go beyond it, such as "Muslim majority countries". I then also counted the mentions of MENA per chapter to test for "ghettoization".

In summative content analysis, counting the pages that cover a specific topic is "followed by descriptions and interpretations of the content, including evaluating the quality of the content" (Hsie & Shannon, 2005: 1285). I used the page counts in the index to identify longer passages dealing with the Middle East and North Africa for such qualitative analysis. Such a qualitative account creates potential problems for content analysis, which is rooted in positivist empiricism and puts a premium on a priori design, reliability, validity, replicability, and hypothesis testing (Neuendorf, 2004: 33) and on showing "that the textual evidence is consistent with the interpretation" (Hsie & Shannon, 2005: 1285). Discourse analysis, meanwhile, places texts into their wider social context. It "assumes that language is a medium within which prevailing power relations are articulated" (Hopf, 2004: 31) and hence discourse analysis involves "retroduction of a discourse through the empirical analysis of its realisation in practices. That is, D[iscourse] A[nalysis] reasons backward to establish structure from its empirical manifestations." (Laffey & Weldes, 2004: 28). My enquiry operates on a middle ground. Despite some seemingly fundamental incompatibilities (Hopf, 2004; Laffey & Weldes, 2004) there are forms of content analysis which pay attention to context, where categories emerge from the data, and requirements of validity and reliability are relaxed (Hardy, Harley, & Phillips, 2004: 21). Furthermore, both methods can be combined for "triangulation" and "C[ontent] A[nalysis] may serve as a stimulant to the conduct of a D[iscourse] A[nalysis]" (Neuendorf, 2004: 35).
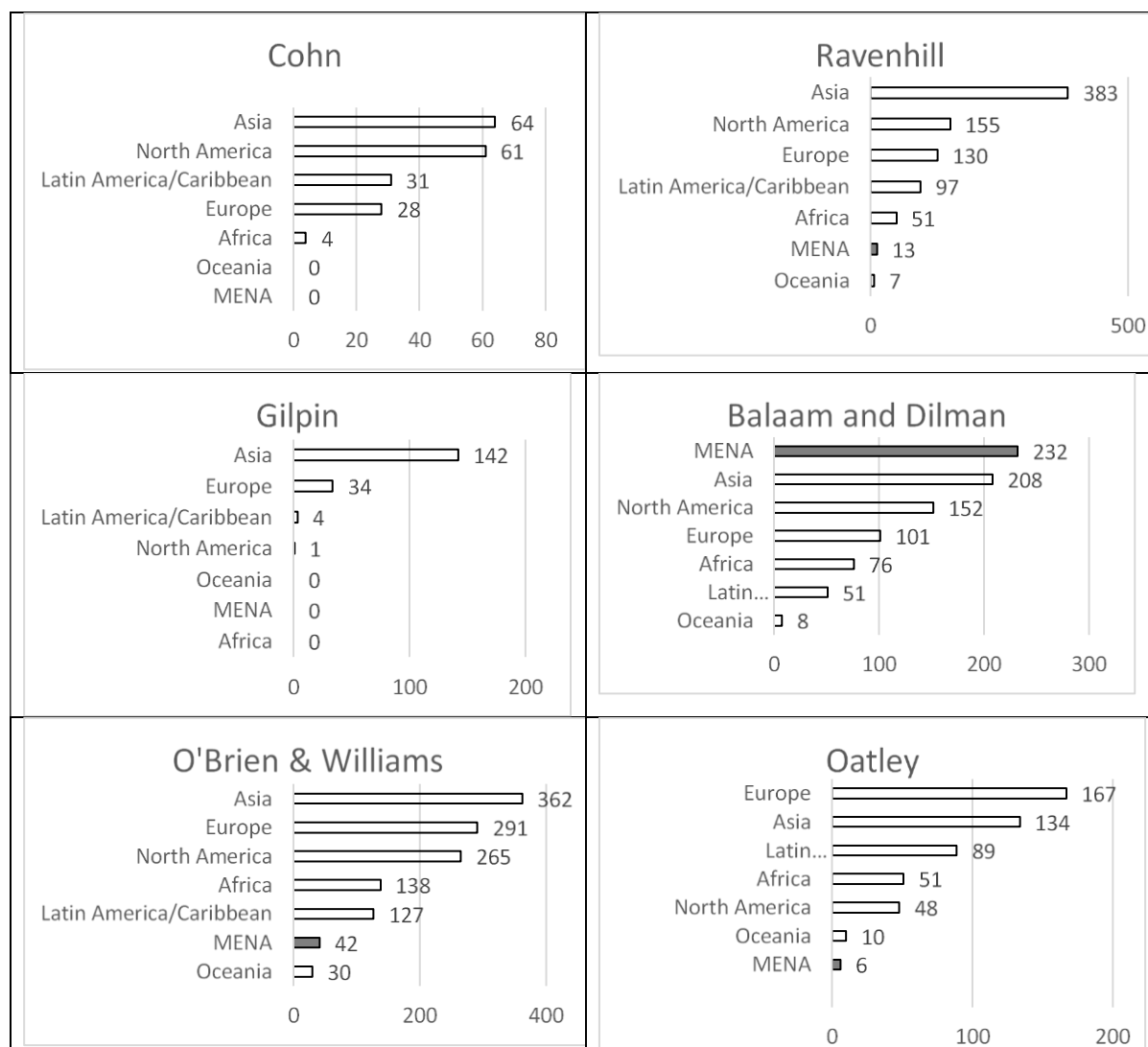
Findings of the quantitative content analysis

MENA countries and the region itself are mentioned only very rarely across five of the six textbooks (see chart). Both the Cohn and Gilpin books do not mention the region at all. Oatley (6) and Ravenhill (13) only mention it very occasionally. Indexing practices vary across different textbooks, of course, but it is possible to compare the number of times different regions are mentioned within a textbook. MENA was the least mentioned region in Cohn, Gilpin, and Oatley. In Ravenhill and O'Brien & Williams, only Oceania received fewer mentions than MENA. With the exception of Balaam & Dillman, coverage of MENA is therefore low compared to other regions of the world. The five textbooks which barely mention the Middle East and North Africa consider the region marginal to the story of the global political economy which they tell. Furthermore, the mentions of the region are so sparse that it is impossible to test for "ghettoization" of the mentions in particular chapters – there are simply too few references to make this worthwhile. Other non-European regions receive greater coverage. Ravenhill and Gilpin both mention Asia more often than North America and Europe and all the other books also give ample room to Asia. All other regions receive considerably fewer mentions in the indexes, with Africa in particular woefully ignored. The many mentions of Asia

may reflect the economic successes of Japan, China, and India. Telling the story of the global political economy without these countries has become difficult. Furthermore, while Asia receives ample space, the textbooks may still reproduce Eurocentric tropes in their treatment of the continent, suggesting a fruitful avenue for further research based on my findings here.

The implications of the absence of MENA in IPE textbooks can be profound. It suggests that the region is irrelevant to the global political economy, while asserting the hyper-agency of the Global North. Sabaratnam's second avatar of Eurocentrism is thus making an appearance here. Secondly, as Cassese, Bos and Schneider point out with reference to the treatment of gender in textbooks on American politics, such absences influence how students think about politics and "may also influence identification with the material, performance, and pursuit of further studies in political science" (Cassese, Bos, & Schneider, 2014: 255). Studies about the absence of women in science, technology, engineering, maths (STEM) subjects have shown that this affected student performance. Students from the region may be put off from studying IPE because the textbooks fail to explain the topic's relevance to their experience. Furthermore, textbooks can shape the direction of study and post-graduate research, leading junior scholars to avoid the MENA. Eurocentrism then leads to "undone science", comprising "all the other possible research projects, proposals, papers and agendas that are not completed or taken up" (Richardson, 2018: 232).

The exception to the rule is Balaam & Dillman's book, which mentions MENA 232 times in the index – more than any other region. This textbook is therefore ideal for testing whether the region is being "ghettoized" in a specific section of the book. 165 of the page references to MENA are in chapter 14 "The Middle East and North Africa: Things fall apart". I will conduct a qualitative discourse analysis of this chapter in the next section of this article. There are much more infrequent but still significant mentions in chapters on "global security structure" (15), "refugees and caring for the forgotten" (13), as well as "energy and the environment: Navigating climate change and global disaster" (10). The region features more frequently among these unusual topics – energy, refugees, etc – but receives far fewer mentions in chapters dedicated to "core issues" of mainstream IPE – trade and finance.

Chart: Number of mentions of region/regional countries in index

Cohn

Region	Value
Asia	64
North America	61
Latin America/Caribbean	31
Europe	28
Africa	4
Oceania	0
MENA	0

Ravenhill

Region	Value
Asia	383
North America	155
Europe	130
Latin America/Caribbean	97
Africa	51
MENA	13
Oceania	7

Gilpin

Region	Value
Asia	142
Europe	34
Latin America/Caribbean	4
North America	1
Oceania	0
MENA	0
Africa	0

Balaam and Dilman

Region	Value
MENA	232
Asia	208
North America	152
Europe	101
Africa	76
Latin…	51
Oceania	8

O'Brien & Williams

Region	Value
Asia	362
Europe	291
North America	265
Africa	138
Latin America/Caribbean	127
MENA	42
Oceania	30

Oatley

Region	Value
Europe	167
Asia	134
Latin…	89
Africa	51
North America	48
Oceania	10
MENA	6

Findings of qualitative content analysis

I will first look at the way the MENA is treated in textbooks which only mention the region in passing: Oatley, Ravenhill, and O'Brien and Williams. The absence of overt orientalist tropes is noteworthy but what is more striking is just how cursory many mentions are. The core concerns of IPE tend to revolve around international finance and trade. In terms of finance, there are cursory mentions of financial crisis (Oatley p. 329, 333, 346), sovereign wealth funds (Ravenhill, p. 210), and currencies and monetary power (O'Brien and Williamson, p. 170). There are mentions of trade, individual trade agreements, and Israeli trade policy (Ravenhill, p. 121, 135, 146, 158; O'Brien and Williams p. 135). MENA development is also not systematically explored beyond mentions of rent-seeking, the perils of state-led development, and manufacturing exports (Oatley, p. 142, 349; Ravenhill, p. 367). Somewhat surprisingly, oil is given little attention except by O'Brien and Williams (p. 128, 160). O'Brien and Williams make cursory mention of MENA and international organisations

(p. 116), while Ravenhill notes Turkish attempts to accede to the EU (p. 143). Security issues come up repeatedly: Sanctions on Iran or Iraq (Ravenhill, p. 321; O'Brien and Williams, p. 292, 293), arms sales (O'Brien and Williams, p. 87), wars over Suez, Algerian independence, the Gulf 1991 and 2003 (O'Brien and Williams, p. 90, 95), terrorism (O'Brien and Williams, p. 290), and state breakdown (O'Brien and Williams, p. 307). Democracy and protests are mentioned due to the Arab uprisings (O'Brien and Williams, p. 95, p. 270). O'Brien and Williams are the only ones seriously engaging with the history of colonialism and capitalism. They describe the Middle East before European hegemony as a dynamic economy that largely came under the political control of the Ottomans and shaped the fate of Italian city states through commerce and war (p. 42-47) before being swept up in a wave of European expansion (p. 52, 74). Their textbook is also noteworthy for at least mentioning race and gender, although these issues are not systematically explored (O'Brien and Williams, p. 181, 203, 213, 214). Across the textbooks there is little on MENA thinkers or theorists.

Overall, there is no sustained engagement with the region in these textbooks, with the notable exception of a chapter on the region by Balaam and Dillman. The qualitative analysis of this chapter can provide an indication of the ways in which content of IPE textbooks can be Eurocentric. Having a sample of n=1 is, of course, not a sufficient basis for generalisation. Instead, the content analysis of the one textbook tests the quality of engagement: Are the authors "bringing the MENA into IPE" or are they achieving a deeper register of decolonisation by provincializing Europe, de-provincialising the MENA, and new "ecologies of knowledge" based on dialogue among Southern epistemologies? I continue to use Sabaratnam's three avatars to operationalise Eurocentrism. At several points, the authors stress their rejection of culturalist or essentialist explanations – Sabaratnam's first avatar of Eurocentrism. They reject the explanation of war and conflict as being caused by "ancient hatreds" (p. 385), or religious and cultural explanations of Middle Eastern authoritarianism (p. 392). The chapter is not entirely free of references to orientalist scholarship. The authors cite orientalist eminence grise Bernard Lewis for evidence that it was the Middle East's cultural characteristics that explain why the region came to be unable to compete militarily or economically with Europe, while they rely on neo-orientalist scholar Daniel Pipes who opines that people of the region are particularly prone to conspiracy theories (p. 386).

A striking feature about the chapter is the framing, which is largely, albeit not entirely negative. The chapter's title sets the tone: "The Middle East and North Africa: Things fall apart" (p. 374). It starts off with four vignettes of the horrors of the Syrian civil war, before mentioning the conflicts in Gaza, Yemen, Iraq and Libya as further examples of "humanitarian disaster and destruction" (p. 374). The authors then ask the question that frames the chapter: "How did it come to this just a few years after the Arab Spring of 2011, when there was a tantalizing possibility of greater freedom and democracy?" (p. 375). Later on, in the short introduction to the chapter, the authors also mention that "Despite serious problems the Middle East is deeply embedded in global flows of finance, goods, and people." (p. 376) The key puzzle this IPE textbook chapter thus sets itself is to explain the prevalence of war and authoritarianism in the Middle East, with economic issues running alongside these.

Further evidence of framing MENA as a failure can be found in a more formal content analysis. I coded the chapter's 99 paragraphs (excluding textboxes) using inductive category development (Halperin & Heath, 2012: 348; Hsie & Shannon, 2005: 1279). I coded paragraphs by whether they characterise what they describe explicitly as "successes" or "failures". For instance, democratisation, peace, or economic growth are coded as "successes", while authoritarianism, war and conflict, the absence of economic growth, as well as state failure are "failures". 44 paragraphs deal with failure, while only 30 deal with successes. Failures include the crushing of the "Arab Spring" protests, civil wars and state failure, as well as poor growth. Recent growth is oil-driven and there was no economic transformation in MENA comparable to what was seen in Asia. Successes include spurts of economic growth, Algeria's war of independence against France, the growing integration of parts of the region into the global economy, as well as the growth record of Israel and Turkey. Overall, however, the picture the chapter paints is gloomy: In MENA there is too much war, too little democracy, and too little economic growth except for occasional oil bonanzas. Failure is the norm, success the exception.

The authors note that "The Middle East as a whole lags behind every other major region of the world in terms of democracy" (p. 377) and that, despite some oil-fuelled growth and successful globalisation in Turkey and Israel, "the MENA countries lack the kind of economic transformation seen in Asia" (p. 399). Integration into the global economy remains patchy, as evidenced by the fact that "as of mid-2016, only a handful of countries in the world had yet to join the World Trade Organization, and a surprisingly large number are in the MENA" (p. 399). Balaam and Dillman end a section about "regional dynamics after the Arab Spring" discerning a set of broad trends, which are all entirely negative: states have become ungovernable and failed, a Sunni-Shia rift has spread, regimes in MENA cannot agree on how to deal with Islamist movements and some authoritarian regimes have reconsolidated power (p. 384). The last trend is the most revealing about their positionality: They note that "U.S. legitimacy and influence with regional allies have decreased […] thus giving room for Russia to expand its role more than at any time since the end of the Cold War" (p. 384). The authors here display a deeply US-centric perspective. They inject a note of optimism at the very end: "The Middle East's future will ultimately depend not on the actions of foreigners but on what Middle Easterners do to, and for, themselves" (p. 402).

This concluding sentence to the chapter raises the issue of agency by insiders and outsiders: Who shapes the fate of the MENA? Decolonisation revolves around recognition of the centrality of colonialism and race in the making of modernity and continuation of coloniality (Bhambra, Gebrial, & Nişancıoglu, 2018: 2; Quijano, 2007). The authors acknowledge the continuing role of European colonialism, writing at the outset that: "To help us understand the roots of current conflicts and the structure of current markets, we need to know something about the history of the Middle East's contentious relations with the Western powers" (p. 377). Western influence did not cease with political decolonisation but continued during the Cold War. The authors identify superpower

influence – especially from the Western camp – as driving forces of key developments in the region: "Regimes relied on the superpowers for weapons and aid" (p. 381). The authors also note the US role in propping up conservative authoritarian monarchies during the Cold War (p. 391). The effects of colonialism are not only political but also economic: "colonial powers left many unfortunate legacies, including many that hamper the MENA's adaptation to globalization. Some states' overdependence on a single exported commodity such as oil, cotton, or phosphates, slowed economic diversification" (p. 399).

Balaam and Dillman are right to highlight continuing colonialism. Paradoxically, however, their account swings the other way, making colonizers so powerful as to deny agency to the colonised. They present the following narrative of the history of colonialism in the Middle East: The Ottoman Empire was "the sick man of Europe" (p. 377) unable to withstand European meddling. They cite L Carl Brown's claim that the region's international relations are uniquely "penetrated" by the West since the 19th century (p. 380). In this book, Brown also claims that the region's international relations follow unique "rules of the game" different from any other part of the world, thus presenting a deeply exceptionalist narrative of the region's international relations (Brown, 1984). Balaam and Dillman maintain that the borders drawn by colonial powers are at the root of current ethnic and sectarian conflict: "Slicing up territories or combining different ethnolinguistic and religious communities to create new states, the colonial powers ensured future strife" (p. 385). While the authors rightly acknowledge the continued influence of colonialism on the region, their analysis here slips into other problematic territory: The over-determination of MENA politics by decisions taken in Paris and London in the early 20th century. There is by now a voluminous scholarship which has questioned the orientalist cliche that the Ottoman Empire was a "sick man" in terminal economic decline (Owen, 1981) or that it had no autonomous agency in the making of capitalism beyond "defensive modernisation" (Tansel, 2015). Political sociologists of the state in MENA have long rejected orientalist claims about the "artificiality" of the state in the region, supposedly born out of the original sin of colonial borders (Zubaida, 1993; Fawcett, 2017). Balaam and Dillman's narrative thus disregards the long history of anti-colonial resistance and contentious politics which restores agency to local opponents of colonialism (Chalcraft, 2016; Tripp, 2013). What Balaam and Dillman do, then, is to combine the necessary acknowledgement of continuing forms of colonialism with an assertion of European hyper-agency, which reproduces Sabaratnam's second avatar of Eurocentrism.

Balaam and Dillman's primary objective in their textbook – as set out in the introduction – is "to help you understand the interconnections between political, economic, and social topics that are not accounted for in separate disciplines" (p. 4). The chapter on MENA deals extensively with war, state failure, and politicised religion, without, however, relating these phenomena to the economy. Much of the chapter could be in a general international relations or even comparative political science textbook, while the political economy analysis adds little value to their discussion of autocracy and war. In order to find out how the authors fulfil their goal of tracing "interconnections between political, economic, and social topics", I coded paragraphs for the topics they covered: Politics,

economy, religion, war, refugees, and gender. The latter "social" categories had emerged inductively from a first reading of the chapter. A strikingly large number of paragraphs deal with war, namely 32. Religion is also a recurring theme, as Islamist politics or sectarianism are mentioned in 20 paragraphs. An equal number of paragraphs mention politics and economics, namely 36 each. The prevalence of war and religion is unusual for an IPE textbook but potentially exciting if the authors truly fulfil their goal of showing interconnections between economy, politics, and society. The structure of the chapter, however, already suggests that one topic follows another rather than different topics informing each other. Several sections deal with war and questions of democracy and authoritarianism but contain very little analysis of the economy: "regional dynamics after the Arab Spring" (p. 382-385), "the roots of conflict" (p. 385-390), and "the Arab winter" (p. 390-393). The following sections, meanwhile, deal with the "integration into the global economy" (p. 393-395) and "falling behind in the global economy" (p. 399-402). They are largely descriptive and have little to say about politics – or indeed about war and religion. This disconnect becomes visible when looking at the coded paragraphs: Only 9 of 99 paragraphs deal with *both* politics and economy, 7 with war and economy, and only 2 with religion and economy. Economy, politics, and society remain separate in the text.

The theoretical toolbox Balaam and Dillman give the reader is the conventional IPE trinity of liberalism, mercantilism, and structuralism (chapters 2-4). These theories are largely drawn from European experience, representing Sabaratnam's third avatar of Eurocentrism. The Middle East is "brought into IPE", knowledge about the region is "added" to the discipline, but the region is not de-provincialised, nor is there an effort at building ecologies of knowledge outside of Europe. Arguably, the way that Balaam and Dillman apply standard IPE theories results in the "othering" of the region, despite it being "brought in". The whole chapter is strangely detached from a wider analysis of standard IPE. At the end the authors do mention the three theories that guide their inquiry. It is worth quoting this paragraph in full:

> "A mercantilist would probably attribute many of the conflicts and development outcomes discussed in this chapter to the struggle by states for power and protection of national interests. Economic liberal theorists stress the inevitability of MENA reforms as a result of global market forces. The dynamism of Dubai and Israel, as well as the democratic advances in Tunisia, suggest that people open to the world's ideas and goods are most likely to thrive. Structuralists could point to the MENA's weak industrialization and great disparities of wealth as evidence of the exploitation inherent in global capitalism."

Note how the authors are unable to actually cite any engagement by these three theories with the region. Their treatment of theory is almost entirely in the subjunctive: If liberals/mercantilists/structuralists were to engage with the region, this is what they would write. The student is left with the impression that the regular theoretical tools of IPE are unusable for the analysis of the Middle East and North Africa, marked as it is by religious politics, conflict, and resistance to democratisation. The region marks the realm of the irrational impenetrable by rational Western theory (Quijano, 2007; Said, 1978).

Conclusions

IPE textbook coverage on MENA avoids some avatars of Eurocentrism but reproduces many others. A quantitative analysis of the six textbooks found that MENA is largely absent from five of six commonly used IPE textbooks. The region is not accorded much importance or agency in the making of the global political economy compared to the West's hyper-agency, Sabaratnam's second avatar of Eurocentrism. This may discourage students of IPE to delve more deeply into the region's political economy and results in "undone science". The very first step that authors of IPE textbooks must do, then, is to engage more extensively with the Middle East.

Balaam and Dillman are the exception as they "bring the MENA into IPE". The quantitative analysis of Balaam and Dillman's book showed that the region was "ghettoised" into one chapter and thus exceptionalised. The qualitative analysis demonstrated that the authors tried to avoid some avatars of Eurocentrism but reproduced many others. The analysis of this case study does not aim to produce generalisable results but provides an analytical framework for further research on IPE textbooks and syllabi. It also allows me to suggest ways in which authors of IPE textbooks can avoid Eurocentric traps. Balaam and Dillman made an effort to avoid Sabaratnam's first avatar of Eurocentrism, namely reliance on overtly orientalist tropes. This said, their constant references to the role of Islam and sectarianism do exceptionalise the Middle East as a region shaped by religion in a way other parts of the world are not. Non-Eurocentric teaching of MENA requires a non-essentialist account of the political role of these identities and an insight into the ways in which international political economy helps reproduce conflictual relations between ethnic, national, or religious groups.

Furthermore, Balaam and Dillman exceptionalise the Middle East and North Africa as a failure with too little democracy, too much war, and insufficient growth being largely driven by the boom-and-bust cycles of global oil markets. Balaam and Dillman correctly assert that forms of colonialism continue to shape the Middle East. Paradoxically, at the same time they deny agency to local actors who resist such colonial influence. Again, we encounter European hyper-agency, which is Sabaratnam's second avatar of Eurocentrism. Recent work by Tansel (2015), Khalili (2020), or Hanieh (2018) demonstrate local agency in the making of regional and global capitalism. Work by Chalcraft (2016) or Tripp (2013) has provided fresh insights into local resistance to colonialism and post-colonial oppression. Authors of IPE textbooks would need to take such work into account in their narrative of the Middle East to restore agency to the colonised.

Finally, Balaam and Dillman rely on the conventional trinity of liberalism, mercantilism and structuralism as the theoretical framework of their textbook. These theories are Eurocentric in that they derive from the European experience and are taken as universal. Balaam and Dillman's failure to then actually apply these theories to their analysis of the MENA has the effect of exceptionalising

the region even further: The Middle East appears as a realm of the irrational which is impenetrable with standard theories. Balaam and Dillman thus "bring the Middle East into IPE" but they fail to engage with local epistemologies in order to provincialise Europe, de-provincialise the Middle East, and thus foster ecologies of knowledge that defy the "monoculture" of Eurocentric theory. This is Sabaratnam's third avatar of Eurocentrism. Even without knowledge of Arabic, Farsi or one of the other local languages, authors of IPE textbooks can draw on a growing body of scholarship in English, which engages with local debates on political economy (Neep, 2018; Tripp, 2006; Salem, 2020; Safieddine, 2020; Frangie, 2016). It is these conversations beyond Europe which we should let our students in to.

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