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Introduction

Studying International Politics Through the Lens of Knowledge and Expertise

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Reflection about knowledge and its production, circulation, and contestation in international politics is paramount in an era that simultaneously glorifies knowledge (as in the idea of the knowledge society), condemns it (as in the notion of ‘post-truth’ politics), and contests it (as in calls to decolonize the university). This Handbook suggests that this type of reflection, hitherto relegated to the margins of the discipline of International Relations (IR), should be its very foundation and a starting point for learning, teaching, and research.

The way we make sense of human and more-than-human action depends on our concept of knowledge, that is, the world-image, or ideas and understandings about the world, which we experience as reality (Kratochwil 1989). While academia is predominantly concerned with propositional knowledge (i.e., text-centric and abstraction-oriented knowledge), what we know also depends on practical, experiential, and presentational (creative/artistic) forms of knowing (Heron and Reason 2008; cf. Andrä et al. 2023). Understandings of the world are furthermore historically and contextually specific: what people have thought they know about themselves and the world, and how, has differed across cultural contexts and changed over time, influenced by shifting institutional settings and societal roles (Östling et al. 2018; Östling and Larsson Heidenblad 2024). As such, knowledge production and its contestation have also shaped in constitutive ways the intertwined dynamics of world politics and the academic discipline of IR that makes this politics its object of study. However, even as knowledge frameworks have been fundamental to making scientific and political claims—discussed to some extent in political philosophy, meta-theory, and epistemology—explicit studies of the international politics of knowledge have tended to be marginal to core IR debates.

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It is only in recent years that studies exploring the production, circulation, and contestation of knowledge in international politics have been on the rise, corresponding to the broader societal problematization of knowledge and expertise currently taking place. All major international studies conferences have featured panels, workshops, and whole sections on epistemic questions, evidencing this heightened interest in the international politics of knowledge and expertise. These efforts to consolidate a knowledge approach in IR mark a distinct shift in how we conceive of knowledge making and how such processes bear on researching and engaging in world politics. Hailing from different corners of the field and typically drawing on interdisciplinary insights from critical social theory, sociology, science and technology studies (STS), social anthropology, and other related disciplines, studies of the international politics of knowledge and expertise add to growing scholarship across the humanities and social sciences that reflect critically on knowledge. Such studies share a firm acknowledgement that knowledge claims are indeed a form of power to be interrogated (Foucault 1980). In this endeavour, the boundaries between knowledge in and about the world and knowledge in and about the discipline of IR become visibly porous yet palpable: the discipline often turns inwards to reflect on its own formation, but it can only do so as part of the unfolding world politics.

This clear trend towards knowledge as a vantage point for international studies notwithstanding, academic debates have remained relatively fragmented, scattered across different academic disciplines and fields, and sometimes siloed within closely knit research communities. Historians of knowledge, for example, trace the place and transformation of knowledge in context over time (Burke 2000; Lässig 2016; Östling et al. 2018); science historians grapple with the question of how to distinguish reliable knowledge from pseudoscience (Gordin 2021) and present new histories of science dissociated from the logic of progress (Renn 2020); philosophers seek to widen their hitherto Western-centric milieu to include forms of philosophical reasoning from around the world in pursuit of a global history of philosophy (Baggini 2018); while scholars drawing on the sociology of knowledge have pointed to the promises of radical sociological approaches to epistemology and reflexivity in IR (Hamati-Ataya 2018). Knowledge-related questions have also been addressed by different subfields in IR, such as critical security studies (e.g., Bellanova et al. 2020; Berling and Bueger 2015; Bueger 2014; Cristiano et al. 2024; Kurowska 2023; Leander and Wæver 2018); post- and decolonial studies (e.g., Gani and Marshall 2022; Kanagasabai 2023; Mignolo 2017; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018); global governance studies (e.g., Littoz-Monnet 2017; Littoz-Monnet and Osorio Garate 2024; Sending 2015); area studies (e.g., Kaczmarek 2020); and peace and conflict studies (e.g., Bliesemann de Guevara and Kostić 2018; Burlyuk and Musliu 2023; Hellmüller et al. 2023), to name a few.

This Handbook cultivates a collective, plural archive that brings together approaches to knowledge and expertise across these diverse communities, with a view to substantiating a truly transdisciplinary paradigm in IR. It does so by showcasing the constitutive role of knowledge frameworks in world politics and by embracing the diversity of knowledge-in-use in politics (e.g., as expertise) and its academic study

(e.g., as methods). The Handbook maps out different perspectives on knowledge and expertise starting from actors, practices, contexts, structures, and relations, respectively, and reconstructs how such frameworks, based on the conceptual repertoires and ways of knowing they draw on, represent diverse world-images. As presuppositions inherent in different concepts of knowledge conceive social phenomena in contrasting ways, they therefore give rise to a variety of questions and puzzles, which are only partially translatable to each other. We see epistemic promise rather than an analytical or methodological obstacle in this potential incommensurability and ground it as a distinct strength of the approach to knowledge and expertise that this Handbook adopts. This means that our choice does not conceal the boundary work involved in drawing and enacting world-images and in making and sustaining knowledge claims. Instead, it engages such boundary work as fluid, never fully sedimented, and continuously contested. In this sense, the Handbook aims to ‘stay with the trouble’ (Haraway 2016) of the endeavour of cultivating a plural archive, that is, to embrace the complexities and incommensurabilities this entails.

Knowledge and expertise: pluralist understandings

Most broadly, knowledge refers to socio-historically determined understandings of the world (Hamati-Ataya 2018; Kratochwil 1989), whose social forms differ across contexts and over time (Östling and Larsson Heidenblad 2024). Accordingly, knowledge and its theorization have traditionally been an explicit object of study in disciplines such as history and sociology. The more recent studies of knowledge in IR have added a particular focus on the *politics* and *ethics* of knowledge and expertise and have done so from a wealth of perspectives centring epistemic actors, practices, contexts, structures, and relations.

The plurality of approaches to the politics of knowledge and expertise goes together with a plurality of terms used to capture epistemic processes. This is reflected in the contributions to this Handbook, whose authors mobilize different knowledge vocabularies and concepts, explained in each of the chapters, as well as in the wider literature. The deliberate simultaneity of different vocabularies is not just a matter of form, but one of substance. For instance, while a majority of studies talk about knowledge *production*, Robbie Shilliam (2015) has argued that we should rather talk about knowledge *cultivation*, to emphasize not only how dominant discursive and material power constellations circumscribe what we have come to know, but also what it takes to know differently. He thereby points to questions of who can exercise their epistemic agency and whose knowledge is recognized. This Handbook unpacks this issue by reconstructing the conditions of possibility of knowledge through the different lenses it puts forward and the ways the contributors assert, justify, and substantiate their vocabularies and standpoints. To this end, many authors draw on established critical theories and positions (e.g., feminism, post- and decolonialism, Critical Theory, queering, and STS), and flesh out how contemporary manifestations of dominance in knowledge production shape formal institutions and thereby

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contribute significantly to how politics is ‘worlded’, that is, which world-images are created and held to be ‘true’.

In doing so, many authors in this Handbook query the boundaries of knowledge and expertise in the contexts they study. They revisit fundamental questions which draw out the different forms that knowledge takes and highlight its historical and social origin, asking among others: What is considered knowledge and what is designated as non-knowledge (e.g., ignorance, raw data)? Who decides what knowledge or expertise is? Whose knowledge or expertise is considered authoritative, and whose is devoid of authority? Which knowledges can claim to be theoretical, and which ones cannot? Substantive queries such as these draw attention not only to the politics, but also to the ethics of knowledge production. They examine the parameters of epistemic agency and the capacity to craft knowledges deemed worthy of political, social, and/or academic consideration.

Epistemic authority is a form of interpretive authority that is ascribed to certain individuals (and practices) in view of their special command of epistemic goods, such as rational credence, knowledge, or understanding in the relevant domain or discipline (Jäger 2016). Capacities and positions of being (recognized as) an authoritative knower are not equally distributed. In the realm of politics, epistemic authority often correlates with expertise. Experts in a given domain enjoy epistemic authority, which means that their assessments are acknowledged as both knowledgeable and non-partisan, and therefore legitimate. Expertise and its object of study are invariably co-constituted, however: expertise functions as a fixer of meaning by ‘giving structure to uncertainty and turning it into manageable risks’ (Kessler and Werner 2013, 795). Despite the fact that epistemic authority is ‘always in flux, more or less embattled, and in need of constant reproduction’ (Danielsson 2020, 117; cf. Leander 2014), dominant notions of expertise are tied to scientific ideals and formalized study or professional training (Evans 2015). Expertise has been a core theme in international politics, while its conceptualization has continuously evolved (Bueger 2014). Recognized political expertise has historically been shaped by strategic studies, military/diplomatic history, and law (Johnstone 2005; Kessler and Werner 2013), but has also incorporated economics (Drezner 2017; Easterly 2014), area studies (Derichs 2017; Escobar 2011; Szanton 2004), and social and behavioural sciences (see Stein, Chapter 22, ‘Thinking, Feeling, and Choosing: Pragmatism, Political Psychology, and the Intelligence Community’), among others.

Notwithstanding the emphasis on formalization and scientism, expertise is ultimately a socially negotiated and contested category, suffused with power, and many contributions in this Handbook problematize it as such. Determining what counts as expertise thus requires a careful study of the power dynamics at play, which reveals expertise to be a powerful categorization tool, as the boundaries drawn between expertise and everyday life experiences (experiential knowing) can become arbiters of how we know politics (Behera 2023). Epistemic authority is, however, neither entirely static nor entirely determined by dominant structures of significations. Marginalized or subaltern actors also negotiate their claims to knowledge and seek redress for historical epistemic injustices (e.g., Bartkowski 2013; Hartman 2019; Owens and Rietzler 2020). In this sense, it is critical, as Shilliam (2014) maintains,

to constantly rethink how the relationship between the knowers and the known operates and who exercises their epistemic agency, and how.

How this Handbook is organized

Organizing a topic as broad as that of knowledge and expertise in international politics into reader-friendly categories—and thereby inevitably creating knowledge frameworks about knowledge—is no easy task, not least because of the epistemic implications (inclusions and exclusions, positionings and silencing, etc.) that such ordering entails. This Handbook has chosen to group approaches to knowledge and expertise in international politics into five perspectives which, respectively, take actors, practices, contexts, structures, and relations as their starting point. As building blocks of academic knowledge across the social and natural sciences, these perspectives transcend (sub-)disciplines and thus offer manifold ways to connect attention to knowledge with other central questions of international studies. These five perspectives are neither exhaustive (i.e., there may well be others we have not accounted for) nor mutually exclusive (i.e., scholars may choose to combine several perspectives in their studies), yet they serve well to broadly capture different scholarly emphases in approaches to knowledge and expertise. Within each perspective, there is diversity of theoretical and methodological commitments, that is, not everyone shares the same vocabularies, concepts, methods, etc., attesting to the wealth of ways in which knowledge and expertise can be studied.

Like any other taxonomic exercise, the five perspectives chosen here are prone to contestation and critique, not least in our own reflections on how to best organize this Handbook (see Bliesemann de Guevara et al., Chapter 67, ‘Creating Knowledge by Editing a Handbook: A Self-Critical Reflection’). The advantage of this taxonomy still is that actors, practices, contexts, structures, and relations are core concepts in IR, which facilitates the integration of knowledge perspectives into all IR teaching and research. The five perspective-informed sections are bookended by two discussion forums: an introductory section, which conveys the range of theoretical, empirical, and methodological knowledge debates in world politics and IR today, and a final section assembling disruptions and meditations that indicate pressing future questions in scholarly engagements with knowledge and expertise in international politics. In the following, we give a brief overview of the logics of the seven parts of this Handbook and of the contributions they curate, to then conclude with some remarks about the place of knowledge, expertise, and the university in the current political moment.

Part I: knowledge debates in international politics

Part I sets the scene for the Handbook with essays which, by way of example, discuss central knowledge-related concerns in both IR and world politics. In Chapter 2, ‘International Politics by Other Means: The Role of the Scholar in IR’, Vineet Thakur

offers a reading of the origins of the discipline of IR as attempts at promoting the ascendance of the advocating expert over the politician. The chapter thereby shows how IR and expertise have been deeply entangled from the outset, raising important questions about the disciplinary self-understanding and its role in world politics.

Chapters 3–5 introduce important theoretical debates on knowledge in IR through the lenses of criticality, gender, and worlding. In Chapter 3, ‘International Relations Knowledge and Practice: The Crisis of Critical Theory?’, Beate Jahn addresses the supposed crisis of critical theory, that is, the allegation that critical theory today is out of sync with history and out of touch with practice. She argues that academia’s intimate connection with neoliberal capitalism puts pressure on critical IR theories to succumb to the demand for marketable knowledge and ‘useful’ knowledge. The chapter suggests that refusing to succumb to these pressures and returning to its own meta-theoretical principles, critical theory can regain its critical edge. In Chapter 4, ‘Gender and Knowledge (Re)Production in International Thought’, Kimberly Hutchings presents a gendered construction of histories of international thought. Acknowledging the central role of historical canons of international thought and retrospective narratives about the historical sequence in which theories for understanding and judging IR emerged, she discusses what such a reconstruction means for the significance of gender in the reproduction of IR knowledge. In Chapter 5, ‘Worlding and Worlds’, David L. Blaney and Arlene B. Tickner employ the notion of ‘worlding’ to discuss the promise of a relational ontology to open the IR discipline to ways of knowing, being, and doing beyond its parochial, Eurocentric foundations. Going beyond the idea of epistemological plurality and geocultural variation in understanding the world as one, they draw the reader’s attention to the multiple worlds created by complex processes of knowing, doing, being, and feeling in which a diverse array of actors, both human and other-than human, participate.

Chapters 6–9 centre notions of expertise in international politics and discuss the role of knowledge and expertise relating to two central issue areas: violence and AI. In Chapter 6, ‘Science and International Relations: Knowing and Making the International’, Dagmar Vorlíček takes stock of main approaches within STS, an interdisciplinary field focusing on the interconnections between the production of science and technology and socio-political orderings, and connects them with scholarship, knowledge, and expertise in international politics. Chapter 7, ‘Not Knowing as Expertise: Knowledge and the Politics of Ignorance’, draws attention to the role of ignorance and the normalcy of not knowing in policymaking. Matthias Gross argues that, instead of trying to eliminate ignorance, it should be treated as a form of expertise in all fields of policymaking. In Chapter 8, ‘Knowing Violence in International Politics’, Werner Distler and Mariam Salehi explore different ways of knowing with a focus on violence, one of the central structuring modes of international politics. They discuss international knowledge politics and epistemic hierarchies through everyday, expert, and academic ways of knowing, cautioning against the risk of perpetuating violence as a structuring element of the discipline of IR itself through the knowledge frameworks produced by it. Chapter 9, “Artificial Intelligence” and the

Production of Knowledge and Expertise in International Relations,' turns to a more recent debate: the potentially transformative role of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies for knowledge and expertise in international politics. Ingvild Bode and Henrik Huelss argue that emerging AI regulation often privileges a particular type of technical-corporate expertise, and that IR theory needs to be more attentive to 'knowledge' produced by AI and its political implications.

Chapters 10 and 11, finally, focus on methodological questions of studying knowledge and expertise in international politics. In Chapter 10, 'Studying Knowledge: An Analytical Guide for International Politics,' Audrey Alejandro develops analytical guidelines to help researchers design and self-assess research focusing on knowledge. In Chapter 11, 'Coloniality of Knowledge (Re)Production: Individual Entanglements and Collective Solidarities in Epistemic North-South Relationships,' Siddharth Tripathi discusses the coloniality of knowledge (re)production and the entanglements and multiple subjectivities of individuals involved in it. To address questions and challenges for critical praxis, the chapter mobilises dialogic encounters and collective solidarities.

Part II: actor-centred approaches

Part II contains eight chapters which foreground the agency and authority of individuals, organizations, and other collective actors in the production, diffusion, and contestation of knowledge and expertise in and on international politics. Following an overview of this lens in Chapter 12, the next two chapters focus on international organizations (Glaab and Kortendiek, Chapter 13, 'The Politics of Knowledge Production in International Organizations') and on legal professionals in the field of atrocity crimes and human rights violations (Christensen and Madsen, Chapter 14, 'Legal Knowledge and Expertise in International Politics'), as two particular types of epistemic actors in global governance.

The next two chapters then examine the relation between knowledge and different types of actor networks. They focus, on the one hand, on staff movements between governmental and non-governmental organizations and agencies and how the interconnections thereby created bear on the tacit background knowledge involved in international policymaking (Warnecke, Chapter 15, 'Informal Ties and Expertise in Global Crisis Governance: An Exploration of Network Methodologies'), and on the other hand, on strategic uses of knowledge in power struggles between private networks set up to consciously shape or manipulate the policy process for their benefit (Kostić and Bliesemann de Guevara, Chapter 16 'Intimate Networks and Strategic Knowledge in Peacebuilding Interventions').

The final three chapters offer different ways to approach the knowledge co-production between experts and policymakers. They look, respectively, at deep co-production understood as the holding of multiple expert and policymaking roles by single individuals (Waisová, Chapter 17, 'Deep Co-Production of Human Security at the Science–Politics Nexus'), the role of quantification and related expertise in

global governance (Bandola-Gill, Chapter 18, 'Quantified Expertise: Connecting Science and Politics in Global Governance'), and the move from a concentration on scientific results understood as products to more emphasis on the process of making these products relevant and usable at the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (Lidskog and Sundqvist, Chapter 19, 'From Product to Process: Science and the Making of International Environmental Governance').

Part III: practice approaches

Part III assembles scholarly studies that see knowledge as produced by and observable in the structured and meaningful practices of human communities (or assemblages of humans and non-humans) and explores the devices and wider material arrangements that render epistemic practices authoritative or dominant. Following an introduction (Bliesemann de Guevara and Warnecke, Chapter 20, 'Practice Approaches to Knowledge and Expertise in International Politics'), the section contains ten chapters that approach the practices and wider infrastructures of knowledge production in international politics from four angles. The first three chapters invite the reader to think about where to find and how to study (epistemic) practices in international politics, namely through methodological innovation by and in immersive fieldwork (Berling, Chapter 21, 'The Embedded Study of International Knowledge Practices: Towards a Methodology of Ironic Immersion'), the tracing of pragmatic learning (Stein, Chapter 22, 'Thinking, Feeling, and Choosing: Pragmatism, Political Psychology, and the Intelligence Community'), and creativity in academics' own epistemic practices (Särmä and Vuori, Chapter 23, 'Arts-Based Methods in IR: What Knowledges Become Possible').

The next three chapters investigate various knowledge practices in international politics, using different conceptual tools to study them. They explore practices in the co-production of knowledge and politics in global governance, drawing on concepts from STS (Littoz-Monnet, Chapter 24, 'The Co-Production of Expertise in Global Governance'); as political and historically contingent practices that co-emerge with larger epistemic political formations, drawing on Michel Foucault's method of genealogy (Andrä, Chapter 25, 'Producing Knowledge to Problematize War: A Foucauldian Approach to Knowledge Practices'); and as specific forensic practices and innovations such as the practice of producing 'sites of forensic interest' in Colombia, through which forensic experts make conflict victims knowable (Olarde-Sierra, Chapter 26, 'Forensic Experts and Knowledge Practices in Transitional Justice Scenarios').

The following two chapters then centre on particular devices or technical processes of knowledge production in international politics—namely algorithms (Bellanova and Monsees, Chapter 27, 'Algorithmic Knowledge and International Politics') as well as pilot studies and massive open online courses (MOOCs) (Martin de Almagro, Chapter 28, 'Assembling Knowledge: Pilot Projects and Massive

Open Online Courses in International Policymaking’)—and discuss their wider contradictions and politics.

The section closes with two chapters that focus more explicitly on epistemic infrastructures. One studies the political instrument constituencies and translocal spaces (re)producing and promoting specific knowledge about governance itself (Voß, Chapter 29, ‘Instrument Constituencies and Spaces of Knowing Governance’), while the other focuses on expert-driven techno-politics and its socio-political and moral effects in the Middle East through the examples of the report, the workshop, the drone, and the solidarity movement (Kosmatopoulos and Nasr, Chapter 30, ‘Colonial Wars, Postcolonial Peace & Anticolonial Solidarity: Expertise and Techno-Politics in Southwest Asia (Middle East)’).

Part IV: context-centred approaches

Part IV addresses context as the social, cultural, political, and economic milieu of knowledge making, diffusion, contestation, and obstruction. Following a short introduction (Kaczmarska, Chapter 31, ‘Context-Centred Approaches to Knowledge and Expertise in International Politics’), the chapters in this section approach the contexts of knowledge production from three angles. The first five chapters set the scene by exploring the broad contexts of knowledge production: hierarchies present in IR knowledge production globally (Loke and Owen, Chapter 32, ‘Hierarchies and Contexts in International Relations Knowledge Production’), the Global IR agenda (Eun, Chapter 33, ‘A Broadening of International Relations: Knowledge Production Beyond West-Centrism’), queer IR (Wilkinson, Chapter 34, ‘Queer Knowing and Knowledge: The Case of Queer IR’), cultural contexts (Reus-Smit, Chapter 35, ‘The Problem with Cultural Contexts’), and academic freedom (Kaczmarska, Chapter 36, ‘Academic Freedom and the Contexts of Knowledge Production’).

The three subsequent chapters discuss the conditions and outcomes of producing knowledge in various political settings around the globe, including the conditions of possibility for knowledge making and dissemination in (non-)democracies. These chapters have a more concrete geographical focus, zooming in on the Global Easts (Müller and Yatsyk, Chapter 37, ‘The Global Easts in the Geopolitics of Knowledge: The Decolonial Imperative’), Latin America (Ravecca and López Burian, Chapter 38, ‘The Politics of International Relations: Glimpses from Chile and Uruguay’), and the everyday practices of the global university as seen from Australia, Argentina, and Puerto Rico (Jerrems, Cuadro, and Fonseca, Chapter 39, ‘The Everyday Practices of Making a Global Discipline’).

The last two chapters draw attention to how context plays out in institutional settings. Beatrix Futák-Campbell reconstructs the process of setting up the Global International Relations Section at the International Studies Association (Chapter 40, ‘Creating a Global International Relations Section at the International Studies Association’), whereas Alexander Ruser analyses the relationship between experts and public trust by diving into the policy field of climate change (Chapter 41, ‘Experts and Public Trust in the Policy Field of Climate Change’).

Part V: structural approaches

Part V interrogates how larger dominant material and discursive conditions are central to how the world is interpreted. Structural approaches recognize these larger structural dynamics as core to processes of knowledge production and examine the unequal distribution of epistemic agency within the global epistemic order. Following a short introduction (Poopuu and Kurowska, Chapter 42, 'Structural Approaches to Knowledge and Expertise in International Politics'), the chapters in this section approach structures and knowledge/expertise from three angles. The first three chapters are curious about the dominant knowledge regimes and/or the coloniality of knowledge that shape how we know violence (Poopuu, Schweiger, and Simon, Chapter 43, 'The *Violens* in International Relations: Can We Produce Knowledge Differently?'); how knowledge regimes shape global health governance (Aue, Chapter 44, 'Knowledge Regimes and the Postcolonial Hierarchies of International Health Quantification'); and how non-knowledge is a form of power which can render individuals and populations governable (Aradau, Canzutti, and Perret, Chapter 45, 'Regimes of Power/Non-Knowledge in Global Politics').

The second group of chapters pluralizes the sources of expertise. It makes a case for listening to differently situated voices by exploring whose knowledge of conflicts matters and why (Anas and Perera, Chapter 46, 'Experts in Conflict: Having *Been There* but Not Being *From There*'); queering knowledge on humanitarianism and acknowledging LGBTIQ activists as experts (Hagen, Ranawana, and Pritchard, Chapter 47, 'Queering Humanitarian Response Through LGBTIQ People's Expertise'); and treating insurgent social theory as particular theoretical knowledge (Nilsen and Cox, Chapter 48, 'Social Movements and Insurgent Social Theory: Making Theoretical Knowledge Through Collective Action').

The final chapters bring into conversation the power of established material structures and the ideas they promote. Michael Merlingen looks at how EU foreign policy ideas derive from (international) relations of class and domination (Chapter 49, 'EU Foreign Policy Ideas as International Relations of Domination: A Neo-Gramscian Perspective'); while Gloria Novović shows how the epistemic authority of the mainstream development paradigm derives from western liberal capitalism's dominance in the aftermath of the Cold War (Chapter 50, 'Poverty, Inequality, and Knowledge in Development Politics').

Part VI: relational approaches

Part VI lays out relational approaches to knowledge and expertise in international politics. Their overarching tenet is that relations and interconnections are ontologically prior in the making and thus also knowing of the world(s). Relational approaches accordingly prioritize continuous, immersive, and entangled ways of knowing that resists epistemic containers and instead challenge the traditional

units of analysis in the IR discipline. Following a brief introduction (Kurowska and Poopuu, Chapter 51, 'Relational Approaches to Knowledge and Expertise in International Politics'), the first three chapters examine relational ways of knowing through, respectively, a constructivist take on the social establishment of epistemic authority (Jackson and Heo, Chapter 52, 'Ways of Knowing: A Relational Account'); the relational alternatives of Sinophone and Japanese theorizing about international politics (Kavalski, Chapter 53, 'Relationality with Asian Characteristics? Healing the Columbus Syndrome of International Relations'); and anthropological approaches to relational knowing in IR (Mc Cluskey, Chapter 54, 'Anthropological Approaches to Knowledge in International Politics').

The next two chapters draw on social theory of Pierre Bourdieu to explore relational knowledge production in socially bounded fields, in which actors mobilize different forms of capital to struggle for their positions. They do so through the case studies of human rights advocacy and genocide labelling in post-civil war Sri Lanka (Markland, Chapter 55, 'Fielding Knowledge: The Problematic Case of Human Rights Advocacy and Genocide Labelling') and the emergence of 'interventionary objects' within a peacebuilding field, illustrated through the study of 'anti-informality' projects in Bosnia and Kosovo (Danielsson, Chapter 56, 'Field Methodology and the Relational Emergence of an "Interventionary Object"').

The subsequent two chapters approach relational knowledge from feminist perspectives that centre the 'personal' standpoint as a mode of knowing through, respectively, the experience of two transnational feminist activist movements (Åhäll, Chapter 57, 'Being as a Mode of Knowing: Feminist Knowledge on Affect') and biographical storytelling as a relational form of knowing that aligns the 'I' and the 'we' against the structural entrenchment of intersectional oppression (Dibavar, Chapter 58, 'Transnational Feminist Solidarity: Story as a Relational Approach to Knowledge Production').

The final two chapters in this section offer relational critiques that problematize Western, human-centred ways of knowing as universalizing despite not being universal. To this end, the authors draw on complexity thinking and posthumanism that accounts for other-than-human beings (Cudworth and Hobden, Chapter 59, 'Complexity Thinking, Posthumanism, and International Relations Knowledge'), and on Andean indigenous relational cosmology of the Aymara people and its pluriversal ways of knowing the world(s) (Querejazu, Chapter 60, 'Pluriversal Knowledge and Shamans: The Aymara Yatiris as Knowers and Diplomats').

Part VII: disruptions and meditations

Part VII assembles seven essays that break with the previous structure of the Handbook in both perspective and format and invite the reader to re-read knowledge and expertise through ruptures that may open future research avenues. In Chapter 61, 'Cosmologies, Sciences, Planetary Politics: Reflections on "Knowledge" in New

Registers', Milja Kurki draws on her own experiences as a student of scientific cosmology to invite her readers to observe the 'sciences' as a messy living practice of being with, or communing, and as a way of doing politics across disciplines and species. The result, she argues, is a less 'apolitical' understanding of science, a less 'social' understanding of politics, and a more 'planetary' multispecies understanding of political possibility. In Chapter 62, 'The Future of Academic Expertise: Speculative European Bureaucratic Fabulations', Jonathan Luke Austin and Anna Leander unfold a speculative reflexion on what forms the current ideas of expertise will have taken in future. They do so by composing an as-if evaluation report written in 2040 on the commission of a fictional European Science Foundation. In Chapter 63, 'Racism and Racialization in International Relations Knowledge', Amal Abu-Bakare introduces her readers to the writings of three black feminist scholars—Christina Sharpe, Sylvia Wynter, and Amy Niang—to broach topics of racism and racialization in IR as trajectories of knowledge expertise. The chapter thereby showcases the wider significance of centring lived experiences of blackness as political ways of knowing global politics.

In Chapter 64, 'Reflections on Imagination of Future and AI', Toni Čerkez, James Finnis, Milja Kurki, Helen Miles, and Joseph Thurgate converse with ChatGPT about AI and imaginations of the future. Their contribution highlights the entanglements between technical systems and humans and makes predictions on how this will shape knowledge production and expertise in the future. In Chapter 65, 'Hermeneutical Ignorance and "Strong Objectivity" in Knowledge Production on the Russo-Ukrainian War', Thomas Fetzer, Xymena Kurowska, and Kateryna Zarembo work with the concept of hermeneutical ignorance to make better sense of the epistemic bewilderment among mainstream IR experts at the scale of the Russia's attack on Ukraine and Ukraine's resistance. The concept confronts how epistemic communities may not be able to integrate knowledge hailing from experience other than their own. Chapter 66, 'The Necessity of Being Negative: Critique and Care in the Anthropocene', links back to discussions of criticality in IR knowledge production dispersed throughout the Handbook. Philip Conway makes the case for the continuing importance of negativity in the practice of critique in IR scholarship, but also argues that critique should not be careless and can build on an ethos of care.

The Handbook ends with a self-critical reflection. In Chapter 67, 'Creating Knowledge by Editing a Handbook: A Self-Critical Reflection', Berit Bliesemann de Guevara, Katarzyna Kaczmarek, Xymena Kurowska, Birgit Poopuu, and Andrea Warnecke discuss the process of editing a handbook as a particular epistemic practice. They reflect on their own roles and positionalities in this project, explore the wider power structures and inequalities which shape these positionalities, trace how they sought to negotiate them, and also discuss how the context of knowledge production in the neoliberal global academy constrains such efforts. Ending on a relational note, they invite the readers of this Handbook to meet the plural archive cultivated here as a starting point and an encouragement to embrace collaboration as a critical moment in knowing the world.

The future of knowledge, expertise, and the university in contemporary society

This Handbook is published at a time when, for a host of reasons, knowledge production and expertise, as well as the institution of the university, become challenged in profound ways. Authoritarian governments and populist political forces in democracies have adopted increasingly explicit anti-intellectual agendas. Mocking experts and portraying universities as bastions to be conquered in imagined ‘culture wars’ have been normalised. As this Handbook demonstrates, knowledge—and the related concepts and practices of expertise, evidence, and truth—are political and they matter in politics; they are socially made, as such infused with power dynamics, and need to be continuously interrogated. In the so-called ‘post-truth’ era, however, the critique of power relations and the insight that stirring emotions can translate into greater political capital than evidence have been growingly instrumentalized and put to nefarious use. How this occurs is necessarily context-dependent, but examples include attempts by conservative, right-wing, and other populist parties to promote ideological agendas under the pretext of freedom of speech and to attack universities and, in some cases, individual academics for what they interpret as the promotion of left-wing or ‘woke’ agendas. While places of learning have always been sites of intense struggle and frequently attacked, at the time of writing we are also witnessing the physical destruction of universities during Russia’s full-scale invasion on Ukraine and in the war between Israel and Hamas which has obliterated much of Palestinian (higher) education in Gaza. Beyond the loss and disruption of life, this destruction threatens to limit the future ability of societies to engage in knowledge production and cultivation.

We are also at the outset of what might be thought of as an AI revolution. AI chatbots, like ChatGPT, use natural language processing and machine learning algorithms to produce human-like interactions. This process undermines reliability of any source of knowledge and intensifies ethical dilemmas, as well as philosophical and legal debates as to the knowledge status of such creations. Given the significance of AI, algorithms, and other technological developments for current and future knowledge production and politics, the discipline of IR will need to grapple with the complex questions they raise in a more sustained way.

The institution of the university—arguably the place where scholars are animated primarily by the ideal of *bona fide* knowledge seeking—has been a central actor (and target) in these developments and will remain the locus of contemporary struggles around knowledge and expertise. Questions about ways of decolonizing the university, its curricula, and teaching, and—ultimately—responsible knowledge making in society are as pertinent as ever (Bendix et al. 2020; Bhambra et al. 2018; Macías 2022; Narayanaswamy et al. 2023; Tickner and Smith 2020) in this demanding context; they are compounded by the ethical challenges of machine-generated knowledge with its in-built biases and imbrication in global capital.

Ethical questions about knowledge are further interwoven with the funding of teaching and research: what kind of knowledge actors, institutions, or processes get funded; what kind of universities does this create; and what are the wider implications for knowledge in society? Certainly, these are not questions of economics only; the politics of funding shape how knowledge about particular topics is developed and how this, in turn, shapes our realities. Throughout its different sections, contributions to this Handbook have engaged these debates in original and systematic ways. Their input will serve for re-thinking, re-articulating, and re-envisioning current and future critical engagements with knowledge and expertise in international politics.

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